

Sgt. Kevin J. Dolan, Jr.

Fall River Police Department
685 Pleasant St.

Fall River, MA 02723

(508) 676-8511 x147

KDolan@frpd.org

Mr. Dennis Polselli

Chairman

Fall River Commission on Disability

One Government Ctr.

Fall River, MA 02722

February 18th, 2019

Mr. Polselli,

The partnership between the Fall River Police Department and the Commission on Disability, since its inception in 2008, has been a positive one in my opinion. As you are aware, the Fall River Police Department assigns two full-time police officers to specifically patrol- looking for handicap parking violations. One aspect of their duties, that I feel is both unique and positive, is that the officers remain at the location of some violations and wait for the vehicle's driver to return so that they may explain to the offender what they have done wrong. The fining and educating of the public is an excellent approach to ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities into daily activities and employment within the City of Fall River.

Prior to writing this letter, I reviewed many monthly reports to figure out, on an average, how many parking tickets and misuse citations, the two officers give out on a weekly basis. This average is 33 handicap violation tickets and 1 handicap placard misuse violation citation per week. The fine for a handicap violation is \$200 and the fine for misuse of a handicap placard is \$505. Using these figures with an average of 33 handicap violations and 1 misuse violation, the average total is \$7,100 per week.

One of the hurdles to properly deploying police personnel is our aging fleet of cruisers. Fall River is not unique in this hardship, of course. Purchasing and maintaining a fleet of cruisers is a very large part of all police departments' budgets. The Fall River Police Department's Traffic Enforcement Unit's manpower is currently set at five police officers and one sergeant. As it currently stands, we only have four cruisers assigned specifically to this unit. There are shifts where my personnel are required to seek out, and borrow cruisers from another unit- and only if they are available. The four cruisers we do have are aging quickly. The newest one is already 5 years old. Due to virtually constant use, they accrue mileage and use-hours and a substantially higher rate than do civilian vehicles. As a result, they break down more often and experience accelerated wear-and-tear. In the past two months, we've had to have 3 cruisers towed in to be repaired due to breaking down while on patrol.

The purpose of this letter is to ask that the Fall River Commission on Disability consider the purchase of two police cruisers to be used by the two police officers assigned to the Handicap Patrol. Understandably, the initial cost of purchasing two cruisers is high, however, these particular cruisers, assigned specifically to the handicap patrol, would last considerably longer than our other fleet cars because of their limited use in contrast to the virtual around-the-clock use of the regular cruisers. Instead of a common five-year lifespan, I would estimate that these cruisers would have somewhere near a ten-year lifespan. Thus, the cost of these vehicles, when viewed with the years of use, would be notably lower.

The purchase of police cruisers by an outside agency for specific enforcement locations or goals is not unheard of. In recent history, the Fall River Housing Authority, the Office of the

District Attorney, the company that purchased the closed properties of Quaker Fabrics (DJM) and the Community Development Authority have all purchased cruisers for the Fall River Police Department specifically for law enforcement use in their respective properties or targeted locations.

I am attaching a recent purchase order for two cruisers that the Fall River Police Department had submitted to MHQ only for use as a reference in pricing for review by the Commission on Disability. This letter is merely an exploratory request to see if the Commission is amenable to purchasing two cruisers for the handicap patrol officers.

I believe that the purchasing of the two cruisers would be a great opportunity to involve the local media outlets- and to once again educate the public about the importance of leaving the handicap parking spaces and ramps available to the handicapped public. We could remind them that there is an alliance between the Fall River Police Department and the Commission on Disability and that we have two full-time police officers assigned to enforce the laws pertaining to handicap violations.

I look forward to receiving your reply on this matter.

Sincerely,

Sgt. Kevin J. Dolan, Jr. A284