



Raymond Kelly Richardson
Superintendent

Deborah Friedl
Deputy Superintendent

Barry Golner
Deputy Superintendent

To: Eileen Donoghue
City Manager

EMD

From: Raymond Kelly Richardson
Superintendent of Police

Date: October 24, 2018

Re: ***Motion Response: 9/25/2018 – Councilor Mercier/Councilor Elliott – Request the City Manager have the Superintendent of Police provide opinion and report regarding costs for scheduling two Mounted Police Patrol Units in downtown when the Lowell High School goes in and out of session during school year.***

During the process of researching Mounted Police Patrol Units, the Lowell Police Department (LPD) consulted with both the Worcester Police Department (WPD) and the Massachusetts State Police (MSP). The WPD and MSP are currently the only two police departments in Massachusetts that have Mounted Units.

The WPD began the process of starting the Mounted Unit approximately 2 years ago and it took about a year to have the Unit in operation. It would cost approximately \$10,000 to purchase a horse, though that number can vary. Since horses are herd animals, it is important to have more than one. Additionally, Draft horse breeds are the preferred type of horse for Police Mounted Units. Startup costs for the horses include a truck, horse trailers, police gear/uniforms, saddles, grooming supplies and a horse barn. WPD was able to utilize the Worcester House of Correction horse barn which was no longer in use. They spent approximately \$34,000 to rehabilitate the location.

Ongoing costs include training, medical costs (veterinarian/farrier), grooming supplies and horse barn maintenance. Since the LPD does not have a current option for a horse barn, we would need to research this extensively to get a better understanding of whether or not the LPD could have our own barn or rent space from a local horse barn. The startup costs for two horses would be approximately \$155,000. This does not include barn costs or having a trainer on staff. WPD currently trains their Mounted Unit 24 hours per week, which is highly recommended due to liability. Ongoing, yearly costs would be approximately \$10,000 - \$12,000 per horse. These yearly costs do not include ongoing barn housing costs if necessary. Typically, officers patrol with the horses for 4 hours at a time and take care of the horse's needs (grooming, care, and vet) for the other 4 hours of the shift.

Similar to a K-9 Unit, one officer would be assigned to each horse. There is approximately a 6 month training period for the Mounted Unit before being assigned to patrol.