



## Buckland Shelburne Shared Services

### NEWS RELEASE

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### **Buckland and Shelburne select boards issue joint statement supporting shared police services & seek community support through public outreach plan**

**Buckland and Shelburne, Massachusetts [October 11, 2022]:** On October 11 at a joint meeting, the Boards of the Towns of Buckland and Shelburne voted in support of a motion to develop a formal agreement to share Police services. The Boards further affirmed their support for the previously approved Interim Agreement, which shares administrative Police services. The Boards also endorsed a public input and engagement process to allow for transparency and community discussion.

At the 2023 Annual Town Meetings, the towns of Buckland and Shelburne will be asked whether they want to move forward with shared police services. Sharing began with an interim agreement on April 1, 2022, with Shelburne Police Chief Greg Bardwell becoming the Chief of Police in both towns through June 30, 2023. Town officials are looking for formal community support for some additional form of shared police services.

Police reform enacted by the Massachusetts state legislature is a major factor spurring small towns toward sharing police services. In December 2020, Governor Charlie Baker signed, "An Act Relative to Justice, Equity and Accountability in Law Enforcement in the Commonwealth Massachusetts," otherwise known as the Massachusetts police reform law. This law requires many changes to police work statewide, some of which have a substantial impact on small town police departments. Police reform requires all police officers to receive a high level of training and certification. Communities that historically

relied on part-time officers to fill gaps in service will need to pay for fully trained and certified officers, regardless of their work schedule. The costs of providing police services are likely to go up. The Buckland and Shelburne Select Boards are looking for a way to comply with the law without causing unnecessary cost burdens on their residents, though an increase in cost is still likely.

Town officials are hopeful that by sharing police services, the citizens of both communities will have:

- Better police services in general;
- More consistent and professional police coverage in both towns;
- A police force that is better trained and educated, particularly in modern policing techniques and approaches; and
- The option for officers to train in specialty fields (for example: detective work, community outreach, search and rescue, crash reconstruction, domestic violence intervention, etc.).

The Commonwealth's police reform law will likely increase the costs of policing for most Massachusetts communities. The Select Boards of Shelburne and Buckland hope that by sharing police services, the cost impact will be lower than if each town were to comply with the law on its own. Buckland and Shelburne already share regional schools, libraries, sewer, water, fire, senior services, veterans' services, health services, and building inspection.

The first step in the 2-town public engagement process will be a Public Forum to seek resident input on shared police services. The Public Forum will be held November 16<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. at Buckland-Shelburne Elementary at 75 Mechanic Street in Shelburne Falls. Residents of Buckland and Shelburne are invited to attend. In the coming weeks, additional information will be provided regarding future public input opportunities. For more information, please contact Chief Greg Bardwell at 413-625-0304 ext. 5 or [gbardwell@TownofShelburneMA.gov](mailto:gbardwell@TownofShelburneMA.gov)

