Judge Sawako T. Gardner
Chairperson

State of New Hampshire

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John V. Scippa
Director

Full Text Remarks of John V. Scippa, Director
New Hampshire Police Standards and Training Council
House Public Works and Highways Committee, Capital Budget Hearing for FY26, FY27
Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Good afternoon. For the record, my name is John Scippa. I am the Director of New Hampshire Police Standards and Training. Our mission is to shape, strengthen and sustain the competency and professionalism of New Hampshire Law Enforcement in service to our state. The Police Standards and Training Council regulates the hiring, educational and certification standards for all police, state corrections, and probation-parole officers in New Hampshire. We operate the NH Police Academy which all municipal police, county sheriff deputies, state troopers, conservation officers, liquor investigators and other full-time law enforcement officers must attend to become certified as a full-time police officer in this state. We also operate the part-time officer basic training classes 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 in order to obtain corrections officer certification.

We also provide 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.

As part of our responsibility for regulating over 4000 certified officers in our state, we convene and rule on disciplinary hearings that may suspend or revoke the certification of officers that have violated Council rules or committed a crime or an act of moral turpitude.

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 conflicts of interest with our regulatory function and decertification duties.

We provide services with 28 full-time and 11 part-time positions, which includes sworn staff, administrative and 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.

Present Facility Conditions

We are in desperate need of more classroom and office space as well as a more secure facility public entrance. 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.

FY26 Capital Budget Request

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

Project #1: NH Police Standards & Training is in urgent need of physical security improvements for recruits, in-service training officers, guests, civilian employees, and training specialists. The main building was designed and constructed in the early 1980's with no consideration for restricting access to the facility. The facility regularly has over 100 unarmed police officer recruits and corrections officer recruits as well as many unarmed instructors and actors for scenarios that are providing recruit training. We also have unarmed full time and part time civilian staff. Restricting access to only those authorized is imperative to the safety and future continued success of the mission of PST. This project would provide for the installation of doors in hallways leading from the lobby and recruit dormitory rooms that currently have unrestricted access to anyone from outside the building. The project would also add doors and access control in the main entrance of the facility and provide cameras and intercom capabilities to allow PST staff to control entry to the facility. PST has previously requested security improvements in the FY24/FY25 capital budget process and was denied during the Governor's phase. We respectfully request that this important security project be approved for the FY26/FY27 capital budget. The total request is $480,000 and is included in the Governor's capital budget.

Lapse Extension Request #1: We request a lapse extension for the appropriation made to the Police Standards and Training Council in **2019, 146:1, XIV, A for Boiler Replacement**, which was amended by HB1043, 2024 session, to include replacing our Tactical Center floor, and facility improvements (boilers, controllers, a/c replacements, range). 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. This delay is due to DAS-Public Works prioritizing ARPA projects above capital funded projects. This project was included in the extension list in the Governor's capital budget. Therefore, we respectfully request that this project be extended. There is a current available balance of $125,280.89 in this account, 06-87-87-870030-13280000.

Lapse Extension Request #2: We request a lapse extension for the appropriation made to the Police Standards and Training Council in **2023, L23:1XII1-Move VirTra Simulator**. This project will move the VirTra simulator to an existing outbuilding and reclaim classrooms #3 and #4 back to their original state, and it will provide us with two classrooms to hold in-service classes, use as an academy breakout room and provide room for scenario training. This project was included in the extension list in the Governor's capital budget. There is a current available balance of $300,000 in this account, 06-87-87-870030-59530000.

Lapse Extension Request #3: We request a lapse extension for the appropriation made to the Police Standards and Training Council in **2023, L23:1XII2-Cnvrt Brkrm to Clsrm**. This

project will also allow us to add an additional office for staff, and it will provide us with an additional classroom to hold in-service classes, use as an academy breakout room and room for scenario training. This project was included in the extension list in the Governor's capital budget. There is a current available balance of $150,000 in this account, 06-87-87-870030-60070000

Conclusion

We are respectfully requesting one Capital Improvement Project to address our urgent need of physical security improvements to the public entrance for recruits, in-service training officers, guests, civilian employees, and training specialists. We are also requesting (3) lapse extinsions for our existing and approved funding for three capital projects that have been delayed by NH DAS-Public Works that will provide more classroom space so that we can adequately address the present and future training needs and mandates for New Hampshire Law Enforcement.

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