

**Full Text Remarks of Chief John Scippa, Director
New Hampshire Police Standards and Training Council
House Public Works and Highways Committee, Capital Budget Hearing for FY 24-25
Friday, March 10, 2023**

Good afternoon. For the record, my name is John Scippa. I am the Director of New Hampshire Police Standards and Training. The mission of NH Police Standards and Training is to shape, sustain and strengthen the competency and professionalism of NH Law Enforcement, in service to our State.

We are an independent executive branch agency, governed by a 17 member Police Standards and Training Council. We are not affiliated with any law enforcement or prosecutorial agency, thereby avoiding potential conflict of interest with our regulatory function and decertification duties.

We set the hiring and educational standards for all police, state corrections, and probation-parole officers in New Hampshire. We operate the NH Police Academy that every full-time municipal, county and state law enforcement professional must attend to become certified as a full-time police officer in this state. We also operate the part-time police academy that all part-time police officers must complete to obtain part time police officer certification, as well as the NH Corrections Academy that all state corrections officers attend to obtain corrections officer certification.

We oversee the Law Enforcement Conduct Review Committee that receives allegations of police misconduct, oversees the investigations into such matters and then reviews the results of such investigations to validate the findings and presents those findings to the Council for their consideration.

Created by Executive Order and administratively attached to NHPSTC is the Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission, a body that has created a voluntary accreditation program to advance law enforcement professionalism through the establishment of professional standards and the administration of a formal mechanism by which New Hampshire police agencies can be systematically measured, evaluated, and updated.

We provide a catalog of specialized, advanced, and in-service refresher training at our facility in Concord and regionally around the state, to assist officers in completing the annual requirements to maintain their certification.

The Council holds disciplinary hearings and may suspend or revoke the certification of officers that have violated Council rules or committed a crime or an act of moral turpitude.

We provide services with 20 full-time and 5 part-time positions, which include sworn staff, clerical staff, and building maintenance employees. Our staff is assisted by adjunct instructors, most of whom are unpaid volunteers and a small number of contracted instructors. We operate a 77,000 square foot training facility located on 20.87 acres of grounds across from NHTI – Concord’s Community College in Concord.

Present Conditions

We are in desperate need of more classroom and office space. To provide background the following is offered. Our current facility was constructed in three phases.

Phase #1

The main building, which houses the administrative offices, main lobby, two classrooms (classrooms #1 and #2) and one small lecture hall, (lecture hall #1) were finished in 1983. Lecture Hall # 1, while rated for maximum capacity by the NH FMO at 73, can comfortably hold 50 students as configured. Classrooms #1 and #2 are each rated for maximum capacity at 38, can comfortably hold 30 as each is configured. Lecture Hall # 1 is used primarily for holding both Police and Corrections academies and occasionally, when available, will hold an in-service class. Classrooms #1 and #2 are used primarily for in-service classes and for large meetings such as the monthly Council Meeting.

Phase #2

This phase of the building was completed in 1986 and added two more classrooms, (Classrooms #3 and #4), Lecture Hall #2, 8 small offices for the trainers, and a multipurpose room. Lecture Hall #2 was originally configured to hold 110 students but was reconfigured years ago, reducing the maximum capacity per the FMO to 73 but configured to comfortably hold 55. This room is exclusively used for the full-time police academy. Classrooms 3 and 4 were used for in-service classes and break out rooms for the academy, (squad meetings, group projects scenario training). In 2013, classrooms 3 and 4 were reconfigured to house the VirTra Training Simulator. This device is used about 25 % of the year to provide low cost, highly controlled and safe firearms, and decision-making training. The multipurpose room, (called the Break Room) was initially used for all hands-on training such as fitness training, defensive tactics training and baton training. Presently, due to the construction of phase 3 of the facility, this room is now used for scenario training and occasionally as a breakroom.

Phase #3

This phase of the facility was completed in 1992 and consisted of a residence wing being attached

to the south end of the building and the Tactical Center added to the north end of the building. The tactical center's first floor is a large multipurpose room that is used for all skills classes such as fitness training, defensive tactics training and baton training as well as scenario training. It is also used for large-scale meetings and for all graduations. The upstairs houses the 20 lane indoor firing range that is used for all academy and in-service firearms classes as well as a small track that runs along the outside of the range.

Budget Request

We are in desperate need of more classroom and office space so that we can more efficiently provide training to NH Law Enforcement. It should be noted that several increases to our agency's training and standards mission have been added over the last two years to include the increase of mandatory in-service training for every officer annually from 8 hours moving to 24 hours annually, a major increase in Crisis Intervention Training with an initiative to have at least one officer from every police department be CIT trained and taking over the active shooter response training from NH HSEM. We are also seeing a huge increase in the need for academy training as retention issues still plague our profession.

For your consideration, we make the following two capital improvement project requests and one lapse extension request:

Project #1: We are requesting a total of 350,000 dollars from the general fund to move the VirTra to an existing outbuilding and reclaim classrooms #3 and #4. This project will call for building upgrades to the existing outbuilding to house the VirTra, moving the VirTra to the new location and re-configuration of classrooms #3 and #4 back to their original state. If this project is approved, it will provide us with two classrooms to hold in-service classes, use as an academy breakout room and provide room for scenario training.

Project #2: We are requesting 150,000 dollars from the general fund to convert the existing breakroom into a classroom. This project will also allow us to add an additional office for staff. If this project is approved, it will provide us with an additional classroom to hold in-service classes, use as an academy breakout room and room for scenario training.

Finally, we request a lapse extension request for the appropriation made to the Police Standards and Training Council in 2019, 146:1, XIV, A for Boiler Replacement. The boiler replacement was nearly completed when during the final phase of the construction project the engineers discovered that a hot water tank and piping would need to be replaced and hot water high temperature issues with recruit showers would need to be addressed for safety. Public Works initiated DPW Project No. 81117 C – Domestic Hot Water System Upgrades. Now Public Works has advised us that they cannot get this job completed prior to the end of this biennium and

requested that we ask for the funds to be available in the next biennium. Therefore, we respectfully request that this project be removed from the lapse list and extended.

Conclusion

We are requesting these two Capital Improvement Projects to address our need for more classroom space so that we can adequately address the present and future training needs and mandates for New Hampshire Law Enforcement. It is our position that these two capital requests to reconfigure existing space within the existing dimensions of our facility is common sense and fiscally responsible. These two requests will provide for much needed training space to more efficiently deliver up to date recruit training to newly hired law enforcement officers and provide specialized and in-service training for in-service officers.

We are requesting the lapse extension so that we can have the unanticipated work completed to finalize the Boiler Replacement project.

Thank you for listening to our presentation. I stand ready to answer any questions that you may have.