

# Michael D. Custer

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149 Meadowood Drive | Middletown, CT 06457  
860-788-6085 (res.) | 860-982-5166 (cell) | pipe083@aol.com | www.linkedin.com/in/MichaelDCuster

October 6, 2021

City of Palm Coast  
Attn: Ms. Renina Fuller  
Director of Human Resources  
160 Lake Avenue  
Palm Coast, FL 32164

Dear Ms. Fuller:

I am very interested in being considered as a candidate for the position of **City Manager in Palm Coast**. With 40 years of law enforcement and government background, an exceptional record as a municipal Police Chief for 18 years, a Master's degree in Public Affairs/Public Administration, FBI National Academy training in Quantico, and CT POST certification as just several highlights of my qualifications, I am confident I bring the skills and expertise that the city of Palm Coast is seeking in its next Town Manager.

## **Broad experience that will prove immediately transferable to this role:**

- Exceptional history of team building and staff development, coaching and promoting numerous direct reports throughout career—known for cultivating talent and accountability, putting very best people in place, and positioning overall organization for exemplary performance.
- Demonstrated expertise leveraging technology—from mobile data terminals/laptops to dash-mounted, touchscreen tablets in cruisers—recognized as one of the most technologically advanced police departments in the state (recently completed \$370K connectivity upgrade for communications system and \$1.7M digital upgrade to radio program).
- In-depth experience leading building committees in design/construction of new Rocky Hill Police Department Headquarters and working with former Middletown mayor on new Middletown Police Department Headquarters. Interfaced with architects, conducted needs analyses, determined infrastructure requirements to optimize efficiency, identified cost savings, and was instrumental to ensuring on time/under budget completion of both projects.
- A reputation for initiating and implementing innovative programs within the community—from highly effective community-based policing in urban settings to School Resource Officers. Successful in securing grant monies essential for funding key programs (implemented canine patrol, cross-trained staff, equipped patrol officers with AR-15 assault rifles, created a regional narcotics unit, etc.).
- A track record of success assimilating into new organizations and departments—garnering support; instilling mutual respect; identifying, mediating, and resolving conflict; valuing contributions of all stakeholders; and positively advancing shared goals and objectives. These skills are furthered by a dynamic leadership style and decisive management approach that is collaborative and optimistic, recognizing opportunities and building on strengths.

In my current capacity, I direct 41 sworn staff and 15 civilians while overseeing a \$6 million budget. Additionally, I was appointed to serve as the Emergency Management Director for the town of Rocky Hill. In 2020 my agency was nationally accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies.

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Attn: Ms. Renina Fuller  
October 6, 2021  
Page Two

**Additional qualifications I bring to the position as City Manager for the city of Palm Coast:**

I place the highest priority on delivering optimal levels of cost-effective services, maintaining exceptional relationships with community leaders and members, improving accountability, implementing best practice strategies, and enhancing safety for personnel. At this juncture in my career, I am very eager to assume responsibility for a larger municipality with new challenges and opportunities.

I am confident of my ability to significantly contribute to the city of Palm Coast as the City Manager and look forward to speaking with you about this opportunity. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Custer

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## Chief of Police | Distinguished Career in Law Enforcement | Exemplary Leadership

**Highly Motivated and Dedicated Law Enforcement Professional** with a career record distinguished by outstanding performance, progressive advancement, and accomplishments across a 40-year history. Possess excellent management, investigative, community relations, and listening skills as well as keen decision-making and problem-solving expertise.

Effectively lead by example in a politically astute but completely ethical manner; keen sense of integrity and commitment to professionalism.

- Able to develop and motivate staff to optimal levels of performance. Expert mentoring and succession-planning skills.
- Excellent skills as communicator and negotiator. Responsive and flexible. Highly value cultural diversity.
- Graduate of the 228<sup>th</sup> Session of the FBI National Academy.

**Departmental Leadership, Management & Oversight • Fiscal Responsibility • Budgetary Experience  
Law Enforcement Administration • Criminal Investigation & Prevention • Internal Affairs  
Community Relations & Community Policing • Community Liaison / Outreach  
Staffing: Recruitment • Training • Supervision • Development**

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## Professional Experience & Accomplishments

ROCKY HILL POLICE DEPARTMENT • Rocky Hill, CT

2003–Present

### Chief of Police

Hired to turn around volatile department, establish clear goals, and provide professional direction to staff of 56 (41 sworn staff and 15 civilians). Within 2 years, successfully enhanced professionalism, brought external and individual respect to the department, and boosted morale of all sworn staff; implemented numerous programs while staying consistently under budget. Report directly to town manager in community of 20,000 residents in 13 square-mile suburb of Hartford, Connecticut.

### Select Accomplishments & Areas of Leadership/Responsibility...

- Manage efficient operations within a \$6 million budget; track record reflects solid success rate in applying for and securing significant grant monies.
- Appointed Emergency Management Director for Rocky Hill, collaborating with town manager to ensure readiness of town emergency management program to address myriad of situations.
- Oversee effective management of Communication Center, handling all 911 calls and coordinating dispatch of police, fire, and emergency medical services throughout community (call volume exceeds 30,000 annually). Successfully implemented complete upgrade of hardware and software.
- President, Capitol Region Chiefs of Police (2009–2010).
- Appointed as Training Coordinator, Capitol Region Chiefs of Police, managing in-service training for 3,000+ sworn personnel across 31 towns and agencies of the Capitol Region (2007–Present).
  - Collaborate with others Chiefs of Police on a monthly basis and meet quarterly with training officers of 31 towns/agencies to assess training requirements.
  - Spearheaded comprehensive evaluation (conducted every 3 years) to assess and enhance quality of content and programming (introduced new programs for homeland security, meth labs, etc.).
  - Manage 1 administrative coordinator (contracted through Connecticut Law Foundation).
- Proposed implementation of School Resource Officers program in Rocky Hill public schools. Instrumental in advancing initiative; approval anticipated for 2014 fiscal budget (2 SROs for high school/middle school starting Sept. 1, 2014).
- Spearheaded successful campaign that secured community support and \$4.2 million through referendum for complete renovation of Police Department Headquarters; collaborated extensively with project architect and orchestrated involvement of numerous staff to generate concepts that ultimately saved substantial costs in the design phase. Renovation was completed 2006.
- Created position of Deputy Chief as second in command, which provided value-added leadership as well as an incremental career step for sworn officers.

ROCKY HILL POLICE DEPARTMENT • *continued*

- Effectively negotiated 7-year police pension contract with the police union by leading discussions with stakeholders (union and town) without attorneys. Subsequently negotiated 4 multi-year police contracts directly with union (again without attorneys).
- In 2014, initiated complex, 6-year national accreditation process for the department and established mechanism for methodical completion of all criteria.
- In first year, successfully resolved 13 outstanding union grievances from previous administration and implemented the following: an Employee Assistance Program, the town's police canine patrol (reenacted), a street readiness program, a Connecticut River marine patrol, a motorcycle unit, and a redesign of police department website ([www.rockyhillpd.com](http://www.rockyhillpd.com)). In 11 years as Police Chief, no formal union grievances have been filed.
- In year 2, enacted Midstate Regional Narcotics Task Force (a consortium of 5 towns), hired female officers to an all-male force, implemented the first motorcycle patrol in department's history (secured grant and asset forfeiture funding for motorcycles), and trained detectives for state certification as fire marshals for arson investigation.
- Added ATV and Ford Expedition (grant-funded) to fleet to enhance patrol capabilities; cross-trained staff and purchased AR-15 assault rifles for patrol officers as part of patrol tactical unit development.
- Enhanced communications and improved accountability through program that issued Nextel cellular phones with 2-way radio capability to all commanders and detectives.
- Earned the Connecticut Police Chiefs Challenge Award for traffic safety (2005 and 2006).
- Spearheaded and secured \$316K federal technology grant that funded new CAD and RMS software.
- Cultivated staff for advancement (promoted 1 Deputy Chief, 2 Lieutenants, and 6 Sergeants).

## MIDDLETOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT • Middletown, CT

1981–2002

**Captain, Administrative — Public Information Officer (1999–2002)**

As Division Commander, managed complete budgetary and administrative operations in support of Middletown Police Department, a medium-sized agency comprising 100+ sworn and 30 civilian personnel serving city of 50,000 residents. Established and oversaw budget, records bureau, property and evidence, scheduling and payroll, equipment and supply, fleet management, parking authority, technical and custodial services. Directly managed staff of 17.

**Key Achievements & Areas of Leadership/Responsibility...**

- Fiscal responsibility entailed developing and administering \$8.3 million operating budget as well as a \$1.1 million capital improvement budget.
- Served on Building Committee with former Middletown mayor for new Police Department Headquarters, representing entire Police Department. Active liaison, interfacing with architectural design team to ensure development of plans addressed myriad needs of various divisions. 12-month, multi-million dollar project was completed on time/under budget and was first in the state to share ground floor retail space in an urban environment.
- As Captain, took over division with significant turnaround opportunity; immediately assessed and launched initiatives that revamped operations, improved morale, and reduced costs.
- Collaborated with Chief of Police and implemented program assigning radios to each uniformed officer/detective; result: improved communications, safety, and morale.
- Coordinated outfitting of S.W.A.T. team comprising 15 officers; creatively secured funding through asset forfeitures to support program, linking objectives closely to initiatives in narcotics unit.
- Launched very successful bicycle unit; formulated program and coordinated training.
- Developed and implemented program of performance appraisals (quarterly meetings/annual reports).
- Successfully planned and managed operational initiatives for emergency and high-profile special events throughout Middletown (350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Middletown, Pratt & Whitney labor strike, etc.).

**Patrol Lieutenant (1996–1999)**

As Shift Commander, supervised up to 15 sworn officers; oversaw investigative direction, filed critical incident reports, and ensured adherence to operational policies and procedures. Coordinated scheduling to ensure adequate patrol coverage; deployed emergency response teams for major incidents.

- Commander of Emergency Services Unit; managed S.W.A.T. Team, Scuba Team, and Marine Unit.

MIDDLETOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT • *continued*

**Training / Internal Affairs Lieutenant (1995)**

Responsibility encompassed all aspects of conducting thorough internal investigations, staff and field inspections, and investigation of citizen complaints against departmental members. As Commander, maintained dual responsibilities for in-house staff development and internal affairs investigations.

- Coordinated and conducted training programs and maintained comprehensive files to ensure up-to-date certification of all sworn and civilian personnel.
- Implemented Field Training Officer Program; collaborated in design/facilitation of firearms training.
- Conducted background investigations of police candidates; formulated pre-hire recommendations.

**Patrol Sergeant (1989–1995)**

Directed community-oriented policing for a city sector.

Overall breadth of responsibility included field operations and numerous program initiatives.

- Initiated the nationally recognized McGruff Crime Prevention Program in city public schools.
- Developed, implemented, and commanded a Marine Unit and Scuba Team; Dive Rescue Advanced Certified/Ice Rescue Specialist. Administered unit budget and scheduled/trained staff.
- Recipient, Department's Citation for Meritorious Service as well as 25+ letters of commendation.

**Detective (1989)**

Key role in major criminal investigations. Analyzed and secured evidence; provided courtroom testimony.

- Conducted comprehensive background investigations, entailing interviews to obtain testimony of victims, witnesses, and neighbors.
- Incorporated complete study of forensic information; developed detailed reports and affidavits.

**Juvenile Officer (1986–1989) Traffic Officer (1984–1986) Patrol Officer (1981–1984)**

Developed and delivered lesson plans regarding drug and alcohol education, crime prevention, and juvenile law to pre-through high school students in the public school system. Representative at career day activities.

- Instructed Department of Environmental Protection Officers and new Middletown Police recruits regarding Juvenile Law and Juvenile Affairs.

FIRST SECURITY SERVICES CORP. (Investigator/Supervisor/Lieutenant) • Hartford, CT

1978–1981

YARMOUTH POLICE DEPARTMENT (Summer Reserve Officer) • Yarmouth, MA

1978

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## Education

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT • Storrs, CT

**Master of Public Affairs — Concentration in Public Administration (1994)**

FBI NATIONAL ACADEMY • Quantico, VA

**Graduate of the 228<sup>th</sup> session (Jan. 7–Mar. 16, 2007)**

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY • New Britain, CT

**Bachelor of Science, Industrial Technology — Concentration in Public Safety (1989)**

MANCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE • Manchester, CT

**Associate of Science — Law Enforcement (1979)**

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## Certifications

- Federal Bureau of Investigation – Law Enforcement Executive Development Seminar
- Field Training Officer (former)
- Certified Law Enforcement Instructor (former)
- Police Juvenile Specialist (credentialed with Int'l. Juvenile Officers Association, Inc.; former)

### **Affiliations and Activities**

MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE • Middletown, CT

1998–Present

**Adjunct Professor — Member, Criminal Justice Advisory Board** *(2001–Present)*

- Collaborated with Dean of Academic Studies to develop and successfully launch degreed Criminal Justice program at Middlesex.
- Instruct 1-2 courses per semester; classes include Criminal Investigation, Introduction to Criminal Justice, Leadership, Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice, etc.

**International Association of Chiefs of Police** *(2003–Present)*

**FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Association** *(2005–Present)*

**FBI National Academy Associates** *(2007–Present)*

**New England Association of Chiefs of Police, Inc.** *(2003–Present)*

**Connecticut Police Chiefs Association** *(2003–Present)*

- Elected **President, Capitol Region Police Chiefs Association** *(July 2009–July 2010)*

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## Continuing Professional Education *(partial list)*

- **Federal Bureau of Investigation** — Law Enforcement Executive Development Seminar
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** — Successfully completed Incident Command System Training: IS-100, IS-200, IS-300, IS-400, IS-700, IS-800
- **Office of Emergency Management** — Incident Command System-Emergency Ops Center Workshop
- **Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc.** — Accreditation Manager Training and Introduction to Law Enforcement Accreditation
- **Southern Police Institute Dept. of Justice Administration (University of Louisville)** — Management of the Small Law Enforcement Agency Course
- **Capitol Region Chiefs of Police** — Field Training Officers' Seminar
- **The International Association of Chiefs of Police** — Advanced Internal Affairs
- **Federal Bureau of Investigation** — Instructor Development
- **The Southwestern Law Enforcement Institute of The Southwestern Legal Foundation** — Training Administration and Management Program
- **The International Association of Chiefs of Police** — Performance Appraisal Training
- **State of Conn. Police Officer Standards & Training Council** — Certified Law Enforcement Instructor
- **Hutchinson Law Enforcement Training** — Police Background Investigations
- **Institute of Police Technology and Management** — Leading Law Enforcement into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- **BowMac Educational Services, Inc.** — Critical Incident Management Initial Response
- **The Community Policing Consortium** — Cultural Diversity/Community Partnership
- **Int'l. Juvenile Officers Assn.** — Police and Juvenile Problems, State-of-the-Art Juvenile Investigations
- **New England Institute of Law Enforcement Management** — Mastering Multiple Priorities and Demands
- **The University of Connecticut's Institute of Public Affairs Center for Policy Analysis & Management** — Labor Contract Administration
- **State of Connecticut DEP** — Boating Safety Law Enforcement, Boating Under the Influence
- **State of Connecticut Municipal Police Training Council** — Middle Management, Interview and Interrogation Techniques, First Line Supervision
- **Flat & Associates Consulting, Inc.** — Management Leadership Training
- **International Association of Dive Rescue Specialists** — Advanced Dive Rescue, Ice Rescue, Underwater Investigations
- **Narcotic Enforcement Officers Association** — Narcotics, Dangerous Drugs, and Patrol
- **International Institute for Community Police, Inc.** — Community Policing
- **Sexual Assault Crisis Service** — Child Abuse/Criminal Investigation
- **Inst. of Police Technology and Mgmt.** — Narcotic Identification and Investigation, Police Internal Affairs
- **John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, New York** — Vice and Narcotics Control
- **St. Joseph College, West Hartford, Conn.** — Child Sexual Abuse: Assessment and Initial Management
- **Springfield Technical Community College, Springfield, Massachusetts** — Sexual Trafficking in Children: Issues and Strategies for Change