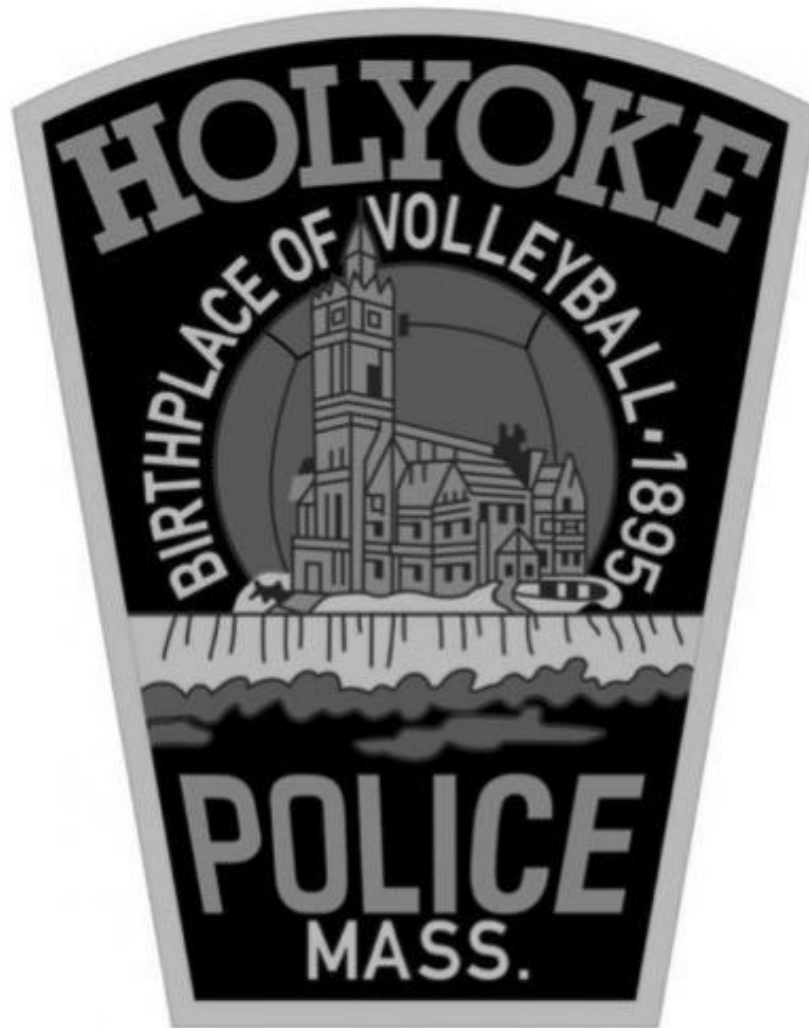


# HOLYOKE POLICE

Response to Department-Wide Assessment



04/01/2024

**Chief David R. Pratt**

## HOLYOKE POLICE DEPARTMENT RISK REVIEW

In late 2022, the Holyoke Police Department contracted with Municipal Resources, Inc., (MRI) to conduct a department wide Audit (the report). The final report was presented to the City Council on March 6, 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 two underlying contributing factors, lack of funding, and/or lack of staffing. My hope is to continue an open and honest dialogue with city leaders and interested parties to address both of these moving forward to provide the best possible Police services for the citizens of Holyoke.

## 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:** Department Budget.
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 Signal 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 13 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:** Department Budget.
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:** Minimal

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:** \$5000 **Source** Departmental Budget
9. Evidence Room: Firearms placed in temporary storage have been relocated to the proper secured area. A procedure (Gun buster) 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. Steps were taken to reduce use of Time owed and officer sick time buy back.
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: Organizational Chart and Job Descriptions for each position in the department currently in draft phase, with anticipated completion date of Spring, 2024. The Organizational Chart will be updated as needed. **Cost:** None

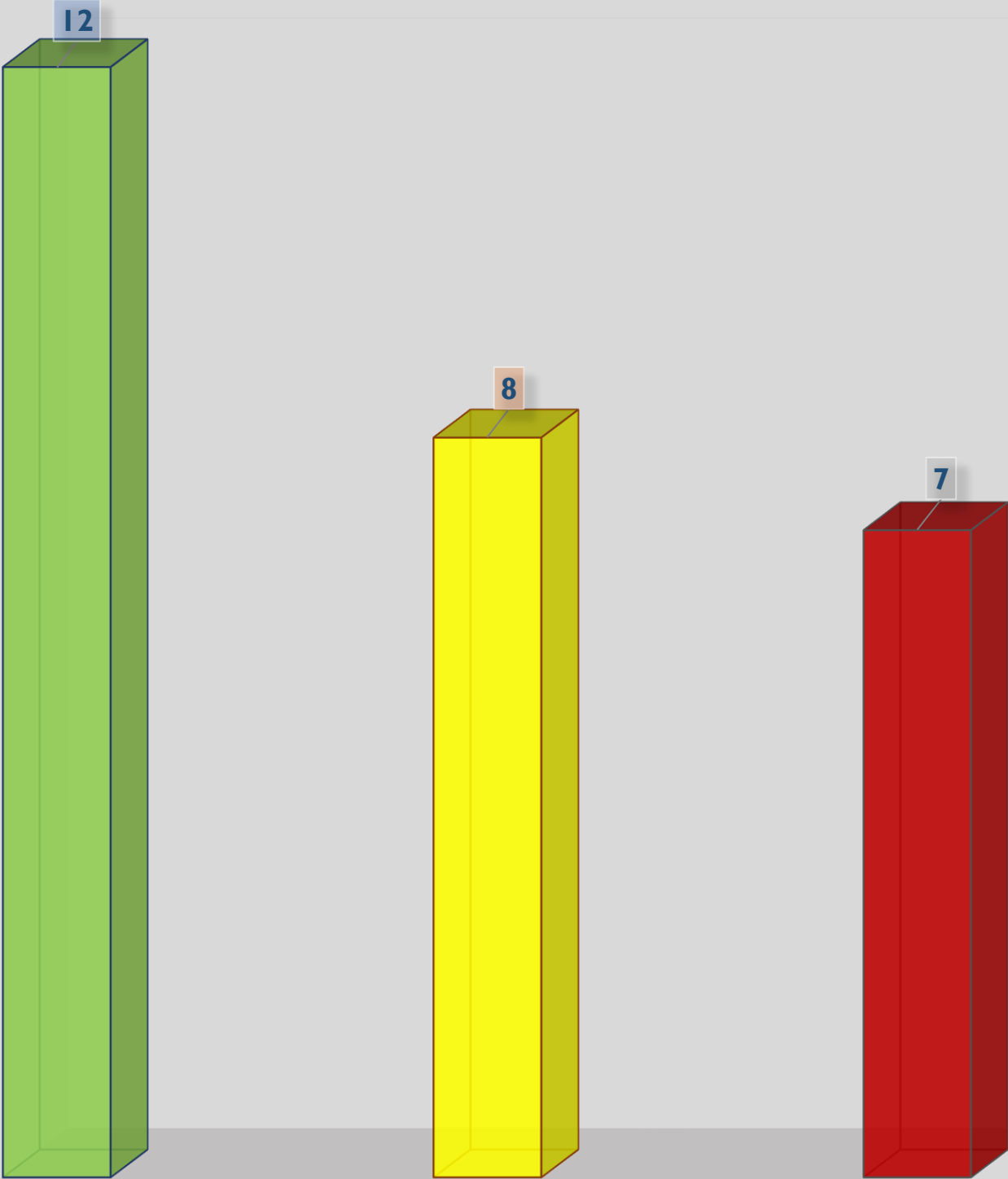
## Projects Currently in Progress

1. Staffing: Currently authorized for 95 officers, with 10 vacancies. Candidates are currently being vetted for these positions, with an academy date in May of 2024. **Source**: Department budget.
2. City Crime Prevention Cameras: 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**: Capital Stabilization.
3. Radio Repeater Room: 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**: Free Cash
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. **Cost**: None
6. Technology: New records management software (Mark 43) is being implemented with a live date of approximately July 2024. This will be replacing software (IMC) that is approaching 30 years old. The new program is web based and will incorporate barcode driven evidence storage and equipment management. **Cost**: **Source**: Free Cash/Departmental 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 to be hosted by HPD, however that request has been declined by Axon at this time. Conversations continue to do this in the near future. **Cost** Minimal
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.

## 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. DPW approval/appropriation
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: Overall training budget is far smaller than similar size agencies. **Needed to accomplish**: Funding Source.
4. Administrative: Implementation of payroll automation software and/or hiring of Comptroller. **Needed to accomplish**: Funding Source.
5. Traffic Unit/Patrols. The establishment of a traffic unit is solely based on an increase in staffing levels. Once staffing levels are increased as suggested in the Audit on page 53 then a realistic conversation can be had about the implementation of traffic patrols and other enhanced patrols (Bike/Walking beats). Until such a time these extra patrols will be continued with available extra staff as well as grants. **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 funding for needed improvements to meet standards. **Needed to accomplish**: Staffing and Funding Source.
7. Civilianized Positions: As stated in the audit we are analyzing what positions can be civilianized and the steps needed to create these positions within the Police department's budget. The department is currently looking at a civilian crime analyst for the department. **Needed to accomplish**: classification, funding, staffing of positions.

# AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IDENTIFIED IN HPD RISK REVIEW



Completed

In-Progress

Long Term/Tabled

# Funding Locations of Risk Assessment Recommended Changes

