

Police Department
City of Keene, New Hampshire

Date: January 21, 2021

To: Steven Russo, Police Chief *SR-140*

From: Todd B. Lawrence, Police Captain *TBL*

Subject: Calendar Year 2020 Recruiting Analysis

I. Identified Objectives

It is the policy of the Keene Police Department to actively conduct a recruitment program to the best of our degree in order to fill all vacant positions as quickly as possible, using validated methods and instruments, and ensuring positions are filled with the most qualified candidates while balancing the ethnic/gender composition of sworn members with the ethnic/gender composition of the available workforce in the community.

II. Demographics

The 2020 population of Keene stood at 23,409 (Suburbanstats.org). Males composed 46.9% (10,979) and females 53.1% (12,430). This does not include the population of Keene State College's (KSC) approximate 3,200 students or Antioch University, with an estimated 1,100 students. Additionally, Keene is the County Seat and the shopping and business center of Cheshire County. Keene is also home to Keene High School (KHS) with approximately 1,800 students and teachers present per day in attendance. It is estimated (by the City's planning department) that during a weekday there may be between 60,000 and 75,000 people in the City of Keene.

In 2020 the population of Cheshire County was at 77,117. The State's population is 1,342,795. It is a rural state, with the largest population density located in the area south and East of Concord, NH and, specifically, Manchester, NH. For recruitment purposes the following demographics are offered:

City of Keene: Population 23,409 (2020)

- Females comprised 53.1 % of the population (12,430)
- Males comprised 46.9% of the population (10,979)
- 95% of the population is white
- <1% of the population is black
- 2% of the population is Asian
- <1% of the population is American Indian
- 1% of the population is Hispanic

- 1% identified as two or more races

Cheshire County: Population 77,117 (2020)

- Females comprise 51.2% of the population
- 96% of the population is white
- Below 1% of the population is black
- 1% of the population is Asian
- Below 1% of the population is American Indian
- 1% of the population is Hispanic
- 1% of the population is two or more races

New Hampshire: Population 1,316,470 (2020)

- Females comprise 50.6% of the population
- 93% of the population is white
- 1% of the population is black
- 2% of the population is Asian
- Below 1% of the population is American Indian
- 2% of the population is Hispanic
- Below 1% of the population is two or more races

The Keene Police Department's end of calendar year (CY) 2020 sworn ranks was:

- Authorized full time strength during 2020 was 44
- Number of positions frozen during 2020 was two
- 41 positions filled at end of CY 2020
- 90.3% of sworn officers were male (37)
- 9.7 % of sworn officers were female (4)
- 4.8% of sworn officers are racial minorities (2)

Achieving a 50% female number of sworn officers for the department is unlikely. Therefore we use a nationally accepted number of 14%. If fully staffed at 44 sworn positions, this would lead us to a goal of having on staff a minimum of 6-7 (6.5) female officers, a goal we continually strive for. Using the actual authorized position fill due to frozen positions would equate to having six female Officers.

The Keene Police Departments full and part-time non-sworn ranks (excluding crossing guards) were as follows:

- 18 non-sworn positions (includes Assistant County Attorney Prosecutor)
- 10 were female (55.5%)
- 7 were male (38.5%)
- 1 unfilled position (6%).
- All were Caucasian

III. Recruitment Efforts

In 2020 the Department's sworn officer shortages stayed fairly consistent between 6-7, budgeted positions. Our highest number of officer vacancies was once at eight (8) budgeted positions. **Six (6) Probationary Officers were hired in calendar year 2020.** Two (2) out of the six (6) officers hired were results from hiring processes held in late 2019. This brings the Department strength to 41 sworn at the end of 2020. This leaves us at the end of the CY with three (3) open, budgeted sworn positions.

In CY 2020 our department experienced one officer retirement. Two (2) non-probationary officers resigned from our agency and are now working in the private sector. None of our probationary officers resigned from the department. We did not experience any retirements from our civilian employees. However, we had one civilian employee resign and another passed away.

In 2014, through efforts with the City Manager, City Council, and Finance Department, we have been authorized to hire one extra Officer above funded strength. This effort has been made to help mitigate the issue of only hiring to authorized strength, only to lose a trainee in the FTEP or having an Officer retire and leaving us again short of authorized funded strength. We see this effort as a step in the direction of having qualified Officers already hired before another Officer retires or resigns. As of this writing, we are still trying to fill this "one above" position, having never been able to achieve this through qualified candidates.

The department continues to use the Great Bay Community College (GBCC) testing alliance as our secondary recruiting mechanism. The Great Bay Community College testing alliance only ran two (2) tests this year due to COVID-19. The department continues to successfully use the established testing alliance during our mixed hiring processes. The Department finds it more beneficial to advertise our open positions on-line through the website, Indeed. By soliciting applications on a more consistent basis, it allows the department to administer in-house hiring processes more frequently.

Additionally, we have in the past signed up for several colleges Job Boards advertising our open positions. This type of advertising and recruiting was extremely limited in 2020, due to COVID-19.

Given the non-existence of minority or specialized radio stations in the area, coupled with budgetary restraints, radio advertisement has not been used as a recruiting tool in recent memory. The same can be said for print advertisements, with past years advertisement costs not passing a cost benefit analysis for sworn positions.

We continue to advertise our open positions with the use of social media. The department has accounts with Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The department also advertises our open positions on the City's website and has a dedicated website called kpdjobs.com. This site leads candidates to our department employment website. Also as mentioned above we also use the employment website Indeed.

In CY 2018 we created a recruitment video. Since the video was created in CY 2018, the video is still relevant to today's department. The video was professionally done in order to attract candidates to our department. The video focuses on five different officers within the department. Each officer explains what they may encounter on a daily basis. Some of the officers talk about the overall atmosphere of the agency. Other officers discuss why they were interested in applying to our department. The video also demonstrates the different types of department teams and other ancillary responsibilities within the department. The video lasts 2 minutes and 27 seconds. The video was posted on all of our social media sites as well as YouTube. The following link plays our video on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h81th1q-ZGg&feature=youtu.be>

As of this writing, the video was viewed 2,341 times on YouTube, and 19K views on our Facebook page.

We continue to have incentives in place to attract candidates from the heavier populated areas of the state (Central and Seacoast) and Certified Police Officer whether In-State or Out-of-State Certified.

The incentives were posted on our department website and social media sites. The incentive packages are as follows:

NH Certified Officers (\$5,000)

- Successful completion of Departmental Orientation (usually 30 days) \$ 1,500
- 6 months \$ 1,500 (successful interim evaluation)
- 12 months \$ 2,000 (+step increase, probation completion)
- \$ 5,000**

Out of State Certified Officers

- Successful Admittance to a NH Police Academy Class \$ 1,000
- 6 months \$ 1,500 (successful interim evaluation)
- 12 months \$ 1,500 (+step increase, probation completion)
- \$ 4,000**

Uncertified hires

- 6 months Probationary schedule increase (successful interim evaluation)
- 12 months Step increase (probation completion)

All newly hired probationary officers (certified or uncertified)

Vacation leave

-40 hours of vacation leave during the probationary period after completion of 6 months of employment and a successful interim evaluation

Relocation Assistance (if required to move meet department residency requirement to live within 30 minutes of Keene PD)

-Up to \$1,000 paid out on a reimbursement basis for moving, housing, or related expenses

We have the ability to start certified officers off at a higher starting pay grade within the CBA contract, due to their various levels of work experience. The department in the past has bought out certified officer's contracts with other local departments to allow them to move to KPD sooner than they would have been able to.

Although in CY 2020 the department has hired six (6) new officers under the hiring incentive program, it is difficult to say if the hiring incentives played a role in the candidate's interest in the Keene Police Department. Two out of the six officers hired were already certified police officers. I have had three other certified officers express interest in our department. Of those three, one officer was removed from our hiring process during the background, and two officers failed the required entry-level physical fitness test. After speaking with all the candidates we hired, both certified candidates applied knowing the monetary benefit of the hiring incentive. Both candidates would have eventually applied regardless. The non-certified candidates applied due to other factors. Based on our current shortage of officers, I would recommend keeping the incentives in place in order to stay competitive within the employment market.

As briefly noted above we expanded the offering of in-house written testing for all those who sent in applications. This has met with mixed results, which can be seen below in section IV.

In CY 2020 we ran one (1) hiring process for full-time Dispatcher. We did hire a dispatcher from this hiring process. We are currently accepting applications for another Full-Time Dispatcher Position. This hiring process will likely occur in 2021. We continue our practice of seeking assistance from the City's Human Resources (HR) Department for the hiring of non-sworn positions. This assistance centers on advertisement, the use of their automated database for candidates to apply rather than applying directly to the Police Department, as well as assistance in notification to those who have applied for the position posted.

IV. 2020 Sworn Officer Hiring Processes:

During CY 2020, the Department conducted **eight (8)** hiring processes. Four hiring processes were in-house processes. Three hiring processes were certified officer/individual hiring processes. One process was for an individual. We did not have any mixed hiring processes. An **in-house process** is when candidates express self-initiated interest in a

career with our department. **Mixed hiring processes** are candidates that express self-initiated interest in a career with our department and candidates from the GBCC test. A **certified officer hiring process** are candidates previously certified that express interest in our department. An **individual hiring process** is rarely utilized at our department. There are certain circumstances this process will be utilized when a candidate cannot attend the other hiring processes listed above.

Those that take a Police Written Exam with our testing alliances are invited to the hiring process if they score a 75% or higher in either the overall score or the cognitive score (GBCC). GBCC written exams consist of three scores, cognitive, personality, and overall. Those who take our in-house test must score a 75% or higher on a validated Police Written Exam we purchase through a vendor.

It should be noted that we invite back most candidates from the previous processes that failed the written test or physical fitness test (PFT), with an emphasis on getting female and minority candidates to return if possible.

The **first** hiring process was held on February 17, 2020, an in-house process based on self-initiated interest. We invited thirty-nine (39) candidates. From that, we received:

- 17 candidates stated they would attend
- 10 candidates showed for the process

Seven (7) of the candidates passed the written exam and scored a 75% or higher on the test. The four (4) female candidates that showed for the written test, all passed.

Later that day the seven (7) candidates that passed the written test were invited for a PFT. All the candidates showed for the PFT testing process. Two (2) of the seven (7) candidates failed the required testing.

This brings the total number of invitees to thirty-nine (39), thirty-five (35) males and four (4) females. Out of the thirty-nine (39) total invitations only five (5) moved onto the oral board phase of the hiring process.

On February 18, 2020 oral boards were conducted as scheduled. Two (2) of the five (5) candidates were recommended by the oral board. No candidates passed the background and were hired from this process.

At this point in the CY our hiring processes were suspended due to COVID-19. We did not resume recruitment practices until May 2020 and hiring processes until June 2020.

Our **second** hiring process was held on June 1, 2020, an in-house process based on self-initiated interest. Twenty-six (26) invitations were sent out. From that, we received:

- 12 candidates who stated they would attend

- 6 candidates showed for the process

Four (4) out of the six (6) candidates passed the written exam. Later in the day all four (4) candidates showed up for the PFT and all four passed the PFT.

This brings the total number of invitees to twenty-six (26), twenty-three (23) males and three (3) females. Out of the total invitations, four (4) candidates moved onto the oral board phase of the hiring process.

On June 2, 2020 oral boards were conducted as scheduled. Two (2) out of four (4) candidates fully participated in the oral boards. One of the candidates decided to withdraw from the process while waiting in the department lobby, just before his designated time slot. At the start of the other candidate's oral board, we learned he did not meet the basic hiring criteria. The oral board panel recommended both candidates that participated. Only one candidate successfully passed the background and was hired by the department.

Our **third** hiring process was held on July 27, 2020, an in-house process based on self-initiated interest. We invited Forty (40) candidates. From that, we received:

- 8 candidates stated they would attend
- 7 candidates showed for the process

Four (4) candidates passed the written exam and scored a 75% or higher on the test. Later that day the four (4) candidates that passed the written test were invited for a PFT. Two (2) of the four (4) candidates failed the required testing.

This brings the total number of invitees to forty (40), thirty-seven (37) males and three (3) females. Out of the forty (40) total invitations only two (2) moved onto the oral board phase of the hiring process.

On July 28, 2020 oral boards were conducted as scheduled. One (1) of the two (2) candidates were recommended by the oral board. No candidates passed the background and were hired from this process.

Our **fourth** hiring process was held on October 19, 2020, an in-house process based on self-initiated interest. Twenty-seven (27) invitations were sent out. From that, we received:

- 8 candidates stated they would attend
- 5 candidates attended the process

Five (5) candidates showed up for the written test. All 5 candidates passed the written exam and scored a 75% or higher on the test. Later that day the five (5) candidates that passed the written test were invited for a PFT. All the candidates showed for the PFT testing process. Two (2) of the five (5) candidates failed the required testing.

This brings the total number of invitees to twenty-seven (27), twenty-two (22) males and five (5) females. Out of the 27 total invitations only two (2) moved onto the oral board phase of the hiring process.

Oral boards were conducted as scheduled. Both candidates participated in the oral boards. Only one of the two candidates were recommended by the oral board. No candidates were hired from this process.

During this CY we gave **three certified officer hiring processes** with a total of five (5) candidates. All of these candidates were males. The processes were held during different times of the year. Two (2) of the five (5) candidates failed the physical fitness exam. All three (3) candidates that passed the PFT moved onto the oral boards. All three (3) candidates were recommended by the oral board. One candidate was removed from the background portion of the hiring process. **Two certified officer candidates** were hired.

The department did give an **individual hiring process** to a male candidate. This candidate was unable to attend the February 2020 hiring process due to his college athletic program. In March this candidate passed the written, PFT, and oral boards. This candidate later passed the background and was hired.

V. Overall Statistics for 2020:

Invited candidates, Male:	123
Invited candidates, Female:	15
Total	138
Invited candidates that actually showed up:	34 (27.6% of total invitees)
Passed PFT:	18 (52.9% of those that showed up)
Passed oral board:	9 (50% of those who passed PFT)
Passed background investigation:	4 (44.4% of those who passed oral board)
Hired	4 (44.4% of those who passed oral board; 22.2% of those who passed the PFT; 2.8% of all those invited)

There was a significant decrease in the number of candidates invited in CY 20 from the previous calendar year. The difference in the number of invited candidates from CY 19 (376) to CY 20 (138) is 238 or down 63.2%. This decrease can be contributed due to the department suspending the hiring process for approximately 3½ months during the height and uncertainty of COVID-19. However, the department hired two (2) more qualified candidates in CY 20 (4) than in CY 19 (2).

VI. Ongoing Activities:

Our department has reviewed the Governor's LEACT Recommendations for Hiring Practices and Background Investigations. The Keene Police Department has done its best to recruit and hire a diverse law enforcement workforce. In 2020 the department has hired three (3) police officers that are in a protected group. Our background investigations exceed the LEACT mandate to vet out any candidates who possesses or demonstrate an outward bias towards a protected group. This vetting process is done through an aggressive polygraph examination and subsequent background investigation interviews.

Both our College Liaison Officer (CLO) at Keene State College and our School Resource Officer (SRO) at Keene High School continue to provide meaningful interaction between both high school and college students at their respective schools, solidifying the visibility and professionalism of the Department.

In light of the difficulty of hiring female officers, the Department has strived to retain those that we have on staff. To this end, one has achieved the position of detective and remains in that position as of this writing, as well as being a defensive tactics instructor and being on the current Sergeants promotion list; one is a Field Training Officer and a OC instructor. The third is on the night shift who has become one of our better investigators and has expressed interest in the Collision Analysis Team. The fourth officer recently finished the full time Police Academy.

VI. Conclusion:

Recruiting in this part of the state has historically been challenging, and continues to be. Younger candidates are often pulled through social and family contacts to the more populated areas of the south central and eastern portion of the State. This, coupled with resource and budgetary constraints, makes non-standard recruiting practices difficult. Over the recent past we have used a variety of techniques, to include newspaper and radio ads, the mentioned Police Testing Alliances, college fairs, local job fairs, various web sites, and word of mouth. We have also committed to the recruitment of veterans.

What we have found is that the best outcomes is the continuation of our own hiring process and the established testing alliances to rely on a large number of candidates, as well as our web site, FaceBook page, public web sites such as PoliceOne.com, and college bulletin boards. These constant hiring processes gives us the best chance of drawing a variety of minority and females from a wide area of New England. We also continuously attempt to recruit certified officers from surrounding agencies and elsewhere.

