

**RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

**RHODE ISLAND CAPITOL POLICE**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2023**



**Prepared by: Chief Joseph T. Little, Jr.**

**Rhode Island Capitol Police Headquarters  
One Capitol Hill, Suite 200  
Providence, RI. 02908**



**RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**  
**Rhode Island Capitol Police**  
**Headquarters**



*A State Accredited Agency*

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Colonel Darnell S Weaver  
Director, Department of Public Safety  
Superintendent, Rhode Island State Police

Joseph T. Little, Jr.  
Chief of Police  
Rhode Island Capitol Police

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## **Rhode Island Capitol Police**

### **2023 Annual Report**

#### **Agency Overview**

The Rhode Island Capitol Police was established in 1974 so that the Rhode Island State House would have a police force that was unique unto itself and trained to deal with its specific security needs. Today the Capitol Police are assigned to sixteen facilities throughout the state to provide police and security services.

The mission of the Rhode Island Capitol Police is to provide basic protection for life and property, enforce all laws and ordinances, maintain order at demonstrations and public events, prevent and repress crime, detect violations of the law, and apprehend violators at the Rhode Island State Capitol and annexes, properties contained therein, and the other state buildings, grounds, and premises where they maintain security responsibilities.

In addition, the Capitol Police ensure the safety and security of the general officers, state legislators, judges, state employees, and members of the public who work in and visit these public buildings. Officers operate the metal detectors and x-ray machines at the entrances to all the courthouses, the State House, and the Powers (DOA) building. Capitol Police officers at these facilities are responsible for the screening, and if necessary, searching employees and visitors entering these public buildings. They not only patrol these facilities to maintain a safe environment, but they also respond to calls for service to investigate criminal, domestic, traffic and parking related incidents that occur on and/or within the state properties and facilities they patrol.

## **Leadership**

The Capitol Police is an umbrella agency under the Department of Public Safety that was established in June of 2009. The Chief of the Capitol Police is Joseph T. Little, Jr., who was appointed to the agency in August of 2010 by then Commissioner Colonel Brendan P. Doherty. Our present commissioner is State Police Colonel Darnell S Weaver who was appointed by Governor Daniel J. McKee on April 29, 2022. The agency, while focusing on the specific mission, relies on the assistance and expertise of the Department of Public Safety - the Rhode Island State Police and the Division of Sheriffs - to provide all facilities with high-quality safety, security and law enforcement measures.

Chief Little is responsible to plan, develop, direct, supervise, and administer the operation of the Capitol Police force and to provide policing and protection for all buildings, grounds, and premises where staff maintain security responsibilities, against the ordinary hazards of trespass, theft, fire, and damage, and to perform related work as required.

Chief Little joined the Rhode Island Capitol Police after serving twenty-nine and one-half years with the Narragansett Police Department. He served the Town of Narragansett for three years as Chief and concurrently served six months as the Acting Town Manager. Chief Little holds a Master of Science degree in the Administration of Justice from Salve Regina University where he also received his undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice. He is a graduate of the FBI National Academy (215th) as well as an Executive Board Member of the New England Association of Chiefs of Police. He is also a member of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association, the FBI National Academy Associates, FBI LEEDA, and the University of Rhode Island Criminalist Associates.

## **Overview of 2023**

This report will illustrate the agency's steady growth in most of the metrics. Screening numbers have exponentially risen in all the buildings where screening is performed. While this growth is certainly good, it brings with it some significant challenges. As a credit to the men and women of this agency, throughout 2023, despite the growth; the agency successfully maintained state accreditation and increased training to meet these challenges. The agency is well-positioned to meet the challenges of 2024.





*Initial State Accreditation Award 2016. At the Rhode Island State House Bell Area  
L-R Chief Little, Lt. Habershaw, Colonel McCartney, Director Christine Crocker*

Over this past year, there have been upgrades to the fleet, the weapon systems, and the communications equipment. In late June, the Capitol Police took possession of two new patrol vehicles that are assigned to line officers for the Pastore complex (in Cranston) and for ongoing roving patrols. The agency also upgraded to the more advanced Taser 7 which provides more safety and accountability. Finally, all officers were issued new Motorola radios for critical 800 MHz communications between facilities as well as enhanced communications with other law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

The training cadre is overseen by Lieutenant Joseph P. Habershaw who also maintains officers' certifications in weapon system and in screening protocols. He is also responsible for coordinating external training, maintaining state accreditation standards, and overseeing three sergeants. The agency has achieved and been awarded state accreditation in 2016 which we have successfully maintained since that time. Lieutenant Habershaw is also responsible for general operational oversight at the State House.

## The “Roy McGowan” Recruit Class of 2023

In October, three recruits graduated from the “Roy McGowan” Academy Class of 2023. These recruits are currently in their Field Training Program. Capitol Police Officer Roy McGowan began his career with the Portsmouth Police Department before joining the Providence Police Department where he spent a twenty- year career. After he retired from the Providence Police, he joined this agency on October 5, 2014. Roy was an inspiration to all who knew him. His attention to detail and his work ethic was second to none. Sadly, he passed away after a valiant battle with cancer on May 16, 2023, leaving behind his wife and three children. So, in a fitting honor, that recruit class was dedicated to his memory. It was a fitting tribute that both his family and Providence Police Colonel Oscar Perez (who was an academy classmate of his) were able to attend. It is my hope that these recruits can emulate Officer McGowan’s tenacity and attention to detail, and in doing so, Roy will never be forgotten.



*Officer Alexis Becote-Russa instructs the 2023 Roy McGowan Academy Class*

As a sign of the times and despite best efforts to retain officers, the agency continues to experience an unfortunate turnover of officers who typically move onto other work positions. This creates a challenge with more frequent recruitment which is both time and labor intensive. Despite these challenges, the agency has been able to hire and maintain an excellent core group of men and women who serve each day in various capacities and at various buildings.



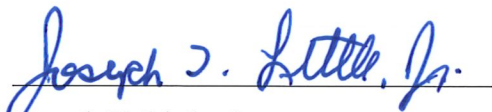
## Building Security Upgrades

Working with the Division of Capital Assets Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) the agency hired two specially trained civilian screeners in October of 2022 for an upgraded entrance security protocol at the Powers building. This past year marks the first full year of the new screening protocols at the site. As a result of this successful and critical upgrade, the agency currently has entrance statistics for members of the public who have come into the facility for taxation assistance, training, and meetings.

In the third quarter of this calendar year, the agency began training along with our Department of Public Safety partners in various disciplines including active shooter training, firearms training, and qualifications as well as a plethora of other specialty training including mental health, de-escalation, crowd control, and officer wellness. These high-quality trainings, coupled with the professional caliber of our training officers, assures that the agency provides an excellent product for the citizens and visitors to the buildings.

I have a great appreciation for all the members of this agency. The officers and support staff form a tremendous team who for the past fourteen years that I have led the agency, have continued to provide all the facilities safe space for people to visit and conduct their business in these buildings. This is the core of our mission which has not only been achieved, but it has been exceeded.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this report.



Joseph T. Little, Jr  
Chief of Police



# Capitol Police by the Numbers 2023



## Calls for Service.

This year the Capitol Police logged 56,221 calls for service.

<b>Capitol Police Calls for Service</b>		
2021	2022	2023
46,691	48,002	56,221

This illustrates a continued increase in calls for service over a three-year period. We are up over eight thousand calls from the previous year and just under ten thousand from 2021. These calls for service represent officer-initiated calls as well as calls from members of the public. Our agency serves as the primary responders to all calls for emergencies at our locations. Any serious calls which require lengthy investigations or arrests are handled by the Rhode Island State Police.

## Traffic Enforcement/Citations

Our agency issued forty-five (45) traffic citations in 2023. Most of those tickets were issued by officers assigned to the Pastore Complex. These citations are primarily for various parking enforcement issues including handicap parking, fire lane violations and unregistered vehicles. Thirty-seven (37) of these traffic citations were paid or were defaulted by the violators. Six (6) were dismissed by the courts and two (2) were dismissed by the agency.

## Screening

One of our agencies greatest strengths is the screening that we provide for people entering our five judicial buildings as well as the State House and at the Powers Building. The State does not allow weapons or firearms into any state facility. As noted above, this year we implemented full screening at the Powers (DOA) Building. All Capitol Police Officers and Capitol Police Screeners have received specialized training and undergo biannual testing for the operation of the scanners and magnetometers. This is done to ensure that everyone who works and visits our facilities can do so in an unfettered and safe environment. Our agency also screens all mail and packages that come into the State House and at the courts.

The numbers for entrants for 2023 as compared to 2022 are as follows:

	<b>Screening 2022</b>	<b>Screening 2023</b>	<b>X-Ray (State House) 2023</b>	<b>X-Ray (Powers) 2023</b>
State House	51,486	81692	48,492	40,708
Courts	380,891	606,097		
Powers Building	<b>0</b>	47,734		
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>431,777</b>	<b>735,523</b>		

The screening numbers here represent an enormous growth of over 300,000 people who have come into our buildings. The X-Ray count are the numbers of bags/packages/backpacks that had been screened separately in both the State House and at the Powers Building. The State House realized a large increase of visitors of over 300,000 from the previous year while the courts' increase was over three hundred thousand. As was the case in 2022, the largest volume of screening is attributable to the five (5) State courts.

### **Professional Standards**

The cornerstone of any professional police agency is a vibrant and robust method of internal review, oversight, and accountability. The professional standards duties are overseen by Captain Donald J. Sousa, Jr. Captain Sousa has been with this agency for 18 years. Prior to that, he retired as a Captain with the North Providence Police Department. Captain Sousa holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Roger Williams University. In addition to his other duties, he investigates complaints that have been lodged by citizens against Capitol Police Officers and he investigates any deviance by members of the agency that do not follow policy standards. By policy, and after a thorough review, the incidents are concluded in the following manner:

- Sustained – Evidence sufficient to Prove the allegation.
- Not Sustained – Insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation(s)
- Exonerated – Incident occurred but was lawful or proper.
- Unfounded – Allegation is false or not-factual.
- Policy Failure – Flaw in policy caused the problem.

As part of our internal controls, we also compile a quarterly sick time review where we monitor and track officer's use of sick time for any type of patterned abuse or early warning signs. The early warning signs are crucial in maintaining the wellness of each of our officers and



supervisors. This is extremely important because our personnel are the cornerstone of our agency. The breakdown in numbers for this year is as follows:

	Number of Complaints	Sustained	Not Sustained	Exonerated	Unfounded	Policy Failure	UOF Review
Citizen Complaint	8	4	2	1	1	0	0
Internal Review	24	18	3	2	1	0	0

Any complaints that are sustained can result in progressive discipline from an informal counseling, a formal counseling, an oral reprimand, a written reprimand, a suspension, a “Last Chance Agreement” (LCA) or a termination/resignation.

In 2023, the following counseling(s)/discipline(s) were imposed:

Counseling	Oral Reprimand	Written Reprimand	Suspension	Last Chance Agreement	Termination Resignation
14	4	4	2	0	1

### TRAINING

All sworn members of the department are firearms qualified pursuant to statute (11-47-15.3 RIGL) and POST approval. These firearms trainings are biannual, typically in the spring and fall. The courses include reduced light firing, moving targets, use of cover, hand drills and close quarter firing. In addition, all officers review and are tested on the agency’s Use of Force policies, including testing in all the less lethal force options. All officers are also certified in CPR, First Aid and Narcan.

Utilizing PowerDMS software, every Capitol Police officer reviewed all the agency’s policies including, workplace harassment, mental health, blood borne pathogens, criminal intelligence, impartial policing, records/ public information, officer wellness and social networking. Officers were also tested in many of these policies including legal updates, 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment issues and accreditation.

The agency also sent several officers to various specialty training programs either to outside locations or remotely by computer.

<b>TRAINING DATE</b>	<b>TRAINING COURSE OF STUDY</b>	<b>OFFICERS ATTENDING</b>
January 18	Training Bulletin Qualified Immunity	PDMS 50
January 18	General Order 220.01 Uniform Standards	PDMS 50
January 18	General Orders 100.04	PDMS 50
January 18	General Order 360.19 Screening Protocols	PDMS 50
January 17	OC Certification	50
January – May	Autism Awareness (5 parts)	50
February 1	Bomb Recognition	50
February	OTS Training (Screening Certification)	50
February 16	Accreditation Training	2
February	Taser Software Update	50
March 4	Training Bulleting Terry Search	PDMS 50
March 6-7	Background Investigations	1
March 8	POST Orders Pastore	PDMS 50
March 14	POST Orders DOH	PDMS 50
March 14	POST Orders DOA	PDMS 50
March 16	POST Orders SH	PDMS 50
March 30	APX6000 Manual Training	PDMS 48
April	Department Firearms Qualifications	50
April 3-7	Active Shooter Training	1
April 3	Training Bulletin Qualified Immunity	PDMS 50
May	CPR/AED Certifications	50
May	Ethics Training (Policy and Test)	PDMS 50
May	Taser Training	48
May 26	Training Bulletin 4 <sup>th</sup> Amendment DLG	PDMS 50
June	Performance Appraisal Training	3
June 1	Training Bulletin Use of Force DLS	PDMS 50
June	OC Recertification/Use of Force/Handcuffing	50
July 1	Public Order Platoon Training	16
July 24	Patrol Rifle Certification	1
July 25-28	Field Training Officer Certification	1
<b>TRAINING DATE</b>	<b>TRAINING COURSE OF STUDY</b>	<b>OFFICERS ATTENDING</b>
August	Workplace Harassment/ADA Training	PDMS 50
August 8-9	Security Software Training	1
August-December	Active Shooter Training (Courts)	10
September	Impartial Policing	PDMS 50
September 14	Accreditation	1
September 21	Conflict Engagement	2
October	Mental Health Training/ Range	50/50
October 12	Giglio Training	2
October 20	Crisis Response -CIT	1
November	All Hazards	PDMS 50
November 20-27	Qualifications New Trainees/ Returning Deployment Officers	6
November 30	Taser Recertification	1
November	Agency Weapons Training	50



*Rhode Island Capitol Police Vehicle at the Pastore Campus*

### **PASTORE COMPLEX:**

Since September 2019, the agency has assigned two (2) Capitol Police Officers to the Pastore Complex. The Pastore complex is in Cranston on approximately 325 acres of land that has 35 buildings that provide office space for a variety of state office facilities. These include the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Labor & Training, the Department of Business Regulation, the Executive Offices of Health & Human Services, the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals, the Department of Human Services, the Healthcare Exchange, Office of the Child Advocate, Governor's Commission on Disabilities, Fire Code Appeals Board, Labor Hearing Board, Traffic Tribunal, Parole Board, Department of Corrections, Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner, Department of Children Youth & Families, The Lottery Commission and the Eleanor Slater Hospital Network.

The Capitol Police substation is in the Department of Motor Vehicles and officers are primary responders to all calls for service on this campus. Officers assigned to the campus work with the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) personnel and staff at many of these facilities to ensure the safety and security of the building.



**AGENCY STAFFING:**

The Capitol Police currently is at our legislatively authorized FTE strength of 51 members. This includes the Chief of Police, one Captain, one Lieutenant, three Sergeants and an Administrative Assistant to the chief and two screeners. The Chief, the Captain and the Administrative Assistant are non-union positions.

The supervisory staff of the Capitol Police is as follows:

**Chief Joseph T. Little, Jr.**

**Captain Donald J. Sousa, Jr.**

**Lieutenant Joseph P. Habershaw**

**Sergeant Robert D. Brown, Jr.**

**Sergeant Dennis Charbonneau**

**Sergeant (Open)**

**Mrs. Edina Zuena, Administrative Assistant to the Chief**

**Patrol Officers (42)**

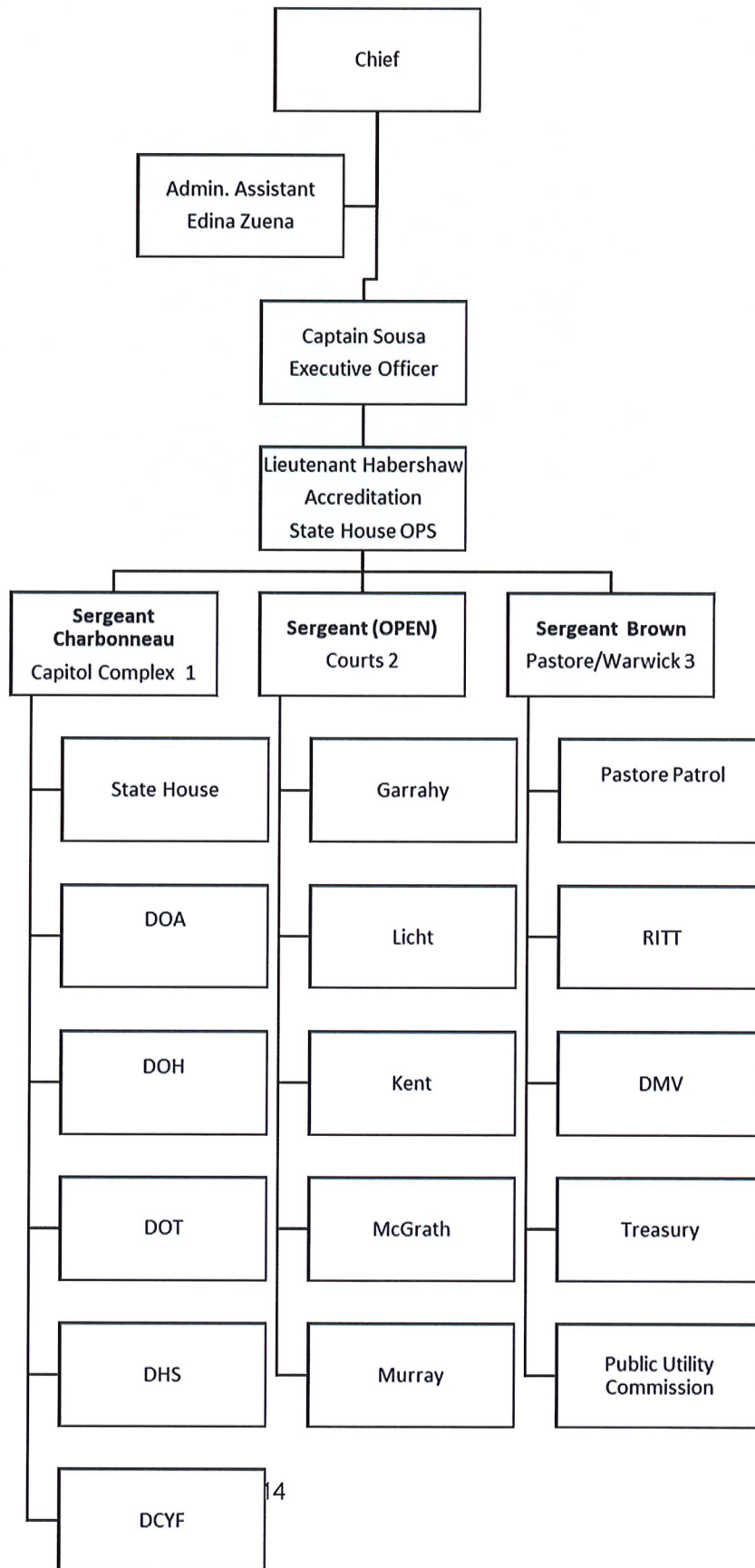
**Screeners (2)**



*Chief Joseph T. Little (left) and Sergeant Robert D. Brown, Jr. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter and Paul*

The 2023 Table of Organization listing the disbursement of supervisory personnel is on the following page.

**TABLE OF ORGANIZATION  
RHODE ISLAND CAPITOL POLICE  
2023**







Rhode Island Capitol Police

Rhode Island State House

2024

