



POLICE MONTHLY REPORT

To: Richard Bronson, Town Manager
From: Lee Miller - Police Chief
Date: May 1st 2025
RE: Police Department Report for April 2025

Police Department Updates

Message from Chief Miller

As we move into spring, things are going very well at the Lincoln Police Department. I'm pleased with the progress we're making and proud of the direction we're heading. One of our top priorities is building a culture that encourages people to stay, grow, and thrive within our department.

This month, we launched quarterly check-ins—a new initiative where supervisors meet one-on-one with each team member. These aren't just mini evaluations. They're meaningful conversations that help us understand what's going well, what challenges need to be addressed, and what each employee hopes to accomplish. Just as importantly, they give us a chance to ask, "Why do you stay?" While exit interviews are helpful, "stay interviews" give us the opportunity to retain good employees before they decide to leave.

Retaining quality people takes more than just one thing. It takes competitive pay, a positive work environment, solid training, the right equipment, and—perhaps most importantly—a genuine sense that our people are cared for and supported. When employees feel valued and equipped to do their jobs well, they're more likely to stay and succeed. This kind of culture doesn't happen overnight, and it can't be created by one person alone. I can lead the effort, but it requires buy-in and commitment from every level—our supervisors, patrol officers, town leadership, and council. Together, we can create a department that people are proud to be a part of—a place where they feel respected, challenged, and supported.

By working together and focusing on the complete picture—not just one area—we can continue to build a department that serves the community with excellence and integrity.

Policies and Administrative

We're nearing completion of our policy review and publication process in PowerDMS, our department's policy management system. All current policies have been signed off by each officer in the system.

Policies and Administrative cont....

The next step in my policy learning process involves incorporating policy-based quizzes.

I approach policy through a risk-frequency lens. For example, a high-speed pursuit represents a **high-risk, low-frequency** event. While rare, the stakes are high—making it critical that officers are well-trained and fully understand the applicable policy. These types of policies will be a focus for ongoing review and targeted training.



In contrast, **low-risk, low-frequency** policies—while still important—pose less danger if a mistake occurs. Understanding this difference helps us prioritize our training efforts and reinforces why consistent policy training is essential to officer readiness and public safety.

I've also scheduled our **Incident Review Committee** meeting for late May. This committee includes a police chief, a State Police Lieutenant, a mental health professional, a local college professor, and a community member. I personally selected these individuals based on their diverse expertise and perspectives.

The purpose of the committee is to review the recent officer-involved shooting and provide recommendations related to **policy, training, and tactics**—highlighting both what was done well and where we can improve. The committee will not assess whether the shooting was justified—that responsibility lies with the Attorney General. Instead, their focus is on how we can grow and improve as a department.

Once complete, I will share the committee's findings with you. Their report will also be included in our **end-of-year summary**, much like the report that was added to the January Monthly Report.

Trainings

We recently completed department-wide training on tourniquet use. Until now, our officers were not trained in their application and were not carrying them. This is a critical piece of life-saving equipment that should be standard issue. We are in the process of acquiring mounts for the tourniquets, and once received, all officers will be equipped with them.

In addition, we've been participating in a training series through the Maine Municipal Association focused on our PowerDMS platform. This seven-part course, spread over several months, centers on "Fitness for Duty." It covers key topics such as physical fitness, nutrition, sleep, and mental wellness — all vital components of a healthy and resilient workforce.

Finally, congratulations to Officer Milner, who has successfully completed his drone certification.

Patrol Highlights

The body cameras have arrived and are fully set up. We're currently waiting on the correct mounts to attach them to the vests, as the initial ones sent were incorrect. I'm in the process of setting up the signal devices for the holsters, and those will be ready soon. The policy is finalized, and officers are undergoing training on camera usage. I expect everything will be fully operational by mid-month. This is a significant step forward for our department.

April was Dispatch Appreciation Week, and we're very fortunate to work with the Penobscot Regional Communication Center. I've had the privilege of serving on their board, and the Director has made excellent progress toward achieving full staffing. We're grateful for their continued partnership and professionalism.

April also included Administrative Professionals Day, and we're incredibly lucky to have Britny on our team. She's far more than just an administrative assistant—she is truly the backbone of our department. Britny handles a wide range of responsibilities, from report management, redactions, and FOIA requests, to managing court communications, video evidence (soon including body camera footage), and overseeing our case filing and closeout process.

Patrol Highlights Cont.

She keeps the entire department on track, and her work is invaluable. A card and flowers are a small gesture compared to the tremendous impact she has on our team.



Community Outreach

This past month, I had the opportunity to teach a class at Region III's Criminal Justice program. These are high school students with a strong interest in law enforcement, and I hope this marks the beginning of a lasting relationship with the program.

I also met with Paul Spescha, the manager of Walmart. He gave me a tour of the facility, and we discussed potential grant opportunities Walmart may be able to support. I'm currently exploring those options to help fund some of our department's future needs.

Officer A. Winslow has taken the lead on organizing our first *Tip-A-Cop* event. We stopped by Foresters, and they've generously agreed to partner with us for the event. Officers will be helping to serve on May 8th from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM. This is a great opportunity to connect with the community—we hope to see you there!

We're continuing to encourage our officers to take leadership roles in community projects:

- Officer Milner is heading up the Loon Festival Parade. I'm excited to work with him on this, drawing on my previous experience organizing similar events.
- Sgt. Winslow is planning a *Fishing with Cops* event in June. We're partnering with other agencies and

Community Outreach Cont.

- organizations to make this a fun and memorable day for families.
- Officer Peters is teaming up with Shawn to bring *National Night Out* to Lincoln in August. We're still in the early planning stages, but this has the potential to be a fantastic community event.

Lastly, we're bringing back our leg of the *Special Olympics Torch Run* in June—a great tradition that we're proud to support.

Grants

This month, I've submitted several grant applications to support critical equipment needs for the department and were approved for a printer grant.

We're pleased to announce that Highway Safety has approved a \$3,600 grant to purchase six in-cruiser printers for the department. These printers will enable us to fully implement the eStop (eCitation) system for issuing both warnings and citations.

This upgrade streamlines our operations and directly supports compliance with the mandatory data reporting requirements that took effect in July 2024 under **Title 5, Chapter 337-D**

(<https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/5/title5ch337-D.pdf>). With eStop, officers can now enter data directly into the system during a stop, and it will automatically transmit the required profiling and data collection information to the Attorney General's Office. This eliminates the need for manual data collection and significantly improves accuracy and efficiency in reporting.

One of the key grants is through Firehouse Subs, aimed at replacing our aging mobile and portable radios. I've built a strong relationship with Derek, the owner of the Bangor franchise, and he was instrumental in helping us secure a similar grant during my time in Old Town. I'm hopeful we'll be successful again, though it's a very competitive grant. Fortunately, there will be another opportunity to apply if we aren't selected in this round.

We're also preparing for the upcoming DOJ Bulletproof Vest Partnership grant, which will help cover 50% of the cost of our ballistic vests. These vests are essential safety equipment and have a five-year service life.

Grants Cont...

In addition, I'm pursuing a couple of grant opportunities for AEDs and working with the local Walmart manager to activate the Walmart Spark Grant, which could provide funding for various community safety initiatives.

Another grant I've submitted is for a radar/message board. This equipment would allow us to post safety messages in key areas of town while also collecting speed data to help identify and address speeding concerns. It would be a valuable asset not only for traffic enforcement but also for community events like Loon Fest.

Lastly, I've applied for a federal grant to fund several LPR (License Plate Reader) units. Other communities are applying as well, and if awarded, this technology would significantly enhance our ability to solve crimes and monitor activity in town. For example, in cases of home burglaries or Silver Alerts, LPRs can help us track vehicle movement and provide investigative leads. They would also be a useful tool in combating drug-related activity.

Staffing

We currently have three conditional offers of employment out. Two of the candidates have completed the background process and are now awaiting their polygraph exams. Unfortunately, polygraph scheduling has taken longer than usual due to the availability of the examiner. Once those are completed, the candidates will move on to their psychological evaluations, followed by a physical exam before officially starting. Our goal is to have them enrolled in the August academy.

The third candidate is still in the background phase, and we are actively gathering the necessary information. Of the three candidates, two are local, and one is from out of state and looking to relocate to the area.

In addition, the Lincoln Police Department is welcoming a summer intern, Josiah Burns, a student from Eastern Maine Community College who just completed his first year. I've had a very successful internship program in the past, which has led to the hiring of former interns as full-time officers. So, what does an intern do? Interns assist with a variety of tasks. One important project this summer will involve organizing and archiving old records. Some of these documents can be destroyed in accordance with retention policies, while others will be digitized and uploaded into PowerDMS. I aim to work with multiple colleges to bring in one or two interns each year. These internships provide valuable experience for the students and help us complete projects that we might not otherwise have time to tackle.

Staffing Cont.

Lastly, the Animal Control Officer (ACO) we hired when I first started has chosen not to continue in the role. Given the initial challenges we faced finding qualified applicants, I explored alternative solutions and was able to secure a three-month trial period with the regional ACO through Penobscot County.

After analyzing our call volume, I found it comparable to Old Town's, making this a practical and scalable option. Penobscot County bills for ACO services based on hourly rates and mileage, with the officer based in Greenbush. Instead of paying a weekly wage, we'll be invoiced quarterly—only for the services we actually use.

This setup offers immediate cost savings. We no longer need to maintain a dedicated ACO vehicle, which cost us over \$2,400 in upkeep last year alone. It also reduces our administrative burden, eliminating the need for employee onboarding, ongoing training, compliance with Bureau of Labor standards, and associated liabilities.

We've talked to the officers regarding which calls should be referred to the ACO and which can be managed internally. For example, barking dog complaints will continue to be handled in-house.

Currently, our budget includes \$9,700 for ACO services. I've increased that to \$11,200 for FY2025 to account for projected use under the new structure. Notably, the original \$9,700 did not factor in vehicle-related expenses, so we still anticipate cost savings. By mid-May—after the first month of service—I'll have a more accurate picture of actual expenditures and effectiveness.

Detective's Office

Each month, I continue to be impressed by how busy Detective Jacobs is and the complexity of the cases he's handling. Currently, he is working on a fraud case involving over \$300,000. This investigation has required collaboration with an out-of-state agency as they work together to bring the case to prosecution. The Lampson case has now reached a resolution. Mr. Lampson was sentenced to five years in prison, with all but one year suspended, followed by probation upon his release. While Detective Jacobs and I had hoped for a longer prison term, we were very pleased with the work done by the District Attorney's Office and the Victim Advocate's Office. They did an outstanding job communicating with the victims,

Detective's Office Cont.

keeping them informed, and considering their input throughout the process.

This case involved over 100 separate incidents and more than \$60,000 in losses. Without Detective Jacobs' expertise, determination, and attention to detail, we may not have seen the successful outcome that was achieved.

In recognition of his outstanding work on the Lampson case, Detective Jacobs was nominated by Chief Leonard for a statewide honor. At the May conference of the Maine Chiefs of Police, he will be presented with the *Outstanding Contribution to Law Enforcement Award*. A copy of the award letter is included.

We are very fortunate to have Detective Jacobs on our department. Since my arrival, I've seen firsthand his dedication and commitment to justice. He has a remarkable ability to dig into complex cases and see them through to the end. Simply put, he is one of the best at what he does.

LD Laws and Case Law

I wanted to bring your attention to LD 1410 – An Act to Provide Due Process in the Confiscation and Destruction of Personal Property of Unhoused Persons. This bill, currently in the Judiciary Committee and expected to move to a work session soon, has significant implications for law enforcement operations.

Under this proposed legislation, if we encounter an unhoused person living on public property, we may be required to issue a notice before removing them. Additionally, if they are unable to take all of their belongings with them, we would be obligated to store those items and possibly hold a hearing—even if the individual does not attend. Regardless of whether a hearing occurs, we may be required to keep the property for a minimum of 90 days.

This creates multiple concerns. First, it potentially places officers in unsafe situations by requiring them to inventory and document a wide array of personal belongings. Second, it places a considerable logistical and financial burden on our agency to store items indefinitely. Most concerning is the liability: if we fail to properly store or inadvertently destroy an item, the agency could face penalties of up to \$2,000 per item.

The bill also introduces confusion regarding the definition and handling of abandoned property. Determining ownership and providing adequate notice to individuals without fixed addresses presents practical challenges. There's also a risk that property disposed of in good faith could later be contested.

I urge careful consideration of the impact this bill may have on public safety and department resources

Law Enforcement in Action how we do the Job!

This month, I want to talk about the hiring process and what it takes to become a police officer.

It's no secret that hiring in law enforcement has changed significantly over the years. Back in the late '90s and early 2000s, agencies often received over 100 applications for a single position. Today, we're lucky to get just a handful. That's why we consider ourselves fortunate to have three conditional offers extended right now.

So, what is a *conditional offer*? Simply put, it allows us to take the next steps in evaluating a candidate more thoroughly. Once the offer is made, candidates sign several forms that grant us permission to collect background information. They also complete a detailed 20-page Personal History Statement, a Pre-Polygraph Questionnaire, and a Conditional Offer Letter outlining the rest of the process.

Given how busy Detective Jacobs is, we use a background investigation company to help speed things up. The company is owned by a former law enforcement professional and does excellent, thorough work—often more cost-effectively than if we were doing it in-house.

If the background check is successful, the next step is the polygraph exam. This is a tool to verify truthfulness and identify any disqualifying conduct. We understand that people make mistakes—what we're looking for is honesty and accountability.

Next is the psychological evaluation. It's a two-day process: the first day involves a written assessment to evaluate mental fitness for the job, and the second day includes a face-to-face interview with a licensed psychologist to review the results.

After passing the psychological exam, candidates complete a physical and are eligible to start working. At that point, they can be placed on the list for the police academy, which runs twice a year—once in August and once in January.

While waiting for the academy, we try to get new hires through Phase I and Phase II of the part-time law enforcement course. Once those are complete, they can begin working on the road under the supervision of a Field Training Officer (FTO). Our FTO program lasts about three to four months.

The police academy itself is 18 weeks long, Monday through Friday. Upon graduation, officers earn their "blue pin," marking them as full-time certified officers.

From the initial background investigation to being fully on the road, the entire process can take up to a year. And even after that, it often takes about three years for an officer to feel truly confident handling the wide variety of calls we deal with.

Even after 20 years in this profession, I still occasionally come across a call that makes me pause and scratch my head. That's the nature of this job—it keeps us learning every day.

Monthly Stats: Law Incidents: 264, Traffic Stops: 119, Total Criminal Violations: 12