

Analysis of Proposition 2 ½ Override for a 9th Police Officer

Question 1 on the Annual Town Election Ballot would authorize a Proposition 2 ½ Override to provide funding to hire a 9th full-time police officer for the Dunstable Police Department.

Adding a 9th police officer would have the following impacts on the Police Department:

Coverage: The Dunstable Police Department receives over 40% of the calls from the Groton-Dunstable Dispatch Center using 8 full-time officers (compared to Groton's 20 full-time officers). On Monday through Friday from 12 am to 8 am there is only one Dunstable officer on duty. Adding a 9th full-time officer to the Department would allow for a second officer on duty during these hours. Certain calls like domestics and mental health situations can pose higher risks for officer and victim safety. Having only one officer respond to these types of calls is not a best practice. In addition, Dunstable's officers are trained first responders and are often the first person arriving on scene to a medical call while more advanced care is in route (officers can provide much of the care that Dunstable Fire can while Trinity Ambulance may be farther away). If the only officer on duty is tied up on a previous call they cannot leave to provide other assistance.

Scheduling: Although a 9th officer would be primarily assigned to the 12 am – 8 am shift, the addition of a full-time officer to the Department's roster would provide opportunities to amend the Police Department's schedule due to short or long term absences that will help limit overtime (for instance, the Department is currently down an officer due to a military deployment).

Police Reform: The Town currently relies on 6 part-time officers who assist the Department providing coverage and service. The State's Police Reform bill will likely result in the Town losing its part-time officers because the increased requirements to certify as a part-time officer will reduce interest in individuals meeting these requirements for a part-time position. If this happens, the addition of a 9th officer would help address the gaps from part-time officer loss.

Cost: The annual cost of funding a 9th officer would be just over \$100 for the typical single family residential home.