The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, July 13, 2021 began at 5:30 p.m. Remote participation due to COVID-19.

Members Present: William Rosenblum, Chairman, Derek Debarge, James Gennette, Antonio Goncalves, and Manuel Silva

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

Visitations:

5:30 Sergeant Interviews – Jason Chelo

Mr. Rosenblum: Alright tonight we have five interviews for the position of Sergeant in the Ludlow Police Department. We are just waiting on the first candidate to be brought in.

Mr. Goncalves: Hi Mr. Chelo, how are you?

Mr. Chelo: Good evening.

Mr. Rosenblum: Evening.

Mr. Gennette: Evening.

Mr. Rosenblum: Good evening Officer Chelo. How are you?

Officer Chelo: Good. Yourself?

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Mr. Rosenblum: Good. Congratulations. Thank you for coming in this evening. Congratulations for making it this umm, making it to the interview process. So, the way that we are going to do this tonight is that obviously you will have some opening remarks. The Board will go ahead and ask you a series of questions and then we'll allow for Chief Valadas and HR, Ms. Ribeiro to go ahead and make any comments if they have any and then you will have the floor for closing comments. So, the floor is yours.

Officer Chelo: Alright. Thank you. Alright, so good evening Chief Valadas, Board members. Obviously, my name is Jason Chelo. Thank you with providing me the opportunity to be considered for the position to Sergeant with the Ludlow Police Department. I began my career in law enforcement fifteen years ago with the Ludlow Police Department as a full-time officer and over that span of time, have taken on a variety of different roles. Actually, I just started my sixteenth year like five days ago. I worked on three different patrol shifts as well as specialized positions within the department including School Resource Officer and a short stent in the Detective Bureau as a Detective. I've been a member of the Special Response Team in Ludlow for many years and after being appointed team leader, I led my own team in what is now know as the Hampden County Regional Special Response Team for the past three years. In addition, I'm bilingual which has assisted me on many occasions when dealing with the Portuguese community in Ludlow. Most recently, I was appointed by Chief Valadas as a provisional Sergeant on the midnight shift and have held that position for the past year. During this time, I have helped newer Officers make decisions on calls, approve reports and mentored them on a daily basis. Over the past fifteen years that I have worked with the Ludlow Police Department, I have not only gained a tremendous amount of experience, but I continue to grow as an Officer every single day. In addition to experience, I have acquired an immense amount of respect from my fellow Officers and feel grateful to be given the opportunity to speak to all of you tonight.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you. Okay. Mr. Debarge,

Mr. Debarge: Yes.

Mr. Rosenblum: would you like to start off the questioning?

Mr. Debarge: Absolutely. Jay Chelo, how are ya?

Officer Chelo: Good. How are you sir?

Mr. Debarge: I'm good. Congratulations, welcome to the room.

Officer Chelo: Thank you.

Mr. Debarge: I always thought it would be a natural progression for you to be here anyways. So, congratulations.

Officer Chelo: Thank you.

Mr. Debarge: Alright. I'm going to umm, take something off your cover letter before I get into the questions that I have for tonight. Umm, as a team leader of the SRT and the members being A type personalities as they all are. How do you mitigate that? How do you, how do you navigate through those A type personalities in order to get the job done?

Officer Chelo: Well, as far as being a team leader, everybody comes to me when a decision needs to be ultimately made. But we have a bunch of guys on the team from various departments, like I have guys from Chicopee, I have a guy from Ware, I have some of the Sheriff's Department guys and each kind of specialize in their own little thing. We may have someone who's a breacher instructor, we may have a firearms instructor, we may have somebody that's more training in crisis. So, depending on what we think we are going to deal with, everybody wants to be here's what I'm going to do, we're going to do it this way. Kind of pick and choose, a piece from one person, a piece from another, put a plan together and kind of go that way. We really don't have the bickering or I'm the one that's going to make the decision, I don't care what you have to say no matter what you know or don't. It's kind of a team effort where we take bits and pieces from everybody.

Mr. Debarge: Okay. Alright, now I have seven questions for you. I'm kidding.

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Officer Chelo: Perfect.

Mr. Debarge: Alright, Police Sergeants have a multitude of responsibilities as you well know. One of those is interaction with the public, whether it be by phone or in person. Most all of you I know interact with the public in some way. What would you say are the top concerns for our community relating to police work?

Officer Chelo: Big one, I mean with the drug issues, the public cares about that one. Another big one would be the recent car breaks, car thefts, break-ins, things of that nature. I mean we try to educate the public as much as possible on things to prevent or things that they can do to help protect themselves. I mean everyone would love to leave their cars unlocked and have nothing wrong with it, but that's not where we are this day and age. So, the big part is education, getting out and showing the community you know here's some steps that you can take to protect yourself, which in turn helps us. But that's pretty much it, it's just making that relationship between the public and us, not so much the public and the Police Department being two separate things.

Mr. Debarge: Okay. Alright, if I was to ask your supervisor or even the Officers that you've worked with over a period of time, whatever period of time that would be, tell me about, what would they tell me about your leadership style? What are your leadership strengths, your leadership weaknesses and how would they respond in my conversation with them?

Officer Chelo: Start with the, the weakness, I'm kind of a pay attention to detail type person. When I first started there, that's how it was. I mean, I'm sure, I know Chief and yourself remember Officer Witowski, if the paperwork wasn't in order, he's probably throwing it at you and telling you to put it in order. I mean, I'm not at that level but everything needs to be done with a purpose. We can't have, you know, half a job done with you know this job has been under fire for the last year and a half, two years. If you go the full step it just protects you. So, I pay attention to detail and if my guys aren't up to level, you correct them on it, so that if they get into the habit of doing things 100% then you don't have to worry about them later on. If you let them get away with a little bit now and a little bit more often or later on you know, it's kind of teach an old dog new tricks type thing, it gets a little harder to bring them back.

Mr. Debarge: So, you're saying they'd tell me that that's what you would be saying to them?

Officer Chelo: Yes.

Mr. Debarge: Okay.

Officer Chelo: Now, a strength, I would say that, they can come to me with whatever they got. I don't care if they did something wrong, if they did something right. As long as they come tell me what happened, exactly what happened, then most of the time we can fix it, but if they don't then they're kind of putting themselves, putting themselves out on an island where you know your integrity is out the window and if I try to cover up for them then it kind of puts me in the same boat with them.

Mr. Debarge: Yes, it does. Okay. Good there.

Officer Chelo: Si.

Mr. Debarge: Alright. See this one I don't know which one to choose now. I have really good questions; I have a quandary with which one I'm going to go with as my third. So, you got to, you got to give me a second. Okay. Alright, Ludlow crime rate has grown 12%, I was doing some stat checking before doing this, so it's grown about 12% from 2018 to 2019. Umm, not to say that the stats weren't there for 2020 but I think 2020 would kind of be a push. So, also in the last five years, violent crime in Ludlow has risen while property crime has declined a bit. As a Shift Supervisor, how would approach this information going forward?

Officer Chelo: I mean as far as the violent crimes, a lot of that would be your domestics, your assaults. So, I mean we're getting sent to those, there isn't a lot that we can do to prevent, you know, some of these assault and batteries. If they're not happening in front of us, we're getting the calls after they're done. So, there isn't a lot that we can do except respond after the fact and then you know charge the person, the aggressor or both at times. So, that's the hard part with the violent crime, on how to get ahead of that piece and then the property crime is on the way down because I think people are starting to learn that you can't leave your stuff out. You got to,

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Mr. Debarge: You guys do a good job of educating people though, lock your cars,

Officer Chelo: You know, I mean we have Chief brought that message board out and it's you know lock your cars, keep your stuff secured and it will deter these people from coming around whoever it is that's stealing cars or breaking into cars. But the violent part is, like I said, if it's not happening in front of us, we're getting it second nature and we're responding to it after it's done.

Mr. Debarge: Okay. I guess I'll end there. I would love to ask my other one but...thanks Mr. Chairman, I'm good.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Mr. Debarge. Mr. Gennette.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Good evening Officer Chelo. How are you doing?

Officer Chelo: Good. How are you?

Mr. Gennette: Good. Thank you for stepping up. So, you know national sentiment towards the police lately, I mean you know, everybody knows, do you feel that you see a lot of that here in Ludlow? Are you guys feeling it locally?

Officer Chelo: I mean we did have that protest here not too long ago. Although they said it wasn't aimed at the Ludlow Police Department per se, it was more the national movement. Here in Town, I think we're pretty good. We're not catching a lot of the flack you know of what's happened say Minnesota, Wisconsin and all that. We're not catching a lot of that stuff. For the majority I think the public knows, at least the residents of Ludlow know that, we're there to help when called upon and we are going to help you no matter what side of the fence you're on. So, I think that they understand that were not out there to cause harm. You know if your calling us, you need something, we're going to show up. So, I don't, we're not seeing the big kickback in protests and you know every once in a while,

you get someone that's angry with you and tells you a few choice words or tells you, you're number one but as far as what's happened elsewhere, we're pretty good here.

Mr. Gennette: Do you think that that sentiment that's been out there for a little while changes you know how you interact in a situation whether it be good or bad, do you think it really has changed the dynamic of being out there?

Officer Chelo: No because we've, we have the amount of training that we do, it so there's de-escalation training, there's defensive tactics training, there's use of force trainings. So, that's kind of imbedded in us. So, that doesn't, nobody kind of flies of the handle and does something they shouldn't have done on a call or anything like that. So, I think the level of training we have and experience our guys get from you know higher ranking officers or more experienced officers on the way down kind of quells that, that part of something happening.

Mr. Gennette: So, for some of the younger officers that would be under your command if you got the position, you know would you offer them any words of wisdom in this area? Would you I mean what kind of, I mean there has to be some kind of a back and forth with your,

Officer Chelo: They've asked you know what the whole ifs this what ifs that and I go if someone is going to start screaming at you, it's kind of, screaming back at them is not going to solve anything. They're going to get louder; you're going to get louder and then eventually you are going to have a problem because who's going to be the first one to back down? So, I just tell them, handle everything as if you know that person personally. You don't need to go over the top. Sometimes coming down a little bit as far as a conversation, if they're yelling at you, coming down a little bit might bring them down a little bit and you'll get to the root of the problem because realistically who wants to deal with the police. I mean unless you're going there to help medically or something like that. Most of the time when we are getting called it's because someone's complaining about you. So, if you can bring them down, you get to the root of the problem then everything kind of solves itself and you didn't even really have to do anything.

Mr. Gennette: What do you think the biggest challenge facing the department is in the next two or three years. I mean what's coming down the pike, something that's brewing, something that's you know where could we improve even?

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Officer Chelo: Two to three years, I mean the drug issue, could it get worse, could it get better. I mean it kind of goes in waves, it's hard to tell. I mean we do have, obviously we have drugs in town, every community across USA has it. I know Chief is big on amping up the Detective Bureau for the Narcotics. You know try to go after these guys that are dealing or bringing this stuff in. So, I mean we're heading in the right direction. It's kind of hard to dictate two to three years from now, if it will kind of die down or it will ramp up, but I mean we're out there making traffic stops, searching cars, trying to figure out what's coming into town and what's not coming into town, who's bringing it, who's not. So, I mean for the next two to three years I'd say the drug issues and probably the car breaks and property crime stuff.

Mr. Gennette: Excellent. Thank you. Mr. Chairman I'm all set.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Mr. Gennette. Mr. Silva.

Mr. Silva: Yes, thank you. Jason, I can call you Jason, right?

Officer Chelo: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Oh, wait a minute you want to be called Sergeant since you're,

Officer Chelo: No.

Mr. Silva: Umm, I've known you for a long time. You've been on the force for fifteen years and can you just give us a traumatic experience and how you handled it on the job?

Officer Chelo: I mean, I've had a lot of traumatic things. I mean that's just part of, part of what we do. I mean a big one would be going to, I've gone to a death scene, whether it be natural or not, a car

accident or something like that but it's when you end up knowing the person and you've known them for X amount of years and then the family is there and you've hung out with the family. So, to try to do your job but also sympathize with the family and kind of keep those two things separate. Obviously being like the Portuguese community, they're calling the family first before they call us. By the time you get there the whole family is there. So, now you are trying to separate everybody from the deceased person because you still have to make sure that everything is legit, no fowl play or anything like that but your kind of playing both sides as far as being professionals, do your job, but also sympathize with the family and handle their part while letting them grieve, while you know grieving yourself because you knew that person.

Mr. Silva: Okay, thank you. Umm, Jay what one thing would you like to see the department implement?

Officer Chelo: We've started to do it, as far as, the community relations. We've had bike units go out. We've had, when I was in the school resource position, with all the schools, you go to the schools and you talk to the kids. I mean it's hard at first because they see you as Police and what they've heard on the news or elsewhere, the Police are bad. So, to try break down that wall of we are not bad, we are there to help. So, the community-based programs or the more guys that we can get out there knocking on businesses doors, events, things like that to kind of get the community and the Police Department as a whole, which Chief is big on. So, that's kind of already starting.

Mr. Silva: Umm, body cams are coming, umm, from everything else aside what's your, give us your position and your feelings on body cams.

Officer Chelo: I think that 99% of the time they're going to show the type of people that we actually interact with. So, there's 1% of every occupation on the planet that is just bad. It's just ours, when you make that mistake, it's usually someone loses their life. So, you see that side of the body cam footage but there's 99% of it that kind of goes our way, that shows here's the type of people that are out there now that we have to deal with, that people kind of turn a blind eye or never knew that that's what's out there. You know, the violent people, the people that will come after you. So, body cams in opinion, that's fine.

Mr. Silva: Thank you.

Officer Chelo: I mean it's going to show, it's going to show what we do and how we interact with certain levels of people.

Mr. Silva: Okay. Thank you. That's all I got.

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Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Mr. Silva. Mr. Goncalves.

Mr. Goncalves: Yes. Congratulations,

Officer Chelo: Thank you.

Mr. Goncalves: and like Manny, I've known you for a long time. I can think of a few fun times actually. I think waiting for a plane for two days in Boston to go on vacation,

Officer Chelo: It was a good time.

Mr. Goncalves: amazing, but umm, I've always been, the Chief knows, I am pro Detective Bureau. I spend a lot of time in Ludlow. My job is like yours probably, driving around, observing, talking to people. That's how I eat. Where do you rank the drug problem versus everything else going on in Town? What, is that the thing that you hope you're able to find a solution for every day when you're out there? Is the house break because there might be a drug problem connected? Is the car breaks a drug problem connection? Is the domestic coming back to that and do you think it's probably the root of all evil right now?

Officer Chelo: The drug thing definitely has a percentage of the property crimes, as far as the break-ins. You know, its people looking for something to sell, or change or whatever they can get their hands on to pawn and support their habit. I think, I don't want to speak for other people but I'm pretty sure

everybody in the room has known either personally or through a friend, somebody who's had an issue with substance abuse, at, it doesn't matter what level whether it's narcotics or alcohol. I don't, is there an end-all be-all solution to it, I don't think so. I mean we can just do what we can as well as everybody else, is educate people on you know the problems that are down the road. If it isn't, if the addiction isn't dealt with, umm, but the drug problem, it's a big one because I mean it affects people, you know not only the person who is the addict or their family but the public because they are breaking into things. You know it's a bigger, it stretches out, it's like dropping a rock in a pond. You know the initial splash is the addiction part but then the ripples go out to everybody else and their affected by it as well.

Mr. Goncalves: Yeah, and again I've said it, this Chief knows as well as the previous Chief. I think that's a real big problem in town and I think hopefully once that gets under control a lot of the other stuff will go away.

Officer Chelo: It would be great if there was the end-all solution to it. I don't think that will ever happen. I think that the only we can do is kind of shrink it.

Mr. Goncalves: Shrink it down, perfect.

Officer Chelo: Unfortunately.

Mr. Goncalves: So, in reading everybody's cover letter it seems that you have just a few more things in your, on your experience than a lot of the other applications. Maybe they're in there but I really didn't see them. So, besides that, just touch a little bit on this stuff I'm seeing, firearms, Glock armor, the, I know you did the school resource. Umm, you've been, you've worked as a Detective?

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Officer Chelo: That was a short,

Mr. Goncalves: Short period,

Officer Chelo: Yeah.

Mr. Goncalves: Umm, the Hamden County all that other stuff a little bit like besides you know, punching the time card and doing your patrol, some of the other stuff, what excited you the most maybe?

Officer Chelo: So, minus the actual patrol thing through the day shift, the second shift, the midnight. Umm, I was a firearms instructor for I'll say maybe eight, ten years, which Mr. Debarge got me started in it and then, so it was the firearms instructor and then with the firearms instructor thing you get sent to Glock armor school, which teaches you on how to work on the pistols, our firearms in case someone's breaks you can fix or if it is above your level of expertise then you ship it off. There's, I've also been a taser instructor, the School Resource Officer, umm I did that for three years, which was a blast. Dealing with the kids was, was awesome. Umm, and with the School Resource Officer part was the ALICE training. I was an ALICE instructor, which I don't know is everybody familiar with ALICE?

Mr. Goncalves: I have a girl that works in my office that's named Alice, I don't think that's,

Officer Chelo: It's different. It's just the in case of an intruder or something in the school, it's a process that teachers and students can take instead of just the traditional lockdown. So, they have other options and means to defend themselves or escape if that's their best option.

Mr. Goncalves: I think we actually got involved at one time at St. Johns.

Officer Chelo: St. Johns, yes. So, it's that. The Regional SRT team, the Special Response Team from Hampden County, they appointed me the, as a team leader for half of the team. We have roughly forty people from various agencies and I oversee half of them. So, not only did the Chief believe that I could, you know perform the duties of a Sergeant here, there are other agency department heads who believe that I have the qualities to run their personnel when it comes to the Hampden County Regional Team.

Mr. Goncalves: That's great. I'll just share something that you probably remember I think, Chief a few years ago when there was a situation on Center Street and somebody had gone into the woods that's

now Rosewood, umm I still picture this in my mind, you had some type of a machine gun I don't know what it was but,

Mr. Rosenblum: Can't say those words in Massachusetts.

Mr. Goncalves: well, you know what I'm talking about and I remember you putting the vest on and running up into the woods and it was like a TV show. I didn't think that really happened in Ludlow.

Officer Chelo: We didn't either.

Mr. Goncalves: Yeah, and I was amazed just to see you guys going up there with those guns to go get this guy and that was something else. Last question, curiosity just to see where your mind was, if you weren't a Police Officer right now what do you think you'd be doing?

Officer Chelo: I honestly don't think I'd be doing anything else. When I was, I'm going to say maybe eight, seven years old, played soccer my whole life, yeah, I know we're Portuguese and soccer that's your thing, but even through, like I said seven, eight, nine, ten, somewhere in that age range, we were the Ludlow Police. That was our sponsor, everyone, the whole town wore maroon jerseys, we wore blue. It had Ludlow Police on it and there were two officers who were our coaches and their sons played and that was Officer Witowski and Officer Fonseca. So, if one of them was coaching and the other one had to work, if he could, the other one would be there watching the game in his cruiser and after the game everybody is taking picture on the cars and hanging on the hoods, probably not allowed now but we'd be hanging all over those cars. So, you kind of grew up with those guys, you grew up around those types of people and you saw what they do and you looked up to them like heroes and that's kind of the path I took. It hasn't changed since. I grew up in Town, I know just about, I don't want to say everybody but a ton of people and grew up and born and raised here in Town and I don't see myself anywhere else.

Mr. Goncalves: Very good, thank you. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Mr. Goncalves. Mr. Chelo, congratulations again.

Officer Chelo: Thank you.

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Mr. Rosenblum: Umm, I'm going to start off with my easy one because Mr. Debarge kind of touched on it a little bit but looking a little bit inside yourself probably not so much with your professional lifestyle but what do you think I mean just like personally what your biggest weakness is?

Officer Chelo: Well, I guess I get on myself for certain things, whether, not, so taking the professional side out, the work part out of it even things at home. Like I just bought a house in town, remodeling it, trying to do as much as I can myself, when something goes wrong, not too happy about it. But, I expect, even out of myself, 100%, 100% of the time. I can get frustrated with myself at times when stuff you know, things don't go right like I said with the home improvement type stuff and that's probably my, I'd say my biggest weakness is kind of being hard on myself.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay.

Officer Chelo: But then that turns into, I expect the same out of everybody.

Mr. Goncalves: So, if you worked for yourself, you'd fire yourself a lot of times, is that it?

Officer Chelo: But then I'd have to hire myself like five minutes later.

Mr. Rosenblum: It's hard to find work nowadays, workers. Umm, okay thank you. How do you keep track of all the activities of a Police Department? I guess that goes into the actual role of a Sergeant.

Officer Chelo: Each Sergeant is given a certain amount of tasks and then you know that's, if I have three or four now for the past year as acting, those are my three or four things that I have to keep track of and each Sergeant will have their own and then we get together with the Chief every quarter and have a supervisors meeting and it's kind of a big table top type conversation about how's my areas of oversight

going. Then it will go to the next guy and then we kind of bounce around. So, it's kind of, everybody has their own couple things that they have to look after and then obviously it gets kicked up to the Chief and if improvements need to be made or things need to be changed then it gets changed.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay. Lastly, what trait do you believe is the most important to have as a Sergeant?

Officer Chelo: I guess just an overall like understanding because someone, a Patrolmen might come in after dealing with a call and just whether it went good, bad or indifferent and you hear it on the radio. So, I'm only getting bits and pieces of it, I wasn't there with him, so I don't know what happened. You know you kind of got to step outside of the boss/Sergeant chair and kind of listen to what happened instead of just saying you did this wrong or you did it right, kind of getting the whole picture. So, I guess understanding but I'm not getting the right word for it,

Mr. Rosenblum: Compassion?

Mr. Goncalves: That's what I was about to say.

Officer Chelo: compassion but it's just being able to stare at it from outside the box. Getting the whole picture of it.

Mr. Rosenblum: Objective. Objective.

Officer Chelo: Correct and then kind of forming you know here's what you should do, here's what you should have done, here's how were going to fix it, here's how we don't let that happen again.

Mr. Rosenblum: Alright. I'm good. Thank you very much.

Officer Chelo: Thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Chief.

Mr. Goncalves: Closing?

Mr. Rosenblum: Oh, closing no closing is at the end. You're messing me up.

Mr. Goncalves: Just making sure.

Mr. Rosenblum: You're making me question myself.

Mr. Goncalves: Just a question.

Mr. Rosenblum: Chief.

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Chief Valadas: I just want to let you know each candidate know and I will save my comments on each one at the end but each candidate must know that it's a Shift Supervisor position. So, you'll be assigned to a patrol shift and I want each one to know that. It's not a specialty position, you go into patrol. You are a Patrol Shift Supervisor.

Mr. Debarge: Great.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay. Your good? Okay. Closing remarks.

Officer Chelo: Thank you. So, Chief Valadas and Board Members thank you again for the opportunity to be considered for the open Sergeant position. I believe that with my time of service and vast experience, I possess the qualities necessary to be a leader within the Ludlow Police Department. Chief Valadas believed and put his trust in me to be a successful leader when he appointed me to the Provisional Sergeant's position for the past year. In addition to Chief Valadas, my role as team leader of the Hampden Country Regional Special Response Team shows a trust additional Chief's of Police and the Sheriff within Hampden County have in me to lead their officers during high stress situations, dangerous events and call outs when our team is called upon. The Town of Ludlow holds a special place in my

heart as it is where I was born and raised. My family lives in Ludlow, I now own a home in Town and couldn't imagine being a part of any other community. When I joined the Ludlow Police Department, I did so with the goal of helping and giving back to the community that has shaped me into who I am today. It would be an honor to continue to do so as a Sergeant in the Ludlow Police Department if given the opportunity. Again, thank you.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you. All set. Thank you.

Officer Chelo: Thanks.

Mr. Goncalves: Great, take care. Did you have another question?

Talking over each other.

Sergeant Interviews – Stephen Ricardi

Mr. Goncalves: Hi, how are you?

Officer Ricardi: Good yourself?

Mr. Goncalves: Good, thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Ricardi, how are you?

Officer Ricardi: Very well. Yourself?

Mr. Rosenblum: First of all, I'd like to say congratulations. I got some news that you're a new father?

Officer Ricardi: Thank you. Second, second daughter. Born about 24 hours ago.

Mr. Goncalves: Nice.

Officer Ricardi: So, it's been a wild couple of days so.

Mr. Rosenblum: Any sleep?

Officer Ricardi: Umm, not much.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay.

Mr. Goncalves: Oh, not you, your daughter.

Officer Ricardi: Oh, she sleeps great. Yeah, so hopefully they will be, I'll pick them up tomorrow morning and,

Mr. Rosenblum: Just say it's a reveal, you got a pink tie on.

Officer Ricardi: Yup. Girl dad.

Mr. Rosenblum: I got two.

Mr. Goncalves: I got two.

Mr. Rosenblum: Well, congratulations in making it into the room tonight and thank you for coming in. So, you've been in here before, you kind of know the procedure,

Officer Ricardi: Yup.

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Mr. Rosenblum: we will go ahead and let you have opening remarks and the Board will ask you questions.

Officer Ricardi: Okay.

Mr. Rosenblum: I know that the Chief has a quick statement umm that he'd like to say. He's going to hold his remarks until the end but he has one statement that he wants to make,

Officer Ricardi: Okay.

Mr. Rosenblum: and then if Ms. Ribeiro has anything,

Officer Ricardi: Yes.

Mr. Rosenblum: and then we will let you do your closing remarks.

Officer Ricardi: Sounds good.

Mr. Rosenblum: So, the floor is yours.

Officer Ricardi: Okay. So, my name is Steve Ricardi. I'm a life-long resident of Ludlow. I live in town with my wife, who works at the school system. We have two daughters now like you know. My oldest, Avery starts Kindergarten in the fall and Adison was born 3:58 yesterday morning so we are very excited and umm, so like I said we live in town. I started my police career in 2001 in Southwick where I worked as a reserve officer for about five years. In that stint I became a provisional full-time officer because the need was there for a year and a half. In 2006 I came to Ludlow. I've been here ever since. So, I just celebrated my 15th anniversary July 10th.

Mr. Debarge: Longevity.

Officer Ricardi: What's that?

Mr. Debarge: Longevity.

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Officer Ricardi: So, in 2009 I got assigned to the regional narcotics unit, which I've been on ever since. In 2010 I got assigned to the Ludlow Special Response Team, which has since merged regionally to the Hampden County Special Response Team and I've been on that since. I spent most of my career in the Detective Bureau. I got in there like 2010/2011 until I took an acting position on the midnight shift as an acting Sergeant, 13 months ago and that's pretty much my whole time-line of my professional career.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you very much. I'm going to start with Mr. Gennette.

Mr. Gennette: Umm, Officer Ricardi, thanks for coming in.

Officer Ricardi: Thank you.

Mr. Gennette: You know umm, recently with a lot of things that are going on in the community around national sentiment you know towards Police umm, I'm just wondering how you thought that has impacted Ludlow? Umm, if it's been kind of a big concern?

Officer Ricardi: I think, I think for Ludlow, it's not. I mean I think you always have to be cognizant of any national news or things that kind of touches your borders but like our Town is very supportive of Police you know. I mean I like anywhere there might be you know a little bit here and there that's not happy with how things happen or maybe they got a ticket or whatnot but predominantly all the people that I talked to and reach out to and reach out to me, it's the sentiment is, is not like the national umm sentiment like you described.

Mr. Gennette: Right. Do you, knowing that in the back of your head some things may have changed in the community, umm, do you change anything that you do during the day, like when you're dealing with people, is that in the back of your mind this could be a little different then it used to be?

Officer Ricardi: Umm, I think, I kind of just base everything on treating people the way that I want to be treated,

Mr. Gennette: Yup.

Officer Ricardi: and treat people with respect and I think umm, if you do that, you go a long way, you know. Umm, and just kind of like proceed that way.

Mr. Gennette: The reason that I ask that is because you know with you being a Sergeant, you're obviously going to have other officers' underneath you,

Officer Ricardi: Right.

Mr. Gennette: and I want to know kind of what you're relaying to them. What are some of the things, I mean actually you just said that so, umm, I'll move onto my next question, I think you accurately described that but what do you think is the biggest challenge coming up facing the Police Department?

Officer Ricardi: Police Department, umm, probably I would say staffing when it comes to drug, drug cases. I mean I, predominantly that's what I did throughout my career. So, it's kind of like near and dear to me and I think the drug cases and the drug addiction and drug crimes kind of like hits everywhere, you know. Umm, it's not, it hits families as far as like overdoses and deaths and we have to deal with that but it also hits with you know people that are breaking into houses aren't breaking into houses to pay their electrical bill, they're breaking into houses to support their habit, you know and that kind of like enfolds into now you have another victim where you know my mom's house got broken into two years ago. When she had stuff stolen that not of any value but stuff that she could never get back. You know, like some of her father's things or some things that we might of like given her like cards, Mother's Day cards and things like that. She had that taken you know. So, it's, the drug crimes and the drug related stuff is so wide spread and there's so many victims that you might not even think about that I feel like that's where the attention needs to be brought to, you know and there's only so many pieces that you can pull to do that with you know staffing that we have. I know that Chief Valadas is working hard to do that, that's a major push on his part, which I think is great. I think it's a for sure like a foreseeing move to like get ahead of the game and go that way.

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Mr. Gennette: I agree. Umm, how many, do you know how many staff will be under you if you had this position?

Officer Ricardi: Umm, usually we're running with seven, seven Patrolman underneath, umm, as far as like shifts go. So, like right now Sergeant Chelo and myself have seven, seven guys that work midnights with us.

Mr. Gennette: Excellent. I'm all set Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you. Mr. Debarge.

Mr. Debarge: Umm, one second. What's up?

Officer Ricardi: How you doing?

Mr. Debarge: I'm alright. How are you? Welcome back.

Officer Ricardi: Thanks.

Mr. Debarge: I have to find your, there you are. Okay, umm, taken from your cover letter,

Officer Ricardi: Yes.

Mr. Debarge: sorry. I highlight a bunch of stuff when I go through interview packets and things that catch my eye and stuff like that, may lead to a question or something like that. Umm, one thing in your cover letter that caught my eye was talking about your achievements but mostly your ability to

communicate those achievements are attributed to my ability to communicate with my supervisors and fellow Officers and most of all citizens and visitors to the town of Ludlow.

Officer Ricardi: Correct.

Mr. Debarge: What's your greatest ability in communication?

Officer Ricardi: To listen and to understand what people, the point that they want to get across and then if I need to get a point across the same way. You don't, I mean I guess certain people deal, respond to different things. You know, like so you might have to speak slower to someone or more harsh to someone or kind of like you know what I mean. Like people respond different to different stimuli, I guess you would say.

Mr. Debarge: Okay. Alright. Okay so you've been acting Sergeant now for,

Officer Ricardi: Thirteen months.

Mr. Debarge: over a year, okay. So, well as you well know then, Police Sergeants have a multitude of responsibilities. One of those is interaction with the public, whether it be by phone or in person. We all know that you interact with the public obviously, what would you say are the top concerns for our community in Ludlow relating to police work?

Officer Ricardi: Police work,

Mr. Debarge: So, if you were to poll a bunch of people in town, what do you think their greatest concern would be relating to police work?

Officer Ricardi: I would probably say one of the top has got to be the motor vehicle B & E's because there has been an uptick in those and you know stolen cars, it's been on the news, it's been everywhere. There's been rings going around. So, I feel like the people that I talk to that they're pretty concerned about that, you know like some people might forget to lock their car and they wake up and it's gone or you know or they just feeling of being violated where your, you might now have much in your car but you don't want anyone else in your car when you wake up in morning, going through your glovebox and your change thing and it just you know a couple bucks doesn't mean as much but feeling like your privacy was violated is big to a lot of people you know. So, I would think that probably would be one of top concerns of the town if you polled them.

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Mr. Debarge: Okay. Alright, if I was to ask your direct supervisor or even the officers on your shift, to tell me about your leadership style, what your strengths, your leadership weaknesses, umm how do you think that conversation would go? How would they respond?

Officer Ricardi: I think they would say that I'm someone that is not afraid to get their hands dirty and will be right beside them doing the work and you know whatever, even if it's grunt work or whatever that goes. Umm, I would say that weaknesses I think like last time we talked about this, I'm a pretty umm, orderly person and I kind like have my ways where I like things written a certain way, I like things organized a certain way and sometimes I find myself going in to like if someone is going to do something, I'll grab, no, no, no, I'll do it because I like it organized a certain way, which I'm trying to work on and be more, be better at that and I know that delegation is key and you can't do everything yourself. It's just like in my head I know that I like certain organized things and you know like if we're going away and my wife's like oh, I'll pack the car for you, I'm like no, no, no, I need to do that because I need to know where everything is and I want to pack it right. So, it's just kind of like,

Mr. Debarge: Oh, I don't know any husband that allows that.

Mr. Rosenblum: No.

Officer Ricardi: like you know one of those type of ticks, I guess.

Mr. Debarge: Step away from the vehicle. Put the bags down.

Mr. Rosenblum: Yup. Exactly.

Mr. Debarge: Alright. I like that. Oh, okay, I forgot which one I chose. Okay, I did a little statistical homework before the interview just on a couple of things. Umm, so, Ludlow crime rate has grown it says from the census that I looked at 12% from 2018 to 2019. Umm, I'm not saying that 2020 wasn't there but I didn't look because that year doesn't really count in my opinion. Umm, but over the last five years, violent crime has risen while property crime has declined a bit. So, as a Shift Supervisor sending your officers out, knowing what, knowing the information that I just gave you, umm, how would you approach this with the officers on your shift? Would you do anything different? Would you do anything,

Officer Ricardi: I don't, I mean, I don't necessarily think I would do anything particularly different. I mean, I guess violent crime could pop up anywhere. I mean if you wanted to kind of get ahead of the game you might, if you have extra people on, put them towards the bar area at closing or anything like that. You know or places like violent crime would or could take off. I mean umm, I'm sure if you looked at the 2020 stats, you'd probably see like an uptick in domestic violence because everybody during COVID was home alone or home with their family everybody got, you know that's what we saw, we saw an uptick in domestic violence. So, like with that type of violent crime, there's no way you would be able to pick out any type of house where you would drive by and be like Oh, I know somethings going to happen at this house at this time. You'd never be able to do that. So, I feel like for that you'd set yourself up for success by putting your people or you know maybe a couple extra people in areas that violent crime would you know have a propensity to take off.

Mr. Debarge: Okay. That should do it for me. Thank you.

Officer Ricardi: Thanks.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Mr. Debarge. Mr. Goncalves.

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Mr. Goncalves: Welcome.

Officer Ricardi: Thank you.

Mr. Goncalves: Congratulations,

Officer Ricardi: Thank you.

Mr. Goncalves: on your daughter, on Adison and being here. It's great. Umm, where do you rank the drug problem in Ludlow amongst the B & E's and the domestics and everything else? Where do you see the drugs?

Officer Ricardi: I would say it's number one.

Mr. Goncalves: Number one?

Officer Ricardi: I would say. I mean like I said earlier, you know not all crime is tied to drugs but most crime is tied to drugs. You know like I mean like we were talking about B & E's and even if you look at bank robberies, like you know people aren't robbing banks for, for milk you know what I mean like and all the we have a you know substantial from time-to-time problem at Big Y with shoplifting all the time and like carts and carts and carts of stuff where people are just walking out. You know, you're walking out to sell it, you're going to go somewhere else and sell your red bull, your crab legs and razors, stuff you can get a quick buck for to travel to wherever you're going to travel to to get your drugs so.

Mr. Goncalves: Yeah, and it's funny and I'll make the comment just with this, it's not specifically for you. In my business, I'm seeing the uptick and it's the catalytic convertors, it's the break-ins.

Officer Ricardi: Yeah, big money items.

Mr. Goncalves: It's you know the cars, we had tires, actual tires. Someone is coming in, they're leaving jacks they probably stole from somebody's garage and leaving cars in the air and they're popping tires, mags off cars.

Officer Ricardi: Yeah.

Mr. Goncalves: It's mind-boggling to me and ultimately, I think it goes back to the drugs. Anything they can sell quickly. So, besides being an officer for fifteen years and that's a long time and I'm sure there's a lot of stuff going on. What else besides, are you involved with? I mean you're with the Regional Task Force, other stuff?

Officer Ricardi: As far as Police-wise goes?

Mr. Goncalves: Police-wise, yeah.

Officer Ricardi: Yeah, so I'm with the Regional Narcotics Unit, which encompasses eleven towns in the area. So, you know we have people come here, we go there. It's kind of like a team effort because everyone is struggling with the same thing where no one has enough people to work drug cases you know. Umm, we've been fortunate to have what we have. Some towns have more, some towns have less, significantly less. So, they formed this unit. Also, the only other thing is the Special Response Team that you know handles critical incidences, whether it be high-risk warrants or a barricaded suspect, active shooters like hopefully not,

Mr. Goncalves: Like a SWAT team, kind of like swattish?

Officer Ricardi: Yeah, yup and then in 2020 I was elected President of Patrolmen's Union. So, that kind of takes up some time. Other than that, like I would say that the majority of the time spent or my time spent was in the Detective Bureau, which is very time intensive where you know you can get a call at any time to respond. You have a lot of work that just can't get done in eight hours or you know your normal forty hours a week, you have to come in and you just, you can't just you know shut off your radio and go, it's time, time consuming. Umm, so that's kind of like the other things that I'm involved in for, primarily.

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Mr. Goncalves: Just so you know and I've made it public for a long time, I'm a big fan of the Detective Unit. There's no question in my mind, you guys are understaffed and what you guys need to do, you don't have the capacity, you don't have the men to do it. I don't think Sergeant Tulik had that, that ability, he didn't have the people he needed there and I'm sure you're fighting the same thing with Dave and whoever else, Alex whoever else you might have in there.

Officer Ricardi: Right.

Mr. Goncalves: So, my final question, so, if you didn't grow up to be a Policeman what do you think you'd be doing right now?

Officer Ricardi: Umm, I don't know. I know my grandmother wanted me to be a Pharmacist, I don't know why. My mother wanted me to be like a sportscast announcer, I don't know why,

Mr. Goncalves: You got the voice, yeah.

Officer Ricardi: yeah. I would probably, honestly, I probably, I definitely don't see myself doing like a cubicle type job. It would have to be something with my hands and something where I would move around and do that. I don't really know a specific because this kind of like all I've ever known you know. Umm, my dad was a Police Chief before he retired. So, like this has been like you know like this little and that's all I know.

Mr. Goncalves: Great answer. Thank you. I'm all set.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Mr. Goncalves. Mr. Silva.

Mr. Silva: Yes, thank you and congratulations.

Officer Ricardi: Thank you.

Mr. Silva: Thank you for you know staying with it and taking the test and going through everything you need to go through.

Officer Ricardi: Thank you.

Mr. Silva: Umm, you've been on the force for fifteen years, approximately,

Officer Ricardi: Yup.

Mr. Silva: I guess and umm, can you just relay to us a traumatic experience that you had and how you handled it?

Officer Ricardi: Umm, so, I kind of, I guess two stick in my mind. We had, a couple of years ago we had a double fatal accident where it involved two young kids and like it was, I want to say I was probably second on scene at the time in the Detective Bureau. So, you, after your lifesaving care takes place, then you go into investigative mode where like at night we were at the hospital all night talking to the parents who you know are essentially now victims as well. You know, no parent wants to ever experience something like that. So, at the time I think my daughter, my oldest daughter was maybe like two or three. So, after a late night, I get home my wife and I had like an agreement where you know like baby sleeps, you wake her up, she's yours. So, I usually never went into her room. That day I went into her room and I probably sat there for maybe an hour and half just rocking her in the rocking chair. Just like, kind of like thanking your blessings and everything like that and kind of unwinding. Umm, the other one, was kind of work related but not. Umm, I would say like a year, about a year ago, right before COVID, I was working at a training, bad cell phone service and I got a, people were trying to get ahold of me. Long story short, my wife and I, we were pregnant then, we lost the baby at five months when she was pregnant and she couldn't get ahold of me for a long time. So, it was kind of like one of those things where just man what a crappie day at work you know and then you have to like form up the strength to leave where I was and go to my family and now you got to explain it to a kid, you have to be there for your wife. You know, I took a few days off but not, not a ton because I have responsibilities at the department too you know. Like I think those would be the two that would stick in my head.

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Mr. Silva: Yeah. Certainly, tough ones. Can you give us the number one thing you'd like to implement in the department?

Officer Ricardi: Number one thing I would, umm, that's pretty easy for me, I would say like a full-time dedicated drug unit in our department would be, that's not even a question for me. Like I think that would go far, far for this community, for the department, for everything.

Mr. Silva: And the other thing, the other question, umm, body cams are coming as we all know, what's your feeling?

Officer Ricardi: Umm, I think, I think we as a department I mean, it's coming whether we like it or not but I mean all our guys and gals, we're very professional. Everybody is very cognizant how, how to talk to people, how not to talk to people. It's kind of like, I guess growing up in this day and age and seeing everything that's happened. So, I mean we realize that they're coming. I mean as a whole from what I'm hearing like people really aren't like too concerned or worried about it. Maybe it's a little bit different or like you know you go home for dinner you don't want something caught, like a conversation with your wife or kid or something like that you know caught on the camera but I mean I would say that's probably like the biggest of the concerns but I mean everybody at our place is a professional and they know how to act and what to do. They're trained very well.

Mr. Silva: Thank you. That's all I got.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Mr. Silva. It's like a lay-up because you've already been in here, kind of already answered it but umm, I have to ask a question. Umm, non-professionally, you're biggest weakness?

Office Ricardi: Non-professionally, yeah, umm,

Mr. Rosenblum: If you took notes last time you would have known it was coming.

Officer Ricardi: yeah, non-professionally I would say is my kind of like OCD, organizational type thing. It's like, I feel like it's a strength but it's a weakness, it's a weakness because it kind of annoys a lot of people, mainly my wife but umm, you know it's kind of like one of my things where I like things the way I like them. I like them organized and neat.

Mr. Debarge: Nothing wrong with having OCD.

Mr. Goncalves: It goes back to packing the car when you're going on vacation.

Mr. Debarge: Nothing wrong with having OCD.

Mr. Rosenblum: As a Sergeant, how do you keep track of all of the activities of a Police Department?

Talking over each other.

Officer Ricardi: How do you keep track?

Mr. Rosenblum: Yeah, I mean what would be your priority in keeping track of activities? Umm, I have a hard time wording this one.

Officer Ricardi: I mean I would say like keeping track, we I mean, we have two different email systems where we have inhouse emails where they'll send you know like you know updates on things. We have dot com email where they send trainings and other information like that. We also have a log where everybody scans through it. Umm, and I guess the other way is just word of mouth through you know during shift changes. You know every time you see the guys leaving shift and you're coming on, they're always like okay this happened, this happened, this happened, hey watch out for this, oh hey has this been a problem today, no, no it hasn't and then you kind of go about your business you know. It's a, we are 24/7 so we're kind of recycling through all the shifts and updating everybody on the daily workings anyways.

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Mr. Rosenblum: Okay and lastly what trait do believe is the most important to have as a Sergeant?

Officer Ricardi: Umm, communication. I mean, you can only go as far as you know working with your guys being able to communicate with them you know. It's like I said before, certain people respond to certain things and when you're a supervisor you have to realize who responds to what and how, how they're going to react you know. I mean I've been lucky; I mean I've only been doing it for thirteen months but the guys who work under me are you know great guys; everyone gets a long but they know when to do business and they know when to joke around and you know it's been fun.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay. Thank you. Chief you have a statement you want to make,

Chief Valadas: Yes, I want to make sure that each candidate know that it is a Shift Supervisor position,

Officer Ricardi: Yup.

Chief Valadas: so, it would be assigned to the patrol as Acting Sergeant Ricardi has been doing. So, it's not a specialty position.

Mr. Goncalves: So, can I ask, so in other words in Officer Ricardi's situation, he would leave the Detective Bureau?

Chief Valadas: Yes, he actually gave up the Detective Bureau position when he was promoted to Acting per special order last June.

Mr. Goncalves: Thirteen months ago, right?

Chief Valadas: He had to... now as much as small department can do that because as a Police Officer you have to do everything when you're needed to. So, it's not like you can say well I don't do traffic today or answer accidents because I'm in the Detective Bureau, everybody helps out. The incident that he mentioned about the fatality, he and another Detective responded because they're supposed to respond, it's a fatal accident. They can't just go I'm working on an invest today, I'm not going, everybody goes because we got to be there. We only have so much staff so everybody does everything but as a Shift Supervisor, this specific position, both of them are Shift Supervisor Positions.

Mr. Goncalves: And this is what Officer Ricardi and Officer Chelo have been doing for the last thirteen months.

Chief Valadas: Thirteen months.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay Ms. Ribeiro doesn't have anything, so closing statement.

Officer Ricardi: I just want to thank everybody for the opportunity and the time. I'm really excited and umm just thank you. Appreciate it.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you.

Mr. Debarge: Thank you.

Mr. Silva: Thank you.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you.

Mr. Goncalves: Good luck to you.

Officer Ricardi: Thank you.

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Sergeant Interviews – Bradford Tierney

Officer Tierney: Good evening.

Mr. Debarge: How are you?

Mr. Goncalves: Hey, how are you?

Officer Tierney: Good, how are you?

Mr. Rosenblum: Good evening.

Mr. Goncalves: How's it going?

Officer Tierney: Good, how are you sir?

Mr. Goncalves: Awesome.

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Tierney, congratulations for making it in tonight.

Officer Tierney: Thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you for coming in. So, you've been in the room before, so, kind of the same,

Mr. Debarge: He has.

Mr. Rosenblum: yes, he has. Same scenario as it will, you will have an opening statement. The Board will go ahead and ask you some questions. The Chief just has a quick statement. Umm and then if HR has anything that they'd like to add, they will also.

Officer Tierney: Okay.

Mr. Rosenblum: With that, the floor is yours.

Officer Tierney: Good evening my name is Brad Tierney, I'm 32. I've been with Ludlow PD for nine years now. I'm married to my wife Abby of eleven years; together we have two kids a 10-year-old and a 4-year-old. I have my Batchelor's Degree in Criminal Justice. I am currently taking classes to finish my Master's Degree also in Criminal Justice. I was previously in the military for six years, in the Army as Military Policeman with one deployment to Iraq from 2010 to 2011. So, with my six years of law enforcement experience in military and nine years in PD, I have fifteen years of law enforcement experience in total. Here at the Ludlow PD, I am an FTO, Field Training Officer and have been since 2015, where I assist of training of the new guys who come on. I'm also the departments first and only drug recognition expert. Preparation for this position, I spent a lot of time studying last summer to take the test. I got a 92 on the test and I'm number one on the list right now. In addition, since December 2020 I've spent a significant amount of time, about 288 hours now of out of grade over-time pay where I've acted as an OICU, which is a supervisor where you have direct experience on a shift doing exactly what a Sergeant does. With that being said, I appreciate your time today.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you. Mr. Silva.

Mr. Silva: Congratulations and thanks for keeping up with the testing and all. Not many officers really want to push forward but thanks.

Officer Tierney: Thank you sir.

Mr. Silva: Being on the force for several years, can you relay to us a traumatic experience that you were involved in and how did you handle it?

Officer Tierney: Umm, certainly a difficult experience we had recently was a fatal motorcycle accident a couple of months ago. That night I was the Supervisor on shift and Mr. Debarge do remember I talked to you that night because I was the boss.

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Mr. Debarge: Yes.

Officer Tierney: So, I think we were kind of short that night and kind of busy too. So, we got a serious 911 call and as the Supervisor I had to rush out of the station and I was the second person to respond to it. So, on top of my first responder duties that I typically have to do, like first aid, putting out a fire, traffic, etc. Like I said I was the Supervisor so, I had to act in a supervisor's capacity where I had to ensure all the proper phone calls were made to the Chief, the Lieutenant, the State Police, tow company, accident reconstruction, a set of details, etc. and had to facilitate that whole process and was able to move smoothly in a tragic situation but I've had enough experience, or I haven't been a Supervisor for a situation like that obviously but I've had enough experience working here that I know what to do to facilitate things like that.

Mr. Silva: Okay. Thank you. Umm, my next question is, what is the one thing you'd like to implement in the department?

Officer Tierney: Umm, I believe I said this last time was the community survey idea where it has the benefit, it ties back to community policing where you kind of you ask questions along the sense of the public's perception of crime, their fear of crime, how they view the PD. What they think our priorities should be and so it kind of has the sense like that you see the publics perception of things that we may not see as police to what they think we should prioritize. So, we can kind of self-reflect on that and after the last interview, I looked up at how you go about implementing it and some towns have traditionally used college students to help analyze and collect data. So, we frequently use interns from WENEC. So, I feel like we can facilitate that and make that happen, using those kinds of interns.

Mr. Silva: Good idea. Umm, body cams are coming, can you express to us your feelings on it?

Officer Tierney: Umm, truthfully, I've always been supportive of body cameras because if you're doing the right thing all the time, you should have no issues being recorded and I feel like it would be helpful

for us doing a report so we can review them and accurately write a report about it. You know, I've had a few times where I've had complaints against me and where someone accused me of stealing a wallet. I wish I had a body camera to show this guy yeah it didn't happen because he ended up finding it in his car later on.

Mr. Silva: Thank you. That's all I have.

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Silva. Mr. Goncalves.

Mr. Goncalves: Yes. Thank you again,

Officer Tierney: Yes sir.

Mr. Goncalves: Officer Tierney. First question, where do you rank the drug problem in Ludlow amongst all the policing that needs to be done?

Officer Tierney: I certainly rank it towards the top. The opioid epidemic, I mean it has the direct impact of having more drugs in the town. Then it also causes more indirect impact with more overdoses...more larcenies in the town, more B & E's and other sorts of various thefts. So, it certainly is a priority amongst other things too.

Mr. Goncalves: I'm going to guess; you think we should have a special department just on that?

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Officer Tierney: Oh, for sure.

Mr. Goncalves: For sure, yeah.

Officer Tierney: For sure yeah. That would be great.

Mr. Goncalves: Umm, besides what you do on your shift, on a normal day, what are some of the other things you've been involved with? As far as training, SRO any regional,

Officer Tierney: So, yeah, I'm a field training officer and have been since 2015 so I trained a lot of the new guys. Especially, a lot of the new guys that are on the midnight shift who are there right now. It's rewarding but can be a taxing experience sometimes. Also, I'm a drug recognition expert and first and only one to volunteer for that position in the town. Pretty intense training there.

Mr. Goncalves: Right and my last question, what do you picture yourself doing or being right now with your life had you not become a Police Officer?

Officer Tierney: If I hadn't become a Police Officer, it's kind of hard to envision what I, I really didn't have any other goals in life. I knew since I was a young kid, this is what I wanted to do. So, I haven't really thought of what I would do instead of this.

Mr. Goncalves: Okay. I'm good. Thank you.

Officer Tierney: Thank you sir.

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Goncalves. Mr. Gennette.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Welcome Officer Tierney.

Officer Tierney: Thank you sir.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you for your military service as well.

Officer Tierney: Thank you.

Mr. Gennette: So, you actually touched on one of the topics that I've been asking people about when you were talking to Mr. Silva about community service and stuff and you know the past couple of years

national sentiment toward the police hasn't been very good. Umm, that's a big concern of mine. I've even talked to the Chief in the past about bike patrols because mostly because I think you're out in the public and I think it's important to have that connection with the community and umm, as far as the national sentiment goes, have you seen any impact here in Ludlow that would determine how you would change things?

Officer Tierney: Yeah, I kind of expected that we would but I'm surprised that we haven't as much. There are small pockets here and there but I feel like our community generally supports us very well. I'd like to think it's in large part because we're fair and we treat them with respect and we explained to them what we are doing and why we do things. I think Ludlow is very supportive of us. I remember when we had the protest last year, myself and another officer had to go door to door on Chapin Street just notifying that we had a protest coming up and each person we knocked on their door said yeah, we support you guys, thanks for everything you do. I didn't have one person slam the door on us and say anything negative.

Mr. Gennette: That's great. So, the other thing is, you'll have a bunch of guys under you know you know and umm, what's the some of the conversations that you've had with them about how they should interact with the public or have you had anyone come to you with concerns about this stuff?

Officer Tierney: Yeah, I've personally talked to people who have been concerned about it. Umm, but I mean, I'm sorry, I'm kind of drawing a blank here but yeah, I've had conversations with people about these issues for sure on the streets and kind of it's good to be able to relate them on a personal level to tell them what we do and why we do things and kind of just be able to relate to them personally.

Mr. Gennette: Yes, so is, you're the only FTO I think right on the list that's been,

Officer Tierney: Yes.

Mr. Gennette: so, in the FTO is there any training for that, involved in this?

Officer Tierney: There's a lot of training that MPTC has been putting out about fair and impartial policing that our leadership has encouraged us to sign up for independently.

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Mr. Gennette: Will you have to give up your FTO position to be a Sergeant?

Chief Valadas: You can perform those duties in the Supervisory role but not as a fill in or an overseer, you're more of a manager but certainly we encourage Supervisors, especially front-line supervisors, Officer Tierney certainly has the experience in the service, we carry that over to. So he would have the opportunity to at least have some...

Mr. Gennette: I'm all set Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you.

Officer Tierney: Thank you sir.

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Debarge.

Mr. Debarge: Yes. Hi. Standby. Okay, one second. Sorry I have this system and I have to keep it organized or I will walk out if it's not organized.

Officer Tierney: Fair enough.

Mr. Debarge: Okay. To begin, this time I, and welcome back by the way,

Officer Tierney: Thank you.

Mr. Debarge: it says a lot about you and I have always heard good things about you from people on the street. Brad, you're,

Officer Tierney: Thank you.

Mr. Debarge: impressive. Umm, what I'm doing this time is I'm going to take my first part from something from your cover letter. Umm, I enjoyed the cover letter's this time. All well written and specific items that I took from each one. Yours, what caught my eye was your service and thank you to the country, specifically your statement we understand and you were speaking about your wife and thank you for your wife's service as well. Umm, you mentioned we understand the commitment and dedication that is required in public service. Can you expand on that?

Officer Tierney: Yeah, we are kind of a public service-oriented family. I was in the military; she was in the military. Umm, we feel like it's just something that's sort of lacking I guess in today's culture and we kind of want to raise our kids to recognize that and kind of guide their, their direction in life to want to be, dedicate their life to public service also.

Mr. Debarge: Okay. Thank you. Okay. Any leadership role but for here Police Sergeants have a multitude of responsibilities. One of those responsibilities is the interaction with public, whether it be by phone or in person. Umm, as all of you that are coming into tonight have your own interactions with the public in your own way, umm, through that interaction that you have what would you say are the biggest concerns of our community, relating to Police work?

Officer Tierney: I would certainly go back to the opioid epidemic and the drug problem in town for sure. Kind of like I previously mentioned, it indirectly relates to a lot of other crime that you see, larcenies, B & E's and all sorts of types of thefts. There are also people who complain about speeding too and speeding is always kind of a tough one to nail down but we have a decent system in place where we can field these questions on line with the forms people submit. I kind of think we should take another step-in direction where an officer physically goes to a complainant's house to get their concerns about what it is that they're forwarding to us. Just kind of so we, the public can put a face to the departments. So, they know who we are because some these people may not interact with us on a daily basis and just for the traffic issue have them do enforcement in that area and follow up with the complainant too, let him know what we did, cars stopped etc. Some other things you do for traffic related issues too, for a having a dedicated traffic division. We might not have the manpower for it but you could have one officer on each shift who's dedicated to doing traffic and enforcing traffic.

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Mr. Debarge: He's all for divisions.

Officer Tierney: Well, good. Sometimes we might not have manpower for it but we have to work with what we got and make it happen.

Mr. Debarge: Okay. Thank you.

Officer Tierney: Yes sir.

Mr. Debarge: I don't know why I keep losing where my questions are. Alright, if I was to ask your direct Supervisor or the officers that you work with on a daily basis on your shift to tell me about your leadership style, leadership strengths, leadership weaknesses; how would that conversation go? What would they tell me?

Officer Tierney: Umm, I would like to think they would say that I would, I would be someone who gravitates towards an active leadership style. There's a lot of different leadership styles but I feel more naturally, inclined to gravitate towards active leadership which is where you're leading from the front, you're setting the examples for your officer's underneath you and research show that active leadership has the best influence on officers' behavior.

Mr. Debarge: How about weaknesses?

Officer Tierney: About my weaknesses?

Mr. Debarge: What would they say? What would they tell me about your leadership weaknesses?

Officer Tierney: Probably something along the lines of, I'm someone who kind of doesn't stop and kind of just person who moves on to the next task, does something, finishes the task, moves onto something else, moves onto another thing after that. It can be kind of a weakness in a sense that just I feel like I overwork myself sometimes.

Mr. Debarge: Okay. I think I got it now, they are over here. Yup, I got it. Okay, I did a little statistical analysis before tonight. Some minor homework. So, Ludlow crime rates gone up 12% from 2018 to 2019. I didn't go any further, I didn't see it necessary. But over the last five years, violent crime has risen up, property crime has dropped a little bit and this is in Ludlow. As a Shift Supervisor, would you do anything? What would you do to going forward with this information?

Officer Tierney: I know it's kind of, it was a topic that was or an issue people kind of didn't like recently was like broken windows/zero tolerance policing. It's something that's worked traditionally in the past. I feel like we could direct our officers to work on or further enforce disorder type crimes and the broken windows kind of theory there where you kind of, when you work on that kind of stuff, it has a direct impact on the violent crime according to some research that I've seen before.

Mr. Debarge: I agree with that.

Officer Tierney: Yeah.

Mr. Debarge: Was that all I had. That was all I had. Thank you.

Officer Tierney: Thank you sir.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Mr. Debarge. Umm, I guess this kind of clears up this question for me. Mr. Debarge had asked you about what did you think the people that you work with would see as your weakness, what do you see as your weakness? I mean outside of really professionally.

Officer Tierney: Yeah. It's still really kind of the same thing where I know I said at work I kind of overwork myself, I do the same thing at home where I feel like I always have like a task I need to be doing. I move from something to another thing and it's a weakness in a sense that at the end of the day or when I'm done, I feel like I missed out on some time with my family. When I could have like stopped and just enjoyed spending time with them. If that makes sense.

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Mr. Rosenblum: Okay. How would you as a Sergeant, how would you keep track of all of the activities of the Police Department?

Officer Tierney: Umm, so, what we do, we kind of an informal thing where you brief the next Supervisor who's coming on. The we typically read the daily log about what happened on the shift prior to your shift. I think it would be beneficial to kind of have an informal role call. I'd try to implement something like that on the midnight shift if I were to be a supervisor there just to kind of get a comradery going on and everyone can be fully briefed about what happened in case someone missed the logged or missed something the other day.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay. And lastly, what trait to do believe is the most important to have as a Sergeant?

Officer Tierney: A good trait would be being able to know when you have the ability to make a quick decision versus when you have to take the time think about a decision. You don't want to be the type of Supervisor who just acts just based on emotion without any thought and runs head first into a situation when it's not necessary.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay. Thank you very much and I know the Chief you had one thing to say.

Chief Valadas: I wanted to tell every candidate, Officer Tierney that it's a Shift Supervisor position and it will directly be assigned to patrol operations. As you are all aware, I just want to make sure that everybody knows that it is not a specialty position.

Officer Tierney: Yes sir.

Chief Valadas: Both of them.

Officer Tierney: Absolutely.

Mr. Rosenblum: Alright. Closing remarks.

Officer Tierney: I just want to say thank you for your time today. I know it's a long process for all you guys and a long night. So again, thanks for your time today.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you.

Sergeant Interviews – Brandon Vigneault

Officer Vigneault: Evening guys.

Mr. Goncalves: Evening.

Mr. Rosenblum: Evening.

Mr. Silva: Evening.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you very much for coming in. Congratulations for making it into the room tonight. So, the procedure will be that you will go ahead and you will have an opening statement. Then the Board will ask you a series of questions. Once we are done with that the Chief just has a brief statement and if HR has anything to say they'll, if anything at all and then you'll have closing remarks.

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Officer Vigneault: Okay.

Mr. Rosenblum: So, the floor is yours.

Officer Vigneault: Okay. Well first off, I'd like to say thank you all for taking the time to see me and thanks for the opportunity. Umm, my name is Brandon Vigneault. I've been here employed at the Ludlow Police Department for 8 ½ years now already. Time flies. It seems like yesterday; I was just hired. So, about a year and a half ago I was fortunate enough to be assigned to the Detective Bureau, under the direction of Detective Sergeant Kornacki which is a great honor. I take pride in that, it's humbling. About, I'd say 2016 I was assigned to the Ludlow Special Response Team back then, we were just Ludlow town wide, which you know we respond to critical incidences and volatile situations in town. Umm, in 2019 we began the merger with other towns around us in Hampden County along with the Sheriff's Department into the Regional Special Response Team. At that time, I was fortunate to be assigned to the position of Assistant Team Leader when that team was formed. In January of this year, I was assigned to or I guess you could say promoted to the position of Team Leader when our Sergeant Knox was promoted to the Commander of the entire team. So, in January or I guess I was originally assigned to the Assistant Team Leader that was just for half of the Special Response Team. We are split up into two teams, one's red, one's blue because of the volume of guys we have. So, Sergeant Knox has since taken command of the entire team and the command staff had appointed me to that position of Team Leader in January of this year. So, a little about me personally I'm born in Ludlow, I've lived here basically my whole life aside from a couple of years in college where I went to Westfield State. That's where I got my degree in Criminal Justice and a minor in Sociology. Umm, I moved back home and kind of began my path to where I am today and my goal to become a member of the Law Enforcement Community here in this town. I live in town today; I built a house here in town and I built my family here in town. So, I'm proud of this town and I'm proud of where I come from.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you. Mr. Goncalves you're first this time.

Mr. Goncalves: Thanks again and congratulations.

Officer Vigneault: Thank you Mr. Goncalves.

Mr. Goncalves: Umm, where do you rank the drug problem in town with relation to everything else you see going on. The break-ins, the cars...

Officer Vigneault: So, I'd say it's up there. You know it's up there probably at the highest. The highest level right there with the car breaks which you know a lot of the car breaks these days are coming, they're kids coming from out of town. Umm, not that that is necessarily a drug problem. I think it's just a lot of kids running, gunning and having fun. That's you know, which sounds crazy but that's what it is. Hard to catch. Umm, so that's a big problem, but the drug problem definitely contributes to all of the other issues we have in town. Umm, it's a difficult task to combat. It's something that you know to be, it almost has to be dealt with before the Police are even involved. You know, we have to get, or if the Police are involved it's before it becomes criminal. It's got to be dealt with way down here when they're young with the parents, with education about drugs. So, it's definitely one of the highest issues we have you know it's a small town but it's something that affects everybody in town. I'm sure it affects most people that you know, probably everybody personally. I know it affected me personally. I've just been on a call where one of my best friends you know I've had to deal with and it's a difficult topic and it's a difficult subject to deal with.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you. So, you touched a little bit on the SRO and in those eight years besides you being a Detective and an Officer, etc. and the SRO, what are some of the other things you've been doing?

Officer Vigneault: I was never an SRO, a School Resource Officer, I was,

Mr. Goncalves: Oh, I'm sorry SRT.

Officer Vigneault: SRT, I'm sorry.

Mr. Debarge: We have to correct him once in a while.

Mr. Goncalves: I was going to say SWAT Team but I'd probably get in trouble for that one too.

Mr. Debarge: You can't say that one...

Officer Vigneault: We are very politically correct now. Umm, I'm sorry, so could you just, I missed the question...

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Mr. Goncalves: In addition to the Special Response Team,

Officer Vigneault: Yes.

Mr. Goncalves: and being an Officer and a Detective, what other things umm, training, umm, not a field training officer where we had the one before, some of that sort of stuff that you've done over the eight years or eight and a half years?

Officer Vigneault: So, I was originally Patrol for the first 6 ½ - 7 years. Umm, then from there it was the Detective Bureau. So, during Patrol I just did the normal Patrol stuff. Honestly my main goal was to become a Detective and work narcotics and that's where I'm at now. I did go to a two-week training, years ago now, its basic narcotics training hosted by the DEA. So, that's one thing I did. Umm, I went to a few other trainings now that I've been implemented into the Detective Bureau, I've been to a handful of trainings like how to you know whether it be death scenes or original, different narcotics, basic narcotics schools after that.

Mr. Goncalves: I think it was yours and I'm going to ask you because I think I saw it on yours, what is BEER Training?

Mr. Debarge: See I was going to ask that; how do you get training in beer because I want in.

Officer Vigneault: I probably am certified in beer too but there's a period after every letter.

Mr. Goncalves: The referred to in the resume' here.

Officer Vigneault: So, that's Breaking Entering Evidence Recovery, that's the class. That's what that is.

Mr. Goncalves: Oh, okay.

Officer Vigneault: So, it's essentially how to fingerprint. What to look for when you enter a crime scene that is, has anything to do with any kind of break into a house or a car or anything like that and what to look for and stuff.

Mr. Goncalves: Oh, okay. Good deal. Umm, so the final question for you, if you weren't a Police Officer right now, what do you think you'd be doing?

Officer Vigneault: Banging nails. No, honestly so my father was a carpenter. I built my own house, right. No, but honestly my father was a carpenter and Police Officer and I always just really wanted to be a Police Officer. I couldn't really see myself doing anything else. If I had to, I'd bang nails but I'd really couldn't see myself doing anything else. This is what I feel like I was born and raised to do. Umm, you know I come from a Law Enforcement family as I'm sure you guys know and I've said. My mother worked in the Courts and it just felt like it was part of me and umm, I'm happy, I'm glad I made this choice and I just hope to continue to better myself in the department and my career here.

Mr. Goncalves: Good deal. I'm good, thank you.

Officer Vigneault: Thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Goncalves. Mr. Silva.

Mr. Silva: Sure. Umm, congratulations and,

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Officer Vigneault: Thank you Mr. Silva.

Mr. Silva: thank you for keeping up with your endeavor to become or better yourself I should say. Umm, I have three questions for you, umm, you've been on the force for a while. Umm, can you relay to us a traumatic experience that you had and how did you handle it?

Officer Vigneault: Well to be honest, I'm not going to, I wouldn't mention the actual traumatic experience I've had. It's the worst I've had I guess but how I dealt with it umm, during the moment, it sounds weird but it's almost easier to deal with it when it's happening because you're trained, you know what you have to do and you just do it. It's your job and if you're trained right and you get in the right frame of mind you just do it and it's almost natural. Whether it's CPR or you're dealing with a victim that's bleeding, whatever it is you just do it. The hard part is afterwards, you know. Umm, you have to, you have to have the ability to recognize if you're having any kind of feelings that you need to deal with, anything like that. So, the best way, the best way I can answer that is, after those traumatic experiences I feel like I do the appropriate things that I have to in order to continue my career as a Law Enforcement Officer for 25 more years.

Mr. Silva: Okay. What's the one thing that you would like to implement in your department?

Officer Vigneault: Well, I don't know if it's implement, right because we already have it, but I'd say community service is huge. Especially with Law Enforcement today, which we all know the temperature of Law Enforcement today and the volatility across the entire nation. So, I think the more community service and the more outreach we have I think the key, the key is to instilling into the Police Department. We have a golf tournament coming up and it's I know it's you know it's a fundraiser for our Police Association but it's a way for us to connect to the community as well. We have a great outpouring of support and I think more community involvement like that is great. People come up to us and they want to be involved. They want to know what's going on and I think that's great. Another thing, along the same lines of community service, I think it's good to continue to evolve as Police, right. So, technologically we need to keep rolling as much as some of us might hate it right. I'm not a big social media guy but now a days social media is huge, right.

Mr. Goncalves: Information highway.

Officer Vigneault: It's crazy. It's, I'm not, like I said, I'm not big into it. A couple of pictures of my kid and wife but I feel like the Police Department if it continues to grow in that field, can reach out to those kids and the more we implement that, it might help the drug problem because we're reaching them young. Instead of wanting to be criminals, they'll want to be Police Officers and we are able to more transparent as well.

Mr. Silva: Thank you. Umm, body cams are coming, umm, what's your feelings on body cams?

Officer Vigneault: Well, to be honest, we might as well have them now. We are on camera 24/7 in my eyes anyway. So, you know if you're out there doing the job, you better act like you're on camera. So, umm, to be honest with you, eight years ago I might have said something different but now you know body cameras might just be your friend because you can disprove a lot of these false accusations and if you're not acting appropriately, you're, it's going to be found out anyway. So, you know body cameras for me, it's part of the business now and like I said you might as well have them on 24/7 anyway because there's a camera on every corner, on every house and if they're not already there then there's someone with a celiphone 24/7,

Mr. Silva: Thank you. That's all I have.

Officer Vigneault: and they love taking pictures.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Mr. Silva. Yes, they do. Umm, Mr. Gennette.

Mr. Gennette: Umm, thank you for coming in Officer Vigneault, pleasure to have you.

Officer Vigneault: Thank you.

Mr. Gennette: You know you had mentioned when you were talking to Mr. Silva about public perception and community outreach basically but one of the things that really concerns me is the perception of the Police to the community and how the community is working with the Police. Umm, I think it's very important to have a good connection between the two. National sentiment recently, actually you've been here what 8 ½ years you said?

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Officer Vigneault: Eight and a half years, yes sir.

Mr. Gennette: So, probably half of that is probably when, four years is when we really had this big national sentiment against Police and there was issues. How did you handle that? I mean you were already in here probably four years when that really started to take hold and,

Officer Vigneault: Yeah, I'd say four or five years I was already a Police Officer when it really started to take hold. I'll say first and foremost I think we are very lucky to be in the town we're in and be Police Officers in this town because we have great support as a whole from this town. I mean in the eight years it's a handful of times where it's really like you know, they're coming after you. But generally, they're very supportive of us. So, I guess to get back to your question was how would I feel, I mean it's discouraging, it's still is discouraging. Umm, and it was discouraging back then. Maybe in the beginning I didn't you know think that it would come to as far as it has and you can only hope that it's going to get better in the future. I think promoting the Police as a whole is the best way to change that and we need to stop demonizing the Police, right because the more that happens, it's like, it's just a snowball effect and it's going to continue to get worse and worse. So, so, the more the media demonizes us and makes us looks like the bad guys, it just makes it worse and harder for us to do our job out there. Umm, it's not just media thought, we have to be proactive to initiate those conversations with people and show them that we're here to help. So, yeah that's kind of my feeling on that.

Mr. Gennette: So, you're going to be in charge, if you get this position, you're going to be in charge of several officers who may be, younger officers, who may be feeling a lot of that stuff coming up. I mean what's your answer to them? How are they supposed to handle that?

Officer Vigneault: Well, umm, I'd like to lead by example first of all and show them the correct way to carry yourself as a human being and then as a higher step as a Police Officer. If they have any questions

about it, about the situation, I would, you know I would explain to them that they have to hold themselves to a higher standard and whether or not the public perception, again I don't think we have this problem so much in Ludlow, but they still feel it throughout the country we feel it. Like I felt it, all of us feel it. We all talk about it and know it's there. So, they best thing for a younger officer that I can explain to them, you have to fight through it and you have to hold yourself to a higher standard then everybody else. That's really what it comes down to. You have to make sure you keep your cool and you maintain your professionalism throughout not only your day but your entire career.

Mr. Gennette: What do you think is the biggest issue that the Police Department is having right now? I mean not as far as the drugs, I know the drugs are it but umm, just in house. So, we mentioned body cams, we mentioned you know that kind of stuff. What do you think is the biggest thing that we need to, like in house?

Officer Vigneault: The biggest issue. If I'm being honest, my feeling the biggest our issue is, we are constantly fighting for manpower. You know, it seems like someone's always hurt, you know it makes it difficult to okay as a Detective in my position right, I'm, I've been there a year and a half but I've been by myself on my shift for the majority of it. So, that makes it difficult to do your job you know if I'm, I'm in narcotics, I'm supposed to be a narcotics Detective but in the Ludlow Police Department if you're a Detective, one day you might do drugs, Tuesday you might have to go to a fatality somewhere, you know every day your job changes a little bit and it's tough when you're by yourself to continue say an investigation that you have. So, generally I mean there's overtime popping up left and right so in house I think that's one of the biggest problems we have. It's, it's tough to, it's tough sometimes. There's a lot of overtime and you know but that's just my opinion of it.

Mr. Gennette: Mr. Chairman, I'm all set. Thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Mr. Gennette. Mr. Debarge.

Mr. Debarge: Yes, hey.

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Officer Vigneault: How are you Mr. Debarge?

Mr. Debarge: Good, how are you?

Officer Vigneault: Good. Nice seeing you sir.

Mr. Debarge: Nice seeing you. Nice to have you here. Congratulations for getting into the room,

Officer Vigneault: Thank you very much.

Mr. Debarge: and as soon as I find my place, we will get started. Okay from your cover letter,

Talking over each other.

Mr. Debarge: umm, I already said this, some of the best cover letters I've seen in interviews, umm, so I kind of took umm, I kind of took something from yours that caught my eye. You had said in your cover letter, I believe a healthy relationship between a Sergeant and his or her Officers results in the most proficient and productive work environment. Can you give me an example what you believe to be a healthy relationship with a Sergeant and his or her subordinates and also one that you would stay away from?

Officer Vigneault: So, I feel like an example a healthy relationship, right?

Mr. Debarge: Yup.

Officer Vigneault: The best, I'd say you have to have trust in them, your, when you come to work you want to work for somebody that you know has your back, right and I feel like you want to work not just for somebody but with somebody, right. So, as a Sergeant they're not just my subordinates, they're my coworkers. That's what I feel like is most important, a relationship that's, like it's umm, it works both ways. So, as a Supervisor I feel like it should be your job to provide your subordinates with the tools

they need to accomplish their job. That's what I think a healthy relationship is. So, I'm not coming to work and telling him hey, go do this, go do that, like I want to come to work and ask him, hey what do you need you know? What can we do together to make this a healthy relationship, make it the most productive relationship and a Police Department? Now second part was what I want to stay away from?

Mr. Debarge: So, I would say, would say almost the opposite is the answer to the second one.

Officer Vigneault: Almost, yeah honestly,

Mr. Debarge: Demonstrative.

Officer Vigneault: you know in my opinion very strict; I don't want to say strict, it's not your parent but demonstrative is a good word where you're coming in and you go in your office and you close your door and all you do that's it, you get a knock on your door and that's it, it's the only time you talk to your guys. You want to be a part of the guys and I so, it's opposite is don't do that, keep the door open, have an open-door policy, talk to the guys and have it be a friendship but a professional friendship at the same time. I think that's the best way to do it. Stay away from the just regimented kind of supervision style.

Mr. Debarge: I'm tracking, I'm with you. Alright, so, leaders whether it be with stripes or without, leadership in the SRT or anywhere, umm, leaders have a multitude of responsibilities. As a Shift Supervisor multiple responsibilities; one of those is interaction with the public whether by phone or in person. All of you that are here tonight have interacted with the public in some shape or fashion obviously. Umm, in your conversations with the public, what would you say is their biggest concern involving policing in our town?

Officer Vigneault: Well, I mean I guess we can go back to the drug thing right, that's definitely a concern especially in my position right now. I phone or receive phone calls whether they're tips or they're questions on how to deal with a loved one that has an issue, a drug issue or people are just curious. They're asking what's going on in town and a lot of times it's drugs, a lot of times it's the drug issue. Umm, obviously, we get plenty of calls about traffic issues, whether it be a traffic complaint because of the school traffic or whether it's speeding from the car show. So, that's, that's one of the biggest complaints I'd say from citizens throughout the town and I think we are doing our best to combat those and acknowledge those complaints which is essential. Listen we work for; we work for the community. That's what we do as Police Officers, you know that's our number one thing. So, when we get those calls, we got to answer those calls and do something about it.

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Mr. Debarge: Okay. Alright, so, if I was to ask your direct Supervisor or even the fellow officers that you work with in the DB office or around on your shift to tell me about your leadership style, strengths, weaknesses, how would that conversation go? What would they tell me?

Officer Vigneault: Strengths, umm well let me start with weaknesses. You know I think I've been a team; I've been an Assistant Team Leader and then a Team Leader for only a couple of years. Umm, and honestly, I still feel like I'm a little green you know. There's still, you got to learn every day and that's key in this job; you can never stop learning. So, umm, I think that would be my biggest weakness is, in my opinion, I'm still a little green. I have no problem admitting that and I think that's key. Umm, for some strengths, I feel like I'm very laid back about you know team leader of SRT now and I like to delegate and let everybody be a leader by themselves. So, I think that's the best, one of the best qualities of a leader, is letting everybody else has to take part of that. So, you don't want to be too overbearing. So, I feel like I'm good at letting that happen and if I do see something or someone step out of line where it reaches a point where they're not taking, it's not taking care of itself, I'm not afraid to step in and let them know that they're out of line. So, but it's you know, I'd like to believe that I'd let them hash it out and try and figure it out themselves before I just jump in there and take, you know and take command and be over, over stepping.

Mr. Debarge: Okay. Alright and finally some statistics for you, so Ludlow crime rate has grown from, grown about 12% from 2018 to 2019. Umm, I didn't get 20's because 20 doesn't really count because of the you know. Umm, also, violent crime has gone up in Ludlow over the last five years while property crime has dipped a bit. So, with this information that I gave you, as a Shift Supervisor would you put your shift out to do different things? How would you do this?

Officer Vigneault: Property crime going down is obviously a good thing, the violent is negative right. So, violent crime is, it's a tough thing to deal with I think especially in this town right. It's not Springfield where the violent crime is gangs, gang violence, most of the violent crime in town is, I'd imagine is either domestic violence issues, bar fights or maybe a random car road rage incident, stuff like that. You know, that, I mean from what I see that's the main violent crime in our town. It's hard to combat that. Hard to fight the violent crime when it's actually happening in the household and in a bar right. Maybe up some Policing at the close of bars because usually that's when fights are happening. So, you know you ask your guys to go out there, hey just make their presence felt while the bars are closing you know especially the ones, the bars in town that are a little bit more popular. More people leaving at the same time. I guess that would be the best way to combat the violent umm that I can think of right now the violence, the violent crime situations. In regards to property crime even though it's going down, it's still not down far enough. It's frustrating to see umm, especially when you see a lot of individuals coming to our town to victimize our citizens of the town. It's really hard to combat that too but umm with directive patrols and you know you got your hots spots and in the Detective Bureau you know we will put a map together when we are really getting hit hard with the car breaks and stuff like that and you know we will make a map and say they hit here you know and try and figure out where to go next. It's tough but I think it's the best way. Getting information out to the public more, is also a great way to combat any type of crime. Whether it be you know social media, like I spoke about earlier, putting more stuff out on Facebook and Twitter and whatever else they have and because honestly, I'm not part of that so I don't know but you know getting that information out and letting victims know that if they are, they are being victimized not to be afraid to come to the Police. I think that's key too because there's plenty of victims that are afraid to come to the Police. So, I think that's key.

Mr. Debarge: That's all I have. Thank you.

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Officer Vigneault: Surprised.

Mr. Debarge: Right. See. I could ask more, but,

Mr. Rosenblum: He's got ten pages over there. Thank you, Mr. Debarge.

Mr. Debarge: You're welcome, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Debarge asked you what you thought through, through the Officers that you work with what might be your professional weakness. What do you see as your personal weakness?

Officer Vigneault: My wife will agree with this, sometimes I, a lot of times I spread myself too thin. Umm, I take on a lot, whether it's you know I'm building stuff, I'm building a car, building a house, breaking stuff and then fixing it or helping my fiends and family. I tend to not say no when people call and ask for help and sometimes it kind of, I'm kind of not allotting my time in the right direction and you know time is valuable, you don't get it back. So, that's, with that being said, I've come, I've definitely come to realize that and I'm doing my best, you know I'm do my best to try and reel it back in and make sure I spend time, spend time with my family and you know keep on, keeping you know keeping everything happy because when you know the more you, the more you spread, I spread myself thin you become more agitated and stuff like that. That'd be my weakness I'd say.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay. Thank you. Umm, what would be your priority in keeping track of all of the activities of the Police Department as a Sergeant?

Officer Vigneault: Priorities of keeping track? I'm sorry I didn't,

Mr. Rosenblum: Yeah, how would you keep track of all the activities of the Police Department as a Sergeant? It's poorly worded I know; I've struggled with this one.

Officer Vigneault: So, are you asking like what's a list of what do you think number one priority or I mean are you putting it on an excel sheet?

Mr. Rosenblum: I look at those all day. No, I mean yeah go ahead run with it.

Officer Vigneault: So, you know honestly, yeah so, umm if you're really looking at it and you want to keep track of everybody's, whether it be their training and their specialties you know you keep a, which I'm sure we already have track of everybody's productivity and their, you know what they bring to the table and then I think you just you know need to use the technology we have and keep adapting with that. I think that's the best way, the best way to keep track of everything because there's a lot now especially with Police reform and you know the policies and procedures, we have to all be accountable for. So, I think the best way is to have a clear and concise way you know track sheet on that.

Mr. Goncalves: Record.

Mr. Rosenblum: Well, we see that coming down the road through the state anyway.

Chief Valadas: Absolutely.

Mr. Rosenblum: Yeah and no I agree with you because I use spreadsheets for everything just because I want to numbers versus numbers versus numbers.

Officer Vigneault: Yeah.

Mr. Rosenblum: So, even you can use if for traits that's, lastly, what trait do you believe is the most important to have as a Sergeant?

Officer Vigneault: Humility. I feel like you have to, you have to be able to understand when you're wrong and you have to admit it. You also have to make sure you don't jump to any conclusions. You have to be able to take a step back. You know if there's an issue with one of your guys or there's a complaint brought in, I think the worse thing to do is to jump to a conclusion and I think you need to take that step back and take a deep breath and look at every side of that, that puzzle and kind of like when you're a regular Police Officer, when you're a Patrolmen or you're going to a call, you don't just believe the first thing someone says, you investigate it and you talk to everybody and you do it with a cool head and then you take all those pieces, you put the puzzle together. So, I think that's important to do that as a supervisor too because you don't want to wrong anybody, whether it be your officer, the public making the complaint or your supervisor above you. So, I think that's really important especially when it comes to being a Sergeant and a Supervisor.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you very much. That is it, a Chief I know that you wanted to say one thing.

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Chief Valadas: I want all the candidates to know Detective Vigneault that this is a Shift Supervisor position assigned to the Patrol.

Officer Vigneault: Okay.

Chief Valadas: Both of them. That's it.

Mr. Rosenblum: That's why you sat in the second row today. So, with that, closing remarks for yourself.

Officer Vigneault: Well, again I'd like to thank you all for the opportunity and your time tonight. Umm, I'd like to say that I, I think anybody that you pick tonight for these two spots is going to be outstanding. Umm, and I think the town should be grateful for the Police Officers, for the people here tonight and the Police Officers that work here, that work in this community. I think we got a great bunch of guys. We have a great Chief leading us and umm I think that should be heard and I think they should know that, that we are you know, we're all working for them and I think you know as a whole country I think we should be grateful for all of the Police that go out there and spend holidays and weekends and nights giving back to their community and providing for their community. So, that's basically it.

Mr. Debarge: Here, here.

Officer Vigneault: God bless.

Mr. Rosenblum: Alright, thank you very much.

Officer Vigneault: Thanks, you guys. Have a great nigh.

Mr. Goncalves: Have a great night.

Sergeant Interviews – Jhon Wielblad

Mr. Debarge: Hi, how are you?

Officer Wielblad: Good yourself.

Mr. Debarge: Good thanks.

Mr. Rosenblum: Good evening.

Officer Wielblad: Evening.

Mr. Rosenblum: Let me make sure I say this, Wielblad?

Officer Wielblad: That is correct.

Mr. Rosenblum: Sweet. Congratulations, congratulations on making it to the room. Thank you for coming in tonight. So, what we're going to do is the procedure is that umm, you're going to have an opening statement, the Board will then ask a series of questions, the Chief has just a brief statement, Ms. Ribeiro for HR if she has any comments, which she won't so we'll skip over her but go ahead the floor is yours.

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Officer Wielblad: Okay my name is Jhon Wielblad. Born and raised in Ludlow. Currently live here with my fiancé and daughter. Both my parents are from Poland. I was lucky enough to learn the language growing up. So, I speak Polish, which has come in handy on the job several times. Umm, in 2013 I graduated from American International College with my Batchelor's Degree. My senior year, I completed an internship with the Ludlow Police Department and that essentially started my career here. I worked in the records department. I assisted with firearms licensing, fingerprinting. I became a dispatcher, worked as a Special Police Officer and I worked corrections for three years and then I became a full-time Police Officer. I pride myself in giving myself my best effort at everything I do. At AIC I received an award for outstanding performance in the field of Criminal Justice and that was due to my internship with the Police Department. In the Corrections Academy and the Police Academy I received the physical fitness award. I had the opportunity in the Police Academy to be a Squad Leader for the duration of the academy. At the Police Department I received a life saving award for performing CPR in the field. Also, a letter of recognition for life saving care to a gun shot victim. Umm, I'm really a big proponent of community policing. So, anything that I can do with the community, I try to do. In the Sheriff's Department, I worked with the Law Enforcement Torch Run and volunteered events that had to do with the Special Olympics. Umm, at the Police Department I work with the Ludlow Cares Coalition. I'm a department representative. I had the opportunity to help bring back the bike unit. That's probably one of my proudest achievements that I had up to this date. We had really good feedback from the community with that and I really pride myself in that. Before COVID, I was a DARE officer and I was teaching 3rd and 5th graders. It's not the easiest thing to take a step back from policing and teach, but it was very awarding once I got into the swing of things and currently, I'm a student at Westfield State going for my Masters Degree in Criminal Justice and I am taking classes to get my Emergency Medical Technician certification.

Mr. Rosenblum: Excellent. Thank you very much. We will start with you Mr. Debarge.

Mr. Debarge: Okay. Jhon, how are you?

Officer Wielblad: Good.

Mr. Debarge: Welcome into the room,

Officer Wielblad: Thank you.

Mr. Debarge: congratulations for the test and you know I got to mention, looking over your packet it's always nice to see, especially coming from the position that I'm in now where you started from intern at the Police Station to records clerk at the Police Station to dispatcher, Special Police Officer then full-time Police Officer but before that all the while you were a Corrections Officer and now, you're here in front of us for a Sergeant promotion. That in it of itself speaks volumes of your character and also it says a lot for the Police Department as well because obviously you haven't chosen to go anywhere else. So, we appreciate that and I commend you for starting back as an intern and continuing on. It's a cool thing to see. Staying with your, your cover letter, umm there's a part that jumped out at me that I'm interested in. You are the, you manage the Twitter social media for the Department. I would assume that's what you meant, for the Department, right?

Officer Wielblad: Yes.

Mr. Debarge: Okay so tell me more about that, how do you, how do you navigate that? How do you,

Officer Wielblad: So, basically, I try to get all pertinent information out there as effectively as I can to the community. So, when we were dealing with our slew of car break ins, I would post something on there telling people to lock their doors, make sure their vehicles were secure. Make sure there's no valuables in there. If it's raining, I'll try to post something, if it's raining, keep your headlights on so you're more visible. Anything that's pertinent with what we are doing in the department I try to post and anything that's positive that other departments are doing I try to keep up with. We just had an event with Ludlow Cares. We had family night there. So, I posted some images of that and about the event so more people would see that. Along with the Twitter account, I help manage the message boards that you guys have probably seen outside the Department.

Mr. Debarge: Yup.

Officer Wielblad: I try to keep, there's a few us, we try to keep pertinent information out there for the public to see.

Mr. Debarge: Yeah, that's a great way to get information out. There's no doubt about that. I don't know if I'd want to be the guy to mitigate all of that and take care of the Twitter account, but that's why I wanted to ask about it. How are the responses?

Officer Wielblad: Umm, so our Facebook page has the most interaction with the public but our Twitter account, it's a little different then Facebook. So, people like tag you and post and they write their responses and stuff like. So, sometimes it has to do with police work and stuff so you have to remind them to call like the Police Station and other times they tag you in something that can be like helpful in certain areas of the town so we can address that accordingly but usually it's, for the most part it's very positive and people enjoy seeing information that I put out there.

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Mr. Debarge: Good. Glad to hear that.

Officer Wielblad: Thank you.

Mr. Debarge: Okay. My first question for you, alright as a Police Sergeant or a leader in a department you have a multitude of responsibilities. One of those is the interaction with the public whether by phone or in person as you all know or social media as well. Do you interact, obviously we know that all of you interact with the public in some way, shape or form. So, you being in a particular different kind of situation with doing social media for the Police Station. What would you say the community would tell you or what has the community told you is their biggest concern as far as policing goes in our community?

Officer Wielblad: Interesting question, I would revert back to motor vehicle breaks that we have been dealing with. This started a few years ago, we've been dealing with it on and off but it's become more prevalent recently. I think that's what the community would tell me their biggest issue would be to address. Umm, we have come a long way as a department, understanding how these people operate. Getting the information out there, not only on social media but our department website, the message board. I think that's crucial because a lot of people feel safe when they're at home or close to home. So, they think that something like that is not going to happen. So, if we keep on reiterating to make sure

that they take their valuables out of their car and secure their vehicle I think that will be an important aspect in stopping them from being victims and then from us as a Law Enforcement perspective, the more information we get about how these individuals operate when they tend to do their, do their operations, we can more effectively try to target those areas or hopefully target those areas. Just a couple of months ago umm, myself and a few other officers actually got into a chase with a few of these guys and we ended up apprehending the majority of them. So, it was nice to finally kind of get after these guys and make some apprehensions so,

Mr. Debarge: Yes, I remember that. That, that was a good day.

Officer Wielblad: Yeah. It started off with just a single vehicle break where we apprehended one individual and then there was two suspicious cars where we tried to engage them but they ended up running and then we ended up calling out the K-9 unit we ended up tracking down a few of the guys. So, it was a busy day but it was a good day.

Mr. Debarge: Good stuff. Okay. So, if I was to ask your supervisor or even your fellow officers to tell me about your leadership style, strengths, weaknesses, what would they say? How would they respond to that?

Officer Wielblad: So, I would say my leadership style is more of a democratic type of leadership style and for my weakness everyone in this room has much more time on the job and experience than me. So, that's probably what my staff would say about me, is my experience on the job would be my greatest weakness, but since I've been on the job I've been involved with so much within the department and the community and I feel like that shows how committed I am and dedicated to the department. I feel that like with democratic style of leadership you get more input and better communication with your officers and you get a better understanding of what their needs are and what they want to see happen. Does that answer,

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Mr. Debarge: Yes, sir it does.

Officer Wieldblad: Okay.

Mr. Debarge: Okay. Umm, so the crime rate in Ludlow has gone up 12% from 2018 to 2019. Umm, I didn't get any other years leading up to this because of COVID, I didn't think it would be fair. So, umm, also in the last five years violent crime has risen in Ludlow while property crime has dipped a bit. So, as a Shift Supervisor how would, would you do anything different to approach this information that I gave you with your shift?

Officer Wieldblad: Absolutely. I would love to, if I get information like that, I would like to address it with my shift. I'll bring up the stats and give my officers options on what they could do better. I would like to dive deeper into those stats and see what's really behind this. Is it, is it bar fights, is it just domestic violence, is it something else? It seems like since the property crime has gone down that the opioid crisis is kind of subsiding even though that's still a large issue that we're dealing with. I would also look into the population growth too if that had a factor in the crime rate growth because we are an ever-growing community. So, just because we are getting larger, that might increase the crime stats.

Mr. Debarge: Okay, I appreciate it. That's all I have. Thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Mr. Debarge. Mr. Gennette.

Mr. Gennette: Officer Wieldblad, thank you for coming in. So, you had mentioned you started up the bike patrol and you were talking about the Twitter account and Facebook and stuff like that. So, you must have, you must feel it's pretty important to have a good community interaction with people, right.

Officer Wieldblad: I do, yes.

Mr. Gennette: So, you know this is a question that I've been asking everybody umm, national sentiment towards the Police over the past four years or so, which is probably most of your Police career at this point being here five years, umm, has that posed any challenges for you? I mean what's your opinion about that?

Officer Wieldblad: So, I would say whenever you encounter someone that has an opinion like that, it's most important to remain professional. I'll ask you a question, is this like being a Police Officer in uniform or just out in public?

Mr. Gennette: Professional.

Officer Wieldblad: So, just remain professional, talk to the person. If they want any information or if they need help let them know but at the end of the day you're going to encounter people that just don't like you and the best you can do is just remain professional and help them as needed.

Mr. Gennette: So, you're going to have a bunch of staff under you if you get this position so what's going to be your direction to them? I mean if people have issues and they come to you with them are you prepared to be able to handle that?

Officer Wieldblad: Absolutely. So, you're talking about issues dealing with the public and,

Mr. Gennette: Well, they may have some concerns themselves. You get some Officers that are newer than you, you know and this is stuff that's got to be hitting you guys right up front. You know, I mean you're feeling it and you know I'm just wondering these new guys that are coming in they got to be feeling it more so than most and I want to know that when there's a Sergeant that's going to oversee them, that they're going to be able to take care of them appropriately. Umm, I don't want them to get...I don't want the community and the Police to be at odds. I want them to, I want everybody to gel. I'm concerned for you guys. I'm also concerned for the community. So, I just want to make sure that when you take in a staff and they have some of these concerns that you are going to be approachable.

Officer Wieldblad: Absolutely. I always welcome questions. I've taken on a number of OIC shifts, Officer in charge shifts and my main thing is communication with Officers, dispatch and anyone else who's working. So, if anyone has a question or concern; they're more than welcome to sit down and talk to them and if they're new Officers I think it would be a great idea to just sit down with them and let them know be like hey these are the types of people you might run into. It's best to just remain professional. It has nothing to do with you personally, it's just how they feel about Police in general and just having a sit down like that I think would be very, very important to do.

Mr. Gennette: Umm, what do you think for, coming up for the Police Department in the next couple of years, what would you see is the biggest internal thing you guys got going on? What's one of the hardest things you guys have hitting you right now that you could probably,

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Officer Wieldblad: That we could work on?

Mr. Gennette: yeah. That you guys are struggling with you know that,

Officer Wieldblad: I guess umm, you could talk about the opioid crisis and how we effectively,

Mr. Gennette: that would be more the community, I'm talking more for the Police. You know we were talking about body cams at one point. We were talking about you know that kind of stuff. So, umm, somebody else had suggested Detectives that kind of thing. So, I just wondering you know what your,

Officer Wieldblad: Okay. I think body cams would be a great idea because you get to see firsthand what we experience on the day to day but I would say cyber crime because it's an ever-evolving issue. We see this happen more and more often and in Ludlow we have a very heavy elderly population. So, they're more susceptible to these types of crimes. So, we handle them by taking a report and kind of advising them but I feel like if we trained more Officers to better understand and better act on these types of cyber crimes then we could move forward in a better direction with dealing with these crimes because let's face it, they're not going to go away. Technology is only going to advance and it's going to get more difficult to track down these people. I would even propose getting an Officer certified in ICAC. So, that's Internet Crimes Against Children and that would be a great role for like an SRO or a Detective or a motivated Police Officer to take on because kids are getting younger as when they're getting on the internet. They're getting on there at a very young age. So, it's important to have an Officer that could

do something if a child is involved in an internet crime and also educate them. So, I think that's why having that Officer in an SRO, a School Resource Officer role would be good to educate them that way.

Mr. Gennette: Great answer. Thank you. Umm, Mr. Chairman I'm all set. Thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you. That was ICAC with a C at the end?

Officer Wieldblad: Umm, yes, ICAC.

Mr. Rosenblum: C, yes. Thank you.

Officer Wieldblad: Yes. You're welcome.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Mr. Gennette. Mr. Silva.

Mr. Silva: Yeah. Welcome and thank you for continuing your education and taking the test. I had three questions but one of them was what was your thought about body cams and you answered so we're good with that, but in your work in the last five years, can you just relay a traumatic experience that you had and how did you handle it?

Officer Wieldblad: Okay, umm, I've had several on the job but I think I'm going to go back to my Corrections career, this one is going to stick with me for probably the rest of my life. I just started as a Corrections Officer and you manage a unit, so you have about like 70 inmates. So, you do like dinner, you do medications, you managed the unit, make sure everyone's behaving appropriately. In between dinner and medications, I had an inmate tap on his window and tell me that his brother's not feeling well. So, this could be a number of things, they could just be messing with you but I just had a gut feeling that something was wrong. So, I actually went up and checked on his brother, which was right next door to him. He actually ended up hanging himself and this was like two weeks out of the academy so I ended up getting on the radio, getting the response that was needed and I was going through my keys so I could open the cell door and get to him. I ask for a rescue hook, which is what we use to cut them down. We ended up opening the door and we ended up saving him. That was like I said two weeks out of the academy, that was, some people don't have an experience like that for like ten years at the Corrections Department. So, that's got to...but umm can I touch on the body cams real quick?

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Mr. Silva: Yeah.

Officer Wieldblad: Umm, so I think they would be good because of all the stuff that we deal with, Mr. Gennette, am I saying that right, about how you touched on how we deal with the negative people and all that, umm, I think it would only benefit us to show what we really go through on just like a regular call never mind the people that like take this to the extreme. The studies have shown, in one of my classes that over 90% of the body cam footage and the complaints that have been put against Officers, the body cam footage showed Officers to be in the right. So, I think there can only be positive things to come from that. I think the only issue for a department our size would be to properly store the footage and how it's going to be maintained. There's going to be a cost associated with that, so that's got to be looked into and then who's going to manage that and how, how long and basically that's it but overall, I think it would benefit.

Mr. Silva: My other question is what one thing would you like to see implemented into the Police Department?

Officer Wieldblad: That's the one I would've liked to say, the ICAC but as being a big proponent of community policing, bringing back the bike program and working as many community events as I can, I would really like to see a citizen's academy. I think in other interviews people have brought this up. I think, I know that the Sheriff's Department runs a citizen's and it seems very successful. So, I think if we could offer that to our community, I think it would be fantastic. It would show people more of what we do. We have open house about once a year and that's kind of the only time where the public comes in and sees what were all about. So, to have a whole academy would give you, the community a better picture of our whole operations.

Mr. Silva: Thank you. That's all I have.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Mr. Silva. Mr. Goncalves.

Mr. Goncalves: Yeah. Good evening and again thank you. Where do you rank the drug problem in town with relation to all the other crime that you see?

Officer Wieldblad: I would definitely rank it up there umm as one of the top priorities. I think it's much more than just a Police matter. You're going to see this affect the school systems. You're going to see this affect the community, families, mental health. I was just talking to a couple of colleagues of mine and us bordering the city of Springfield, they have the cheapest prices of heroin in the entire country.

Mr. Goncalves: It's funny you're saying that because I think you're seeing a decrease in property crime because it's getting cheaper to buy,

Officer Wieldblad: I agree with you there,

Mr. Goncalves: they don't need as much money as quickly and they're backing off taking that chance. Yeah.

Officer Wieldblad: I agree with you 100%. So, further on that, since it's cheaper to buy you're starting to see both parents using and when they have kids and when these kids go into the school system, they don't have social skills. They don't have educational skills. So, this results in more, special needs program, almost like an explosion because these kids need more help to kind of get up to speed where everyone else is at and ultimately you see these kids graduate, they have mental health issues and then unfortunately it comes full circle and then we end up dealing with them because they have some sort of crisis situation. So, I think it's a much bigger problem then just Law Enforcement and we need to keep on addressing it. I think from a Police aspect we've done a fantastic job. All Officers at the department carry Narcan. We've invested in our social media platforms, getting information out there on how people can get help, what they can do. We have a drug drop off box that people can come in and drop off medications and we also picked up on the DART Program, which was started in 2016 at the Northampton Police Department and it's been extremely successful in Hampshire County and we've had it, I want to say about two years. Basically, what it is, is a plain clothes Officer, usually it's a Detective goes in with a Social Worker to a house where we had a narcotics issue and pretty much, we just put in their face, hey here's a Social Worker willing to help you if you want the help here it is and if they chose to say yes then that whole process begins and hopefully that puts them in the right direction. So, I think we're doing a great job on the Police side. I think we just got to keep on addressing it because the prices are so cheap, it's so readily available we just got to stay on top of it and keep on doing the best that we can.

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Mr. Goncalves: Great. So, umm I think you pretty much answered one of my other questions. If you weren't a Police Officer, what would you be doing right now? What would have been, you think?

Officer Wielblad: Interesting question, umm, so when I was going through college, I would do landscaping kind of to pay for school and I was also kind of like a janitor. My grandfather has a cleaning company so, I was doing that to pay through college and I think I would, I would have continued with the landscaping business. I was just mowing like a few properties and small work like that and I probably would have like to see that progress and see where that took me.

Mr. Goncalves: Okay. Good deal. (Speaking in Polish)

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Mr. Goncalves. I just want to make a couple of comments because of a couple things you already said. The Twitter thing I think is great because it's actually, it's a great way of getting information out quickly. I think it's quicker than actual Facebook. I, for instance and in what I do for business we put it out for weather instances when it comes to golf course closure and anything like that. The course is walk in only or anything like that. It's a great, it just seems to be a lot quicker than Facebook. Umm, I've used, not personally, the drug drop-off box, which I think it's great because my oldest daughter has had three knee surgeries from athletics and Percocet's, she never touches them. We get them but we never use them, drop box all the time. I think that's, that's great. I mean I encourage anyone to use that if they have any leftover medications. My questions are, I know that Mr. Debarge had asked about professional weaknesses, what do you think is your personal weakness?

Officer Wieldblad: My personal weakness I would say I like to take on a lot of tasks and then I'm not very good at asking for help. For example, like currently I'm working, I'm a father, I'm going to school and I'm doing my Emergency Medical Technician certification. So, that's quite a bit of work and I'm very reluctant to ask for help from anyone sometimes. So, I think me being more willing to ask for help would transition better into a role of supervisor too because you have to delegate responsibilities and things to do. So, that's would I would say for a personal weakness.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay. Umm, had a problem wording this question all night but I think Mr. Debarge helped me out with it last time. How would you keep track of all the activities of the Police Department? Maybe, in a I guess we were saying like a bookkeeping type of way?

Officer Wieldblad: Oh, okay.

Mr. Debarge: Used to do a spreadsheet. Chief used to do a stat sheet too.

Mr. Rosenblum: Yeah. How would you track it? Anything that has to do with the people, the Officers that work under you, anything you know how would track it?

Officer Wieldblad: So, I would like to see some of the things I already have done. For the bike patrol program, I helped develop and design a sheet that keeps track of like our daily bike patrols. So, we keep that in a binder. So, it's much easier than just going in the log and just like looking okay they did a check here, they did a check there, it's like much more detailed. It's like okay they road their bikes here, they interacted with these people. For the message board, I keep an excel sheet kind of documenting all the messages that we had and the dates that we had associated with those messages. For Officers, I could easily transition that into just having a folder on the computer and being like this is Officer so and so, these are the types of training that he's interested in, this is what he wants to do with his career, this is what he's motivated by and this kind of like what he enjoys doing as a Police Officer. So, I can keep a folder on the computer and I could also make a binder as well and that would easily keep track because as a Sergeant you only gain more responsibilities and it's very good to stay organized like that. So, I would definitely do one of those or both of those to help me keep track of everything that I'm responsible for.

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Mr. Rosenblum: Wow. Perfect. Thank you and lastly, what trait do you believe is the most important to have as a Sergeant?

Officer Wieldblad: Being an effective communicator because as a Sergeant you're kind of like a liaison between command staff and the Officers. So, to understand what the Officers need to complete their job is important, but it's also important to understand what the command staff expects out of the Officers. So, kind of having a good communication both ways with that is very important and extremely important to have good communication skills when you're talking to the public, whether it's booking or on the street talking to someone. Having a way to effectively communicate to someone can really change the outcome of certain situations. So, I think that's by far the most important thing that any Officer and Sergeant for a trait can have.

Mr. Rosenblum: Perfect. Thank you. Just wanted to say one thing Chief, just to clarify something,

Chief Valadas: I'm informing all the candidates Officer Wieldblad that this is a Shift Supervisor position assigned to patrol. That includes both positions.

Officer Wieldblad: Okay.

Mr. Rosenblum: Closing comments.

Officer Wieldblad: Yes, first I would like to thank everyone for their time for considering me for the position of Sergeant. I was very nervous when I came in here but once we started, I think we had a really good flow going and I just wrote a really quick paragraph down for why I want to become a Sergeant. I want to become a Sergeant for several reasons, first having worked in the department for several years. I have a real appreciation of how the organization operates with the community. I would love to have the opportunity to have a larger impact on how we function and delegate sources. I grew

up in the community, so the ability to give back in a more meaningful way is very important to me. I would use the role as Sergeant to organize my team, motivate others, analyze current operations and use that to make improvements. Thank you.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you very much.

Mr. Debarge: Thank you.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you Officer.

Mr. Goncalves: Have a good night.

Officer Wieldblad: Thanks, you too.

Chief Valadas: Good evening, everyone. Thank you for this opportunity to also address you. I consider it what's going on tonight to be, to me, one of the most important things that a municipality has the opportunity to do. So, I want to state to all of you that you have, you can have the opportunity to promote all five of these people that are in front of you today. You can have that opportunity. This Civil Service list remains active and it remains active for a period of time until there's another certified list. That doesn't happen overnight. Usually, it's close to two and half years. The, all of these men that you see in front of you, all of them have the skills, as one of the candidates mentioned, to do this job and this position. The Civil Service process that gets them here, the eight texts that you review and study before the exam and this is a state wide exam. They're comprehensive, they go everywhere form legal to business management, personal management, investigations. They're thorough but they don't look at the intangibles of each candidate. The score is just that, it is crucible, it is not easy. There have been rates of, there have been passing rates in the state of Massachusetts that have been under 20% for Sergeants. So, all of these men show dedication just to get in front of you. The Civil Service process is just that. It's a crucible, it's inexpensive and it's expedient to get you candidates, therefore, I do say that it is something that is worth, that has been, that's worth keeping and worth having. We are in an enviable position. When I talk to other Police Chiefs of many neighboring communities, we have a candidate list that started with eight candidates. That's the biggest list that we've had in twenty years, since 2011. So, we are enviable when I tell you that we have fine people that we can promote here, okay. These men have put themselves not only through what I just mentioned but they've also agreed to assume greater responsibilities. They're already very responsible people just by being Police Officers, by asking to be a Police Sergeant you can do all the reading that you need to do and I am telling you it is the backbone of any Police Department. It is the most important position and I stated to you this before during budget negotiations where I stated that this position here is the jack of all trades. They have to do everything and we are not that big. So, we have 43 full-time positions, we have eight Sergeants. They have to do many hats. When you ask them questions, they have to touch on everything because they have to, in the course of their shift, do many different things including respond to, to serious incidents.

There are three traits that I look for that I think are the most important in being a Police Officer. One being strength and what I mean by strength I don't mean a physical strength, I mean like strength in intelligence, fortitude, okay some type of a constitution just to even do the position. The next is integrity. You must have a sense that what is out of the box and what is allowable. That sense of reasonableness governs everything that we do. Not only from criminal but on the civil aspect of it. The officers must act reasonably. The Supervisors have to review and mentor the officers to judge that reasonableness. I think it's that important and then when we talk about mental health issues without a doubt that fortitude comes from perseverance. A Police Officer and even beyond that a Police supervisor, a Sergeant must have the ability to have longstanding perseverance because not only are they saying I'm dealing with myself and my own issues and my family but I'm now adopting the men and the women that work for me as Mr. Gennette mentioned, they assume more responsibility. They assume that role. The men that you have in front of you and I'm gender specific only because those are the men that you have in front of you, they live and work in town. I think that that's invaluable. They are, they are not only upstanding but they are stakeholders. If you look at community policing, they are the stakeholders in your town. They send their kids here, they live here, they shop here, they conduct their daily activities here and I think and they wish to take on what other people give them and serve

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their community. Again, I think that's invaluable. They've all shown themselves with education. All of them have met standards of higher education but they've gone beyond that with professional training. You do have a Veteran here, okay. His service is outstanding. I'll point to you in his military record that he's the winner of an Army Accommodation Medal. Ladies and Gentlemen, you don't win an Army, an ARCOM for being as an enlisted man especially, you don't win ARCOM for just showing up, okay. You win an Army Accommodation because you served with distinction okay. Your levels of experience here, you do have a certain level of experience from you know the youngest candidate to the oldest candidate. You have some very experienced Police Officers but even as you've just seen the youngest or the least experienced officer has a breath to them. I think that that goes to the character of the person okay. What you're asking from me is specific skill sets. I have the enviable position in my opinion to work with these men every day and I consider it an honor and I'm incredibly proud of them okay. When I look at every single one, as I'm listening to them here, I just want to give you a couple of adjectives, descriptives that I wrote down and I sat here and said like you know each one of them it kind of fits them in my opinion and I'm going to go by the order that they were interviewed.

Acting Sergeant Jason Chelo to me is calm, he's steady and he's a listener. He's always had that ability, always had that ability. I've probably known him longer than all of these men on this list. I remember him when he was a kid, a freshman and he was the phenom playing soccer. I know his family. He, he just always had that, he's just a guy you like you know what I mean and as a Police Officer he's always had the ability to just be calm. He talked about being able to take himself out and look at, he does that, he does that, it's just the way he carries himself.

Acting Sergeant Steve Ricardi, I wrote down experienced, motivated and intelligent. Acting Sergeant Ricardi has headed some of the best and most intricate drug operations that we've had in this community and he's done it with tenacity. He has a zeal to do this job and he mentioned his father, he's a legacy without a doubt. He has a tremendous amount of respect for his father as he mentioned before. His father is like a legend okay. He is just a career Police Officer and when you asked that question about what else do you think you could be doing and a lot of them said probably the same thing, that's, that's Steve, that's him. He wants to do this with a passion okay and I think that's admirable.

On top of that Officer Brad Tierney, I wrote down dutiful, hardworking, and I wrote down that he, himself intelligence. He's pensative, when I look at, he mentioned his DRE training, let me just give you an idea; you have to be selected not only be me but you have to be selected by State Officials to even be allowed to go to the program because the level of, the...manual which is just the beginning of the training, is 500 pages. The level that he went to is three courses, three separate times and the failure rate can be over 50%. That's even if they chose you. His graduating class was half of what he started with statewide and he achieved it and when he asked me for it, I had no doubt, no doubt that Brad was going to do it and no doubt that he was going to be successful. That's just the way he is. He gets it done. I cannot say enough that he has stepped it up in the past year where he's been willing to work weekends to give other Officers time off and you know he mentioned over 200 hours. He did that not voluntarily and not being forced, he did it because he wanted to. He had; he wants to take that responsibility on. I can't say that enough about the man, it's just to the character of who he is.

Brandon Vigneault, I wrote down affable, a gregarious personality and engaging. He's probably you know in the years that I've know him and I haven't known him that long, he's relatively a young gentleman, you know certainly not in my age group. He's probably the person I like to spend you know, the greatest amount of time with. He's just that guy. He's just, he's friendly. I mean you saw him; he has a personality. It carries him in his police career. It just carries him. He can talk to people and his Detective role it's been invaluable.

Officer Jhon Wielblad, I wrote down ambitious, dedicated and energetic. You saw that, you just saw that, he doesn't stop. He's like the ever-ready bunny. He does things like the other day we were talking and told me about a hike that he takes and I'm always asking him like what are you doing now? That's just that guy, he just like, he never stops, he's the only one I know that, he climbs up the mountain and then skis back down it. You just saw that. Nothing will stop this man. He will get it done no matter what's put in front of him, he will do it.

So, I've mentioned to you thing that I feel about all five of them. So, it's a challenging group, okay, to chose from. I want all of them. I want all of them. Ludlow would be great and served better and would

be a better Police Department and a better town if all five of these men have Sergeant stripes. So, with that said, I have to tell you that I'm also big into experience. You have three Officers here that are just simply more experienced then the latter two. So, Officer Ricardi, Officer Chelo and Officer Tierney just have more experience. It's a relevant fact you know without even discussing age. They just have more experience. So, I think that Detective Vigneault, Officer Wieldblad are absolutely the up and comers. They're the future of the Police Department, as all of these men are. Maybe just the time now is for those three to stand out. So, with that three said, Acting Sergeant Ricardi to me is a superstar. He can work anywhere. He could be an FBI Agent. He could work anywhere. He's just, he has that, he just has it. He's my first choice out the gate. My second choice is incredibly difficult. I have an infinity to Officer, to Acting Sergeant Chelo who I chose and was willing to give up his positions to go work midnights, but I have a reverence for Officer Tierney because he's solid and he's a rock. I mean he's and he's been there for me. I've been Chief for almost fifteen months and he's been there. He'll do that shift on a Saturday and when he talked about being at that horrible fatality, when I got there, there's Officer Tierney standing there and he's got that scene and he's got those Officers and they're doing what they got to do and I didn't, I didn't think anything but everything was being done right. You asked me for my opinion gentlemen and I and I gave it to you with all of the honesty that I can. Thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Chief. Okay, umm, with that is there any comments from the Board?

Mr. Debarge: I'm still adding.

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Debarge are you still adding?

Mr. Debarge: Still adding.

Mr. Rosenblum: You're adding?

Mr. Debarge: Yup.

Mr. Goncalves: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Goncalves.

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Mr. Goncalves: What's the, what's it look like from an opening stand point for Sergeants?

Chief Valadas: We will have another opening, there is a Sergeant that's applying for the Department's applying for involuntary disability. I believe that you know, that's I've been assured that at some point and time again they can't give specific dates but I'd be thinking by the fall that it will be approved. This Sergeant was struck by a motor vehicle. He is endeavored to come back. He's had two surgeries. Three years, he's done everything he can and he's well deserved of what he should be approved to receive for the rest of his life. He served the Town of Ludlow honorably, admirably, dutifully and he suffered a career ending injury. I think that by the fall there will be another position.

Mr. Goncalves: That would be the third one or two?

Chief Valadas: That would be a third on top of the two tonight. I asked for two others, you give me those, you have all five.

Mr. Silva: Sure.

Chief Valadas: Thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Silva.

Mr. Silva: Hi.

Mr. Rosenblum: Hi. How are you?

Mr. Silva: Good. Definitely difficult, I mean, I think this is more difficult than the previous interviews we have ever had. Now, what I look at is, I look at experience as the Chief does, the progression, seniority

and devotion, you know with anyone that comes before me. Officer Chelo to me, I have a, I don't know what to say, we've been friends forever and umm the devotion, I would have to choose Officer Chelo as one of them. The other two, it's impossible for me to, great, Officer, Sergeant Ricardi, great, I mean I'm stuck there so.

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Gennette.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you Mr. Chairman. So, first off, I have to agree with you with and I don't know any of the Officers personally at all. So, I have nothing but an open mind with everybody. Officer Ricardi exudes confidence. I mean he just sat here and he just was as comfortable as he could have been. I think he probably interviewed better then any of the others and I agree with you with Officer Tierney who did the same. Officer Tierney was very forward looking, umm he was also very confident and I think those were probably your one and two. The intelligence level for Officer Chelo was just as fantastic. If I was to make a recommendation, it would be for Ricardi one, Tierney, two and if a position opens up within the next twelve months, for Officer Chelo. That would be my recommendation.

Mr. Goncalves: Still writing?

Mr. Debarge: Go ahead.

Mr. Goncalves: I'd have to agree with everybody that this is a tough decision. I think it's tougher than hiring you. Umm, when you came for the Chief. I like Officer Ricardi. I think it's a shame that he's not, not a day time Detective. That kind of bugs me because it's almost as if we are wasting some good talent that we need. Not that we don't have good talent. I could see what you're saying about Officer Vigneault, I think he's good for that and he has the ability to be a chameleon enough to where he can talk to anybody and gets what he needs in any conversation and umm which is great, great for the Town unfortunately. Umm, it's a shame that we can't keep Officer Ricardi at that position. I'm looking at the years of experience. I'm looking at what appears to be working. If there's a decrease at night and of the violent crime, of the crime against property. Is it because of what's happened over the last twelve or thirteen months with Officer Chelo and Officer Ricardi and maybe getting those guys at a different pace and different motivational level that things are happening in that direction because of that. Umm, your service record, thank you, I wrote words in there like assassin and a lot of other things and it was like wow. It's like a movie to me, you know. I've never seen anything like that and it was incredible and I'd love to hire all five. No question that if we are going to have that third one in the fall it would be these three going forward. I'm still a little confused on the order, two and three. I would probably, my tendency would be with sixteen-year veteran that has the position now but I'm still absorbing it a little bit but Officer Ricardi for sure, I think would be my number one pick.

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Mr. Debarge: This was an interesting interview for me as far as my grading system goes because I was impressed by all. There umm, comments, answers to the questions, nice and easy was a pleasure to see. Umm, and let me just say this, one of my questions that I didn't ask was related to the atmosphere towards Police both you know at a local level, national level and all of that and the thing that I love most about this town and its community is how, it's almost like Ludlow is its own family per se in that their support for our Police Department is unwavering. Their support for all of our public services is unwavering and by that we end up getting candidates like this. I think if the atmosphere was different and you can look at other communities, cities whatever, you can see a difference. Our Officers want to stay here, they want to be promoted here. In a town like this you can have aspirations to go from an intern and all the way to the Police Chief and that's what's great about this department and this town and its people. I have rarely been, I've rarely been at the end of an interview where I am not completely set on who I would suggest because of how well everything went in the interview but the interview is not, the interview is not the sole thing in the selection process. You have to take everything into play, training, experience, time on the job. A lot of stuff, all the factors come into play with this decision. I can go to any one of the candidates and tell you how impressed I was with various answers. I look for complete honesty whether the answer to the question is something that might be, it's funny when you say something in an interview that like this like umm, what kind of program would you implement into the department, those being interviewed almost think it's like a knock to the Police Chief, it's not, it's not. It's, when we want you know new leaders to step up, new leaders always have ideas. So, it's a great thing to ask and I love the answers. I think with how close everybody was and how I graded them in the interview umm, I mean the points are not divided by much. Then again, the culmination of everything has to play. With that, with the all the information sorry to say, the Police phrase but the

totality of the circumstances where everybody here I would go forward with, with Steve Ricardi and Jay Chelo, with Brad being right, right, right there. So, and Jhon you know what you handed yourself, I mean you were amazed at your candor, I was amazed at how calm and how well you answered everything. I just you know I think more time, more time is needed but you are definitely going to be a rockstar here. There's no doubt about that and I can't disagree with anything you said about Mr. Tierney either. As I said to you in your interview, I've run into people all over the place. We frequent the same restaurant once in a while and anybody I've run into has never, ever, ever had anything bad to say about you. It's always been pleasant in any interaction they've had with you, professionally, personally. Again, I have to revert back to time, experience and the fact that they've, that Steve Ricardi and Jay Chelo have been in the position as Acting Sergeant means a lot in this respect because they've, they're there, they're doing the job, and they've been there, they've been there for a time that allows them to understand all the idiosyncrasies with all of it and I think you two will get there as well. So, for that without being too long-winded, Ricardi and Chelo would be my first two choices and umm let me say something about, I'm sorry, let me say something about Mr. Vigneault too. I was thoroughly impressed with his interview and thoroughly impressed with his flat-out honesty to the answers to the questions even when they might not be popular and I know I alluded to that in general but specifically with Brandon you know what you're getting with him. He's right there, he's going to tell you exactly what he thinks and I thought his answers were phenomenal. I actually had him rated highest in the interview out of everybody in my score but again the points were like .5 apart the way I do it and I think all three of you, you know, all three of you are definitely worth it but we have to pick two. It's just the nature of how we do it and as I said my two would be Acting Sergeants Ricardi and Chelo.

Mr. Goncalves: Can I ask a question?

Mr. Rosenblum: Sure.

Mr. Goncalves: Are we looking to say today that the third position if and when it becomes available before the end of the year could be filled with a decision made tonight?

Chief Valadas: At midnight tonight by special order I will have to have an Acting Sergeant to fill the position for umm, for umm Sergeant Sevigne. Irregardless, there will be an Acting Sergeant at midnight tonight with the promotions of two people because I still have, I have an opening from retired Sergeant Tulik, I have the new position that you gave me last year and I must fill, as I've been filling for the last 14 months, I have to fill Sergeant Sevigne's position. There will be an Acting, either a new Acting or existing Acting at midnight tonight. With the appointment of the two people that you, you promote.

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Mr. Goncalves: And you're making the decision on the Acting?

Chief Valadas: Yes, because it's only an Acting.

Mr. Debarge: It's only up to him.

Mr. Goncalves: Okay.

Mr. Debarge: We can't...

Chief Valadas: It's executive authority, it's just an Acting, it's not a provisional.

Mr. Debarge: Yeah, and we couldn't put anybody in the position anyways without the position being open.

Mr. Goncalves: No, I'm just asking. That's the first time I've seen this.

Mr. Debarge: Yup, okay.

Chief Valadas: The Sergeants are that important. I can't run without Sergeants because they can do patrol. So, I will run light on patrol but I have to have that Sergeant.

Mr. Goncalves: Okay. I'm sorry, go ahead.

Mr. Rosenblum: No, I was thinking the same thing because in a perfect world if you could appoint two tonight and have a provisional being the third down when the position opens,

Mr. Goncalves: Then we would avoid this again.

Mr. Rosenblum: we would avoid this again but because this list from what I'm seeing is good until 12/22. So, theoretically by October/November we could be back in the same room with the same people.

Chief Valadas: Yes.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay.

Mr. Debarge: Theoretically, yes.

Mr. Goncalves: Could we theoretically kill it today?

Ms. Villano: I don't think you can.

Mr. Rosenblum: No, no.

Mr. Debarge: We just need to do what we need to do and then Chief will take care of the rest.

Talking over each other.

Mr. Goncalves: I got it.

Mr. Rosenblum: Yup and I think the word you were looking for was the Ludlow bubble.

Mr. Debarge: Ludlow, is that what people are saying, yeah.

Mr. Rosenblum: Yeah, everyone calls it the Ludlow bubble I mean it's just you have five people that are part of the community and the part that's great about our department is the fact, is that pretty much everybody lives in town. I mean this, they grew up here, and they work here and you couldn't ask more from anyone that gives you public service, is they want to come back to where they were once they go to school or anything like that. Umm, looking at all five, just because I know that we've kind of narrowed down the probably three candidates right now. Each one has unique skillsets and I have to say Officer Wielblad, sorry getting older, I have to put the cheaters on to make sure I say it correctly, umm, I love where you're going with it because I think that the analytical portion of it, the just the statistics side of it, social media, being even active there because that just seems to be where everyone is going whether we like it or not. Twitter, I think is underused. Just you know the ICAC, that's awesome. Cyber-crime, you are the only one that actually talked about cyber-crime and considering we went through it with out town and that it's becoming a large thing and especially with children. I mean, I have my youngest daughter, you know since the pandemic started, was, does a lot road blocks and those games like that and I know another officer in another town who's, he doesn't let his kids on it because of the predators on it. Umm, I think that's something and again I think everything starts from the bottom and works its way up because we all hit on drugs. We all hit on opioids. Umm and it starts with our kids. I look at it and I'm pretty much in line with my colleagues in that one for me would be Officer Ricardi and I'm stuck at two with Officer Chelo and Officer Tierney, but when I come down to it, I do look at, the same thing that I think we've all been looking at is the amount of service to the town, the amount of years that's been worked and also the position of already being and Acting Sergeant, which would in any tie that I have between Officer Tierney and Officer Chelo would give the nod to Officer Chelo. I just, I go with just the fact that, pretty much what breaks it for me is the fact that he's already been in there for thirteen months. Has just a little bit more experience with the town, years of service. So, that's where I stand. If there's anyone that would,

Mr. Goncalves: I would, Mr. Chairman I would just like to say that I think from what I'm gathering from the balance of this conversation it's going to, I think it's going to end up working itself out anyways.

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Mr. Rosenblum: no and that's kind of why your original question that you just asked is kind of my thought process and again the Chief is going to do what the Chief has to do beyond tonight.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Silva to appoint Officer Ricardi to Sergeant. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Silva to appoint Officer Chelo to Sergeant. Vote 4-1.

Chief Valadas: Thank you gentlemen, ladies.

Mr. Silva: Thank you Chief.

Mr. Goncalves: Guys, thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Gentlemen, thank you.

Mr. Goncalves: So, he becomes a provisional tonight, right?

Mr. Debarge: What's that?

Mr. Goncalves: Tierney becomes a provisional tonight?

Mr. Debarge: Well, that's up to him.

Mr. Goncalves: Well, I'm sure that's where he's going.

Mr. Rosenblum: I'm sure.

Mr. Goncalves: We got to read about it in the paper tomorrow?

Chief Valadas: Midnight tonight, Brad Tierney is Acting Sergeant.

Mr. Goncalves: Okay. Beautiful.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you.

Mr. Goncalves: Everybody's happy. Thank you.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you Chief.

Ms. Villano: Good night.

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Closing Comments:

Mr. Silva hopes that the community sees the officers that we have in this community and how incredible it is and continue to support them.

Mr. Gennette stated that all of the candidates were phenomenal and does think that Officer Wielblad is going to have an incredible tenure here as well as Officer Vigneault. However, cautions the Board that they should not vote for friends.

Mr. Debarge commented that he was notified that he swore on camera and stated that the Chief was going to be long winded with each candidate. Therefore, he suggested to the Chairman through a text that he suggest to the Chief that he makes his comments at the end in order to keep things moving. He admits to using profanity and apologizes to the community and the Chief for doing that.

Mr. Goncalves agrees that we are very fortunate as a community to have a great Police Department and the more we communicate with them and work with them, the better things will be. It was very refreshing to know that one of the candidates is a specialist when it comes to cyber-crime. He is very

happy that Officer Wielblad is that involved with this and don't hesitate to reach out to him if there are issues going on.

Mr. Rosenblum wants to remind the community about the drug drop box and encourages everyone to use it. Do not throw it in the trash as there are people that go through trash and recyclables. Happy with the quality of candidates and believes the community should be very happy with what they saw tonight. Agrees with the candidates that even though on a national level sentiment towards police is poor, but in Ludlow that is not the case.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Silva to adjourn this meeting at 8:59 p.m. and not return to open meeting. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Ludlow Board of Selectmen

All related documents can be viewed at the Board of Selectmen's Office during regular business hours.

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