Data

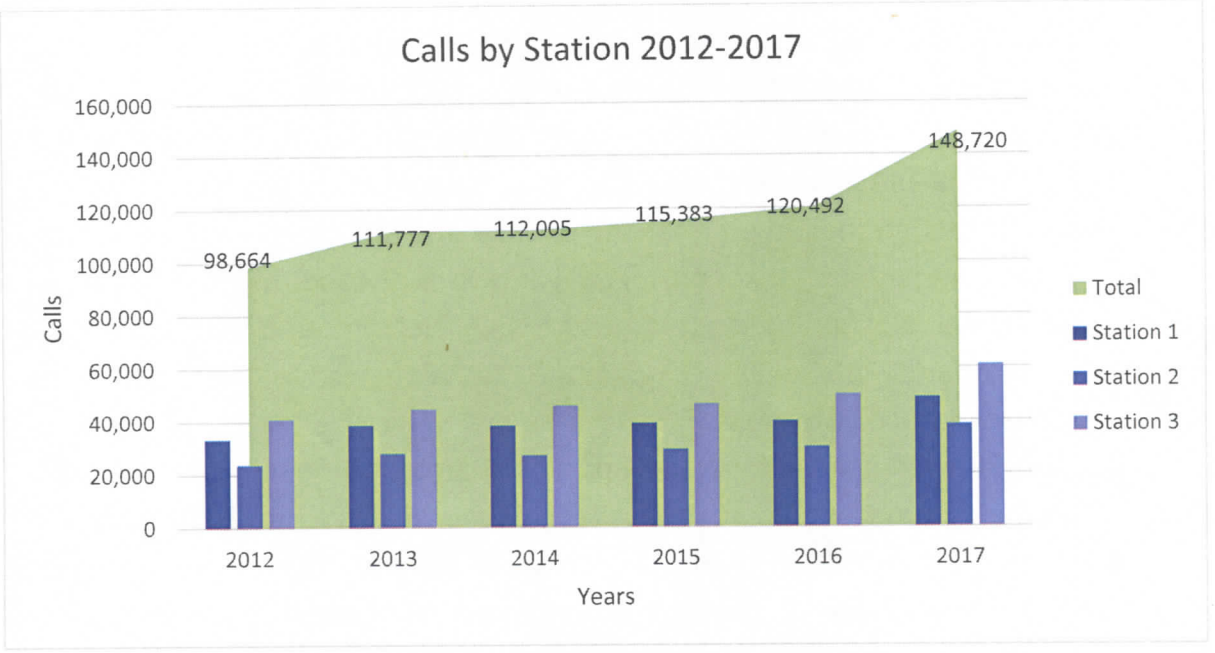
Obtaining accurate data was a challenge for this project. Work continues to support the department in extracting meaningful data and developing a plan for correcting errors. The poor data quality impacts not only this study but the CompStat process and daily supervisor management. The multitude of errors present in all areas of the data indicate a lack of supervision and oversight both in communications and patrol. Civilian oversight (with accountability measures) will help with this issue. Communications staff appear to have been coding based on their interpretations of calls and call categories rather than on an approved (and understood) taxonomy. A quick review of some of the entries—for example, "gassin [sic] er [sic] up," "gettin [sic] gas," "gas," "fuel run," and "fuel" were each attributed to directed patrol—shows the errors in the data along with a disregard for the importance of collecting accurate data. Putting fuel in a vehicle is far from a directed patrol: Direct patrol is when officers focus on a particular area or problem, in other words when officers are being proactive versus reactive. Had the analysis moved forward and calculated the time on directed patrol in the attempt to showcase proactive work, the analysis would have been incorrect because of the presence of these improper entries. Other errors include the arrival time occurring prior to the time of the call and listing the unit type responding to the call as unknown—and call descriptions were listed only about a quarter of the time. Because of the discovery of such various data errors, only a few high-level indicators are provided in this report.

Calls for service entered into CAD have increased from 98,664 to 148,720. While the increase seems dramatic, there have been "calls" entered that are administrative in nature, calls for information only, and entries describing community engagement. Improved data entry will enhance the ability of the department to understand and use its data for management purposes.

There are, however, corresponding increases in arrests, as the next chart will show. The data provided to PSSG at the end of March 2018 was pulled in a somewhat nontraditional manner and transitioned to Excel by police department personnel. PSSG has worked with the vendor and department to change the way the data is pulled so that it will stay in a database format. This will ensure that dates and times are transferred as numbers instead of as text. In addition to the formatting issues, the data set is riddled with errors and missing information.

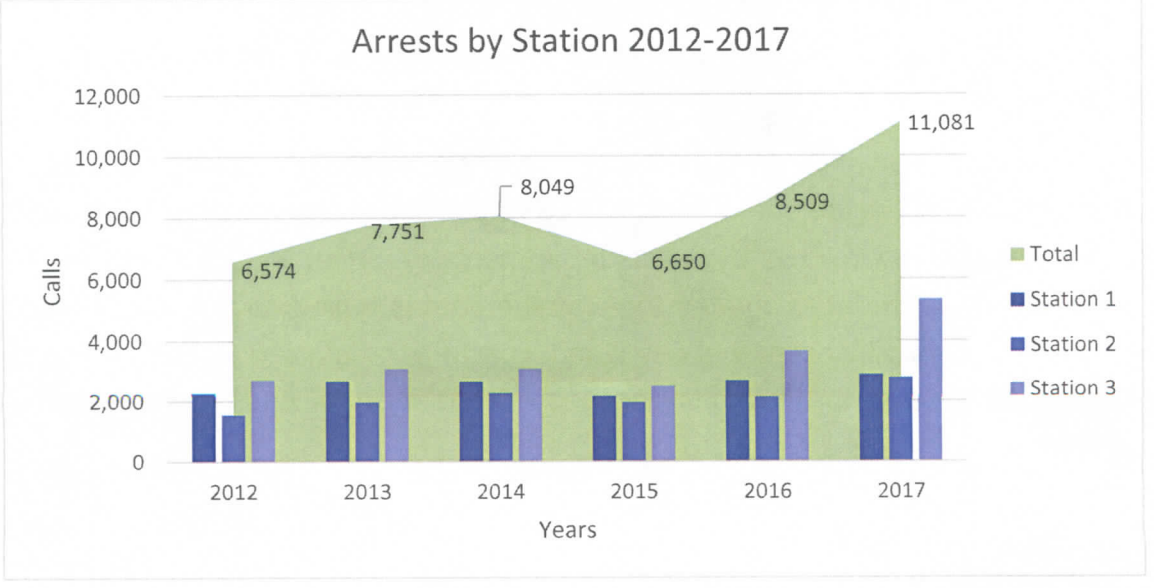
The table below shows the total calls by station for the time period of 2012-2017.

Chart 1: Calls by Station 2012-2017



A more accurate picture of workload increases is the increases in arrests. The chart below shows that arrests went up from 2012, then dropped in 2015 nearly to the 2012 level. The department is now on track to make double the number of arrests made in 2012. A mid-year analysis of this data is warranted and will occur once the new data set is provided.

Chart 2: Arrests by Station 2012-2017



Of significant concern is the change in mental health and overdose calls, where each category has increased citywide. Like the rest of the country, New Bedford is experiencing a crisis in mental health, substance abuse, and co-occurring disorders. There is a task force in operation on which the chief is a co-chair. This task force discusses resource coordination and works in such areas as finding food, shelter, and services as needed for those with substance use and mental health disorders. Given that homelessness is often a related outcome, this topic is also part of the discussions. The department, along with mental health and clergy partners, also conducts home visits after overdose incidents. In 2017, this service was provided over 600 times. The goal is to provide services and support through recovery coaches to help individuals regain control over their lives and eliminate the intake of drugs. While several initiatives are underway, this information underscores the need for additional staffing, collaboration, and service enhancements. Increased collaboration combined with crisis intervention training are key factors in addressing these problems. The table below shows a decrease in both opioid overdoses and deaths since the task force began.

Table 5: Narcotic Activity 2006-2017[3]

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Narcotics Arrests	1239	1703	1326	574	563	603	523	584	486	486	552	554
Opioid Overdoses	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	146*	361	632	511
Opioid Deaths	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	32*	28	48	42
Narcan Use	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	145*	284	496	392

The following table shows the incident data that the New Bedford Police Department has submitted to the FBI. While still higher than much of the country, the number of incidents recorded in New Bedford has decreased.

3. Only a partial year of data, April through December 2014, was available.

Table 6: FBI Crime Data 2006-2016[4]

Type	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Murders	7	2	4	9	3	4	2	6
per 100,000	7.5	2.2	4.4	9.7	3.3	4.2	2.1	6.3
Rapes	58	40	59	66	69	59	54	100
per 100,000	61.9	43.3	64.5	71.3	77	61.7	56.2	105.1
Robberies	283	286	301	340	272	294	272	256
per 100,000	302.2	309.6	329.1	367.1	303.5	307.4	283.2	269
Assaults	795	765	827	769	816	736	702	677
per 100,000	848.8	828.2	904.1	830.3	910.6	769.5	731	711.5

4. Data for 2015 is missing as New Bedford was unable to report that year due to a technological issue.

Type	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Burglaries	842	900	1,056	1,144	1,237	969	929	916
per 100,000	899	974.3	1,154.40	1,235.10	1,380.40	1,013.10	967.4	962.6
Theft	1,866	1,859	1,978	1,806	1,974	2,018	1,950	2,186
per 100,000	1,992.30	2,012.50	2,162.40	1,949.90	2,202.80	2,109.80	2,030.60	2,297.30
Auto thefts	432	393	319	285	388	342	301	335
per 100,000	461.2	425.4	348.7	307.7	433	357.6	313.4	352.1
Arson	38	33	43	38	29	30	29	20
per 100,000	40.6	35.7	47	41	32.4	31.4	30.2	21
Crime index (higher means more crime, US average = 280.3)	504.4	480.2	535.1	541.7	560.8	487.7	454.3	507.1

Organizational Structure

The NBPD is led by a chief. The current chief rose through the ranks and was appointed to his position after the death of the former chief. The command staff currently consists of one deputy, captains in charge of administrative and investigations, and each of the three stations.

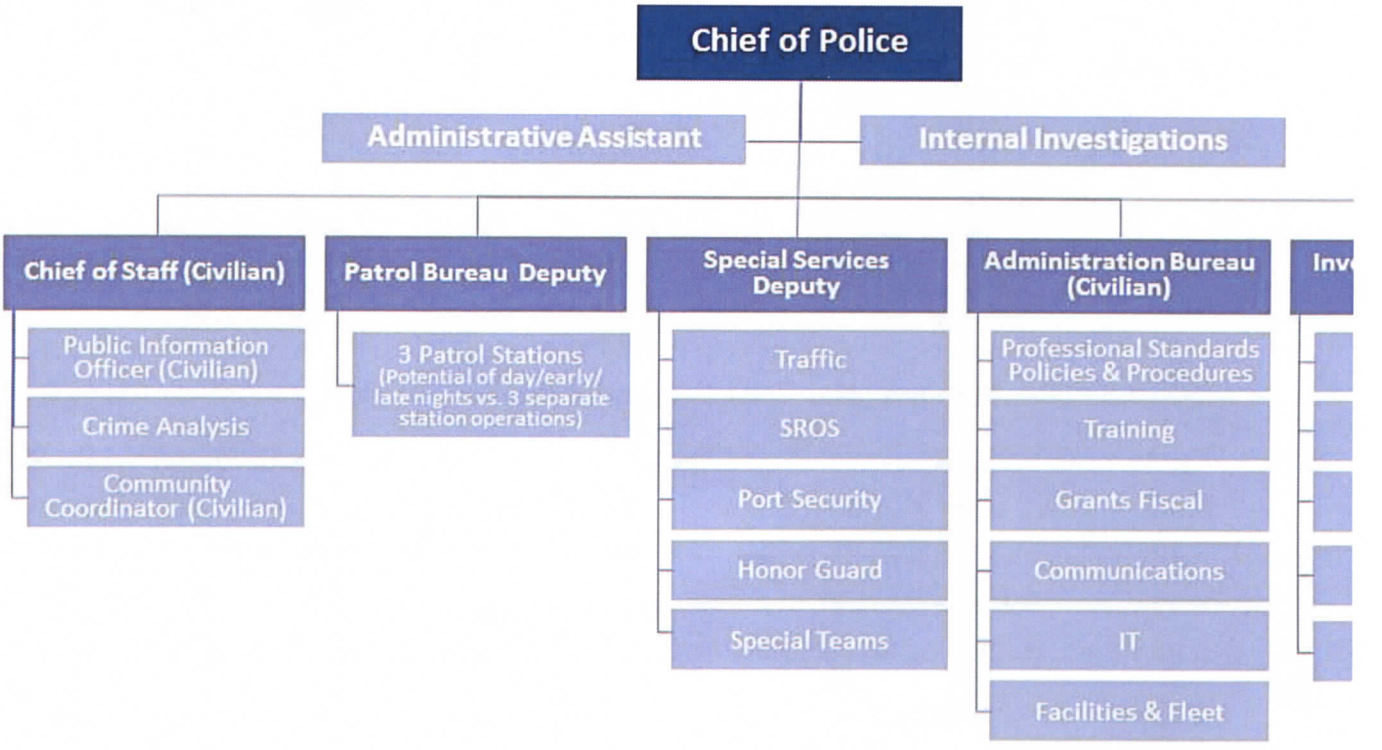
The chief has little ability to select his own command staff because the department operates under civil service. Further complicating the command staff arrangement is that the captains are in a union, limiting their ability to have the required flexibility of assignments. The captains are in the same union as other subordinates, which does not allow for separation between high-level supervision and staff. The overall structure is not supportive of the operations: There are areas where sworn staff are performing jobs that could be performed by civilians. Examples include management information systems, records, dispatch/communications, evidence, training, public information officers, and communications.

In addition, for an agency of this size, there are too many silos and separations of responsibility. The decentralized approach is not the most effective approach for the city. It is one of few agencies of its size that work out of multiple facilities. Others that have more than one station have done so based on the need for additional space. The separation in New Bedford affects operations, deployment, communications, and community perceptions.

While informal discussions on this topic were met with some resistance, it is clear that the current structure has not worked for several decades and change is warranted. Even before the consolidation of facilities and stations should occur, consolidation of command should be practiced.

The organizational chart on the next page shows a conceptual reorganization of the department.

Figure 2: Conceptual Reorganization



Command Positions

Currently, captains are in the union, which limits the chief's ability to appoint department members who share his values and vision. Further complicating the issue is that supervisors are in the same union as their subordinates. PSSG suggests these positions transition to nonunion positions, ideally appointed ones. The organizational chart suggested by PSSG includes three sworn deputies, two civilian administrators (with the same reporting chain of command as the sworn members), and three captains. An alternative approach would be to eliminate the rank of captain and appoint deputy and assistant chiefs. The Special Services position listed as a deputy rank could alternatively be a captain under patrol. The proposed organizational chart also has the IA function reporting directly to the chief. This position can be filled by a lieutenant.

When a new chief is appointed, that person would appoint their own command staff. When a subsequent chief is appointed, the previous chief's command staff would revert to their lieutenant civil service rank as the new chief selects a new command staff. This scenario would increase the number of lieutenants in total but would not increase the number of commanding officers because the captain rank would be eliminated.

Supervisors should be in a different union than those whom they supervise. If the captain positions remain, they should be separated from the union.

Sworn vs. Civilian Positions

As described in the deployment section, there are 251 employees filling sworn positions (excluding the chief) and 42 in civilian positions. There are a number of areas for improvement with respect to civilianization, either by reassigning sworn personnel back to police operations or hiring civilians to fill a current gap in services. The positions that could be filled by civilians include:

- Records
- Desk Staff
- Training Coordinator
- Public Information Officer
- Management Information Systems
- Supervisor of Administrative Functions
- Forensics/Crime Scene
- Fleet Administrator
- Details
- Community Coordinators
- Communications (there should not be any sworn members in dispatch)

The organization chart is out of date and the roster supplied is not transparent in terms of the day-to-day assignments of sworn staff. For example, the PSSG team discovered there is an officer assigned to an office at City Hall. The reason for this position was not substantiated and should be reassigned to patrol.

The department currently assigns sworn staff to the Central Records Bureau and front desk. (During site visits, both sworn and civilian employees were at the front desk.) It appears civilian functions related to details and general recording-keeping are being performed by sworn members. A captain oversees fiscal matters, crime analysis, grants, and services.

The chief has sworn members acting as the public information officer and in an administrative role. Both functions can be performed by a civilian. The civilian public information officer is underutilized. Coordination of training does not require sworn personnel. As noted in the technology section, the MIS coordinator is currently sworn, which is ineffective. The Communications Center (dispatch) has sworn members assigned, which is not necessary.

Supervision/Accountability

Members expressed experiencing varying degrees of supervision, from hands-off to micromanagement. Through interviews, PSSG learned there are essentially three independent stations and one headquarters. From location to location, it appears supervision and accountability vary depending on the leadership. The community relayed their concerns about the lack of interaction with officers on patrol, and some provided information on officers "slacking." Both of these issues are related to leadership and accountability. In a review of the span of control (number of supervisors to subordinates), the range in patrol was striking. In some cases, there were five sergeants and fifteen officers for a 1:3 span of control; in another case, there were two sergeants and twenty-one officers for a span of control of 1:11. The span of control refers to the total number of personnel assigned, not the number of patrol units nor the number of personnel deployed at any one time. When deployed, the span of control falls to within an acceptable 1:5 to 1:7 range. The variations in workload could account for the varying perceptions of supervision and the resulting behavior. The span of control was not as variable in the smaller specialized units. Overall, the span of control falls within an acceptable range. Removing sergeants from communications would be a positive step.

Department members expressed that training in general and specifically leadership training is lacking. The chief was working on a leadership class, and other alternatives exist as well. Local colleges, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and private vendors offer leadership training. A committee should be formed to evaluate available training and select a program to adopt that ensures consistency when sending members to leadership training.

There are opposing opinions related to accountability in terms of internal investigations. Some members feel this administration is "nit picking" and micromanaging whereas others feel the previous administration was too lax and did not enforce policies. The PSSG team learned that there were more than 50 internal investigations carried over from the previous administration, involving nearly 100 officers. More than half of the complaints were sustained.

Appearance

One area noted for lack of consistency was uniforms/appearance, which speaks to the varying leadership styles and lack of a quartermaster system. Currently, officers purchase their own uniforms with an allowance, but there is no oversight for the wearing or conditions of the uniforms. Cruisers also need attention in terms of appearance and cleanliness. During the study, it was recommended to the chief to implement such a process, and this did begin in 2018.

Administration—Policies and Procedures

Up-to-date policies and procedures are important to define operational procedures and guide the behavior of department members. Transparency and accountability are cornerstones of police operations, and well-vetted policies and procedures help to achieve this goal. Well-written, clear, and easy-to-follow policies allow department members to understand what is expected of them and would decrease the likelihood of misunderstanding.

Many of the policies of the NBPD are out of date and require a complete review to ensure they reflect current best practices. NBPD should follow the accreditation process as closely as possible, but it is not necessary to try and achieve accreditation. The most important aspect is to have a diverse group of department members read each policy, determine what is and what is not being followed, and make corrections either in policy or operations. While the chief has been reviewing some policies, it is a significant task that would benefit from a project manager because each policy needs to be read, evaluated, revised, and then, if needed, to be bargained with the union. Once a policy is

revised, testing must occur. The process would benefit from technology as well as a project manager.

CompStat

CompStat (short for Computer Statistics) is a process that uses data collected on crimes and other issues facing the community or department. The goal is for department members to take responsibility for the occurrences and issues under their jurisdiction. Although the department does have a crime analyst, captains are responsible for understanding the information as it relates to the station under their command. CompStat first began to be used in New Bedford under this administration.

The collateral material used in the CompStat meetings is a PowerPoint presentation that consists of data for each station (such as burglary, larceny, robbery, and overdoses) for the current month. The data for each station is shown in successive order, followed by a citywide overview. The review station-by-station with point-in-time data does not provide any relationship context for the data—whether in changes month over month or from one area of the city to another. Just recently, there were some changes made to the CompStat presentation to include a few slides on the citywide data, but this does not meet the goal of having engaged conversations about issues facing the city.

The NBPD needs to revamp its approach to CompStat to allow for immediate evaluation of past trends in the attempt to prevent future crimes. The interaction between the stations would be enhanced by having a citywide presentation that shows all stations on a single slide for all data points.

The visual layout of the material could also be enhanced by eliminating the black background and using graphics that are more visually pleasing. No maps or charts were in the material provided for review. Inclusion of maps would help with understanding place-based crime issues.

Currently, the department has only a single data analyst to cover a multitude of functions. A second data analyst is required to share the workload and create a team approach so that all data is being reviewed (general calls for service, specific traffic initiatives, school related calls, arrests for specific crimes, etc.).

During interviews, PSSG heard many complaints about the CompStat process related to the amount of work and data review required. A group should be assembled to review CompStat and revise the process. The hiring of a crime analyst and purchase of mapping software will help with this process.

Training

Training is currently the responsibility of a lieutenant, but scheduling training should be a civilian function.

There is little training outside of the mandatory forty-hour training that is paid for by the department—with a limited budget of only $18,000, this is understandable. The department does support members who wish to attend free training that is offered by the state or through regional partners like the New England State Police Information Network (NESPIN).Tracking of training is substandard due to the inability to categorize and extract the data for use in a meaningful way. The department could not provide training records in database format for review. If training records are logged into a computer but can't be analyzed (because output is only in PDF), this means that no one is reviewing training or career development plans. This needs to be corrected.

Department members expressed frustration over the lack of formal training opportunities. Some officers reported not only participating in training on their own time but also paying for the training themselves. Not only does lack of training impact morale, it also impacts operations. Lack of training puts the department at risk for making mistakes and incurring lawsuits.

The training room at headquarters is inadequate, with poor lighting and seating. It lacked flip charts, white boards, smart boards, and other basic training aids. This is at a separate off-site facility that is better than headquarters, but does not meet all the needs of a department. A new facility should also include a state-of-the-art training center that would serve for internal training and also create the ability to host regional training.

Equipment/Resources

Vehicles/Fleet

The fleet appears to be in poor shape. This is noted both from observations and interviews. A civilian fleet administrator should be hired, and fleet management software should be utilized to create reports on mileage and repairs. The department needs to create a process where each cruiser is checked at the start and end of each shift for key items and to record such things as mileage and concerns. This could easily be achieved with a simple online form that is input to a database and reviewed by supervisors.

A robust fleet replacement plan is required. The current fleet includes cars, motorcycles, trailers, and boats. The following table shows the number of cars in various mileage categories.

Table 7: Fleet—Mileage Analysis

Number	Mileage
21	under 50,000
45	50,001-100,000
36	100,001-150,000
35	150,001-200,000
11	over 200,000
Total	**148**

The cars reflected in the table do not include undercover cars, which are all high mileage vehicles. Given the nature of the work conducted in the undercover cars, their mileage is not a concern. The shape of the patrol fleet, however, is concerning. Direct observations and review of the mileage substantiated the claims of patrol that the fleet is in poor shape. A fairly aggressive replacement plan along with a concrete plan for rotation of vehicles is warranted. The city needs to evaluate the potential of a lease program to determine if that would be a more effective model. Another area to evaluate is which model of vehicle is best suited for the department. Currently, there is a wide variety of cars and utility vehicles in the fleet.

Computer Aided Dispatch/Records Management Systems

Accurate data is important for tracking the workload and efforts of the department. The NBPD uses IMC/Tritech for its Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and Records Management System (RMS). The CAD software captures information such as the time of the call, nature of the call, and the amount of time spent on the call, both for community calls for service and officer-initiated activities. The RMS captures information on the details of the call and the reports written by officers.

The department underutilizes the features of the IMC/Tritech CAD/RMS system, such as detailed billing, scheduling, contact management, and other similar administrative functions.

Management Information Systems

The department needs to modernize its Management Information Systems approach. The current practice of having a sworn officer is inefficient. The officer is trained in policing and best serves the community in that function. The ever-changing technology landscape and specific needs of policing require the attention of someone dedicated to technology—

not diverted by keeping police certifications. The position should also act as a liaison with outside vendors who perform specialized services such as door security or cameras.

Officers complained about the state of information technology, expressing that computers in the cars were failing and connectivity was slow. These issues were addressed during the study and in-car computers were replaced.

Other identified gaps included the following:

- Lack of an equipment maintenance plan. For example, it was stated that more cameras were needed because there were not enough and many were broken. While this may be true, the department was not able to produce an inventory sheet to back up this claim. A full tracking system of all equipment is needed.
- Department members complained that the "ShotSpotter" technology is good when it works, but maintenance issues are a problem as there are false positives that waste resources (this is discussed in a separate section on cameras and ShotSpotter).
- PSSG was not provided any budget information related to capital plans or current technology expenses. Both of these items must be reviewed.

Cameras and ShotSpotter

This section discusses cameras (both those to monitor police/community interactions and pole-mounted ones for solving and suppressing crime) and a review of ShotSpotter.

Body and Dash Cameras

The department does not employ dashboard or body cameras. Both would require a considerable investment by the city, but body cameras have proven valuable in improving community relationships and evaluating complaints against officers.

Dash cameras, which were popular when funding was available, are also not in use. Dash cameras help with filming what is occurring during traffic stops.

If the department decides to pursue only one option—body or dash cameras—PSSG recommends investing in body cameras as a more comprehensive solution.

ShotSpotter

The NBPD has deployed ShotSpotter for a number of years. As with many communities, the data provided by the department does not support the use of ShotSpotter because many incidents are inconclusive. ShotSpotter monitors suspected gunfire incidents with

an expected turnaround time of less than 30 seconds for reporting, which is less than the timing for reported calls to the communications center. However, the number of calls linked to actual shootings is low and the link to offenders is even lower. Despite the police department's failing camera system, the NBPD reports that success is greater with cameras than with gunshot detection systems.

Communities surrounding New Bedford, such as Fall River, have discontinued the use of ShotSpotter. Many communities agreed that the technology can help to identify where shots might be fired but is doing little to lead to arrests or convictions. In Hartford, Connecticut, ShotSpotter initially had a 10% success rate with identifying gunshot locations; however, the next year the rate decreased to 8%. Due to the lack of independent reporting and the proprietary nature of ShotSpotter, it is difficult to substantiate claims that the software program helps communities.

While PSSG remains vendor agnostic, there has not been a proven value for this system in New Bedford. This does not diminish the capabilities of the company, but speaks to the lack of performance measures and success in New Bedford. Investments in long-range pole-mounted cameras and community programs appear to provide more benefit to the community at this time.

Fiscal Matters

Two areas are covered in the section: the operating budget and supplemental revenues from grants.

Budget

The department budget nearly doubled in twenty years, from approximately $12,500,000 to $24,800,000. Since 2016, there has been a $500,000 increase. The type of investment remains the same, with personnel consuming much of the budget. Only a small amount of funding is dedicated to training ($18,900), which is inadequate for a department of this size. The fleet is also underfunded at $200,000 per year (even the $320,000 allocation in 2017 was still inadequate).

Given the age and shape of the fleet (as discussed in the fleet section), investment is needed. Care should be taken not to over-purchase at any one time, but rather to stagger the purchases so drastic budget increases do not occur in the future to again replace cars. As noted, a lease program also warrants review.

While public safety is often the largest municipal expense outside of schools, the NBPD is not adequate based on current needs related to training and professional development as well as the need to hire some civilian positions to help increase operational efficiencies.

Grants and External Funding

The NBPD has secured numerous grants including the Shannon Grant, Safe and Successful Youth Initiative, Opioid Reduction, State E911, and traffic safety-related grants. The department has done a good job of establishing a grant program, but less so with its implementation and tracking or with the involvement of the department in the philosophy of the grants underway.

Grants should support operations and be based on identified needs. When a problem-based approach is used for grants, the effort to implement them is minimal because the initiatives are based on issues important to the community and department. Department members expressed frustration about the grants as they did not feel there was enough information on what the grants were about. Many stated that these grants' goals were not shared with department members.

The grants themselves were extremely unorganized. There was not an overall list of grants with name of the grant, granting agency, start date, end date, budget (starting or current amounts), or summary of activities. Grant files were not organized and reporting and billing appeared to have missed deadlines.

There is also not a grant committee in place, resulting in grant proposals being written in a vacuum. This results in poor acceptance by the department members and less than optimum implementation. Including more department members with strategy development will help in this area.

Communications Center

The Communications Center is run by the police department. Fire dispatchers are now coming onsite to the police center to dispatch calls.

The dispatch sergeant is also the booking sergeant. There is not a need to have sworn personnel in the Communications Center, nor does it need a sworn supervisor. Having a person oversee both booking and communications is ineffective. If a number of bookings occur, that supervisor is diverted from supervising communications. The dual responsibility can also cause a liability issue. If the department has determined there needs to be a supervisor in communications and that person is in booking during a critical incident, actions could be questioned. If the department believes it needs a separate

booking officer, their duties can be combined with other ancillary duties. A time analysis should be conducted to determine the time available for other duties for the booking officer (e.g., firearms, fingerprinting, etc.). Some departments use civilian booking officers; the NBPD may want to research this option. At the very least, the chain of command for communications should be separate from that of operations and in the future should be staffed only by civilians.

The department should investigate a combined police and fire dispatch at an offsite location or as part of a separate section of a new facility in keeping with the goal of the Massachusetts E-911 department. Further, New Bedford should consider becoming a regional dispatch center: The chief is actively pursuing this potential. Regionalizing is occurring across the state and the state E911 department supports it, so it is important that the department continue to pursue this concept.

Detectives and Specialized Units

There are 43 members assigned to the detective and related specialized units. Detectives in all subunits report understaffing. This is not an uncommon complaint. Unfortunately, the department does not use a case management system, so there was not any information to review. Not only did this limit review, it also makes it impossible for a supervisor to properly evaluate caseload or case management. A supervisor should be able to create reports at least weekly on the number and type of cases per detective and how long a case has been open, and thus easily determine things such as the number of witnesses and victims interviewed. Based on the review, the chief has implemented a new case management process.

Assignments to specialized positions appear to be indefinite. While those holding the positions gain both operational and institutional knowledge, those in some positions (such as juvenile sexual assault investigator) suffer burnout due to the nature of the investigations.

Detectives work the day shift and most of the Criminal Investigative Bureau begin at 4PM. The department should create more integrated hours.

The various investigative units and specialized units such as gang, juvenile, and criminal investigations should be more integrated than they were in the past; the organizational chart has shifted to conform with this practice.

Investigation and Unit Redundancies

The ID Division traditionally lifts fingerprints and takes photographs of crime scenes, which was reported as being redundant with Massachusetts State Police (MSP) Crime Scene Services. The department needs to delineate which services the ID Division will perform and which the MSP will perform. It is understandable that the MSP might handle specialized homicide cases, but routine casework should be handled internally. The department should investigate placing that type of work with civilian forensic technicians to process crime scenes when MSP is not providing the service.

Previously, the Gang Unit and Drug Unit were not under the same leadership as the detective Unit. This created a disconnect because the two are often linked. Fostering a higher level of collaboration and interaction between all detective units would enhance operations and allow them to seamlessly conduct joint initiatives: That command structure now exists.

Domestic Violence

This unit reports spending most of its time on sexual assault cases. There are currently three civilian advocates for the unit. Effort needs to be placed on providing additional staff in this area and on rotation out of the unit. From a wellness perspective, members of this unit should be provided support due to the nature of the cases. While there is a traditional Employee Assistance Program, there is not an active wellness committee in place in the department. Creating one could help with this issue.

School Resource Officers (SROs)

The SROs appeared engaged and informed. The schools reported that their relationships with the department were positive and discussed several programs/grants that are underway. While many program efforts are underway, all program and grant efforts need to be compiled, summarized, and circulated because little is known about the efforts outside of the schools and SROs.

Both community members and school representatives expressed the need for more SROs. The allocation of additional officers would require increased revenue from the city. Many communities split the allocation between the municipal and school budgets.

Marine/Harbor Patrols

Community members felt there could be more visibility in this area. The department is dedicating resources, but it is a large area and very resource-dependent. There was a summer emphasis to increase staffing that included a rotation for the position in 45-day

intervals. Efforts should be placed on defining the position and integrating some harbor foot patrols into the effort.

K-9

Current K-9 deployment includes dogs that are explosives certified, but not narcotics certified. Given the narcotics problem in the city, the department should consider a narcotics dog. While training is extensive and there is a cost for the K-9, the addition could support both patrol and investigative functions. A position to address this was posted during the study.

Animal Control

This unit appears to be understaffed based on interviews with the department members and feedback from the community meetings. The number of animal control officers has decreased from three to two positions. Frustration was expressed over the length of time it takes for the Animal Control Officer (ACO) to respond to calls. To address this concern the again has a third ACO was hired.

Print Shop

This should be a position that is stable and not a revolving door of cadets. It would be helpful to have a civilian take on this responsibility.

Community Engagement/Community Policing

The chief is committed to values partnership development and conducting outreach within the community. Some individual officers and the SROs do embrace the concept; however, the department as a whole does not support this approach in daily activities. During many interviews and during community meetings, reference was made to a particular lieutenant who has since retired. This person, who was known to PSSG, had specialized training in community policing and was a proponent of the philosophy. The approach this person used is similar to how the chief envisions policing under his administration. Despite the department having incorporated some aspects of community policing in the past, the concept was never integrated into all department operations.

Despite the focus of the chief on community engagement and community policing, feedback suggests that these areas are lacking and are not embraced department-wide. The chief is ambitious and committed, but does need both to raise the expectation that other department members become as community-focused as he is and to delegate responsibility to others. The hiring of a chief of staff to assist the chief with efforts such as this would help.

Currently, the chief is involved with or on the boards of the following: Greater New Bedford Women's Center, Community Connections, Legal and Protective Services, Gifts to Give, and the Greater New Bedford Multi-Discipline Opioid Task Force, among others.

New initiatives are underway, such as the Law Enforcement Addiction Diversion (LEAD) program; there is also a juvenile assisted diversion program for those ages 11-24. The various programs are not structured as part of operations, which would allow the program to be embraced by the department or tracked in such a manner that all the efforts could be evaluated both independently and jointly. While training is occurring and efforts are being made to inform the department during roll calls, full integration will take time.

The chief is active in many community groups and participates in several boards, but the efforts are not integrated across the agency. Simple things are lacking, like a department database of community contacts, a list of all committees with a description of the work and contacts, a catalog of programs, and descriptions of community resources. While the chief has some contacts, the lack of a department-wide database speaks to the lack of ongoing initiatives and connections. When it came to setting up community meetings, there was difficulty organizing them. This was surprising because many grants require a level of community engagement. Also, there are ten community groups that the chief reports department members routinely meet with. There is lots of ongoing collaboration and partnership-developing, but due to staffing, such linkages have not occurred throughout the department. A chief of staff could help in this area to ensure that stakeholders and resources are tracked and integrated in department efforts that include more personnel than just the chief.

Many department members reported being unclear as to the purpose of some programs, which could be rectified with more communication. "Park and walks" were discussed, but these appear to be met with internal resistance. Community members, however, welcomed the visibility but feel it is inconsistent. The inconsistency is likely due to the different emphasis placed on the effort by the various captains in patrol.

There are efforts underway to enhance community engagement through a "Meet the NBPD" video series, participation in (bilingual) radio shows, and the Portuguese TV channel 20. The chief's vision was known to many community members (who reported having his personal contact number as a measure of his level of caring), but it was also believed that the department as a whole is trailing in this area.

A community coordinator should be hired to assist the chief with implementing his vision, making connections with the community, and involving the department in the effort.