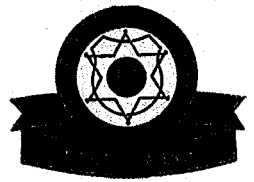


TOWN OF WOODBURY POLICE

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Town of Woodbury

New York State Police Reform and Reinvention

Collaborative Plan

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Panel Chairman: Frank Palermo
Mayor Timothy Egan
Councilman Thomas Burke
Police Chief Kevin Watson
Police Lieutenant Kevin Phillips
Joann Sullivan
Louis Roman
Clifford Ader
Anika Mohammed
Reverend Joseph Tyrrell
Levy Friedman
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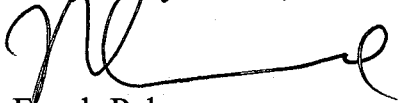
On June 12, 2020, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo signed Executive Order 203 which requires that local governments with a police department review their practices, policies and procedures.

The purpose of this review is to ensure that the police department is addressing the specific needs of the community that they serve in a fair and equitable manner that promotes community engagement and nurtures trust.

With these goals in mind, I have organized a police reform committee, consisting of members of the Town and Village government, police personnel, and community residents, which all represent very diverse ethnic, religious and socio-economic background, and are tasked to perform the review and make recommendations required by Executive Order 203.

As a result of a series of committee meetings, the committee has undertaken a comprehensive review of the Woodbury Police Department's policies and procedures, and has compiled their re-commendations into this report. While our Police Department is dedicated to doing the work, they are tasked with each day, it is important in these trying times to reflect on how we currently accomplish this and in what ways we can do it better, while serving to ensure a safe and prosperous future for all members of our community. As a result of this work, our goal is that these recommendations will address the ever-changing needs of our Town and continue to enforce the working relationship between our police personnel and the public that they serve.

Very Truly Yours,



Frank Palermo
Supervisor

TOWN OF WOODBURY
POLICE REFORM & REINVENTION
COLLABORATIVE PLAN

In response to Governor Andrew Cuomo's Executive Order 203, the Town of Woodbury assessed and sought public input on how the police department could better serve our specific community.

In June 2020, Governor Cuomo signed Executive Order 203. That order requires that each local government entity which has a police agency operating with police officers as defined under 1.20 of the Criminal Procedure Law must perform a comprehensive review of current police force deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, for the purpose of addressing the particular needs of the communities served by such police agency and promote community engagement to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy, and to address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color.”

A collaborative process was recommended where the community should:

- Review the needs of the community served by its police agency, and evaluate the department's current policies and practices.
- Establish policies that allow police to effectively and safely perform their duties.
- Involve the entire community in the discussion.
- Develop policy recommendations resulting from this review.
- Offer a plan for public comment.
- Present the plan to the local legislative body to ratify or adopt it.
- Certify adoption of the plan to the State Budget Director on or before April 1, 2021.
- The Legislative Body that would have responsibility to adopt the Plan would be the Town Board.

The Woodbury Police Department was re-accredited in 2019 by the Law Enforcement Agency Accreditation Council of New York State. The Woodbury Police Department has been accredited every five years since 1994. The accreditation program, which is substantial, was discussed at our initial meeting so that the standards between E.O. 203 and the accreditation program could be compared. For members of the public, here is the link:

https://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/ops/docs/accred/standards_compliance_verification_manual.pdf

The accreditation program, which is voluntary, is administered through the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services Office of Public Safety. Its stated mission is as follows: “The mission of the Office of Public Safety is to reduce crime and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of law enforcement, public safety and security organizations located within New York State, and to increase public confidence by promoting professionalism through standardized training and support.”

In Orange County, a total of only seven (7) law enforcement agencies of 37 are accredited, including the Woodbury Police Department. There are 160 agencies accredited statewide; of these, 143 are municipal agencies. The New York State Police and many of the SUNY Police Departments are also accredited. As part of the accreditation process, each officer receives a minimum of 21 hours of training annually; a portion of this training is anti-bias training. We provide this training throughout the year and due to the amount of Instructors our police agency has, we also provide training to the Tuxedo, Harriman, and Cornwall Police departments.

Prior to Executive Order 203, the Woodbury Police Department has been dedicated to police reform, identifying issues within contemporary policing, addressing community concerns, analyzing police performance, conduct, and does continual reviews of police department best practices and guidelines.

There are 29 sworn members of the Woodbury Police Department, along with 11 civilian staff members. There are 32 males, 8 females, and the demographics of those members are, 18 Caucasian, 1 African American, and 7 Hispanic.

The Town of Woodbury Police Department hiring process is based upon NYS Civil Service Requirements, which require that a candidate must take the State Exam, administered locally by the Orange County Department of Personnel. Those who pass the exam will appear on a Civil Service List for Police Officers, and then the Town must choose from the top tiers of that list in a predetermined format, which is set by Civil Service.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

On February 24, 2021, Supervisor Frank Palermo announced that he had appointed the following members to the Town of Woodbury Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan:

Panel Chairman: Frank Palermo
Mayor Timothy Egan
Councilman Thomas Burke
Police Chief Kevin Watson
Police Lieutenant Kevin Phillips
Joann Sullivan
Louis Roman
Clifford Ader
Anika Mohammed

Reverend Joseph Tyrrell
Levy Friedman
Jaideep Kakar

COMMITTEE MEETING DATES:

MARCH 3, 2021 Committee work session (Recorded)
MARCH 10, 2021 Committee work session (Recorded)
MARCH 17, 2021 Committee work session (Recorded)
MARCH 24, 2021 Draft Plan Public Comment meeting (Recorded)
MARCH 29, 2021 Adoption of Plan at the Board work session.

PUBLIC INPUT:

In order to ensure we engaged the public, we asked for feedback. The public was able to do this by:

Email input and questions to: Policereform@woodburypolice.org
to make a comment or ask a question for the panel to review and/or submit.

Attend the public input meeting that will be held on March 24, 2021 for your input and address the advisory panel. Your input is wanted and appreciated.

DEFINITIONS:

COMMITTEE – Police Reform & Reinvention Collaborative
Committee Members, as appointed by Supervisor Frank Palermo and defined herein.

PLAN – A set of Policy recommendations established by the Committee with the input from the public, which addresses the needs of the Community served by the Woodbury Police Department, used interchangeably with “report”.

REPORT - A set of policy recommendations established by the Committee, with input from the public, which addresses the needs of the Community served by the Woodbury Police Department used interchangeably with “Plan”.

INFORMATION PROVIDED FOR REVIEW:

The following information was provided to the Committee for their review and discussion:

1. Racial and gender makeup of the police department
2. Woodbury Police Department Reform Initiative Presentation
3. Use of Force/Force Continuum/Deadly Physical Force Policies
4. Civilian Complaint (Internal Affairs) Policy
5. Purpose of the NYS Accreditation Program
6. Woodbury Police status on the NYS Accreditation Program
7. Training requirements and policies
8. Annual Police Department Statistics

TOPICS DISCUSSED:

Police Participation and Involvement with Mental Health Calls for Service-

This topic was discussed at one of our meetings and feedback from the committee indicated that police should continue to provide mutual aid and assist other ambulance or mental health agencies who are responding to mental health crisis calls. It was acknowledged at the meeting that the Woodbury Police Department participates in a service for those experiencing or dealing with a mental health crisis through the Orange County Mental Health Association and their Mobile Mental Health Response Team, but because this is a countywide service, there can be long wait times for mental health professionals to arrive when requested. This puts our officers in the position of acting in the place of mental health professionals until Mobile Mental Health can arrive. It may be worth looking into whether mental health professionals would be willing to volunteer their time to be "on call" if/when these services are needed, or whether we could partner with other local municipalities to have someone on staff, or a service on call, who can provide these types of services.

Hiring Process-

A panel member raised concerns about the Woodbury Police Department hiring process at the first committee meeting. All committee members were provided with a gender, ethnic, and racial breakdown of the employees of the Woodbury Police Department. A panel member raised a question regarding the hiring of female officers. It was shared with the public and Committee Members that as of 2018, women make up approximately 12.8% of all U.S sworn police officers. The Woodbury Police Department hiring is based upon NYS Civil Service Requirements which require that a candidate must take the State Exam,

administered locally by the Orange County Department of Personnel. Those who pass the exam will appear on the Civil Service List for Police Officers, and that the Town must choose from the top tiers of that list in a predetermined format set by Civil Service Law. The Committee Members upon review now understand that the Town cannot arbitrarily choose employees for police service positions.

Community Policing/Community Interaction Concepts-

More than one committee member expressed the importance of the police being involved in the community. The Woodbury Police Department has in the past participated in a number of programs, some of which had been in place for over 10 years. Those programs included the following:

- School Resource Officer Program in which six (6) certified SRO's are assigned to the Monroe-Woodbury School District. One is assigned to MW High School, MW Middle School, Central Valley Elementary School and Smith Clove Elementary School. The Monroe-Woodbury School District fully funds these positions.
- Intern Program, in which summer interns are selected from a pool of matriculated F/T college students or high school students with interest in law enforcement. The program exposes them to police operations, programs, knowledge of specialized units, K9, tactics, clerical and administrative duties, and records, better preparing them for a professional career in the law enforcement field.
- EMT Program, we are one of the few police departments who have an EMT program. Pre pandemic, our police officers responded to all medical emergencies and provided medical care. The police department is usually the first to respond on the scene of all medical calls. Our EMT's carry all medical supplies needed to save lives such as: oxygen, blood pressure cuffs, defibrillators,

splints, bandages, glucose, and Narcan. Our EMT's have been credited for saving many lives.

- Operation Concern, allows residents of the Town of Woodbury to register their loved ones or place themselves on a call list. This list is in place in order to ensure that its participants are called daily. Therefore, if a participant is not reached after various attempts, a patrol unit will be sent to ensure the health and safety of the participant. It can provide peace of mind for residents who participate in the program.
- Child Passenger Safety Seat, Woodbury Police Department has specially trained police officers who are certified Child Passenger Safety Seat Installers. By appointment, these officers will professionally install your child safety seat. During installation, these officers will provide the owner with safety tips and guidelines to ensure that your child is safe and comfortable. Your child's safety is these officers' paramount concern.
- Vacant House, this program allows residents to submit a form in order to have a Town of Woodbury Patrol Unit monitor the condition of their home for a requested range of dates to ensure that it remains in its present condition as they vacation or leave their home vacant for any other means.
- Rape Aggression Defense Course, (R.A.D.) is an international program that trains citizens in self-defense in case they ever become victim to an attack. The R.A.D. Systems of Self Defense offers programs for women, children, men and seniors. These offerings provide a truly holistic approach to self-defense education, supporting the necessity of continuous learning in order to provide realistic options for each population as they go through life. Each of these programs includes educational components comprised of lecture, discussion, physical resistance strategies. All

of which are facilitated by certified R.A.D. Instructors. The Town of Woodbury Police Department currently has four R.A.D. instructors.

- Project Child Safe, Woodbury police Department, in conjunction with Project Child Safe, distributes free gun locking devices to Town of Woodbury residents. Project Child Safe is a program whose purpose is to promote safe firearms handling and storage practices among all firearms owners, through the distribution of safety messages and gun locking devices all over the United States. This program is being funded by a US Department of Justice Grant. The free firearm safety kit, which includes a firearm locking device, can be obtained by visiting the Police department.
- No Person Left Behind, during times of emergencies and natural disasters, the Town of Woodbury has developed an Emergency Response Plan which is in place to direct first responders in a way that best aids the residents of the town. The Town of Woodbury Police department enacts the plan when needed. A program the Town of Woodbury Police have started, as a part of the Emergency Response Plan, in order to better serve the residents during a time of need is called No Person Left Behind. This program requires residents to register, who may have special needs during times of an emergency, to allow us to better prepare your Police, Fire and Ambulance services for your unique circumstances. These needs would include, but not limited to: mentally challenged, limited or no mobility, confined to oxygen or other medical equipment to sustain life etc. We encourage anyone with special needs to take advantage of this service by filling out the form and returning it to the Town of Woodbury Police Department.

- Fearless Hudson Valley, this is not a Department program, but is one with which the Department works closely. It is formerly known as OC Safe Homes. They serve Orange and Sullivan Counties, providing services and support to victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and other crime victims. The Department supports this program in any way we can (i.e., providing pamphlets with contact and general information to victims while still on scene pursuant to a call). The Department is currently working with the Director of the program, trying to arrange for times when a member of the program's staff can be physically present, at the station, to follow up with victims of domestic violence.
- Hope Not Handcuffs, this is another program that isn't run by the Department, but one with which we recently partnered (starting in August of 2020). The program seeks to bring law enforcement and community organizations together to find viable treatment options for individuals seeking help to reduce dependency with heroin, prescription drugs, and alcohol. All officers have received training from the program about how it works and what to expect.

Body Worn Cameras

Prior to the formation of the police and community panel, Chief Watson, and members of the Police Commission, had already begun discussing the possibility of implementing a body camera program within the Woodbury Police Department. The program does not come without substantial costs, which were estimated at approximately \$100,000 per year for the next 5 years. Those costs do not include the in-house personnel expenses to manage the program, which will result in a Police Sergeant being reassigned to oversee the collection, storage, and redaction of all body camera footage. This is necessary given the sheer volume of data that will be collected on a daily basis. Chief Watson provided a comprehensive overview of the benefits provided by the body camera program through the industry leading vendor, Axon. The program will provide a complete package of technology and equipment, which will be made available to all sworn personnel within the department, including the Chief. In addition to body cameras, the police department will receive advanced training; new Taser conducted electrical weapons, equipment upgrades, and advanced camera software programs. This will maximize the potential of the camera technology, and ensure the accountability and transparency of police officers who wear them. Members of the panel overwhelmingly supported the decision to implement body worn cameras. The panel suggested that the policy for use of body cameras by police officers be carefully constructed so as to ensure that best practices are followed. Chief Watson advised that his administration was already researching policies and procedures, grants, and that he would keep the police Commission advised of his progress.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this review process, the Woodbury Police Department was transparent, forthcoming, and able to readily provide any data which was requested by Committee members. Chief Watson attended not only our Committee meetings but also other information sessions provided by NYS and Albany Law School in order to have full understanding of E.O. 203, what other communities were doing, and how to effectively implement a plan in the Town of Woodbury.

While we acknowledge that the Woodbury Police Department has already taken steps to go above and beyond what is required as evidenced by its participation in the NYS Accreditation program, we also acknowledge that there is always room for improvement. We believe that the proposals above, including a social media presence, citizens forums, periodic surveys, collaboration with the schools, and meeting local business owners will be helpful in keeping our trust between the police department and the community. However, we also recognize that this is an ongoing process and that this plan should be subject to ongoing review and revision and is likely to evolve in future years as our community changes and as policing needs evolve.