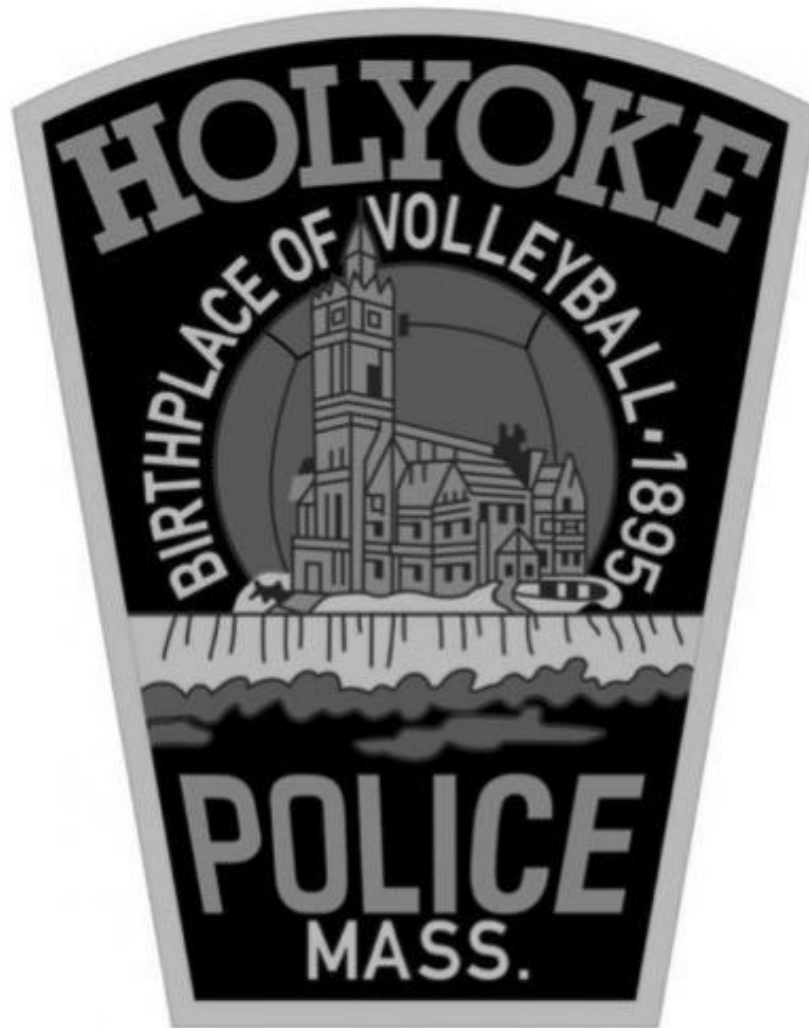


HOLYOKE POLICE

Response to Department-Wide Assessment



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HOLYOKE POLICE DEPARTMENT RISK REVIEW

In late 2022, the Holyoke Police Department contracted with Municipal Resources, Inc., (MRI) to conduct a department wide Risk Review (the report). The final report was issued in January of 2023. The entirety of the report is available for public consumption on the Holyoke City Website.

The auditors from MRI used the SWOT method of evaluation, evaluating the organizations Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The auditors met with staff members from all ranks of the agency, evaluating existing practices, policies, procedures, workloads, and conducted an anonymous employee survey evaluating numerous aspects of the department. Finally, a comparison was drawn comparing Holyoke to departments that are similarly situated, to compare calls for service, staffing and other aspects.

Department Response

The Holyoke Police Department evaluated the report, and compared current practices to what was recommended in the report by the auditor staff. This agency strives to constantly improve; however, it was important for us to see some areas that needed to change printed in black and white, and recommended by someone other than ourselves who examined the practices of the department.

While it is not feasible to make some recommended changes or improvements overnight, many of the areas for improvement identified in the report were/are able to be made with minimal effort, and little to no funding. However, some of the changes and improvements require a significant investment in capital funding, budgetary changes, staff buy-in, and support from community stakeholders, including those who have financial control over budgets and funding.

The following represents a dissection of the report that was undertaken by several administrative staff, in order to illustrate the gravity given to this report by the department. This report does not represent every single improvement recommended, but rather the larger and more costly undertakings.

Many of the recommendations for improvement in the report were already in place or underway at the time the assessment was conducted. The following pages provide an illustration of improvements that are complete, those that are considered “in progress”, and those that are tabled as long-term projects.

It is apparent that many of the issues boil down to a lack of funding, and lack of staffing, both issues of which the department hopes to open and maintain an honest and direct dialogue with city leaders and interested parties about.

Completed Projects and Improvements

For each area evaluated, an approximate cost for large projects and a funding source have been identified.

1. Police Station Security: New surveillance cameras, cell monitoring system, exterior door access card system. High risk areas such as evidence and armory have new installed cameras. **Cost:** \$175,000. **Source:** AARPA funds.
2. Less Lethal: Taser 7 devices were purchased and issued to all officers. These are the newest technology in less-lethal technology and an additional tool for de-escalation of use of force situations. **Source:** Grant funding.
N.B. A police sergeant is assigned to oversee the program, who is a certified instructor and has all current requirements to conduct certification of officers. That sergeant is also scheduled to attend defensive tactics instructor school in the spring.
3. LIDAR Devices: Light Detection and Ranging, used for traffic enforcement and collision prevention by certified officers. Represents current technology. **Source:** Grant funding.
4. Firearms: New firearms were issued in September/October of 2023. These replaced un-reliable units that were approaching 20 years old. New firearms are equipped with the most current technology for safety and accuracy. Transitioning to 9MM ammunition will also save on training costs. **Source:** AARPA Funds.
N.B. In addition, practices that could result in liability to the department have been discontinued, including conducting night training, and discontinuing recycling ammunition, in accordance with industry best practices.
5. Use of Force Tracking Software: software and associated training in place to unify reporting procedures, tracking of use of force reporting, and identifying at-risk officers. **Cost:** \$5000. **Source:** Department Budget.
N.B. The department now also contributes statistics to the National Use of Force Database, overseen by the Department of Justice.
6. Electronics: Administrative and Investigative staff have been issued department cellular phones and iPads or laptop computers, after a change in wireless providers. Digital cameras were purchased and issued to supervisors of each patrol shift for crime scene photography. Computers were purchased for specially trained detectives to investigate crimes involving social media, and to forensically image cellular phones connected to crimes. **Cost:** Minimal **Source:** Grants
7. Citizen Complaints: Complaint policy was amended to reflect industry best practices for handling anonymous complaints against officers or the department. The majority of complaint/internal affairs process is now conducted electronically including utilizing SharePoint and electronic document repositories. **Cost:** None

8. Equipment: Firearms and Taser related equipment are issued and monitored by an electronic inventory system. New hire issued and returned equipment is monitored electronically, and process streamlined to define which is department issued and which is not. **Cost:** None
9. Evidence Room: Firearms placed in temporary storage have been relocated to the proper secured area. A procedure has been put in place to dispose of stored firearms no longer needed for criminal proceedings. **Cost:** None
10. Union: Both patrol officers and supervisor union contracts have been settled, with the next negotiation set for 2025.
11. Internal Affairs: The hiring process for new officers and civilians is now being done almost completely electronically. The sergeant and lieutenant assigned to IA/HR have begun recruiting at local colleges and high schools to spur interest in taking the entry level exam. New citywide Third-Party Administrator (TPA) overseeing officers injured on duty and utilization management. A new procedure for addressing officers struggling with mental health issues has been put into place. **Cost:** Minimal
12. Administrative: The Organizational Chart for each position within the department has been finalized and is now complete. This comprehensive update provides clarity on the organizational structure and role responsibilities, enhancing overall departmental efficiency.
13. Staffing: Practice of recycling recruits who fail out of the police academy for various reasons has been ended. Fully capable candidates are able to take their place rather than an unsuitable candidate taking space on the roster. **Cost:** None
14. Staffing: Over the past year, HPD has successfully recruited seven additional officers who are currently enrolled in the police academy. These new hires are expected to graduate and join the force in October 2024. **Source:** Department budget.

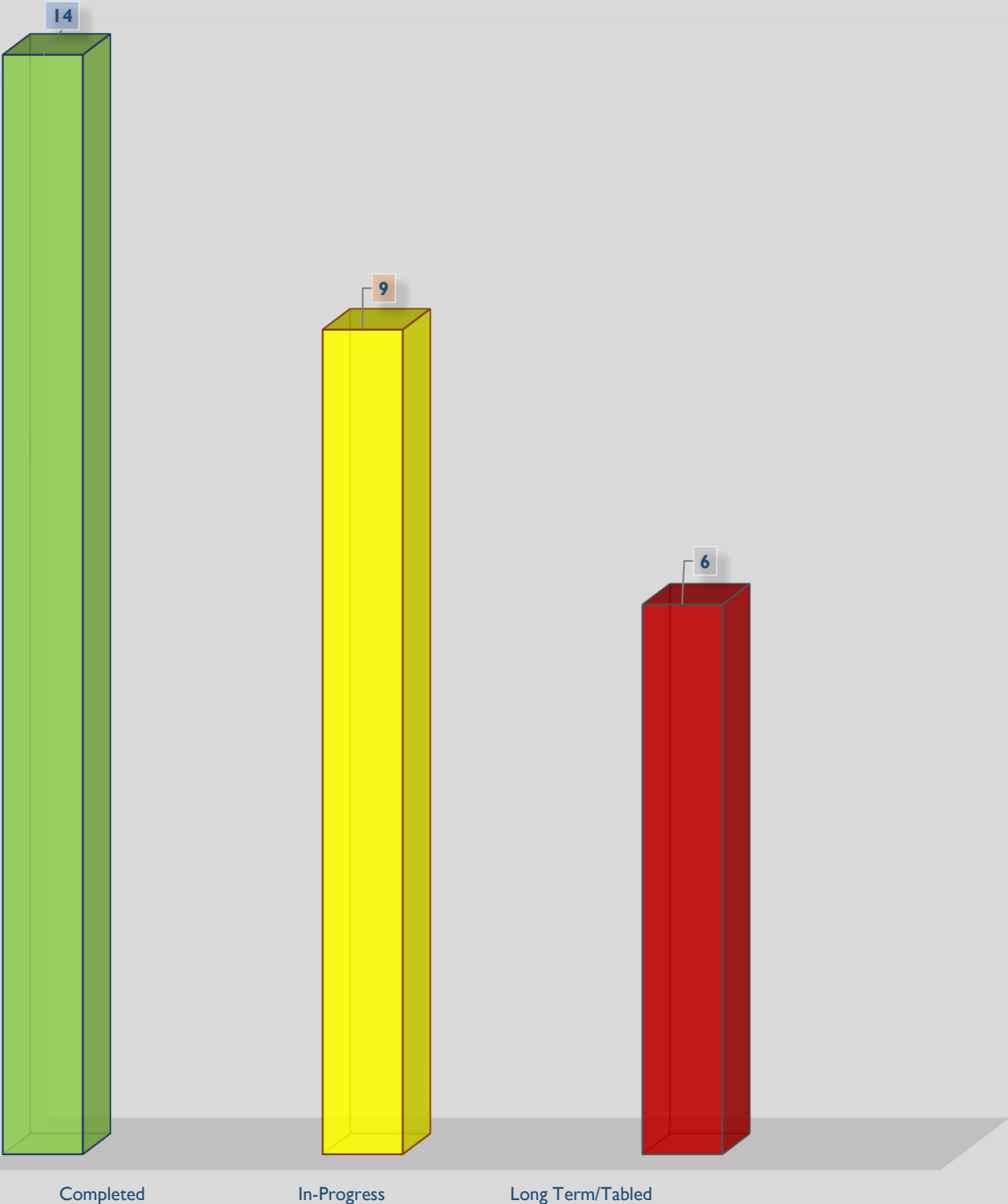
Projects Currently in Progress

1. Staffing: Currently authorized for 95 officers, with seven vacancies. Candidates are currently being vetted for these positions, with an academy date in January of 2025. **Source**: Department budget.
2. City Crime Prevention Cameras: (Currently in the final stages nearing completion) Project underway to replace all strategically placed citywide crime prevention cameras. The cameras and infrastructure are currently over 20 years old. **Cost**: \$256,000. **Source**: AARPA Funds
3. Radio Repeater Room: (Currently in the final stages nearing completion) Climate controlled equipment cabinet has been ordered in order to safeguard and prolong the life of radio equipment stored at the City Hall building. **Cost**: \$25,000. **Source**: AARPA Funds
4. Field Training Program: Nine-week field training mentorship has been implemented for new academy graduates. The program is being reviewed for expansion, addition of more training officers, and expansion of policies and procedures covering program to make it more uniform and able to be replicated across numerous recruits. **Cost**: Minimal
5. Policies: Department policies are under constant review to ensure compliance with mandates and laws, and to reflect best practices and accreditation standards. A policy review and implementation committee is currently being explored for implementation. **Cost**: None
6. Technology: New records management software is being implemented with a live date of approximately Oct. 2024. This will be replacing software that is approaching 30 years old. The new program is web based and will incorporate barcode driven evidence storage and equipment management. **Cost**: **Source**: Department budget.
7. Equipment: Marked police units are ordered completely equipped from the manufacturer, rather than piece-meal as in the past. Options to improve stockpile of taser cartridges and firearms ammunition are being explored. A taser instructor course has been requested through Axon International, however all three requests have been declined.
8. Building Maintenance: Carpets have been scheduled to be replaced in carpeted areas of the building, some of which date to when the facility opened in 1997. The timeline for implementation remains unknown at this time.
9. Administrative: The Auditor's Office is in the process of adding a Professional Accountant to the HPD team. This addition aims to enhance the oversight and control of financial operations within the Police Department.

Long Term or Tabled Projects

1. Facilities: HVAC system on borrowed time. Minimal preventive maintenance and complete system replacement probably needed at this time. **Needed to accomplish**: Funding Source.
2. Fleet: Prisoner transport vehicle and several unmarked cruisers approaching 20 years old. Parts are becoming harder to find and maintenance is needed more and more. Several new vehicles are needed to replace the aging members of the fleet. **Needed to accomplish**: Funding Source.
3. Training: Active Shooter/SIMS training non-existent. Overall training budget far smaller than similar size agencies. **Needed to accomplish**: Funding Source.
4. Administrative: Implementation of payroll automation software and/or hiring of Comptroller or Auditor. **Needed to accomplish**: Funding Source.
5. Community Caretaking: Restoration of Juvenile Officer, Domestic Violence Liaison, Community Policing Unit, and Traffic Unit. All of these titles formerly existed within the agency, however, continuous cuts to funding and failure to properly update the budget have eliminated all of them. **Needed to accomplish**: Funding Source, and Staffing.
6. MPAC/CALEA Accreditation: There are over 400 categories to comply with before even being considered for accreditation. The current police facility alone as it stands would not pass muster for accreditation. In order to pursue this endeavor, at least one person would need to be designated as full-time accreditation manager, with access to copious funding for needed improvements to meet standards. **Needed to accomplish**: Staffing and Funding Source.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IDENTIFIED IN HPD RISK REVIEW



Funding Locations of Risk Assessment Recommended Changes

- Department Budget
- AARPA Funds
- Grants
- Funding Source Needed
- No Cost

