

Truro Police Department

Greetings Everyone – Over the last three months the members of the Department have been very busy. Traffic was extremely heavy, and the numbers of people here seemed to have been significantly more than in the recent past. Motor vehicle accidents over the summer increased alarmingly, including one involving a police car which was determined to be a total loss. On the roads we are experiencing a significant increase in inattention, aggressive driving, and texting while driving. This causes a danger not only to our residents and visitors who drive, but also our cyclists, walkers, runners.

Police Cruiser Program Information

The Truro Police Department has made changes in the way we use, manage, and replace our police cruisers. The vehicles are an important part of being able to deliver services and perform the functions associated with police and emergency service work on a day-to-day basis. We are all stewards of our taxpayers' dollars, and our programs are mindful of this as we operate.

Where we were three years ago:

- 13 police cruisers (3 unmarked, 1 four-wheel drive, 9 marked cruisers) and a motorcycle
- Most officers had take-home cruisers
- Cruisers were kept a long time
- Cruisers had minimal value when disposed of

What we have done in the last two years:

- Reduced the cruiser fleet by five (5) vehicles to eight (8) plus a leased motorcycle – (2 unmarked, 1 four-wheel drive, 5 marked cruisers, and the motorcycle)
- Only two officers have take-home cruisers (the Detective Sergeant and the Chief of Police)
- The Chief's cruiser is now a fully functioning patrol vehicle as opposed to a strictly administrative sedan in order to increase flexibility when an additional patrol cruiser is needed.
- Implemented a 5-year capital improvement plan that replaces cruisers in the worst condition first and puts the cruisers' performing administrative functions (Chief's Cruiser etc.) last. Every other year two vehicles are purchased, the interim year one vehicle is purchased
- Instituted a trade-in process for all cruisers to gain the most value and reduction of costs
- Established a program to sell any excess property (cruiser equipment and more) in order to return free cash to the general fund
- Successfully sought grant funding to equip cruisers with computers

Our current situation:

The Truro Police Department will come before the Townspeople on November 12 at a special Town Meeting with a request to replace three vehicles. In one case, the vehicle that was totaled in an accident, requires Town Meeting action to release the insurance funding. For that same vehicle, the difference between insurance proceeds and the vehicle cost would come from free cash/reserves. A short summary of the vehicles and needed repairs is as follows:

1. 2010 Ford Cruiser – destroyed in an accident. Insurance proceeds totaled \$32,137.85; All-wheel drive vehicle replacement cost \$36,500.00, requiring \$3,862.15 from free cash.
2. 2007 “unmarked” Ford Taurus (6 years old, over 120,000 miles) currently requiring two catalytic converters at a cost estimated to be up to \$3,000.00. Replacement vehicle identified as a Toyota Camry (High resale value, dependability, and good fuel economy) – Cost \$28,000.00, minus trade-in. This vehicle is used for court work and conducting investigations where a marked car is inappropriate.
3. 2006 Ford Expedition (4X4) (7 years old, 78,088 miles) currently requiring the following repairs; Radiator/AC Condenser cross-member support, which is completely rusted (parts held in only by the hoses.) Repairs require removal of front body and engine parts, both fenders, then cutting out and welding new parts in. The right side exhaust manifold and spark plugs are bad and need replacement, and the transmission is slipping. Outside vendor repairs are estimated between 5-6 thousand dollars *if nothing else is found*. This vehicle is used primarily in the fall, winter, and spring. I cannot use this vehicle for patrol and knowingly chance its breaking down on the way to a call for an emergency. It is used now only to transport personnel to training, court, or a meeting.

I am proposing replacing this vehicle with a (4X4) pick-up truck and sharing its use during the summer with the Beach Department. During the summer months we use this vehicle infrequently. Accordingly, why not have two Town Departments benefit from a single vehicle purchase? Our use of a pick-up truck would give us greater flexibility with supporting town events, training programs, and responding to storms. This vehicle cost is estimated to be at \$30,000.00, minus any trade-in.

These purchases are replacement vehicles only – NOT additions to our fleet. The use of the fleet can range from all (being used at any given time) to one. Cruisers are used by all our staff for patrol work, court, training (many times out of town for multiple days,) meetings, special assignments, and details. Please note the following examples:

(Random Friday afternoon):

Chief Takakjian – Marked Patrol Cruiser 721

Lt Danziger – Unmarked Cruiser 715

Detective / Sgt. Perry – Cruiser 717 (unmarked Taurus)

Sergeant – Marked Patrol Cruiser

Officer 1 – Marked Patrol Cruiser

Officer 2 – Marked Patrol Cruiser (4PM-2AM) shift Friday-Monday

Officer 3 – Marked Patrol Cruiser (Out of Town Training/Special Assignment)

During the week of 9/23/13 I was faced with the following situation:

Marked Cruiser 722 – Crashed and no longer available

Marked Cruiser 723 – At Pleasant View Auto Body for repairs

Marked Cruiser 726 – Towed on a flatbed trailer to Dodge (per town mechanic) for electrical trouble (non-starting)

Marked Cruiser 714 – The 4-wheel drive SUV unable to be used for patrol due to mechanical difficulties

This left four vehicles available for the better part of a week to accomplish all our obligations. During this time, I used my private vehicle and continue to do so as needed. (The cruiser I am assigned to was placed back on duty for the officers to use.) The LT used the motorcycle. Our usage ranges from the above to a quiet day on a weekend dayshift in the winter of a single cruiser being used (until something happens.)

As we look at the number of and uses of our cruisers, we have to remember that circumstances can remove cruisers from being available for use. Some examples are normal mechanical services, emergency repairs, and training (sometimes out of town for multiple days.) Further, the smaller the fleet, the higher the mileage in a shorter period of time. One of the vehicles purchased in June of 2012 already has 53,296 miles on it (16 months.) Our current number of vehicles supports our operations, including giving us a small but reasonable cushion for repairs and unforeseen contingencies.

Limitations: All our vehicles have limitations – some examples:

Our 4x4 doesn't transport prisoners and is not used to pursue vehicles

Our motorcycle doesn't transport prisoners and is not used in bad weather

Patrol cruisers can't go on the beach nor transport multiple people to shelters

If we don't keep up with our replacement schedule, we will continue to face our current situation where vehicle dependability and safety is questionable and very costly.

With the purchase of these vehicles at this time the Department, barring any further losses, would not request replacement vehicles during the 2014 Annual Town Meeting.

I ask, please, that you support the purchase of these vehicles. I'm happy to discuss this and to answer your questions.

Very Respectfully,

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