



# Town of Chester Vermont Police Department Assessment

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*Prepared by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, Municipal Assistance Center*

The assessment consists of a review of the Chester Police Department, its staffing and its operations as it relates to providing routine and emergency responses to the citizens of the Town of Chester. The review also examined the Department's interaction with various stakeholders in the criminal justice system.



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## **SCOPE OF WORK**

The VLCT Consultant completed the tasks outlined in the scope of work listed below to assist the Town of Chester assess the capacity of the police department to provide law enforcement services. The assessment project was originally intended to be started and completed in March 2013, but the Town Manager approved an extension to completing the draft report due to extenuating circumstances. Communication was maintained with the Town Manager while the assessment was conducted and summarized in this report.

1. Interview town officials as directed by the Town Manager including: Select board Members, other elected officials, the Chief of Police, department staff and others.
2. Review police department policies and procedures, rules and regulations.
3. Review department staffing, training, facilities and equipment.
4. Review recent (3 - 5 years) history of calls for service, crime reports, and activities and other relevant statistics and gain and understanding of what drives them.
5. Summarize findings and recommendations in a report. Present report to Town Manager and others if he so directs.
6. Travel to town office to conduct interviews, meet with town manager and staff, and make final presentation to the Select board.

## FOUNDATION

The initial phase of this assessment commenced with speaking with various stakeholders in the Town and Police Department to understand perspectives regarding the department.

If there was a reoccurring theme that came out of these discussions it was that there was support for the Police Department and a desire for it to succeed.

At the same time, there were concerns about trust, communication, and integrity. It should be noted that concerns of this nature commonly arise in reviews of law enforcement agencies, from either internal or external perspectives. A better understanding of issues will help the Town and agency discuss and address them. Some of the recommendations are designed to assist in this area.

Concerns raised are noted as information gathered and are not intended to focus on negative aspects but rather to help assess the functionality of the department and opportunities for improvement.

Data presented in this report helps review concerns raised regarding response times for calls for service; non-response to calls, follow up on cases and generation. A well maintained records management system also provides actual data helpful in responding to concerns. A random review by management is a tool to assess how well data is captured.

Lack of public information about activity within the police department was another topic that was mentioned quite frequently.

Other comments and frustrations revolved around perception about lack of direction, no goals, and objectives, absence of equity in extra assignments. While the Town's Personnel Policies had been modified to address this issue, it was an issue brought up again.

## THE COMMUNITY

Chester is a town within Windsor County. The county has a population of 56,670 people, a decrease of 1.3% from the 2000 census. Of that population, 97.5% white and 85.4% have at least a high school education. A total of 28.2% have a Bachelor's degree or higher. The median household income is \$52,762 (the Vermont median income is \$49,406). The population of the county that is listed at below poverty is 14.3% ( 12.7% for Vermont) and there are 56.7 people per square mile. (US Census Bureau, 2010)

The Town of Chester has a population of 3,152 people according to the US Census in 2010; within approximately 57 square miles. While Windsor County's population decreased, the Town of Chester grew at a modest .04%. The median age in the town is 47.3. There are 1,793 housing units in the Town with an average size of 2.75 persons. In housing, there is a 21 percent vacancy rate but that needs to be considered with 17% of the units being seasonal. (US Census Bureau, 2010)

Educationally the Town has an 89.7% of its population with at least a high school diploma and 25.5% of the population has a Bachelor's degree or higher. The median household income in the Town is \$45,750 with a per capita income of \$34,172. Of the Town's population, 14.3% are at or below the poverty level.

One the many factors that determine what level of services a community provides to its residents is found in the ability to manage resources and the ability to afford those services.

As will be presented later in this report there will be information on the demand for law enforcement services, services that are provided, and the ability of the designated agency to meet that demand.

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<b>2012 Taxes and Tax Rates</b>						
<b>Windsor</b>						
Town Name	Education Homestead Taxes	Education Non-Residential Taxes	Municipal Taxes	Education Homestead Tax Rate	Education Non-Residential Tax Rate	Municipal Local Agr Tax Rate
Andover	758,915	1,401,668	504,377	1.2613	1.3665	0.3100
Baltimore	204,402	41,343	84,814	1.2836	1.1908	0.4400
Barnard	1,823,362	2,567,151	747,679	1.3786	1.3314	0.2300
Bethel	1,717,570	1,083,611	1,404,788	1.4967	1.3418	0.7200
Bridgewater	1,116,591	1,715,853	700,001	1.5091	1.4673	0.3627
Cavendish	1,181,959	2,411,588	938,108	1.3951	1.3755	0.3670
<i>Cavendish FD #1</i>	0	0	94,723	0	0	0.0665
<i>Cavendish FD #2</i>	0	0	52,159	0	0	0.0442
Chester	2,614,465	2,614,147	2,403,924	1.2001	1.3078	0.5828
Hartford	8,147,466	10,799,998	10,190,073	1.3158	1.4320	0.7448
Hartland	4,362,969	1,890,869	1,574,154	1.5068	1.3990	0.3750
Ludlow	2,413,403	17,456,411	3,247,841	1.6303	1.4880	0.2496
<i>Ludlow Vii/age</i>	0	0	295,676	0	0	0.2100
Norwich	8,792,385	3,134,816	3,290,445	1.7529	1.4791	0.4689
<i>Norwich Fire Dist</i>	0	0	95,071	0	0	0.0571
Plymouth	607,994	2,787,722	1,099,554	1.0608	1.2421	0.3900

<b>2012 Taxes and Tax Rates</b>						
<b>Windsor</b>						
Town Name	Education Homestead Taxes	Education Non-Residential Taxes	Municipal Taxes	Education Homestead Tax Rate	Education Non-Residential Tax Rate	Municipal Local Agr Tax Rate
Pomfret	1,815,925	1,802,148	886,622	1.5789	1.4249	0.3672
Reading	1,114,688	947,257	533,383	1.5622	1.2084	0.3543
Rochester	873,141	1,178,911	761,462	1.1919	1.3484	0.4774
Royalton	1,828,854	1,665,186	1,531,806	1.3836	1.3768	0.6083
Sharon	1,410,349	781,081	924,829	1.4462	1.4070	0.6060
Springfield	6,252,830	2,989,733	8,310,903	1.5003	1.3089	1.2647
Stockbridge	716,220	800,218	645,997	1.4864	1.3563	0.6043
Weathersfield	2,996,109	1,365,479	1,605,931	1.6722	1.5188	0.6045
<i>Perkinsville Village</i>	0	0	3,500	0	0	0.0381
<i>Ascutney Fire Dist 2</i>	0	0	6,045	0	0	0.0181

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West Windsor	1,643,930	1,869,788	896,351	1.1603	1.2047	0.3000
Weston	1,039,837	1,827,701	977,602	1.4217	1.4826	0.4999
Windsor	1,988,023	1,295,953	2,797,810	1.3255	1.3699	1.1539
Woodstock	5,411,823	7,239,903	2,789,381	1.5365	1.4295	0.3389
<i>Woodstock Village</i>	0	0	561,908	0	0	0.2050
<i>Woodstock Police Dis</i>	0	0	258,027	0	0	0.0447
<b>County Totals</b>	<b>60,833,211</b>	<b>71,668,535</b>	<b>50,214,945</b>			

A review of “***Crime in the United States – 2011***” reveals that there are 2.2 officers per 1000 in population at the national level. In 2010, the number was 2.4. A more in depth look reveals that for jurisdictions of less than 10,000 there are 3.5 officers per 1,000, which is unchanged from the previous year. However, in New England the number is 3.0 officers per thousand for cities under 10,000, which is up from 2.9 in 2010. In other regions of the United States, the average number is much higher, approximately four and five officers per 1,000 persons in jurisdictions of 10,000 or less. (DOJ, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2011)

Looking at the data in Table 78 below one would conclude that the number of officers per 1,000 in population for the Town of Chester is below average compared to the State of Vermont.

There are a couple of caveats in looking at this data. The reporting of this data is strictly voluntary and is subject to swings in hiring phases. The general criteria in any event is that the survey collects data on the number of employees actually working on a specific date, which can be up to a year prior to publication.

During the period that the material for this review was conducted, the number of officers actually working full time for the Chester Police Department was four (4) officers. This results in an actual rate of 1.2 officers per 1,000 in population.

If there were six officers, as an example, that would result in 1.89 officers per thousand. This would be on par with a large number of departments, large and small in Vermont. This can be seen in the chart below in that there is some variation in the number of officers. However, there appears to be a general

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comfort level of 1.7 to 1.9 officers per thousand in Vermont communities as a group. It is important to bear in mind that there are many factors that impact activity level and thus staffing, and the unique aspects of each community.

The Department has used a varying group of part time officers to fill in and bolster shifts in an attempt to provide coverage seven days a week, but not for twenty-four hours per day.

**Table 78**

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**VERMONT**

Full-time Law Enforcement Employees

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by City, 2011

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City	Population	Total law enforcement employees	Total officers	Total civilians
Barre	9,062	24	18	6
Barre Town	7,933	7	6	1
Bellows Falls	3,151	12	8	4
Bennington	15,781	32	25	7
Berlin	2,890	7	6	1
Brandon	3,970	7	7	0
Brattleboro	12,059	38	24	14
Bristol	3,898	3	3	0
Burlington	42,464	128	94	34
Castleton	4,722	4	4	0
<b>Chester</b>	<b>3,157</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>
Colchester	17,086	36	28	8
Dover	1,125	6	5	1
Essex	19,609	33	27	6
Fair Haven	2,737	4	4	0
Hardwick	3,013	5	4	1
Hartford	9,963	33	24	9
Hinesburg	4,401	5	5	0
Ludlow	1,965	9	5	4
Lyndonville	1,208	3	3	0



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Manchester	4,396	13	9	4
Middlebury	8,505	16	14	2
Milton	10,363	16	15	1
Montpelier	7,864	24	16	8
Morristown	5,233	10	10	0
Newport	4,594	12	10	2
Northfield	6,214	6	5	1
Norwich	3,418	5	4	1
Randolph	4,783	6	6	0
Richmond	4,086	4	4	0
Rutland	16,513	45	37	8
Shelburne	7,152	19	11	8
South Burlington	17,924	41	34	7
Springfield	9,383	15	15	0
St. Albans	6,926	33	23	10
St. Johnsbury	7,611	15	9	6
Stowe	4,319	11	11	0
Swanton	6,434	4	4	0
Thetford	2,591	3	3	0
Vergennes	2,591	6	6	0
Vernon	2,208	5	4	1
Waterbury	5,070	2	2	0
Weathersfield	2,828	1	1	0
Williston	8,708	15	12	3
Wilmington	1,878	7	6	1
Windsor	3,557	8	7	1
Winhall	770	6	5	1
Winooski	7,275	23	16	7
Woodstock	3,051	3	3	0

(DOJ, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2011)

The Chester Police Department is organized with one Chief of Police, and three full time officers, one of which is assigned as a detective and another who holds the rank of Sergeant. The department has one full time employee who manages support functions for the agency. There are a varying number of part time officers, which are affected by many factors, often beyond the control of the agency.

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At the time of this assessment a new schedule was implemented that effectively had the majority of the full time officers assigned Monday to Friday with the exception of one officer working a Saturday and another working a Sunday. The rest of the time is occupied by part time officers or overtime.

Scheduling is perhaps one of the more difficult tasks in an agency. There are many scenarios that can be developed to fit various situations. However, there are always a few constants that can either help or hinder a schedule.

The Chester PD staffs two shifts per day and utilizes off duty but on call for the remainder of the day.

In any event – consider the following:

The Chester PD schedule has 14 shifts per week (two shifts per day times seven days per week) which would equal 112 hours to staff those shifts. Each officer would presumably work 40 hours per week. In order to staff for just one officer on duty it requires that there would be three officers working with 8 hours remaining that could be used to increase the size of one shift or use that time to fill vacancies. Two have two officers on duty it would require the addition of at least 112 hours or three officers. That number of hours cannot reasonably be made up with overtime or part time.

The problem with looking at this staffing is that it assumes that each officer works every day they are supposed to, never take any vacation, never become ill, does not attend training, and never go to court. This is of course not true.

While an in depth study of authorized off duty time could be done there are some general guidelines that could be used. It can be presumed that each officer is on authorized leave for a period of 350 hours per year. It is generally accepted that an officer will be on sick leave for a least six days per year, vacation leave for 14 days per year, training days, 10 days per year, compensatory time of 8 days per year, personal time of 3 days per year, which accounts for approximately 328 hours per year. This essentially means that each officer is available for a total of

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1,730 hours of on duty time per year. Depending on other variables, this number can be less.

If one recalls that in the example above, there were three officers. Their combined available hours would be 5,190 annually. In order to have two officers on duty 24 hours a day it will take a total of 6,240 hours. Should a long-term disability occur there could be as many as 1,700 hours to make up in course of the year. While disability insurance may provide for the officer, assuming the officer goes off payroll, making up that time with available staff is extremely difficult to do.

The difference in hours is often made up in overtime and part time officers. It is apparent that the number of hours not covered effectively equals the time of at least one full time officer. Consider that one officer is assigned as a detective yet also is assigned as a patrol officer one day per week. Sometimes a split like this can lead to both functions not being able to fulfill their intended goals.

While part time officers often provide an important role in Vermont law enforcement, when organizations attempt to fill voids with individuals who often have full time jobs, there will be holes in coverage from time to time. All things being equal, a part time officer with a full time certification is probably the best situation with part time officers. However, a part time officer working a shift alone increases the risk level not only for the officer but also for the agency and Town.

An important safety consideration is that no officer should be on duty without a suitable backup.

While a person could ask most any police officer what they thought of their work schedule, there would be a great number indicating they did not like it. That is often the burden of police officers and shift work. There was similar sentiment in the Chester Police Department.

# CRIME

In looking at the activity reports from the Department, VIBRS (Vermont Incident Based Reporting System), VCIC (Vermont Crime Information Center), and VCON (Vermont Crime On-Line), one can see the activity that drives the Department.

It is important to bear in mind that there are two aspects of crime reporting that are almost impossible to document. A community will report criminal activity and other calls for service if it believes that police intervention is needed. A part of that process is if the witness or victim believes that there will be a timely response from the agency. At the same time, an agency that documents all of its activity is able to schedule officers to meet peak demand times and also demonstrate to the community what its needs are.

The table below represents the total activity of the Department as represented by incidents that are reported into the Spillman system. This system is a state wide Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and Records Management System (RMS) that is managed and maintained by the Vermont Department of Public Safety. Participation in the system is voluntary and the majority of Vermont law enforcement agencies participate. Many agencies in the northern part of the state have migrated from Spillman and other systems such as New World to an open source system called Valcor.

All of these systems can be a valuable management tool as well as a means for the jurisdiction's policy makers to have information upon which to plan for budgeting, staffing, and operations.

## Reported Offenses - Chester PD

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Robbery					
Assault	11	11	19	10	12

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Burglary	8	38	30	33	30
Larceny	3	0	1	1	2
Drug					
Dis Con	1	1	6	6	4
Family Probl	33	18	26	19	23
Vandalism	17	38	28	20	18
DUI	3	2	1	5	1
Fraud	13	17	16	18	16
Intox	2	1	6	3	1
Crash	110	93	87	67	82
Juv Problem	30	147	25	11	18
Animal Prob	117	89	83	76	182
Agency Assist	479	391	275	225	211
Suspicious Person	167	92	116	141	103
Citizen Assist	123	84	101	71	69
Total Incident	<b>1782</b>	<b>1566</b>	<b>1341</b>	<b>1429</b>	<b>1273</b>

Total reflects all activity in the law incident reports

From one perspective, one of the weaknesses of this system is that it has not historically collected motor vehicle stops. One can deduce from another part of the system the number of warnings and citations issued and conclude a minimal number of traffic stops. For Chester, this amounts to at least 1,000 motor vehicle stops. (This would mean that there are at least 2,300 incidents in 2012 for example) Experienced law enforcement managers know that a great deal of time is spent on this activity. A robust and fair traffic enforcement activity can promote traffic safety and discover criminal conduct. With the advent of bias free policing the documentation of motor vehicle stops should be a routine activity for the department. Specific information on motor vehicle activity is included later in the report.

The above chart is not intended to be all-comprehensive. The complete printout of the reported activity is included with this report.

Another measure of activity is the NIBRS (National Incident Based Reporting System) reports that all agencies are required to submit. In Vermont, this is usually done on a monthly basis. Conversations with Vermont Department of Public Safety, Criminal Justice Services staff indicated that there could be some

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issues that they would review. Also checking with the staff of the Department, they indicated that they were up to date.

The Law Incident Total Report by Reported Offenses from the Spillman Records Management System for the year 2010 does not show incidents reported for drug activity or larceny. This would be highly unusual and should require further review. It is common knowledge that the Department has been involved in various forms of drug enforcement and that is as it should be. The issue is that the activity is not in the Records Management System.

Below are charts that represent the reported NIBRS (National Incident Based Reporting System) crimes. This data comes from the Vermont Criminal Justice Services division of the Department of Public Safety. The year 2010 is the last year that is available for public view. It is suspected that the numbers for the year 2011 will reflect the same trend as previous years but will be lower in actual numbers.

A little background information on NIBRS may be helpful. There are several parts to NIBRS. Part A and Part B crimes are the ones discussed most often. The concept of seriousness and effect on the community is what will determine a certain crime in a specific location. For example, vandalism is often viewed as a minor crime, yet it is placed in Part A due in fact to its volume on a national basis and the extremely high dollar damages and impact on society. Part B crimes are noted only when an arrest is made for a certain offense. There is a lot of information that can be gleaned from NIBRS reports as it relates to race, age, gender, and other societal impacts on a jurisdiction.

The data tables for the years 2007 and 2008 are located at the end of the report.

As noted earlier concerning the calls for service there was a lack of calls for service for larceny as well as drug offenses. It should be pointed out that there are larcenies and drug offenses reported in this measure as well as other activity such as robbery. Those offenses did not show up on the corresponding law incident tables from the Record Management Section.

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Comparatively speaking these crime reports should demonstrate that the Town of Chester has approximately the same amount of crime as other communities of a similar size within Windsor County.

The information in these reports is derived by data entered by the agency and reflects the activity of any agency that reports a crime in that jurisdiction. The local law enforcement agency filter was applied to produce the following charts.

During the collection of this data, it became apparent that there were some inconsistencies in the data as it related to that collected in the Law Incident Reports and that which is presented in VCON. VCON is driven by NIBRS reporting which is based on the initial incident report. In discussing this with DPS, there was no apparent reason for this difference. For example, in 2010, there were no Larcenies in the Incident table yet there were in the VCON data.

It also appeared although not confirmed, that there are multiple examples of incorrect coding of incidents. The question was also raised concerning access to NIBRS reporting by properly authorized persons. This could also be a security issue.

This information warrants a highly critical area in the Recommendation Section.

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## All Crimes By Town: 2010

### Measures: Number of Offenses

Jurisdiction(01)	Bethel	Chester	Ludlow	Norwich	Windsor
Incident Date(02)	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010
Offense Type					
Murder/NNMS(38)					
Negligent Manslaughter					
Kidnapping		1			
Robbery		1			
Forcible Rape	1				
Forcible Sodomy					
Sex Assault with an Object					
Forcible Fondling					3
Incest					1
Statutory Rape	1				1
Aggravated Assault	4	1			2
Simple Assault	5	6			16
Intimidation		3		2	2
Arson					
Bribery					
Burglary/B&E	6	16	7	2	8
Counterfeiting/Forgery		1			1
Destruction of Property/Vandalism	12	24	8	12	55
Embezzlement					
Extortion/Blackmail					
False Pretense			1	15	1
Credit Card/ATM Fraud		1		1	2
Impersonation		1			
Welfare Fraud					
Wire Fraud					2
Pickpocket					
Purse Snatching					
Shoplifting	1	1			4
Theft from Building	3	7	1	3	5
Theft from Coin-Operated Machine					
Theft from Motor Vehicle	4	4	1	2	7



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## All Crimes By Town: 2010

### Measures: Number of Offenses

Jurisdiction(01)	Bethel	Chester	Ludlow	Norwich	Windsor
Theft of Motor Vehicle Parts	4	2			
Larceny-other	8	11	27	3	20
Motor Vehicle Theft	1				1
Stolen Property		1			
Drug/Narcotic Violations	6	4	1	6	6
Drug Equipment Violations		3	1	3	5
Betting					
Operating Gambling					
Gambling Equipment Violations					
Sports Tampering					
Pornography					
Prostitution					
Promoting Prostitution					
Weapon violation		2			
Missing(22)					
<b>TOTAL</b>	56	90	47	49	142

VCON

## All Crimes By Town: 2009

### Measures: Number of Offenses

Jurisdiction(01)	Bethel	Chester	Ludlow	Norwich	Windsor
Incident Date(02)	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009
Offense Type					
Murder/NNMS(38)					
Negligent Manslaughter					
Kidnapping					
Robbery			1		
Forcible Rape					
Forcible Sodomy					
Sex Assault with an Object					
Forcible Fondling					1
Incest					
Statutory Rape		1			
Aggravated Assault		1		1	6
Simple Assault	5	8	1	3	18

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## All Crimes By Town: 2009

### Measures: Number of Offenses

Jurisdiction(01)	Bethel	Chester	Ludlow	Norwich	Windsor
Intimidation	1	6	1	1	5
Arson			1		1
Bribery					
Burglary/B&E	10	20	17	8	17
Counterfeiting/Forgery		1			
Destruction of Property/Vandalism	10	23	13	7	60
Embezzlement		1			
Extortion/Blackmail					
False Pretense	4	5		6	3
Credit Card/ATM Fraud		1	1		1
Impersonation			1		
Welfare Fraud					
Wire Fraud					
Pickpocket					
Purse Snatching					
Shoplifting	1				4
Theft from Building	3	11	1	1	13
Theft from Coin-Operated Machine					
Theft from Motor Vehicle	3	2		1	4
Theft of Motor Vehicle Parts	1	3	5	1	
Larceny-other	7	23	53	9	17
Motor Vehicle Theft		1	1		2
Stolen Property					2
Drug/Narcotic Violations	6	13		2	25
Drug Equipment Violations		9			16
Betting					
Operating Gambling					
Gambling Equipment Violations					
Sports Tampering				51	
Pornography					
Prostitution					
Promoting Prostitution					
Weapon violation		1			
Missing(22)					
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>195</b>

VCON

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The NIBRS Part B arrest information is placed at the end of the report due to its size. This information should be viewed in conjunction with the arrest data located in the Activity Measures Chapter.

From the Spillman RMS, a review of the day/time analysis for the year 2012 was conducted. A quick review of several years before did not reveal any significant variation.

The chart below is broken into eight-hour blocks of a 24-hour day for a seven-day week. The chart represents the entire year of 2012 so all of the numbers are cumulative for that year. These fluctuations are not very different from any other law enforcement agency within Vermont. The differences are dependent on the size of the jurisdiction and to a certain extent if an agency is staffed for that entire period. Many agencies approach this issue utilizing differing strategies. One of the strategies in Chester is that there are no scheduled officers in the early morning hours.

The green area represents the first eight hours of the day. On average, there is one call every 26 hours of the year for that time block. To emphasize that would be one call every 3.2 days. In the blue section, there is an average of a call every four hours and in the orange section one call every five hours.

It needs to be emphasized that this is an average. There could be days in which there are no calls in a given hour and some days there could be five calls within those same hours. The day of week information is relatively stable through the week and Friday and Saturday being the more busy days is not very unusual. While smaller agencies can often arrive at these decision points based on intuitive knowledge, the decision matrix can be enhanced by further reviewing those calls for service. A more in depth review of time and day analysis for motor vehicle activity could be undertaken. As noted elsewhere in the report, motor vehicle citations and warnings can account for as much as an additional 1,000 or more separate incidents by the officers of the Department. Based on that information alone, a staffing position could be considered.

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A more in depth analysis of this information could assist the agency and community in developing alternate staffing strategies.

### DAY/TIME ANALYSIS      2012

HOUR	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	TOT
00:00-00:59	3	4	3	3	3	4	7	27
01:00-01:59		1	1	1	3	4	1	11
02:00-02:59	2	1				2	3	8
03:00-03:59	2	1	1	1		2	3	10
04:00-04:59	0	1	1	2	3	1	1	9
05:00-05:59	1	1	1	3	1	1	0	7
06:00-06:59	2	2	1	1	2	1	0	9
07:00-07:59	1	4	3	6	8	6	2	30
08:00-08:59	9	9	13	8	7	12	8	66
09:00-09:59	13	9	14	11	11	12	9	79
10:00-10:59	15	11	15	14	18	9	11	93
11:00-11:59	18	11	10	7	17	10	10	83
12:00-12:59	11	16	7	10	11	18	9	82
13:00-13:59	13	11	15	10	9	9	7	74
14:00-14:59	7	9	6	12	12	18	10	74
15:00-15:59	7	8	17	10	16	14	11	83
16:00-16:59	11	12	16	10	17	8	18	92
17:00-17:59	9	14	10	19	17	7	15	91
18:00-18:59	9	10	16	15	13	19	5	87
19:00-19:59	8	7	9	12	9	7	11	63
20:00-20:59	7	9	11	6	12	13	10	68
21:00-21:59	12	5	10	4	6	11	10	58
22:00-22:59	6	3	0	5	12	10	5	41
23:00-23:59	3	4	5	3	3	7	3	28
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>1273</b>

Department Records

Crime rates are another means of assessing activity. It is critical to bear in mind that comparisons to other jurisdiction cannot always be a true comparison as there are many factors that have an effect on crime. The numbers of restaurants, bars, employers, dedicated shopping areas, schools, special needs populations,

## Town of Chester Vermont Police Department Assessment

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major highways, are just some examples that have an impact and the list of factors can be lengthy.

<b>Crime RATE By Town: 2010</b>	
Crime per 1,000 population	
Vermont	46.25
Windsor County	30.82
Andover	25.55
Baltimore	19.23
Barnard	16.65
Bethel	28.87
Bridgewater	18.36
Cavendish	30.19
<b>Chester</b>	<b>29.69</b>
Hartford	39.16
Hartland	14.71
Ludlow	17.71
Norwich	13.97
Plymouth	22.73
Pomfret	8.29
Reading	28.09
Rochester	37
Royalton(40)	19.07
Sharon	29.72
Springfield	55.27
Stockbridge	27.74
Weathersfield	25.69
Weston	9.1
West Windsor	6.31
Windsor	39.09
Woodstock	17.82

### Vermont Crime Report

The chart above is from Vermont Crime On-Line and is for the latest year, 2010, that is available publically.

## ACTIVITY MEASURES

Additional reviews from the record management systems indicate that the Department had the following number of traffic citations issued.

### Citations Issued

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
881	906	905	877	708

### Warnings Issued

673	633	583	360	287
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

One the issues or a concern that was mentioned at the beginning of the assessment was the division of work activity. Looking at the citations issued it was noted that approximately 80% of the citations were issued by two officers. There should be an expectation that the division would be more along the lines of 60% for two officers given the composition of the department. Please bear in mind that a part time officer may be a little shy about citations because there is often traffic court and they may have a full time job that could preclude attendance. There are many other operational factors that go into this but the number was remarkably high.

Examining arrest data the chart below indicates those levels of activity. It is important to keep in mind that an arrest recorded in the month of June 2011 may in fact be for a crime that was reported in November of 2010. In any event, the number should ebb and flow from year to year and have a delayed reaction to the date of the offense. It is also important for the reader to understand that all arrests are not custodial arrests. Some of the arrests are technically an arrest but the immediate outcome is a citation to appear in court approximately six weeks after the contact with the officer.

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Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Persons arrested	48	39	34	50	32
Number of Offenses	48	41	36	50	32

From Department Records

The NIBRS Part B arrest information is placed at the end of the report due to its size.

It is not unusual for a person to be charged with multiple offenses based upon the criminal conduct. This accounts for the higher number in the above chart.

One of the more interesting pieces of information from the arrest data is that in the year 2012 two officers accounted for 20 of the 32 arrests. One of those two officers accounted for 45% of the traffic citations issued that year. Even more telling is that one of the officers is part time. Looking at 2011 there were three officers who accounted for 30 of the 50 arrests. One of those three officers accounted for nine of the 50 arrests. The other years demonstrate similar patterns with the exception of 2008 in which two officers accounted for 58% of the arrests.

## INFASTRUCTURE

During the review of the Department, it was observed that the critical aspects of the organization are in good shape.

The Department is relatively secure; the interior is clean, bright, and generally, a welcoming place for the officers to work and the public to visit. Due to its size, there are some difficulties in conducting interviews as the same general area is used for processing persons who may be in custody.

## Town of Chester Vermont Police Department Assessment

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Most of the data processing is near current for present applications. The radio system appears fully operational and up to date.

The patrol vehicles have Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) and in car cameras are utilized. MDT's utilize wireless communication to function and there reported issues from time to time with the selected wireless carrier.

The station does not have an AFIS machine for fingerprinting nor does it have a Data Master for DUI processing. Both activities require the officers to travel to a neighboring jurisdiction to accomplish these critical and important tasks. Given the staffing of the agency these processings may prove to be difficult if there is only one officer on duty. A trip to an agency for the processing may take the only officer on duty away for several hours. The issue of danger to the officer if done in the office is simply addressed by requesting the State's Attorney and District Judge to order the defendant to appear for fingerprinting. There is no need to get into an altercation for a fingerprint or a breath test

## **BUDGET**

The Chester Police Department uses a ledger form of financial management and the budget for the Department includes line items for various activities and expenses. The chief submits vouchers to be drawn on the approved budget, which is typical in Vermont agencies.

It may assist the agency and the Town if there was a working document that supports the budgetary request. For example, there may be a need for several thousands of gallons of gasoline to provide for the patrol vehicles use. What is the history of the gallons used? What is the predicted usage and what is the estimated cost per gallon? A similar example can be made for tires. Instead, there is a single line item for an aggregate of expenses. A more detailed budget outline is more work, however, the efforts assist the agency to demonstrate what its needs are and for the community to understand those needs.



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There were varying degrees of questions and or concerns voiced during the information gathering stage about the financial health of the organization.

In any department in the State of Vermont, the two overriding budget demands are salaries and benefits. In the case of Chester PD, the salaries account for approximately 79% of the annual budget thus leaving 21% for the operational side of the organization.

It would appear that the Town's budgeting style is that benefits are budgeted for in a separate portion of the Town budget.

The Town of Chester has implemented a compatible salary level for Vermont law enforcement agencies.

This review did not involve a review of fringe benefits. Experience indicates that most agencies offer competitive benefits, as it is critical for the attraction of potential officers as well as retention.

A fair number of smaller Vermont police agencies, and even some larger agencies, do not have a full time dispatching component. These agencies, like Chester, utilize the Vermont State Police or have some form of shared dispatching. Dispatching for the Department is currently at no cost.

There very well could come a day when DPS may no longer be able to provide this service free. It has been suggested in the past and has always failed due to legislative intervention. It would be prudent to be aware of this possibility and develop a fallback position.

## **MANAGEMENT**

Managers of law enforcement organization have many different management styles. Regardless of which style is subscribed to most of the styles, have some common aspects.

One common practice is to have regular department meetings, but these are not currently occurring in the Chester Police Department. Many sources in the agency indicated that they have never had one in their memory.

One of the most glaring areas of need in this section is the Rules and Regulations as well as the concept of Policies and Procedures. Large portions of these records are at least 17 years old and it is suspected that some may be older than that. This is not unusual for any law enforcement agency, especially a smaller agency, yet it remains an area that needs attention

These observations are not intended to point fingers at the current administration but these aspects of management need to be brought up to date if not for the vicarious liability that they represent, but for the good order and operation of the Department. Officers will function better when there is a clear understanding of conduct expected.

This is further discussed in the recommendation section.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

These recommendations are not prioritized; however, they should all receive critical review and action with a view to correcting issues, and strengthening the ability of the Department to fully serve the community. As noted in the introduction, it was observed on multiple occasions that community members

## Town of Chester Vermont Police Department Assessment

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react in a positive manner with the Department. This is an opportunity to work together to enhance that process.

- A. Thoroughly examine schedules versus available staffing to provide safe policing services in the community. Recognize that there are down times and develop a more equitable on call system.
- B. Meet with staff to develop organizational goals and objectives and promote them within the Department.
- C. Continue conducting quarterly Department meetings as necessary. Opportunities for quasi-social time can help solicit ideas and observations.
- D. Request a review of FTO system by the Criminal Justice Training Council as used by the police department. Report to Town Manager the results of that review and steps to be taken to address issues.
- E. The Chief should become a more active member of the Vermont Association of Chiefs of Police and take the time to attend meetings. Other chiefs have dealt with the same issues and are willing to assist.
- F. The Town should encourage the Chief to continue membership in the International Association of Chiefs of Police and continue taking the courses designed for management of small police agencies. The Chief and the Manager should be lauded for the Chief taking Management courses and we would only recommend more.
- G. Make a concerted effort to reach out to surrounding communities to explore additional cooperation in activities such as dispatching or investigations. Continue ongoing relationships with Bellows Falls, Springfield and the State Police.
- H. Conduct a thorough review of the Department's utilization of the Spillman system and utilization and adherence to NIBRS reporting standards. This can be accomplished by working closely with the Criminal Justice Services of the Department of Public Safety. The absence of reported crime not being documented in the system does not allow for follow up. Reports that are completed by another person

## Town of Chester Vermont Police Department Assessment

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- other than the responsible officer is concerning and raises security concerns.
- I. While perhaps never done in Vermont before this might be a good time to explore the concept of a “mentor” for the chief and management staff. There are a number of extremely qualified command officers who have left law enforcement who could assist a new chief or sergeant in how to navigate in these difficult times.
  - J. Request Drug Task Force and or DEA to assist in reviewing drug enforcement activities in the Town with an eye towards need and adherence to accepted investigative practices. There is no doubt there is drug activity in Windsor County. Managing the law enforcement response is critical.
  - K. Develop sound policy that requires officers to complete assigned casework.
  - L. Investigate and consider implementation of internet delivered information via Nixle. This is excellent means to notify the community and the media about events in the Town and especially the Police Department. Also, consider online options to present ongoing activity such as the Town website or Facebook page.
  - M. Develop in conjunction with the Finance staff a sound time card system.
  - N. Develop an equitable means of distributing “outside” work assignments.
  - O. The rules and regulations need to be updated and brought in line with current policing practices. Large portions of these documents are 17 years old. Chester Police Department is not alone in this activity as this is one of the most difficult tasks for any agency yet it is vital for the safety of the officers and protection of the community. One source for direct help is PACIF of the VLCT. Each officer and employee needs to have an updated copy and acknowledge that they have been given a copy. While some of the concepts remain from years past, the practices associated with them have changed. Deadly Force, Use of Force, Pursuits are some of the larger ones but they all need some review and demonstration of updating. One of the first questions that comes out in

## Town of Chester Vermont Police Department Assessment

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- a trial or deposition is “when was the policy last updated?” A response of 1980 is not going to be helpful.
- P. Some of the rules and regulations are actually a policy and/or procedure. Most agencies have both rules and regulations and policies and procedures. It is important that the Chester Police Department invest the time and energy to create both.
  - Q. Reach out to DPS, Criminal Justice Services, to explore solutions to AFIS and Data Master needs. There may be some operational impediments to this but the benefit of keeping an officer within the jurisdiction should be valuable.
  - R. The Chief and the Town Manager should work together to develop a concise and documented process for receiving citizen complaints that include proper reviews and notification to all persons.
  - S. Assess staffing needs in light of discussions on pages 6 and 18 and elsewhere in the report.

## CONCLUSION

It has been a pleasure to work with the Town Manager and the staff of the Chester Police Department. The staff was always helpful in providing information. There were times when it was difficult for the staff to talk about issues, but they did so with the hope that it would make the department better. That is a welcome finding. There is a great deal of appreciation for having the opportunity to make this review.

Municipalities are the purest form of government, its employees genuinely want to provide outstanding services for their community and do so with pride, and this was the case during this review.

# Town of Chester Vermont Police Department Assessment

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## All Crimes By Town: 2008

### Measures: Number of Offenses

Jurisdiction(01)	Bethel	Chester	Ludlow(33)	Norwich	Windsor
Incident Date(02)	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008
Offense Type					
Murder/NNMS(38)		1			
Negligent Manslaughter					
Kidnapping					
Robbery					2
Forcible Rape		1			
Forcible Sodomy					
Sex Assault with an Object					
Forcible Fondling					1
Incest					
Statutory Rape		1			
Aggravated Assault	2	1		1	3
Simple Assault	5	11	2	2	14
Intimidation	1	4	2		5
Arson		1			
Bribery					
Burglary/B&E	19	10	14	4	14
Counterfeiting/Forgery	1			1	2
Destruction of Property/Vandalism	24	21	36	7	32
Embezzlement					
Extortion/Blackmail					
False Pretense	3	6	1	4	2
Credit Card/ATM Fraud	1				
Impersonation		1		3	
Welfare Fraud					
Wire Fraud					
Pickpocket					1
Purse Snatching			1		
Shoplifting	1	1			1
Theft from Building		9	4	2	13
Theft from Coin-Operated Machine					
Theft from Motor Vehicle	1	1	6	2	9
Theft of Motor Vehicle Parts	2	5	4		2
Larceny-other	11	16	36	4	10
Motor Vehicle Theft	3	3	1		

# Town of Chester Vermont Police Department Assessment

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## All Crimes By Town: 2008

### Measures: Number of Offenses

Jurisdiction(01)	Bethel	Chester	Ludlow(33)	Norwich	Windsor
Stolen Property	1				1
Drug/Narcotic Violations	1	14	3	1	24
Drug Equipment Violations		4	2		5
Betting					
Operating Gambling					
Gambling Equipment Violations					
Sports Tampering					
Pornography					
Prostitution					
Promoting Prostitution		1			
Weapon violation		1			
Missing(22)					
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>141</b>

## All Crimes By Town: 2007

### Measures: Number of Offenses

Jurisdiction(01)	Bethel	Chester	Ludlow(33)	Norwich	Windsor
Incident Date(02)	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007
Offense Type					
Murder/NNMS(38)					
Negligent Manslaughter					
Kidnapping		1			
Robbery			1		
Forcible Rape	1	1		1	
Forcible Sodomy					
Sex Assault with an Object					
Forcible Fondling	1				
Incest					
Statutory Rape					
Aggravated Assault	1	2			2
Simple Assault	6	12	8	3	12
Intimidation	1	4	2	1	3
Arson	1				
Bribery					

# Town of Chester Vermont Police Department Assessment

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## All Crimes By Town: 2007

### Measures: Number of Offenses

Jurisdiction(01)	Bethel	Chester	Ludlow(33)	Norwich	Windsor
Burglary/B&E	10	25	12	12	9
Counterfeiting/Forgery				1	
Destruction of Property/Vandalism	14	34	28	13	12
Embezzlement					
Extortion/Blackmail					
False Pretense	1	7		4	1
Credit Card/ATM Fraud		1		1	
Impersonation	1			1	
Welfare Fraud					
Wire Fraud				1	
Pickpocket					
Purse Snatching			1		
Shoplifting		1			
Theft from Building	6	7	8	5	9
Theft from Coin-Operated Machine	1				
Theft from Motor Vehicle	4	3	7	2	6
Theft of Motor Vehicle Parts	3		1	4	
Larceny-other	4	16	35	11	3
Motor Vehicle Theft	7				1
Stolen Property	1				
Drug/Narcotic Violations	6	17	6	5	48
Drug Equipment Violations	1	9			3
Betting					
Operating Gambling					
Gambling Equipment Violations					
Sports Tampering					
Pornography					
Prostitution					
Promoting Prostitution					
Weapon violation		3			
Missing(22)					
Total	70	143	109	65	109



# Town of Chester Vermont Police Department Assessment

## Group B Arrests: 2010

Jurisdiction(01) Measures Law Enforcement Agency	Windsor County Number of Arrestees				Arrestee Rate (per 1,000)					
	Chester	Ludlow	Norwich	Springfield Windsor	Woodstock PD	Chester PD	Ludlow PD	Norwich PT	Springfield Windsor PT	Woodstock PD
<b>Arrest Offense</b>										
Total	16	24	12	211	48	0.28	0.42	0.21	3.71	0.84
Bad Checks				6					0.11	
Curfew/Loitering etc										
Disorderly Conduct	2	1		16	8	0.04	0.02		0.28	0.14
Driving Under the Influence	4	22	8	53	17	0.07	0.39	0.14	0.93	0.3
Drunkenness										
Family Offenses, Nonviolent		1		17	2		0.02		0.3	0.02
Liquor Law Violations				13	4				0.23	0.02
Peeping Tom										
Runaway										
Trespass of Real Property			2	8	7			0.04	0.14	0.02
All Other Offenses			2	98	10			0.04	1.72	0.18
Missing(22)										

# Town of Chester Vermont Police Department Assessment

## Group B Arrests: 2009

Jurisdiction(01) Measures Law Enforcement Agency Arrest Offense	Windsor County Number of Arrestees					Arrestee Rate (per 1,000)						
	Chester	Ludlow	Norwich	Springfield	Windsor	Woodstock	Chester	Ludlow	Norwich	Springfield	Windsor	Woodsto
Total	21	44	19	261	74	66	0.37	0.77	0.33	4.59	1.3	1.16
Bad Checks	1		2	2	1		0.02		0.04	0.04	0.02	
Curfew/Littering/Vagrancy												
Disorderly Conduct				27	12	4				0.47	0.21	0.07
Driving Under the Influence	7	36	13	82	23	31	0.12	0.63	0.23	1.44	0.4	0.55
Drunkenness												
Family Offenses, Nonviolent	3		1	8	2	1	0.05		0.02	0.14	0.04	0.02
Liquor Law Violations				21						0.37		
Peeping Tom												
Runaway												
Trespass of Real Property		1		6	1	2		0.02		0.11	0.02	0.04
All Other Offenses	10	7	3	115	35	28	0.18	0.12	0.05	2.02	0.62	0.49
Missing(22)												

# Town of Chester Vermont Police Department Assessment

## Group B Arrests: 2008

Jurisdiction(01) Measures	Windsor County Number of Arrestees					Arrestee Rate (per 1,000)							
	Chester		Ludlow		Woodstock	Chester		Ludlow		Woodstock			
	23	63	13	282	50	26	0.4	1.11	0.23	4.96	0.88	0.46	
Law Enforcement Agency													
Arrest Offense													
Total													
Bad Checks													
Curfew/Loitering/Vagrancy													
Disorderly Conduct													
Driving Under the Influence													
Drunkennes													
Family Offenses, Nonviolent													
Liquor Law Violations													
Peeping Tom													
Runaway													
Trespass of Real Property													
All Other Offenses													
Missing(22)													

# Town of Chester Vermont Police Department Assessment

## Group B Arrests: 2007

Arrest Date Jurisdiction(01) Measures Law Enforcement Agency Arrest Offense	2007 Windor County Number of Arrestees				Arrestee Rate (per 1,000)							
	Chester	Ludlow	Norwich	Springfield Windsor	Woodstock	Chester	Ludlow	Norwich	Springfield Windsor	Woodstock		
Total	25	21	15	218	73	27	0.44	0.37	0.26	3.83	1.28	0.47
Bad Checks			1	4	1			0.02	0.07		0.02	
Curfew/Loitering/Vagrancy Violations												
Disorderly Conduct	1	3	2	28	22	1	0.02	0.05	0.04	0.49	0.39	0.02
Driving Under the Influence	3	15	8	47	18	6	0.05	0.26	0.14	0.83	0.32	0.11
Drunkenness					1						0.02	
Family Offenses, Nonviolent					2					0.16	0.04	
Liquor Law Violations			1	9	2	1		0.02	0.32	0.07	0.07	0.02
Peeping Tom					4							
Runaway												
Trespass of Real Property	3			9	4	1	0.05			0.16	0.07	0.02
All Other Offenses Missing(22)	18	3	3	103	21	18	0.32	0.05	0.05	1.81	0.37	0.32