

SECURITY COST ESTIMATED AT \$30K FOR SUPREMACIST TALK

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WAKEFIELD - Overtime and equipment costs for last Saturday's meeting of the World Church of the Creator, a white supremacist group, at the Beebe Memorial Library are estimated at \$30,000, according to Wakefield Police Chief Stephen Doherty.

The department provided maximum protection at little cost to the town by tapping the resources of two regional police groups, the Northeast Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council and the Metropolitan Law Enforcement Council.

In all, 250 police officers - many of them in full riot gear - patrolled downtown Wakefield during the event. Four people were arrested on disorderly conduct and civil rights charges.

The two groups, made up of police officers from 70 Massachusetts communities, provide resources and officers for events that present a risk to public safety. The World Church of the Creator meeting drew about 40 participants and 600 protesters to downtown Wakefield for the speech by white supremacist leader Matthew Hale. "The advantage of using these councils is that we were provided with highly trained officers at the expense of the individual cities and towns that belong to the councils," Doherty said.

Since salary costs of the additional officers are covered, Wakefield will only have to pay for the cost of food, water, equipment, cleanup, and other expenses. In addition to the 50-member police department, public works department personnel were also on duty to set up and take down crowd barriers.

"There are costs to the town that are not just police related. There is always support needed behind the scenes, and we couldn't have managed that day without the support of other town departments, as well as the residents and downtown business owners," Doherty said.

Across town, a peaceful community response called "Love Lives Here" at the Wakefield-Lynnfield Methodist Church drew as many as 150 people, including many town officials, according to Doherty. It was planned to denounce the World Church of the Creator, a neo-Nazi group that supports white supremacy and intolerance against Jews as well as people of color.

Organizers had hoped all protesters would attend their event. But, as has happened in other American cities, Hale's appearance in Wakefield sparked heated protests. Protesters represented many anti-racist groups, but the largest and most vocal was the Progressive Labor Party.

Protesters held signs reading, "Matt Hale, You Can't Hide, We Charge You With Genocide." They also chanted "Fight Back," and "Black, Latin, Asian, White, to smash the Fascists, we must unite."

But one protester, who identified himself only as a "committed antiracist," condemned the hundreds of police officers in full riot gear that kept protesters from charging into the library where Hale was speaking. "These idiots in blue are here to protect the Nazis," the speaker shouted into a megaphone.

Doherty said the huge police presence was necessary to protect public safety. "We had a growing and changing body of intelligence that led us to believe there was a serious risk for personal injury and property damage, based upon this group's appearance in other communities," he said.

Doherty did deny a request by Hale to address protesters and townspeople from the front steps of the library. "That was absolutely denied by me, because I felt that would have incited a riot," he said.

Caption: PHOTO

Police escort a protester (left), one of an estimated 600, away from demonstrations against the World Church of the Creator meeting in Wakefield last weekend. Outside the town's library (right), a woman trying to attend the meeting gestures to protesters who tried to keep her from entering the building. / GLOBE STAFF PHOTOS /

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