

Westwood Police Recognized for Accreditation

Tuesday, July 19, 2011

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THE WESTWOOD WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP PATCH

WESTWOOD — Members of the Westwood Police Department were recognized during the council meeting Tuesday night for becoming an accredited department in the eyes of the New Jersey State Police. Members of the governing body praised the department for the commitment members showed throughout the process and for how it functions.

To become accredited, the department had to meet 112 standards, which often meant operating adjustments. Police Chief Frank Regino said 44 policies and procedures had to be rewritten and in order for the changes to take affect, the entire staff, which includes police reserves, secretarial staff and crossing guards, had to review and sign off on the new policies.

Harry Delgado, the accreditation program manager for the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police, came to the council meeting Tuesday to present Regino with a plaque recognizing the department's achievement.

"The Westwood Borough Police Department has now joined an elite group of police departments," Delgado said.

He said accreditation helps departments standardize their policies which can provide financial benefits as well as create confidence in government officials and residents.

Regino said the whole process was a group effort. "It's truly an honor for me to stand up here on behalf of our department and receive this recognition," he said. "But the true recognition should go to the officers and staff of the Westwood Police Department."

The department also had help from the Rodgers Group, which Lt. Colonel Frank Rodgers started after retiring from the New Jersey State Police Department, as a way to help police departments receive accreditation in a timely manner.

Regino specifically thanked Sgt. Mike Pontillo, who was the Westwood Police Department accreditation manager. Regino said he put Pontillo in charge of coordinating the program and that he believes Pontillo's action was the reason for a timely accreditation. Regino said the process can take more than two years, but Westwood completed it in a little less than a year.

Council President Robert Miller, who is the chairman of the Police and OEM Committee, said the accreditation proves what members of the Westwood community have known for years: that the police department is exceptional. "This achievement is not a casual event. There are very few ... communities in the state of New Jersey that have reached this milestone. Many don't do it because it is so difficult. Many don't do it because of the commitment it takes to achieve it and to continue it," Miller said. "Our department is now among the best of the best."



Accreditation Program Manager for the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police Harry Delgado, Council President Robert Miller, Westwood Police Chief Frank Regino, Mayor John Birkner Jr. and Councilman John J. Sciara, left to right, show off the certificate recognizing the accreditation of the Westwood Police Department.

Mayor John Birkner Jr. said he was honored to recognize the department. "It really is truly a privilege tonight that Westwood is recognized for the manner in which our police department conducts its business," he said. "We have set the bar in the Pascack Valley and we have set the bar in Bergen County."