

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026**

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Councillor Al-Zubi, Co-Chair
Councillor Nolan, Co-Chair
Vice Mayor Azeem
Councillor Flaherty
Councillor McGovern
Councillor Simmons
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler
Councillor Zusy
Mayor Siddiqui

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Finance Committee was held on Tuesday, March 10, 2026. The meeting was Called to Order at 10:00 a.m. by the Co-Chair, Councillor Nolan. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2025 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

At the request of the Co-Chair Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Vice Mayor Azeem – Absent*
Councillor Flaherty – Absent*
Councillor McGovern – Absent*
Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Simmons – Absent*
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote
Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Mayor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 5, Absent – 4. Quorum established.

*Councillor Flaherty was present in the Sullivan Chamber at 10:12a.m.

*Councillor Simmons was present and remote at 10:17a.m.

*Vice Mayor Azeem was present and remote at 10:28a.m.

*Councillor McGovern was present in the Sullivan Chamber at 11:05a.m.

Co-Chair Nolan offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to review and discuss the Police Department budget for FY27 before it is submitted to the City Manager, as required under Cambridge Municipal Code Chapter 2.74.040. Present at the meeting was Budget Director, Taha Jennings, Assistant City Manager of Fiscal Affairs, Claire Spinner, Police Commissioner, Christine Elow, Director of Planning, Budget, and Personnel for Cambridge Police Department (CPD) Angela Alfred, Superintendent Pauline Wells, Deputy Superintendent John Boyle, Deputy Superintendent David Brown, Deputy Superintendent Michael Logan, Deputy Superintendent Steven Magalhaes, Deputy Superintendent Michael Medeiros, Deputy

Superintendent Buckowe Yam, Director of Clinical Support Services, Dr. James Barrett, and Director of Professional Standards, James Mulcahy.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Angela Alfred who thanked everyone who helped CPD prepare for the presentation.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Commissioner Elow who offered opening remarks (Attachment A) and gave a presentation along with Angela Alfred titled “Cambridge Police FY27 Budget”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the presentation. In addition to the presentation, the Leadership Team from CPD offered overviews of the different Operations within the Department that the Superintendents and Deputy Superintendent oversee (Attachment A).

Co-Chair Nolan opened Public Comment.

Jacob Brown, Magazine Street, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns related to the Police Department’s budget and programs.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Flaherty who emphasized how involved CPD is with the community and their responsiveness to the needs of residents and visitors to the City. Councillor Flaherty asked if there was the possibility of increasing walking units throughout the City to strengthen relationships with community members across the different neighborhoods within the City. Commissioner Elow noted that community engagement is expected across the entire Department and not just specific units and provided examples of how community engagement is expected to expand. Commissioner Elow highlighted the importance of balancing outreach efforts with enforcement to ensure that public spaces remain safe while also connecting with members of the community. Councillor Flaherty offered comments related to the Community Action Team (CAT) in Central Square and acknowledged the success they have with and being able to help individuals connect with services that support mental health, addiction, and housing services. Councillor Flaherty shared that it would be beneficial to expand the CAT team to other areas in Cambridge, such as Porter Square, to achieve the same results. Commissioner Elow shared how the CAT Team has recently been integrated into the Family and Social Justice section of the Department and that they are being deployed in other areas of the City, such as Harvard and Porter Squares.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who asked how many public requests have been made for body worn camera footage and how many of those requests have been fulfilled. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler also asked for additional information regarding the Co-Response program and associated costs. Mike Horgan of the Cambridge Police Department shared that there were 244 requests, with 39 fulfilled. Commissioner Elow explained that the costs associated with the Co-Response program are covered within the department’s existing operating budget. Angela Alfred added that she did not have the specific salary for the police officer assigned to the program but would provide that information at a later time. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler asked for more information on the proposed public safety technology spending in the FY27 budget. Commissioner Elow explained that the funding would be able to support the increase of public safety cameras and use of cell phones for Police Officers. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler shared that it would be important going forward to have details related to the budget and spending be clearer.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy who highlighted the importance of community policing and public safety for local businesses. Councillor Zusy asked for more information regarding the increase in staffing from FY26 to FY27 and asked if the increase aligns with national benchmarks. Councillor Zusy shared concerns about the CARE Team and CPD overlapping with their roles in the community. Taha Jennings explained that the increase staffing numbers reflect the full-time equivalent model, which now includes part-time positions, such as crossing guards. Commissioner Elow added that Officer staffing is in line with other departments when looking at officers per capita. Commissioner Elow shared that the roles within CPD and the CARE Team depend on the situation, noting that some calls do require a police response, while others can just have a clinical or social service response. Commissioner Elow shared that CPD and the CARE Team are continuing to coordinate with each other and noted the importance of partnering together to provide support to those who need it.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Vice Mayor Azeem who asked for more information on overtime and if Officers are paid at a higher rate. Vice Mayor Azeem asked if overtime work could be moved into regular scheduling to help reduce costs. Commissioner Elow explained that overtime is usually required for major events, protests, and staffing shortage, adding that at some events, such as the Fourth of July and Caribbean Festival, Officers are required to work an extended shift, with an overtime rate, to support the safety needs. Commissioner Elow shared that there are Units within the Department that are working towards reducing overtime. Vice Mayor Azeem noted that it was not clear in the budget book how overtime costs were broken down and that it is important to have information to help with budget discussions. Taha Jennings provided a brief overview of how overtime is explained in the budget book.

Co-Chair Nolan asked if Harvard and MIT Police Officers were considered when reviewing public safety resources in the city and shared similar concerns that were raised related to the coordination between CPD and the CARE Team. Co-Chair Nolan questioned if the CARE Team would be able to add additional call types to increase their responses and reduce police response for certain calls. Co-Chair Nolan provided comments related to the importance of measuring the effectiveness of initiatives and how they relate to the budget. Commissioner Elow pointed out that Harvard and MIT are not included in staffing numbers and explained how call assignment for Police Officers and the CARE Team are determined externally. Commissioner Elow added that coordination between the two is always evolving and responses are based on different situations. Commissioner Elow shared how the Department measures effectiveness of tracking community outreach and safety efforts, especially for the vulnerable populations. Superintendent Wells added that receiving feedback from the community and local organizations also provides the Department with idea of effectiveness of initiatives and community safety, adding how the safety conditions in Central Square have improved since the implementation of the CAT Team.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to extend the meeting to 12:15p.m

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor McGovern who pointed out that safety needs in Cambridge are different than some other communities because of the large daytime population of people working in and visiting the City. Councillor McGovern shared how important collaboration is between CPD and the CARE Team because many calls of service do require both to respond. Councillor McGovern offered comments related to the structure and growth of the budget and the programs offered by CPD compared to other municipalities. Dr. Barrett shared that there is weekly, regular coordination between the CARE Team and CPD and provided an overview of how they work together to review responses and follow-ups. Commissioner Elow noted that the budget has grown over the years, but emphasized that it was to help support the expanded roles in prevention and intervention that Officers have assumed. Taha Jennings provided additional information related to budget growth, adding that factors such as salaries and benefits contribute to the increase. Councillor McGovern thanked CPD for their work and continuing to keep Cambridge a safe city.

Co-Chair Al-Zubi assumed the Chair at 11:51a.m.

Co-Chair Al-Zubi recognized Mayor Siddiqui who emphasized the importance of adding performance measures to the budget to help oversee and track outcomes on the different functions within the Department. Mayor Siddiqui asked why School Crossing Guards are included in the budget. Mayor Siddiqui asked for more information on the Procedural Justice Dashboard and how it is being used towards decision making and best practices. Commissioner Elow explained why the Crossing Guards are included in the budget, noting that they ensure safety coverage during school hours. Commissioner Elow shared that the Department is looking to utilize the Dashboard in the future to provide stronger analysis and they currently use it as a tool that provides transparency. Commissioner Elow added that the Department would need to use an outside partner to help review Dashboard data and identify areas for improvement. Angela Alfred shared that Crossing Guards account for approximately 15.3 FTE positions. Mayor Siddiqui highlighted how important it is to use the Dashboard not just for transparency, but for accountability and improving performance. Mayor Siddiqui added that it is always important to review the budget across all departments to identify cost saving opportunities.

Co-Chair Al-Zubi made a motion to extend the meeting to 12:25p.m.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes
Vice Mayor Azeem – Absent
Councillor Flaherty – Yes
Councillor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Absent

Councillor Simmons – Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Al-Zubi asked how much the Department has spent on overtime in the last fiscal year and how much is budgeted for the upcoming fiscal year. Taha Jennings explained that the FY25 budget for overtime was close to \$4 million, but the actual amount spent was closer to \$8 million. Taha Jennings added that the amount was higher because it covered the vacancies within the Department. Taha Jennings shared that the Department is adjusting the number based on vacancies needed to cover overtime and that the FY26 overtime budget was increased to \$5.7 million. Co-Chair Al-Zubi asked if there have been any efforts made towards Patrol Officers covering the needed overtime while on shift. Commissioner Elow explained that Officers who are on shift are responsible for responding to calls for service and need to remain available, but when it is possible Officers will attend certain community events while on duty. Co-Chair Al-Zubi shared it would be helpful to understand the shift and structure process to figure out ways to better adjust the overtime needs and be more financially efficient. Co-Chair Al-Zubi asked for more information related to the number of violent crimes within the City. Superintendent Boyle shared that Crime Analysis tracks all that data which he can provide after the meeting. Co-Chair Al-Zubi shared it would be important to understand what resources are being put into violent crimes. Co-Chair Al-Zubi provided closing remarks and spoke on the purpose, function, and investment within the different units of the Department and how they are addressing the needs of those with mental health.

Co-Chair Al-Zubi made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes
Vice Mayor Azeem – Absent
Councillor Flaherty – Yes
Councillor McGovern – Yes

In City Council April 13, 2026.
Affirmative Vote of Nine Members
Attest:- Paula M. Crane, Interim City Clerk

Councillor Nolan – Absent
Councillor Simmons – Absent

A true copy;



ATTEST:-

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Paula M. Crane

CMouncayori Slloriddi Zquiusy – – YYeess
Interim City Clerk

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

The Finance Committee adjourned at approximately 12:22p.m.

Attachment A – CPD Finance Committee Statements

Attachment B – CPD response to Committee questions

Clerk’s Note: The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

[Mar 10, 2026 Finance Committee - Cambridge, MA](#)

City of Cambridge Police Department

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Office of the Police Commissioner

Christine Elow

Yi-An Huang

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To: Finance Co-Chair Patricia Nolan; Finance Co-Chair Ayah Al-Zubi
CC: Paula Crane, Acting City Clerk; Nicole Erwin, Clerk of Committees
From: Christine Elow, Police Commissioner
Date: March 13, 2026
Re: Cambridge Police Finance Committee Statements

Christine Elow, Police Commissioner

Good morning Chair, members of the Finance Committee, and City staff. Thank you for the opportunity to present the Cambridge Police Department's proposed FY27 budget.

I want to begin by acknowledging that the police budget receives significant scrutiny, and we understand and welcome that. The resources entrusted to our department come from the residents of Cambridge, and it is appropriate that the Council review them carefully.

Over the past decade, the police department's budget has grown more slowly than the City's overall operating budget, and the department now represents a smaller share of the City's total spending than it did ten years ago. At the same time, the scope and complexity of the work performed by the Cambridge Police Department has continued to evolve.

While responding to emergencies, investigating crime, and ensuring public safety remain core responsibilities, much of our daily work now involves situations that sit at the intersection of public

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Office of the Police Commissioner

Christine Elow

safety and broader social challenges — including mental health crises, substance use disorder, homelessness, domestic violence, and challenges facing youth and families.

Yi-An Huang

Addressing these issues often requires sustained engagement and coordination with many partners. Our officers and professional staff regularly work alongside clinicians, service providers, community organizations, and the courts to help stabilize situations, support victims, and assist individuals in navigating complex circumstances, including involvement in the criminal legal system. In many cases, the goal of that work is diversion and deflection — helping individuals access services and supports rather than moving deeper into the criminal legal system.

There is an ongoing discussion in many communities, including Cambridge, about reducing the role of police in situations involving behavioral health, substance use, or homelessness. We support the development of alternative response models where appropriate and work closely with partners such as the CARE Team to ensure that the right resources respond to the right situations.

At the same time, many of the calls we respond to occur where behavioral health challenges intersect with crime, victimization, or the potential for violence. In those circumstances, the presence of trained police officers remains essential to ensure the safety of the individuals involved and the broader community. Our focus in Cambridge has been to ensure that when officers respond to these situations, they are well trained in de-escalation, diversion, and working in partnership with clinicians and service providers.

There are many complex aspects to the work of the police department. While tonight's presentation focuses on the budget and the resources required to support that work, we recognize that some of the broader issues connected to policing in Cambridge extend beyond the scope of a budget hearing. We welcome those conversations and remain available to continue those discussions with the committee as needed.

With that context, I will walk through the key elements of the proposed FY27 police budget and how those resources support the department's work and responsibilities.

Pauline Wells, Superintendent for Operations

Patrol Operations are the primary public-facing part of the Cambridge Police Department. Our work is guided by the principles of 21st Century Policing: building trust, being transparent, working in partnership with the community, and ensuring officers are prepared and well trained.

Our Patrol Officers are assigned throughout the city to provide a visible, approachable presence. They respond to all types of calls, address quality-of-life concerns, and take on proactive assignments based on crime trends and community feedback. Each year, officers respond to more than 100,000 calls for service. All officers wear Axon body-worn cameras to support transparency and accountability.

We use a data-driven approach to place officers where they are most needed. Patrol work emphasizes de-escalation, alternatives to arrest when appropriate, and strong awareness of mental health needs. Officers receive specialized training—such as Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), Trauma-Informed Practices, and ICAT—which strengthens communication, assessment, and decision-making during complex or high-risk encounters.

A central part of Patrol Operations is our community engagement model, which prioritizes familiarity, accessibility, and consistent presence. Officers conduct intentional foot patrols and Walk & Talk micro-patrols in schools, business corridors, and pedestrian zones. These interactions are relationship-focused rather than enforcement-driven. Officers introduce themselves, listen, and work collaboratively with residents and businesses to identify concerns and find practical solutions.

Patrol Officers also use an Officer-Led Community Problem-Solving model, addressing recurring quality-of-life issues—such as loitering, traffic concerns, or noise complaints—through thoughtful, community-centered strategies rather than heavy enforcement. Officers document their efforts to support accountability and track progress. This is complemented by our Adopt-a-Block and Adopt-a-Building approaches, which assign officers to consistent geographic areas to promote familiarity and long-term relationship building.

Patrol Operations is also the central conduit to every other unit in the department. Patrol officers are the first to identify emerging issues, trends, and community needs. What they see and hear on a daily basis flows directly to the specialized units best equipped to respond—whether that’s Investigations, FSJS, the Traffic Enforcement Unit, or our clinicians and outreach partners as well as the CARE Team. This connection ensures that information moves quickly and accurately, that resources are deployed where they will have the greatest impact, and that the department operates as a coordinated, citywide system rather than separate units working in isolation. Patrol’s constant presence in neighborhoods makes it the frontline source of both situational awareness and long-term problem-solving for the entire department.

Patrol Operations also collaborate closely with city agencies and local organizations to support inclusion, dignity, and neighborhood well-being. Officers provide a steady presence at key community locations and assist during times of increased need, including supporting unhoused residents and connecting them with services.

Day and Night Patrol teams operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, ensuring timely response and reliable coverage citywide. This continuous readiness reflects our commitment to professionalism, reliability, and collaborative public safety for everyone who lives, works, and visits Cambridge.

The Traffic Enforcement Unit (TEU) is dedicated to reducing roadway related harm for those traveling in and through Cambridge through a balanced approach of enforcement and education. The Unit prioritizes areas with the greatest safety impact, including speeding, pedestrian safety, bicycle lane violations, distracted driving, and red-light compliance.

To address community concerns related to speeding, TEU officers deploy a speed trailer to collect data and promote voluntary compliance. The information gathered is shared with partner city agencies in support of the Department’s ongoing commitment to Vision Zero initiatives.

TEU officers investigate motor vehicle crashes involving fatalities, serious bodily injury, or significant property damage. They also provide traffic management and scene safety at major incidents, including fires, large-scale crime scenes, and public demonstrations, and are responsible for dignitary protection for national and international officials visiting the city.

The Unit includes Traffic Supervisors whose primary responsibility is ensuring the safe crossing of school children at designated intersections throughout Cambridge. When coverage gaps occur, TEU officers supplement these posts to maintain student safety during school arrival and dismissal times.

Additionally, TEU members are trained in child passenger safety and routinely assist community members with child safety seat inspections, proper installation, and education to promote the safe transportation of children

Michael Medeiros, Deputy Superintendent for Family & Social Justice Section

FSJS focuses on supporting some of the most vulnerable members of the

community. This includes youth, individuals experiencing homelessness, people facing

mental health or substance use challenges, and survivors of domestic violence. The section brings together several specialized units that work collaboratively. These include Youth and Family Services, the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Unit, the Community Action Team, the Clinical Support Unit, and the Focused Deterrence initiative. FSJS operates using a person-centered case management approach, recognizing that each situation is unique and requires a coordinated response. Family Justice Unit The Family Justice Unit focuses on protecting vulnerable individuals and supporting families experiencing crises or victimization. The unit oversees two primary areas: Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Unit, and the Youth Resource Officer Program. These teams work to address victimization, intervene early with youth, and provide coordinated support to individuals and families involved with the criminal legal system. The unit emphasizes trauma-informed investigations, early intervention, and strong partnerships with schools, prosecutors, and community-based organizations.

Domestic Violence / Sexual Assault Unit is responsible for investigating intimate partner violence and sexual assault cases. Detectives conduct detailed investigations, gather evidence, and work closely with the District Attorney's Office. Victim Advocates connect survivors with safety planning, counseling services, housing resources, and other support services. The unit operates using a trauma-informed approach that balances investigative integrity with survivor support. The team works closely with courts, advocacy organizations, and social service providers due to the complex nature of these cases.

Youth Resource Officer (YRO) Program builds strong relationships with young people and intervenes early when challenges arise. Officers are assigned to Cambridge schools and youth programs where they serve as mentors, educators, and problem-solvers. They help identify youth struggling with behavioral health issues, family challenges, or exposure to violence. YROs collaborate with schools, community organizations, and diversion programs to guide youth toward positive outcomes. The program also builds trust between young people and law enforcement.

The Social Justice Unit addresses community challenges that intersect with public safety. These include homelessness, behavioral health issues, quality-of-life concerns, and violence prevention. The unit works closely with service providers, housing agencies, and community partners to stabilize individuals and improve safety and quality of life. The unit includes the Community Action Team (CAT), Outreach Officers, and the Focused Deterrence initiative.

Community Action Team (CAT) addresses recurring community concerns and quality-of-life issues through a problem-solving and outreach-based policing model. Officers work closely with residents, businesses, and service providers to identify underlying issues and coordinate responses. Much of the work involves substance use, homelessness, and behavioral health issues in high-impact areas of the city. Officers work collaboratively with outreach teams and service providers to stabilize situations and connect individuals with resources. This approach helps reduce repeated calls for service while improving safety and quality of life.

Focused Deterrence Initiative is a collaborative violence prevention strategy. It brings together law enforcement, service providers, community leaders, and prosecutors. The strategy focuses on individuals at the highest risk of involvement in violent crime. Individuals receive a clear message that violence will not be tolerated while support and services are available to help them change course. The goal is to prevent violence before it occurs by combining accountability with opportunities for support.

FSJS prioritizes diversion, service referrals, and specialty court sessions whenever appropriate. The goal is to prevent deeper involvement in the criminal legal system. FSJS focuses on stabilizing individuals in the community before situations escalate into repeated calls for service, arrests, or incarceration. Addressing underlying issues early leads to more effective public safety outcomes.

Dr. James Barrett, Director of Clinical Support Unit (CSU)

Dr. Barrett did not read from prepared remarks, but the highlights are as follows:

Dr. Barrett opened with stating that there are five (5) FTE's in the CSU: the Director, 2 LICSW's the Strategic Partnerships Coordinator and the Case Manager, which was the last position added to the CSU in 2021. He added that the Co-Response Clinician is funded through a DMH state grant and is an employee of North Suffolk.

Dr. Barrett then spoke about the depth and scope of the work of Clinical Support. He cited statistics from 2024 where there were 1,208 mental health reports coded as a voluntary, involuntary or mental health interaction and in 2025 there were 1,282 reports. In 2024 the CSU worked on approximately 1,360 cases and in 2025 that number was 1,340.

Dr. Barrett lastly spoke to the core functions of the CSU which are to work with the courts, detectives, FSJS and patrol to focus on diverting and deflecting our vulnerable populations who either are victims of crime, committed crimes or who are reporting crimes. He noted the acuity of some residents suffering from paranoid disorder who file multiple police reports and require a coordinated approach between criminal investigations and CSU.

John Boyle, Deputy Superintendent for Criminal Investigations Section (CIS)

The Cambridge Police Department's Criminal Investigation Section houses the Department's Detective Bureau. The unit is currently staffed by two Detective Lieutenants—one assigned to the day shift and one to the night shift—and two Detective Sergeants, also assigned to day and night shifts. The section includes 18 detectives, among whom five are assigned to federal task forces and two serve as in-house cybercrime investigators. Detectives are deployed across both day and night shifts to ensure continuous investigative coverage.

The Criminal Investigation Section is responsible for investigating all reported criminal activity and police reports within the City of Cambridge. These investigations range from routine cases to complex and serious crimes, including homicide, aggravated assault, firearms possession, online child exploitation, and financial crimes.

In Fiscal Year 2025, the Criminal Investigation Section conducted 4,306 investigations. Notably, there were nine shots-fired incidents during the year, which resulted in six arrests and an additional suspect charge with a warrant through the court system. Additionally, the City recorded 331 aggravated assaults, with detectives achieving a 60% clearance rate in those cases.

The Criminal Investigation Section works closely with the Middlesex County District Attorney Office to place offenders who qualify in the Immerging Adult Offender program. In FY 25 there were 5 individuals deferred to this program.

David Brown, Deputy Superintendent for Administrative Services Section

The Fleet Management Unit of the Cambridge Police Department is responsible for the maintenance, readiness, and operational management of the department's vehicle fleet. The unit oversees a total fleet of 105 police vehicles and motorcycles, ensuring that all equipment remains safe, reliable, and operationally ready to support patrol, investigative, and specialized law

enforcement functions. Among the department's fleet are 14 fully electric vehicle (EV) police cruisers and 7 plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) cruisers, reflecting the department's continued efforts to incorporate environmentally sustainable technologies while maintaining operational effectiveness. These vehicles represent an important component of the department's broader initiative to modernize its fleet and reduce fuel consumption and emissions. The Fleet Management Unit is responsible for coordinating routine maintenance, repairs, inspections, equipment installation, and vehicle replacement scheduling. The unit ensures that vehicles remain compliant with safety standards while minimizing downtime that could impact police operations. Through careful management of a diverse and technologically evolving fleet, the Fleet Management Unit plays a vital role in maintaining the operational readiness of the Cambridge Police Department and supporting officers in the performance of their daily duties.

The Records Management Office of the Cambridge Police Department serves as a critical administrative unit responsible for managing several essential operational, regulatory, and public service functions. This office provides centralized administrative support to departmental personnel, city agencies, and members of the public while ensuring compliance with applicable municipal policies and Massachusetts law. This office is staffed by three professional staff with three open positions. The Records Management Office is supervised by 1 Lieutenant and 1 Sergeant. The Records Management Office receives communication via email for many of its requests from the public. These requests are varied and require individual attention for proper response. The Records Management Office navigated 13,173 email requests during 2025. These include public record requests; billing inquires and License to Carry inquires. Additionally, staff navigate voluminous visits to the public lobby and telephone calls from the public seeking assistance for a variety of reasons. Primary responsibilities of the Records Management Office include the processing and administration of License to Carry (LTC) firearm permits. This process requires the review, documentation, and management of permit applications in accordance with state regulatory requirements and departmental policies. The Records Management Office processed 323 License to Carry permits in 2025. Due to a 50% deficit in staffing, there are currently 170 License to Carry applications pending. The department has begun the process of implementing software to improve the business process associated with processing License of Carry applications.

The office is also responsible for processing public and official record requests, which involves reviewing requests, locating and preparing responsive records, and ensuring compliance with Massachusetts public records law while safeguarding protected or confidential information. An internal Public Records Access Officer has been hired to work in collaboration with the City Law Department in navigating complex records requests. In addition, the Records Management Office administers the City's false alarm billing program, which includes monitoring alarm activations, maintaining related records, and issuing billing notifications for repeated false alarms in accordance with municipal regulations.

Another responsibility of the unit is the issuance of Sunday Work Permits, which authorize construction or labor activities occurring on Sundays. This function requires coordination to ensure that work activities are properly permitted and conducted in compliance with local ordinances and public safety considerations. The total amount of monies processed by the Records Management Office in 2025 was \$71,380. The office further manages the assignment and coordination of police details, including the scheduling of officers for traffic control, construction sites, public events, and other activities requiring a police presence. This section of the Records Management Office is staffed by 1 professional staff. The unit also oversees the administrative processing and billing associated with these police details, ensuring accurate documentation and financial accountability. This section is supervised by 1 sergeant and employs 1 patrol officer to assign details and support the administrative process. This section received approximately 10,000 detail requests during 2025.

Additionally, the Records Management Office is responsible for traffic citation entry, ensuring that citations issued by officers are accurately recorded in departmental systems and properly transmitted to the appropriate judicial and administrative entities for processing. During 2025, over 8,590 citations were entered by Records Management staff. Despite the scope and volume of these responsibilities, the Records Management Office is currently staffed with three people and has been operating with three vacant positions, which has placed increased operational demands on existing personnel. The absence of these positions requires current staff to absorb additional workload while continuing to maintain service levels and meet statutory and administrative obligations. The Records Management Office remains an essential component of the Cambridge Police Department's administrative infrastructure, providing vital support functions that facilitate regulatory compliance, operational coordination, and public service delivery.

The Cambridge Police Department relies on a single employee to oversee the management and coordination of the department's facility operations. This individual is responsible for ensuring that the department's primary building and associated operational spaces remain functional, safe, and capable of supporting the daily activities of sworn and civilian personnel. The department maintains a LEED Silver rating which adds to the complexities associated with its management.

The Facilities Manager serves as the central point of coordination for building maintenance, repairs, vendor services, and infrastructure-related needs throughout the police facility. Responsibilities include identifying and addressing maintenance issues, coordinating with municipal departments and external contractors for repairs and improvements, monitoring building systems, and ensuring that workspaces, operational areas, and common facilities remain operational and compliant with safety standards. In addition, the Facilities Manager assists with planning and coordinating facility-related projects, equipment installations, and workspace modifications required to support evolving operational needs. This role often involves coordinating with multiple internal units and external service providers to address building-related issues that could impact public safety operations, personnel working conditions, or public access areas. Because the police facility operates continuously and supports critical public safety functions, maintaining the building's infrastructure requires consistent oversight and timely response to operational needs. The Facilities Manager plays a key role in ensuring that the department's physical environment remains functional, secure, and supportive of police operations. Given the size and operational demands of a full-service municipal police facility, the management of building systems, maintenance coordination, and operational logistics by a single individual represents a significant responsibility. This position is essential to maintaining the department's operational readiness and ensuring that the physical infrastructure supporting public safety services remains properly maintained.

The Cambridge Police Department assigns two Detectives and one Lieutenant to support operations within the Court Prosecutor's Office. These personnel serve as a critical liaison between the police department and the court system, ensuring that criminal cases initiated by the department are properly prepared, documented, and presented for prosecution. The Detectives assigned to the Court Prosecutor's Office are responsible for reviewing police reports and case documentation, coordinating with arresting officers, organizing evidence, and assisting prosecutors in preparing cases for court proceedings. Their work includes ensuring that case files are complete, witnesses are properly identified and scheduled, and evidentiary materials are available and properly documented in accordance with legal and procedural requirements. Detectives may also assist with follow-up investigative tasks that arise during the prosecution process, including locating witnesses, clarifying case details, and coordinating with other law enforcement agencies. The Lieutenant assigned to the Court Prosecutor's Office provides supervisory oversight and administrative coordination for these functions. This role includes managing the flow of cases between the police department and the court, ensuring compliance with legal procedures and departmental standards, and maintaining effective communication with prosecutors, court

personnel, and department command staff. The Lieutenant also assists in addressing procedural issues that may arise during case preparation or court proceedings. The presence of experienced investigative personnel within the Court Prosecutor's Office helps ensure that cases brought forward by the Cambridge Police Department are accurately prepared and effectively supported throughout the judicial process. This coordination strengthens case outcomes, improves efficiency in court proceedings, and supports the overall administration of justice.

The Property and Evidence Unit of the Cambridge Police Department is responsible for the secure intake, documentation, storage, management, and disposition of property and evidentiary items collected during police operations and criminal investigations. The unit plays a critical role in maintaining the integrity of the evidentiary process and ensuring compliance with legal standards governing the handling and preservation of evidence. The unit is currently staffed by two professional staff who manage all aspects of property and evidence control for the department. Their responsibilities include receiving and cataloging evidence submitted by officers, maintaining accurate chain-of-custody records, organizing and storing evidentiary materials in accordance with departmental and legal requirements, and preparing items for court proceedings when needed. In addition, the Property and Evidence Unit coordinates the release or lawful disposition of property, including returning items to rightful owners, managing the destruction of evidence when authorized by the court, and maintaining documentation required for auditing and legal compliance. Personnel in this unit must also ensure that evidence related to ongoing criminal cases is preserved and properly documented to support successful prosecution. Because the evidentiary process is fundamental to the criminal justice system, the work performed by this unit requires meticulous record keeping, strict adherence to evidence handling protocols, and close coordination with officers, detectives, prosecutors, and court personnel. The Property and Evidence Unit provides essential administrative and operational support that safeguards the integrity of criminal investigations and ensures that evidentiary materials are properly managed throughout the judicial process.

James Mulcahy Esq, Director of Professional Standards Section

In support of CPD's mission to implement procedural justice and improve transparency, the Professional Standards Unit is tasked with overseeing Internal Affairs Investigations, Background Investigations, and maintaining CALEA Accreditation, utilizing sworn and professional staff.

The core function of PSU is oversight and accountability. PSU investigates all citizen complaints and claims of misconduct against sworn and non-sworn personnel whether initiated directly through the Department or allegations received from PRAB and/or POST Commission. PSU investigates, on average, 21 cases a year. PSU also conducts audits and annual reviews to ensure quality control, legal, and policy compliance for departmental employees. These audits and reviews ensure compliance on high liability topics, such as use of force, vehicle pursuit, evidence storage, and the Department's early intervention system. In addition to these investigatory and oversight functions, PSU also serves as a liaison to the POST Commission for employment status and disciplinary and investigatory information. In this role, PSU is also tasked with assisting new officers with obtaining initial certification, current officers with obtaining recertification, and ensuring that all sworn personnel are actively certified by POST before performing any police or specialty functions.

A secondary function of PSU is to conduct background investigations on all applicants for the Police Department (sworn and professional staff), Emergency Communications Department, Public Safety Information Technology, Constables and other City agencies, as needed. In FY26, PSU conducted more than 75 background investigations internally and for other agencies.

Finally, the Accreditation Unit is also housed within the Professional Standards Unit. The unit was established to review and rewrite all the Department's policies and procedures, rules and regulations, and code of conduct through the lens of procedural justice and to achieve national accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). As a result of this work, the Department issued a new policy manual in January 2025. In November 2025, after rigorous external and on-site assessments, the Department was awarded CALEA Advanced Law Enforcement Accreditation. Obtaining and maintaining CALEA accreditation improves law enforcement management, reduces liability, and builds community trust through compliance with vetted, nationally recognized professional standards. For FY27, PSU will review and update all of the Department's policies and procedures, as dictated by CALEA, and will establish new proofs of compliance for all CALEA standards.

The Training and Certification Unit is responsible for coordinating and directing the Department's training efforts, utilizing both sworn and professional staff.

The core function of the Training and Certification Unit is to implement all state mandated in-service training for sworn personnel. In Massachusetts, police officers are required to attend 40 hours of in-service training a year. The Training and Certification Unit not only assures compliance with this 40-hour mandate for every sworn officer, but also provides a series of additional legal updates and training bulletins as well as on-shift, scenario-based trainings to enhance officer proficiency and knowledgebase. In addition to implementing mandated training, the Unit also assists sworn and professional staff with all external training requests. In both of these roles, the Unit serves as a liaison to the POST Commission and MPTC, providing training records and ensuring compliance with both agencies' training requirements.

The Training and Certification Unit also operates the Cambridge/Northeastern Police Academy. The Academy is a 40-student, MPTC certified police academy, which provides approximately 800 hours of instruction over the course of 22 weeks. The Cambridge/Northeastern Police Academy is designed to immerse student officers in the philosophy of procedural justice and transparency. Student officers learn that policing is a "people business" and that their success as officers will depend in great part on their ability to listen to and talk with community members. A key element of the training is the focus on experiential learning by having officers engage in scenario-based activities and community outreach. The Academy exceeds state curriculum standards and instructs all student officers on the latest in ICAT ("Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics") training and LGBTQ+ issues. By operating this Academy, the Department has the ability to control the overall content of student officer training, along with the messaging, delivery, and safety considerations. The Academy is widely perceived as a model for the entire state and the MPTC, which authorizes its operation, regularly seeks the advice of Academy staff to improve MPTC academies, rewrite academy curriculum, and establish best practices statewide. This reputation has also led to a wide range of agencies sending their student officers to the Academy, thereby positively impacting the overall quality of police training regionally. The current ROC class has student officers from 9 different agencies and student officers from a half a dozen other agencies have attended past academy classes.

Also housed within the Training and Certification Unit is the Cadet program, which was reinstated in FY20. The program provides a pathway for Cambridge youth interested in a career in public safety. The two-year program offers cadets on-the-job, classroom, and

fitness training. Cadets have the opportunity to learn about the daily operations and functions of the Department and culture of work, by rotating through various units and sections as well as participating in community policing activities. Since its reinstatement in FY20, 8 cadets have attended and graduated from the Cambridge/Northeastern Police Academy, 1 is currently in the police academy, 1 is employed by the Emergency Communications Department, and 1 is a trained medic in Cambridge.

Finally, the Firearms and Armorer's Unit is also overseen by the Training and Certification Unit. This Unit handles the distribution, maintenance and training for Department issued firearms and less lethal weapons. As a state mandate, officers are required to train and qualify twice a year on firearms and once a year for less lethal weapons. This Unit develops and oversees these trainings, as well as additional scenario-based firearms, less lethal and de-escalation trainings, which occur throughout the year. The Department's trained armorers also oversee all court ordered live test fires conducted at the station of firearms seized and utilized for evidentiary purposes during criminal prosecutions.

Scope vs. Volunteer Capacity

As written, the Charter and SMART Goals together represent a very substantial workload. When broken down into concrete activities — recruitment pipeline development, interviews, orientation design, evaluation tool creation, engagement tracking, policy review cycles, compliance audits, reporting cadence, education programming, succession planning, and documentation — this likely amounts to *several hundred hours of work annually*.

For two co-chairs who both work full-time in professional roles, this exceeds what is realistically sustainable. My concern here is that attempting to execute all six goals at this scale in one year will either:

- Lead to volunteer burnout, or
- Result in partially implemented systems that don't achieve the intended impact.

I believe we need to recalibrate scope to match actual human capacity.

Governance Oversight vs. Operational Execution

Many of the deliverables outlined in the SMART goals appear operational in nature rather than governance-level responsibilities. Examples include:

- Monthly tracking of attendance, giving, and engagement data
- Compiling individual engagement scorecards
- Auditing committee meeting compliance multiple times per year
- Maintaining governance records and publishing directories
- Collecting and filing conflict of interest disclosures
- Formatting and distributing reports and documentation

These are important tasks — but they are administrative in nature. The Governance Committee should provide oversight, set standards, and review outcomes. Execution and tracking functions typically require dedicated staff support.

Before moving forward, I think we need clarity on:

- What is the Committee responsible for overseeing?
- What is staff responsible for executing?
- What level of staff time is realistically available to support this plan?

Without clear boundaries, the workload defaults to volunteers.

Proposal: Strategic Phasing or Prioritization

Rather than attempting to implement all six goals comprehensively in 2026, I think we should propose a phased or prioritized approach. For example:

Option A: Narrow the Focus in 2026

- Strategic board recruitment (scaled target)
- Committee stabilization and staffing
- Conflict of interest compliance and basic governance hygiene

Then phase in evaluation systems, policy overhauls, and formal engagement tracking in future years.

Option B: Reduce the Targets

- Fewer recruitment targets
 - Simplified evaluation process
 - Policy review spread across multiple years
 - Annual (rather than quarterly) compliance reviews
-

City of Cambridge Police Department

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Yi-An Huang

To: Finance Co-Chair Patricia Nolan; Finance Co-Chair Ayah Al-Zubi
From: Cambridge Police Commissioner Christine Elow
Date: March 20, 2026
Re: March 10, 2026 CPD/ Finance Committee Meeting Question Responses

Background

On March 10, 2026, the City Council Finance Committee convened to review departmental operations, staffing, and programmatic expenditures. During this meeting, Councillors raised a series of questions related to staffing levels, grant funding, program coordination, and service delivery, particularly as they relate to clinical support, diversion efforts, and interdepartmental collaboration.

The following memorandum provides organized responses to those questions, incorporating available data and clarifying the structure and function of relevant programs.

Staffing and Workforce

Union Representation

City of Cambridge Police Department

TELEPHONE
(617) 349-3300



WEB
www.cambridgepolice.org
FACEBOOK
facebook.com/CambridgePolice
TWITTER

Office of the Police Commissioner

Christine Elow

twitter.com/CambridgePolice

Yi-An Huang

Approximately 84% the Cambridge Police Department staff are unionized. This includes the Cambridge Police Patrol Officers Association (CPPOA), the Cambridge Police Superior Officers Association (CPSOA), Teamsters, and Traffic Supervisors.

Vacancies

Last Year Vacancies:

29 (0 Terminations)

Current Vacancies:

33 (2 resulting from termination)

Administrative Leave

There are currently 4 staff members on administrative leave, all of which are related to disciplinary matters.

Grants and Funding

Grant Overview

The Department currently administers five active grants; Shannon Grant, Casino Mitigation, Road Safety, Post-Overdose, and Co-Response.

Presently, there are (0) grant funded employees on staff.

UASI Funding

Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) funding is currently only supporting ShotSpotter technology.

Clinical Support

Clinical Support Unit (CSU) Staffing

The Clinical Support Unit currently consists of 5 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions: (1) Director, (2) licensed Clinical Social Workers, (1) Case Manager, (1) Strategic Partnerships Coordinator.

The most recent addition to the CSU staffing was the Case Manager position which was established in 2021.

It should be noted that the co-response clinician is not a CPD employee but rather is employed by North Suffolk and funded through a state Department of Mental Health (DMH) grant.

Program Coordination

CARE and Co-Response Collaboration

The Co-Response Program works closely with the CARE program, with strong coordination at both operational and strategic levels. CARE is dispatched first when calls meet criteria established by the Medical Director. Co-response clinicians and CARE teams frequently respond jointly to incidents. Coordination occurs through twice-weekly meetings, as well as ongoing daily communication for case management and follow-up.

Since CARE's inception, collaboration between these programs has strengthened significantly, resulting in clearer role definition during incidents, improved coordination, and more effective responses to individuals experiencing behavioral health or social service needs.

FSJS and CSU Roles

It is important to distinguish between the roles of the Family Services and Justice Section (FSJS) and the Clinical Support Unit (CSU).

Clinical Support Unit

This unit focuses on behavior health responses and coordination. CSU holds weekly meetings with CARE to ensure appropriate referrals of cases and facilitates bidirectional referrals between CPD and CARE.

Family Services and Justice Section

This unit works with the most vulnerable populations in the City including seniors, juveniles, individuals experiencing mental illness, individuals with substance use challenges, and unhoused individuals.

FSJS supports both victims and individuals involved in the criminal legal system.

FSJS emphasizes diversion, service referrals, and engagement with specialty courts to prevent deeper system involvement.

FSJS also addresses emerging challenges, including an increase in individuals experiencing paranoia who may repeatedly report unfounded incidents. These cases require coordinated, ongoing intervention.

Service Data

In 2025, CPD recorded 1,228 mental health-related reports

During the same period, the Clinical Support Unit managed 1,340 cases, reflecting both direct response and follow-up engagement.



Christine Elow
Commissioner, Cambridge Police Department