Cover Letter

Dear Peekskill Resident,

A complete draft of the Peekskill Police Reform Task Force’s Draft Plan for public comment has been posted to the project webpage and is available for public review and comment.

The period for public comment webpage ends on February 18, so the Task Force may make changes before submitting to the City Council in early March. Comments may be made via email to policetaskforce10566@gmail.com or through participation in the fifth public meeting of the Task Force, scheduled for Thursday, February 11 at 7 PM. “Zoom” meeting participation information may be found on the project webpage, and the meeting will be broadcast on the City’s Government cable channels. (see project webpage for details of this meeting and project documents: https://www.cityofpeekskill.com/police/pages/peekskill-police-reform-taskforce

The Draft Plan has information on the police department, the Task Force membership and process, and over 30 draft Recommendation Summaries for community feedback. It includes an Appendix featuring background information and details on many recommendations, and well as other pertinent information.

Mayor Rainey, Co-Chair: “Thanks to the Governor for his timely initiative and to Task Force members for their hard work. This draft Plan is the beginning phase, and I look forward to more input from the community and ultimately discussion by the City Council to decide how to move the process forward in concrete ways to implement the Plan.”

Antonio Knott, Co-Chair of Task Force: “It is an honor to be able to release the preliminary draft of the Peekskill Police Reform Plan. It goes without saying this could not have been completed without the input from the community and hardworking members of the taskforce. These members have spent countless hours researching, discussing and finalizing the various areas of reform that we release to the public for review and comment.”

Chief Halmy, City of Peekskill, “Commencing with the signing of Gov. Cuomo’s Executive Order 203, members of the Peekskill Police Department along with community stakeholders who represent the core of the city have worked very hard to compose this draft. While there is still much to do to make it a reality, I believe these proposals will only make an already excellent police department even better. The goal of this package is to enhance many of the programs we already have in place, while expanding our relationship with the community.”
Important dates:

- February 11 - Last public meeting of Task Force to obtain community feedback in order to finalize the Plan for submission to the City Council for review.
- February 18 - Last day public comments will be reviewed and the Plan revised as needed before submission to the Common Council
- February 18 - March 1 - Plan revisions by Task Force based on public comment.
- March 1 - Expected public presentation of Plan to City Council
- March 22 - Expected City Council action on Plan
- April 1 - NYS deadline for completion of Plan.

Comments and suggestions are welcome and may be emailed to: policetaskforce10566@gmail.com
Project webpage with this and other documents: https://www.cityofpeekskill.com/police/pages/peekskill-police-reform-taskforce
NYS Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative
City of Peekskill, NY

DRAFT REPORT
By
Peekskill Police Reform Task Force
February, 2021
Draft Peekskill Police Reform and Reimagination Plan in Compliance with E.O. 203.

E.O. 203 NEW YORK STATE POLICE REFORM AND REINVENTION COLLABORATIVE, June 2020

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, and develop a plan to improve such deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, for the purposes 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.

(See Appendix for full text of E.O. 203)

Executive Summary

This is the City of Peekskill’s response to Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s Executive Order 203 regarding police procedures. The Plan below reflects a formal community collaborative process that meets or exceeds the tenets of the Executive Order. This Plan will be submitted the Peekskill City Council for adoption via resolution prior to April 1, 2021.

The City of Peekskill welcomes the Governor’s Executive Order 203 mandating Police Chiefs and City Managers to lead a thorough review of police operations and policies in consultation with the communities we serve. Tackling head-on the fact that systemic racism in United States history creates barriers to effective public safety work. This work depends critically on community partnership, perceptions of integrity, and trust. To achieve these goals, the Peekskill Police Reform Task Force’s Plan (hereafter, the “Plan”) aims to bolster the police department’s ability to provide public safety and engender trust, specifically in minority communities (which now constitute the majority of Peekskill residents). Additionally, changes in policies, procedures, training, cultural education, community engagement, equipment, and personnel will increase public safety for all Peekskill residents.

This Plan is the result of a broad and deep community engagement process led by a diverse, talented, and dedicated group of community volunteers, police officers, and City staff. This Plan
is the culmination of several intense months of work, but it is only a strong beginning, and many challenges for implementation lie ahead.

All of these recommendations have the support, in principle, of the police chief and city manager.

Cost and feasibility assessment for each recommendation is to be determined upon further review by Common Council and city staff. City management has provided preliminary estimates only, as more accurate estimates will require further work. This will be a substantial undertaking.

The Plan presents several dozen recommendations of varying complexity. Some recommendations can be implemented locally and in short order. Others are complex, costly, require further exploration and, in some cases, require cooperation from other jurisdictions such as the county and state civil service agencies.

The Plan’s detailed data and description of the Peekskill Police Department (hereafter, the “Police Department”) itself constitutes an unprecedented step towards empowering the public to understand and engage police policy matters. These sections of the Plan show a police department with a history of investment in community policing programs and a commitment to steadily diversifying staff with more people of color and women. Various recommendations address the goals of further operational data development and transparency.

Even as calls for service increase, the department has a bare-bones budget and fewer staff today than a decade ago. The community’s growth in population and increasing calls for service combined with calls for greater transparency and community engagement indicate a need for the many programmatic updates described in this Plan. The City Council and management face a difficult balancing act, funding public safety among other essential services while keeping the tax burden on local property owners as light as possible. This Plan helps illuminate the path forward for all concerned.

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Introduction

Peekskill is not a large city. While it has been blessed with an atmosphere of peaceful protest and sincere desire on all sides to address concerns as they emerge, this is no time to rest on our laurels and stick to “business as usual.” The efforts of the Peekskill Police Reform Task Force (hereafter, the “Task Force”) build on a history of sustained and successful investment in community policing, and with the full awareness that the work of overcoming systemic racism in the United States is far from complete and that police agencies and their community partners have a unique responsibility and opportunity to be leaders in this regard.

It is well-understood that our society’s social welfare programs have ample “cracks” and as a result police spend a great deal of time managing people who “fall through the cracks”: those who are struggling with alcohol and drug addiction, psychiatric disorders, domestic violence, and young people getting involved in gang-like activities. These interactions can evolve quickly into dangerous situations and police must routinely make split-second decisions with potentially grave consequences. The Police Department will use this Plan as a guide to bring about changes that can foster trust within our diverse community and can help prevent dangerous situations.

The City of Peekskill thus welcomed the Governor’s emergency order for all New York police departments to engage the communities they serve in a critical review of police practices in light of the disparate and unequal treatment of people of color in U.S. history. This report describes the Peekskill Police Reform Task Force: its origins, mission, activities, and results, including recommendations to guide the City Council, Police Chief, and City Manager in their leadership of local government. This Plan concludes the work of the Peekskill Police Reform Task Force, but it is neither the beginning nor the end of our collective efforts to plan and implement actions leading to greater public safety through an ever more solid and trusting partnership between the police and the community they serve. Community trust and understanding of police is essential to effective police work, as is police sensitivity to the current and historical reasons various groups, and especially people of color, distrust police.

Executive Order 203

Executive Order 203 requires that the Police Chief and City Manager engage stakeholders in a public and open review of policing strategies and tools, including use of force, implicit bias, and de-escalation, aimed at addressing the damaging effects of systemic racism in the United States on police–community partnerships that are so critical to preserving and enhancing public safety in a diverse community. E.O. 203 requires the Police Chief and City Manager incorporate public input into a draft reform plan, present this plan to the public for comments, revise accordingly,
and then present the plan to the City Council for review and adoption prior to April 1, 2021. See Appendix for full text of E.O. 203.

**Peekskill Police Department**

This section of the Plan shows a Police Department with an extensive history of investment in community policing programs and a steadily diversifying staff, with more people of color and women coming up through the ranks. However, the department has a bare-bones budget and fewer staff today than a decade ago, even as calls for service increase year by year. The community’s growth in population, poverty, and the ever increasing calls for service these trends produce, combined with justified calls for greater transparency and community engagement, indicate a need not only for the many programmatic recommendations described in this Plan, but quite simply, more staff and funding.

The development of raw data, from various sources, into a useful presentation to the public is a substantial undertaking and is one of the recommendations of this Plan. This section does not purport to meet this challenge. The information below is just a first step toward providing the kind of information that would be included in an annual police data report such as that proposed in one Task Force recommendation, addressing the challenge of transparency and accountability. Similar information should be accessible and updated via the Police website.

**City Demographics**

Overall, Peekskill’s population of approximately 24,000 residents had the following racial demographics in 2019:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Category</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White, not Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races, Asian, Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: [https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/peekskillcitynewyork](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/peekskillcitynewyork) Viewed on 1-11-21

In addition, about 28% of the population is foreign born, and about 12% of the population is in poverty.
Staff Demographics and Diversity

As seen in the table below, the Police Department has diversified over the last ten years, moving away from the traditional white male demographic. Including both sworn officers and civilians, the percentage of non-Caucasians has increased from 16% to 38% of total staff since 2010. Also, women are a growing part of the team. The data below show staff positions that are filled. For reasons discussed elsewhere, there are vacancies that remain to be filled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010 PO</th>
<th>2010 Civilian</th>
<th>Total 2010 PO</th>
<th>Total 2010 Civilian</th>
<th>2020 PO</th>
<th>2020 Civilian</th>
<th>Total 2020 PO</th>
<th>Total 2020 Civilian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010 %</th>
<th>2020 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Caucasians</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The leadership ranks are less diverse, but that is bound to change over time as a more diverse staff advances towards leadership positions. Despite the evident trend towards diversity in the department, including adding Spanish-speaking Officers/staff, this demographic change in personnel depends on a pipeline of candidates through the county civil service system. In the last three years as chief, Chief Halmy has hired 16 police officers, including eight non-Caucasians. There are currently six funded vacant police officer positions waiting to be filled. To be hired, a candidate must have scored in the top three on the civil service exam and pass background, psychological, and fitness tests. It is not unusual for promising candidates to fail to complete the process, or to decline employment. The demographics of the candidate pool lag behind those of the city population overall, which is currently nearly 44% Hispanic or Latino.

Activity Data

The Police Department maintains a range of tabulated data on its service activities. In some cases this data is easily available, such as the information presented below. In addition, records exist that, to be publicly accessible, tabulated or analyzed, requires a good deal of work culling through records, both paper and digital, and creating datasets and providing context. Since transparency is a basic principle of police
reform, this Plan contains a range of recommendations towards this end. As a starting point, two kinds of data are summarized below:

- Arrest and Incident Data - any police activity that required documentation in a narrative report of some type.
- Calls for Service Data - the Department tracks approximately 100 different types of Calls for Service, many of which result in incident data.

Each type of data is presented briefly below with some discussion notes. Caution is required in interpreting data. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic affected calls for service in 2020. In 2020, “special checks,” in which police check known areas of concern, were up considerably over years past, as were fireworks complaints, since the official fireworks were cancelled. On the other hand, “dark house” checks were reduced since many families cancelled trips and therefore did not request police security checks of their homes. The pandemic is just one example of a factor that may make data from any one category or year non-representative.

**Arrest and Incident Data**

This summary data reflects a small but busy police department with growing calls for service of various types. 2020 data in part reflects the pandemic, with fewer prisoner detention services and overall fewer arrests in total than in previous years.

Arrest demographic data, correlating arrest incidents with subjects’ race and/or ethnicity are still under development and will be provided through the further development of police operational data for public discussion.

**Calls for Service Data**

In 2012 the department responded to 22,816 calls for service and the call volume has trended steadily upward over the last decade, reaching an average of about 39,000 calls per year in 2020, an increase of...
73%. Over the same time period, as shown above, the staffing of the department has fallen from 74 in 2010 to 61 employees in 2020 (51 officers and 10 civilians), for a decrease in staffing of about 18%. The Police Department responds to roughly 40,000 calls for service per year, or 110 calls per day.

Types of calls vary in frequency. The police carry out 10,000 to 20,000 “special checks” per year, meaning proactively patrolling specific sites where crime or safety issues are frequently noted. The next most frequent calls range from 500 to 2000 calls per year and are listed below:
Some lower-frequency service activities are nonetheless very important to public safety, and can absorb a great deal of police time and resources. The activities shown below occur occasionally, and for which the police department maintains records:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Call</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Check</td>
<td>20,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation Safeguard</td>
<td>1,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V&amp;T Detail</td>
<td>1,731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Stop</td>
<td>1,557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Emergency</td>
<td>1,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park, Walk and Talk</td>
<td>1,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspicious Per., Vehicle, Inci</td>
<td>879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Complaint</td>
<td>774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up Investigation</td>
<td>710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Investigation</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise Complaint</td>
<td>601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil, Land/Ten, Verbal Neighbo</td>
<td>598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MVA Property Damage</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Burglary alarm</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Budget

The city budget is divided into funds and most city services, including policing, are covered in the General Fund. With an annual budget of about $8.8 million, the Police Department absorbs about 21% of
the General Fund. Surprisingly, the overall police budget has changed little over the last decade, mostly because the increasing cost of labor (salaries, retirement, health insurance, etc.) has been offset by a decreasing staffing level. As mentioned above, staffing has decreased by about 18% over the last decade.

There are currently six funded vacant positions in the Police Department. These funded positions are vacant for several reasons. Vacancies result from delays in hiring due to civil service processes, as well as the civil service requirement to preserve funded vacancies created by promotions to new positions that are probationary for up to a year, so that an employee can revert back to their former title if needed. Civil Service also freezes the police officer entrance exam list, making additional candidates unreachable for hire.

Personnel costs are about 75% of the cost of the Police Department budget, and the department is currently staffed at a minimum level needed to provide 24/7/365 patrol coverage of the city.

As a general rule, enhancement of services for increased community engagement, increased training of police officers, more police officer time spent on foot or on bicycles, all require increased personnel costs, either through the payment of overtime wages or hiring additional employees.

Current Procedural Justice Activities

To aid in discussion of issues pertaining to police management, it is useful to consider the present status of Peekskill police programs and activities relevant to police reform and accountability. The recommendations in this Plan address many of these topics further.

**Accreditation**: Periodic reaccreditation by NYS involves a thorough and painstaking review of police records, procedures, and results. The Police Department D was last reaccredited on September 9, 2019 (see Appendix).

**Choke Holds**: Choke holds and carotid holds are not permitted under Peekskill Police Department policy.

**Duty to Intervene**: Under current Police Department policy, officers have a duty to intervene when excessive force is being used and must report this to a supervisor.

**Use of Force Documentation**: All uses of force are documented, reviewed by Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Chief, and the NYS Department of Criminal Justice Services is notified.

**Body Cameras**: Body cams are utilized during encounters with the public. This includes audits to make sure there is compliance with camera use and police policy.

**Mental Health/Crisis Intervention**: Police are frequently called to manage people in mental distress, and partnerships with other agencies are key to success. The Police Department uses
Phelps Hospital for obtaining mental health treatment for those in crisis. Mental health cards are distributed to those in need of additional mental health resources.

Complaints: Civilian complaint forms are available at Police HQ and on the City’s website. If people are uncomfortable addressing their concerns within the complaint process, they are encouraged to bring their concern to another police agency for referral to the City, such as the NYS Police or the County District Attorney.

Trainings: Police officers receive a wide range of training, both in the classroom and on the job, to prepare them to serve the public effectively:

- Use-of-force training to limit use of force to only that which is necessary to protect the public and police officers in unsafe situations.
- De-escalation techniques to prevent the need for use of force
- Bias/Discrimination/Cultural Awareness and education to understand how implicit bias and micro-aggression occurs understanding how diverse groups communicate with and perceive law enforcement.
- Crisis intervention/mental health training to prepare to safely attend to the needs of people with psychiatric and emotional issues, or disabilities.

Current Community Engagement Activities

Efforts to improve trust and partnership between the Police Department and the Peekskill community build upon a history of community policing programs that have developed over time in the city. For the Police Department, participation in community events, organizations, and committees is essential for working proactively to address concerns. A few examples of this community engagement work include:

Coffee with a Cop: An event at a local business or popular location where the public can engage with Police Officers about any topics they wish or just meet and greet over a cup of coffee and snacks. Popular locations include the Peekskill Coffee House, Kurzhal’s Coffee, Bohlman Towers, outdoors on Main Street, and the train station platform.

NAACP events: The Police Department has partnered with the NAACP on community events such as Bridging the Gap, kickball games, bowling, and student forums at Peekskill High School.

Youth Academy: A two-week summer camp, typically for middle school and high school students that is hosted by the Police Department. The academy is designed to give youth an idea of what policing is all about and what it takes to be a Police Officer.
**Saturday Academy:** A program hosted by the Peekskill City School District to bring families together on Saturday mornings. This program, which the Police Department participates in, allows residents to interact with a wide variety of community-based organizations in order to introduce them to many new activities they may not have known about and to just have a fun day.

**Youth Bureau:** Officer Jonathan Saintiche is a board member for the Peekskill Youth Bureau and serves as a liaison for the many activities going on with the children of Peekskill.

**Operation Archangel:** Officers trained in helping to manage security protocols in houses of worship meet with religious leaders to formulate safety plans and discuss relevant topics with the congregants.

**High School Tailgate party:** The Police Department works with the School district every year to host a tailgate party at the Peekskill High School where a BBQ luncheon is held for incoming students.

**National Night Out:** In conjunction with the Youth Bureau, a block party is held on North Division Street in which the Police Department provides a cook-out for residents while they meet and greet Officers.

**Hispanic Community Forum:** A community forum was hosted at the Church of the Assumption to discuss immigration concerns and any other topics guests wanted to talk about. Another meeting was being set up at the Tabernacle of Christ Church Hispanic congregation on Main Street but was put on hold with the pandemic.

**Gun Buy Back program:** The River Outpost hosted a fundraiser in order to raise money to buy back unwanted guns. The Police Department then held a gun buy-back event and removed almost 200 guns that may otherwise have ended up on the streets of Peekskill.

**Domestic Violence:** The Police Department recently had all Officers participate in a lethality assessment program that trains them to determine who may be at greater risk to become a victim of violence associated with domestic violence. This, in conjunction with follow up visits and strong referrals, will help to protect family members at risk.

**Park, Walk, & Talk:** On a daily basis, Officers interact with the public at different locations in the City. These typically include parks, the downtown area, Kiley Center, the Paramount Theater, Flea Market and Farmers Markets, scheduled sporting events, all city schools, etc.

**Bicycle Patrol:** During the summer we deploy Bicycle Patrols focused on the downtown area and the Riverfront Green/Riverwalk.
Bicycle Rodeo: Officers host a yearly bicycle safety course, usually in conjunction with the annual Peekskill Rotary Horse Show, in order to teach kids how to safely ride a bike. Usually also involves free give-aways like lights or helmets that were donated.

Child Safety Seat Installation: On a monthly basis, Officers conduct child car seat installations and have an inventory of free seats available to needy parents. This is also done by appointment.

School Resource Officers and DARE instructors: During the school year, these Officers are constantly interacting with the students of Peekskill and Cortlandt, hoping to build lasting relationships with these children.

K9 Program: Our K9s and their human partners are the most requested Officers to attend community functions, especially at schools. Charlie and Bones are our best ambassadors to the youth of Peekskill.

Peekskill Police Honor Guard: A unit that participates in City parades and memorial events.

Peekskill Police/Fire 5K: The Police Department and Fire Department hold an annual 5K race in the City of Peekskill with proceeds going to create scholarships for Peekskill High School seniors going into college.

Peekskill Housing Authority: The Chief of Police attends monthly Housing tenant meetings in order to be available to discuss any issues the residents may have on PHA property.

Social Media: The Peekskill Police social media pages do an excellent job of alerting the public to issues, events, and the different community engagement efforts the Police Department is involved in.

Trunk or Treat: Officers have participated in various Halloween activities throughout the community each year.

Salvation Army Tree Angel Program: Peekskill Officers participate to buy underprivileged children in the community the Christmas gifts they hoped for.

Planning and Public Participation Process

E.O.203 does not simply require all local police departments to make reform plans, but requires as much community involvement as possible in this planning process so that the diverse perspectives of community members are represented in the recommendations for change that will be submitted to the City’s elected officials. Peekskill took the principle of community involvement very seriously,
committing hundreds of hours of staff and volunteer time to this effort. The overall community
engagement process involved:

- **Diverse Task Force:** The 23-member Task Force was chaired by African Americans and included
  a diverse collaboration among local people: people of color, youth, members of the LGBTQ
  community, religious leaders, active and retired police officers, formerly incarcerated persons,
  mental health professionals, and people involved in a wide array community groups and agencies.
- **Public Meetings of the Task Force:** Public meetings were held on October 1, 2020; November 5,
  2020; December 17, 2020; January 21, 2021; February 11, 2021, [add: and presentations were
  made at public meetings of the City Common Council in March 2021]. The meetings were
  promoted in Spanish and English, on social media, streamed live on the internet and on the
  Government Channel. Members of the public used the opportunity to make comments and ask
  questions.
- **Project Webpage:** The project webpage has been continuously updated with documents, press
  releases, and meeting videos and other resources enabling interested parties to quickly obtain
  relevant information.
- **Project Email Address:** Public communications were further facilitated by creating and
  monitoring a unique email address to receive comments, letters of interest, and other
  communications.
- **Committee Membership and Activities:** Committee chairs invited additional persons to participate
  in their committees, adding youth, policy experts, and other community members.
- **“Listening Sessions”:** The Community Engagement committee hosted seven community-based
  meetings attended by a total of 62 people, including Black and Hispanic youths.
- **NAACP Monthly Meetings:** Peekskill NAACP President Valerie Eaton, chair of the Training,
  Equipment and Education Committee, incorporated discussion of police reform issues into
  monthly NAACP meetings and special Criminal Justice meetings of the NAACP.
- **Draft Report Subject to Public Comment:** A draft of this report was published for public comment
  for a two-week period, and comments were received and incorporated as appropriate.
- **Common Council Discussion:** The Plan is to be presented to the Common Council at one or more
  public sessions for further discussion, public input and comment, and eventual adoption by the
  Council.

This public planning process unfolded over almost a year-long period:

**Project Timeline**

- **Summer 2020** - Data gathering, assessment of current conditions, inventory of policy
  reform options
- **Fall 2020** - Feasibility and cost analysis and prioritization of reform options
- **Winter 2020** - Drafting of plan, public comment on plan, revisions
- **Spring 2021** - Presentation of plan to Common Council, revision and adoption
• On-going - Implementation of plan, drafting of new policies and procedures, piloting of new programs or initiatives, measurement of outcomes.

Organizing Committee Formed

Shortly following E.O. 203 the City formed an Organizing Committee aimed at recruiting diverse persons to form a Peekskill Police Reform Task Force. Organizing Committee members were:

• Valerie Eaton - President, NAACP-Peekskill Chapter
• Susan Erdey - Chair, Human Relations Commission
• Mayor André Rainey
• Peekskill Police Chief Don Halmy
• Andrew Stewart, Peekskill City Manager
• Mayo Bartlett, Westchester County Police Task Force
• Ramón Fernandez, City Council liaison to the Police Department

The committee met weekly beginning in July to review E.O. 203 and define the scope of the project, especially as it pertained to ways of generating community participation and engagement. On August 17, 2020, the committee issued a public call for candidates to serve on a large and diverse community task force, and used its social networks to recruit interested individuals from a broad range of social sectors. These included: African Americans, Hispanics, Whites, youth, LGBTQ, straight, male, female, faith-based, those with experience in police profession or policy matters, people who have been incarcerated, and community activists and advocates. City residency was considered important, but some exceptions were made for policy experts with local involvement, if not residency per se, and with the understanding that subcommittees would be free to invite additional people to participate in committee meetings and work.

Task Force and Committees Formed

The Task Force had its first meeting on October 1, 2020, and met weekly thereafter for a total of approximately 20 meetings prior to submission of a Plan to the Common Council. The Task Force elected two co-chairs, Antonio Knott and Mayor Rainey, created five committees, and appointed committee chairs and members. Each committee developed its own schedule of additional regular meetings, and in some cases, opportunities for further public involvement. The table below lists the Task Force members, their affiliations, their committee membership, and in some cases indicates individuals included on committees, but not appointed as Task Force members.
The Police Department assigned one police officer to each committee, including the police chief, a school resource officer, the president of the PBA, and a female police officer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marcus</td>
<td>Andre</td>
<td>Transparency/Accountability</td>
<td>Peekskill Youth NAACP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>Calabrese</td>
<td>Policies and Procedures</td>
<td>Chief Inspector, West. County Police; Local Business Owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>Community Engagement (Chair)</td>
<td>Ret. Police Officer, Mt. Vernon; Law Enforcement Training Consultant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sgt</td>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>Police Officer, Peekskill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff</td>
<td>Deskovic</td>
<td>Policies and Procedures</td>
<td>Community Advocate, Attorney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valerie</td>
<td>Eaton</td>
<td>Education, Training and Equipment (Chair)</td>
<td>Peekskill NAACP - President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Erdey</td>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>Chair, Human Relations Commission, City of Peekskill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramon</td>
<td>Fernandez</td>
<td>Recruitment/Hiring</td>
<td>Councilman, Peekskill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenna</td>
<td>Ferris</td>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>Asst Principal, Peekskill High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>Forbes</td>
<td>Transparency/Accountability</td>
<td>Community Educator and Organizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>Halmy</td>
<td>Policies and Procedures</td>
<td>Police Chief, City of Peekskill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>Knott</td>
<td>Transparency/Accountibility</td>
<td>Accounting Professional; Board Treasurer Peekskill Pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sgt</td>
<td>Kruithof</td>
<td>Transparency/Accountability</td>
<td>Police Sgt; PBA President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>Lalindez</td>
<td>Recruitment/Hiring</td>
<td>Police Officer, School Resource Officer, Bicycle PO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>McDonald</td>
<td>Recruitment/Hiring</td>
<td>Westchester County Police Reform Taskforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilfredo</td>
<td>Morel</td>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>Community Health and Arts Advocate, Peekskill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariana</td>
<td>Okoth</td>
<td>Education, Training and Equipment</td>
<td>Peekskill Youth NAACP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Oliveto</td>
<td>Education, Training and Equipment</td>
<td>Social Services Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tricia</td>
<td>Pickering</td>
<td>Recruitment/Hiring (Chair)</td>
<td>Faith community; Civic leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine</td>
<td>Quezada</td>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>Student leader Peekskill High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andre</td>
<td>Rainey</td>
<td>Education, Training and Equipment</td>
<td>Mayor, Peekskill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Ronco</td>
<td>District Attorney Office</td>
<td>Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>Sgroi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brandon</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Education, Training and Equipment</td>
<td>Use of Force Policy Expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Stewart</td>
<td>Transparency/Accountability</td>
<td>City Manager, Peekskill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eileen</td>
<td>Sullivan</td>
<td>Transparency/Accountability</td>
<td>Mental Health Advocate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In creating committees, the Task Force used for guidance the NYS publication *New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative: Resources and Guide for Public Officials and Citizens*, August 2020. In addition it was noted that the Final Report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing was, at best, a barebones start and foundation to future initiatives.

Transparency and Accountability Committee

Chaired by Joseph Teel, an African American city resident with a background in finance and civic activism, this committee’s work focused on researching models for community review boards as well as creating public electronic access to police records, especially the Police Manual and data on arrests, calls for service, and other police activities. The group interviewed experts in these fields and shared models and policy information.

Community Engagement Committee

Chaired by Jennifer Carpenter, a retired police officer who consults on police training and community issues, this committee focused on methods to increase community awareness and understanding of police operations, and methods to increase police awareness and understanding of community concerns. The group hosted “listening sessions” with local youth and others, and developed recommendations related to police training and ongoing community forums. Here is a partial list of community meetings held:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th># OF ATTENDEES</th>
<th>Demographics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/11/2020</td>
<td>Kiley Center</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Black males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/17/2020</td>
<td>Kiley Center</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>H&amp;B males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/01/2020</td>
<td>ZOOM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hisp f/m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/07/2020</td>
<td>ZOOM</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>B&amp;H m/f, LGBTQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/08/2020</td>
<td>ZOOM</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>B&amp;H m/f, LGBTQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/14/2020</td>
<td>ZOOM</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>B&amp;H m/f, LGBTQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/11/2021</td>
<td>ZOOM</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>B, W&amp;H m/f, LGBTQ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Education, Training and Equipment Committee

Chaired by Valerie Eaton, president of the NAACP-Peekskill, this committee developed recommendations related to police officer anti-racism/implicit bias education, duty to intervene training, in-service training, and crisis intervention training. The committee discussed partnerships possible with county agencies, especially related to mental health crisis response. The committee reviewed equipment concerns, such as dash cams, approachable vehicles, less-than-lethal weapons, data access, and muster room video presentation technology. Chair Eaton also incorporated police reform topics into regular meetings of the NAACP.

Policies and Procedures Committee

Chaired by retired NYPD officer Derek Wright, this committee involved police professionals in the page-by-page review of the Peekskill police department’s Policy Manual, the document that describes exactly how police officers are to do their jobs. Topics included use of force, duty to intervene, juvenile interviews, and managing non-binary gendered persons during arrests and encounters, among others. According to City of Peekskill local law Chapter A602-1,

“The Chief of Police shall be empowered to amend the Department rules, regulations and procedures as deemed necessary by submitting the same to the City Manager in his capacity as Commissioner of Public Safety pursuant to the City Charter. The City Manager is hereby authorized to adopt and promulgate all such amended rules and regulations upon the consent of the Common Council.”

Recruitment and Hiring Committee

Chaired by Tricia Pickering, a local and national media professional, this committee developed recommendations centered on the furthering of youth interest in police careers, specifically proposing Explorers, Cadet, and professional training programs aimed at youth. The committee also reviewed the School Resource Officer program. Several recommendations emerged that would involve changes to the county and state civil service system for testing and hiring police officers, which are described below. The committee also discussed the idea of civilian participation in PO candidate interviews, but no consensus yet exists for this concept.

Table of Recommendation Summaries

Each of these recommendations is summarized below.
Recommendations for Education, Training and Equipment

1. Negotiate Change in Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Police Benevolent Association (PBA) to Provide for Increased Training with Cost Mitigation:
2. Increase 2022 Police Overtime Budget by $40,000 to Pay for Increased Training Hours
3. Join the ABLE (Active Bystander Law Enforcement) Training Program through Georgetown University
4. Increase Training and Education in Human Behavior and Social Interaction Management
5. Approachable Vehicles: Maximize usage of bicycles, ATVs and other innovative vehicles in addition to standard automobile-based policing
6. Dash Cams - Replace and Expand Cameras on Car Dashboards
7. Less than Lethal Weapons - Tasers:
8. Install Flat Screen Video Monitor in Muster Room for Daily Training and Tour Updates
9. Create Roll-Call Presentations Calendar for Local Organizations:
11. Use Bar Codes or QR Codes to Facilitate Information Access
12. Create Educational Panels:
13. Data Collection to Measure Program Effectiveness

Recommendations for Community Engagement

1. Plan Monthly On Going Public Forums for Community Engagement
2. Develop a Community Survey on Public Safety Issues and Concerns
3. Update Community Feedback/Complaint Form on Police Website
4. Redesign Police Website
5. Update Police Mission Statement
6. Revise Police Personnel Evaluation Form to Include Community Engagement Abilities of Pos
7. Meet and Greet Daily Report by Pos
8. City Council Appoint a Liaison to the Police Department
9. Make Spanish Language Translation Available at Police Department Lobby on All Shifts
10. Police Management Should Conduct a Periodic Internal Survey of Police Officers to Identify Ways to Optimize Community Engagement Programming
11. Create and Implement a Communications Plan Showing Community Policing Activities
12. Increase Police Department Community Engagement Activities in Public Housing
13. Develop a LEAD Program in Partnership with County and Local Agencies
Recommendations for Policies and Procedures

1. Revise the Police Department Manual as Continuing Project of Existing Committee

Recommendations for Transparency and Accountability

1. Recommend the Creation of a Community Complaint Review Board
2. Develop a New Webpage Dedicated to the Peekskill Police Department with Police Activity Data
3. Publish Police Department Manual Online
4. Consider Accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA)
5. Police Provide ID Cards at Incidents
6. State and County Agencies Should Address Certain Policy Issues

Recommendations for Recruitment and Hiring

1. State Civil Service Law Should Reform the “1 in 3” Rule
2. State Civil Service Law Should Reduce Delays in Testing Process
3. State Civil Service Law Should Offer Police Exam Every Two Years
4. State Civil Service Law Should Reform the Psychiatric Evaluation Rules
5. Add a Dedicated Community Relations Police Officer to Staff
6. Create an “Explorers” Program for Youth Ages 14-21
7. Create a “Public Safety Academy/Classes” at the High School Level
8. Improve the SRO (School Resource Officer) Program
9. NYS Create a Police Officer Recruitment Agency
10. Peekskill PD Should Make Better Use of Social Media Tools

Recommendations Related to Behavioral Health

1. Registry for Persons At-Risk
2. Crisis Intervention Training
3. Crisis Intervention Coordination with Experts in Local, Faith, County and Medical Agencies

Recommendation Summaries

The summary recommendations below are derived from, and in addition to, the recommendation memo authored by the various committees and assembled in full in the Appendix. The
recommendations are organized by committee, and they vary greatly in complexity, from a simple change to a policy, to the development of a complex project that requires organizational change, significant cost, and/or partnership or cooperation from other parties.

Preliminary feasibility and cost estimates are provided using a simple rating system:

- Feasibility rating: 1 = simple; 2 = somewhat involved; 3 = complex/difficult
- Cost rating: $ = less than $10,000; $$ = less than $20,000; etc.
- **Priority rating:** This rating is incomplete, subject to feasibility, cost and further discussion.

Recommendations for Education, Training and Equipment

Police officers currently receive a portfolio of ongoing in-service training in a wide range of topics, from de-escalation to firearms safety. Since an hour of in-service training for one officer is an hour of patrol work that must be filled by another, increasing in-service training requires increased funding for staffing and overtime.

1. **Negotiate Change in Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Police Benevolent Association (PBA) to Provide for Increased Training with Cost Mitigation:** The current union agreement enables management to assign officers to receive up to 24 hours of training at the cost of “comp time” instead of overtime (time and a half) pay, with a cap on comp time of 56 hours per year. Trainings that occur and require additional time beyond 24 hours are paid at overtime rates. Therefore, the City will seek to negotiate with the PBA to enable the City to pay officers for 40 hours of training using comp time, not overtime, making the increased training envisioned in this Plan more affordable.

   Feasibility = 2   Cost estimate = $$$$$   Priority = TBD/High

2. **Increase 2022 Police Overtime Budget by $40,000 to Pay for Increased Training Hours:** In general, an additional 8 hours of training for all PO per year would cost an approximate $40,000. This budget increase would enable the PD to provide greater diversity of trainings. Current budget for trainings (registration, travel, lodging) is $12,000.

   Feasibility = 1   Cost estimate = $$$   Priority = High

3. **Join the ABLE (Active Bystander Law Enforcement) Training Program through Georgetown University:** Organize a presentation by these policy and training experts and if appropriate, approve an agreement and plan to participate in this outstanding training program designed to help officers take action to intervene to prevent a colleague or supervisor from taking inappropriate or harmful action.

   Feasibility = 2   Cost estimate = $   Priority = High
4. Increase Training and Education in Human Behavior and Social Interaction Management: De-escalation, anti-racism, racial and implicit bias, mental health crisis intervention, trauma and stress management for all POs, tactical perception and procedural justice principles. All officers should be trained on recognizing mental illness and substance abuse. Trainings offered through County Dept of Health and NYS DCJS, and others. Ensure local experts and organizations are included in training /education contract procurement process. Also possible to allocate more of existing training budget to de-escalation and related topics.

   Feasibility = 1          Cost estimate = $$$          Priority = High

5. Approachable Vehicles: Maximize usage of bicycles, ATVs and other innovative vehicles in addition to standard automobile-based policing. Current bicycle program is contingent on minimum staffing a minimum of 4-5 cars for rapid response to radio calls and patrol with sufficient safety equipment. Use of additional vehicles routinely requires additional staffing. Cost is both equipment and staffing.

   Feasibility = 1          Cost estimate = $$          Priority = TBD

6. Dash Cams - Replace and Expand Cameras on Car Dashboards: Currently PD has a few cars with Dash Cams, but the systems are not operating adequately for a simple expansion to more vehicles and integration with body cameras and other digital devices. Estimated cost of $30,000 in 2022 budget.

   Feasibility = 1          Cost estimate = $$$          Priority = TBD

7. Less than Lethal Weapons - Tasers: PD will increase its supply of Tasers to insure Tasers are always available to and used patrol officers; PD will require all officers to carry Tasers in addition to pistols and pepper spray. Training on de-escalation will equip Officers with the skills to choose the appropriate weapon to meet the circumstances. PD will continue to explore less than lethal weapons as new technologies develop.

   Feasibility = 1          Cost estimate = $            Priority = TBD

8. Install Flat Screen Video Monitor in Muster Room for Daily Training and Tour Updates: Include Peekskill-specific information trends and daily updates. Muster room current technology for projection is outdated Update this technology for the display of intranet pages available internally to PPD staff and officers. Explore further development of digital document sharing and collaboration tools, such as an intranet.

   Feasibility = 1          Cost estimate = $            Priority = TBD

9. Create Roll-Call Presentations Calendar for Local Organizations: The PD currently does 5-10 minute mini-trainings and presentations at roll call, and will create a calendar of such opportunities and review presentation topics and credentials from interested community groups and representatives. Due to shift schedule, four meetings are needed to address all police officers.

   Feasibility = 1          Cost estimate = $            Priority = TBD
10. **Safety Pouch for Vehicle Document Access During Traffic Stops:** The safety pouch is a community-wide initiative. It enables drivers to purchase (or be provided) a “safety pouch” for storing vehicle documents, accompanied by a window sticker. During a traffic stop, these devices clearly indicate driver cooperation and make documents more easily accessible.

   Feasibility = 2  
   Cost estimate = $  
   Priority = TBD

11. **Use Bar Codes or QR Codes to Facilitate Information Access:** Addition of a bar code or QR code to accident Reports. Scanning code will take the user to information about the accident and the Officer who responded. Addition of a bar code or QR code to Drivers License/ID Card. Scanning code will take the user to information about the individual identified in the ID. Voluntary information could be added to this data including mental health, autism, medical information (e.g., allergies, conditions such as seizure disorder, etc.). Addition of a bar code or QR code to Officers badge or business card. Scanning code will give the user information about that Officer: Name, badge number, etc. Scanning can be used for an individual to identify that an officer is in fact an officer.

   Feasibility = 2  
   Cost estimate = $  
   Priority = TBD

12. **Create Educational Panels:** Regularly scheduled educational panels where officers and the community can come together to discuss predetermined topics as related to police-community relations. These panels would be a collaboration between the proposed Community Services Officer and interested community members.

   Feasibility = 2  
   Cost estimate = $  
   Priority = TBD

13. **Data Collection to Measure Program Effectiveness:** Police department will incorporate program evaluation tools into major community engagement activities to track and measure outcomes and benefits to participants. In addition, the Peekskill Police would benefit from having an electronic database which contains a variety of data points pertaining to Police stops, outcomes and individual demographics. This information can be collected, extracted, and reviewed by the Police Department for a variety of reasons: training, focusing priority, funding, and indicating where reform is needed. This information can point out to the Police and the community where possible biases are, leading to targeted training and reform.

   Feasibility = 2  
   Cost estimate = $  
   Priority = TBD

**Recommendations for Community Engagement**

The police department has a current portfolio of community engagement programs described above. These recommendations focus on enhancing this portfolio with better tools for capturing community interests, needs and perceptions.

1. **Plan Monthly On Going Public Forums for Community Engagement:** Continue and institutionalize the public forums created by the Task Force (Committees on Community Engagement and Education) through the appointment by the Common Council of a new committee dedicated to this purpose, drawing from the Task Force members and including the police department. Meeting agendas to focus on: community concerns and
questions, policing programs and priorities, presentations by experts in various areas of police community engagement work, monitoring of progress on implementation of this Plan.

Feasibility = 2  Cost estimate = $  Priority = High

2. Develop a Community Survey on Public Safety Issues and Concerns: Design and administer a survey to measure public satisfaction with police services and perceptions of diverse public safety concerns throughout the city’s neighborhoods to help prioritize policing and public safety activities.

Feasibility = 2  Cost estimate = $  Priority = High

3. Update Community Feedback/Complaint Form on Police Website: Update existing complaint form on the website to make it more visible. The “complaint and commendation” tool on the police website makes it easier for city residents to let police know their concerns, observations and ensure that the comments received are assigned and reviewed by police officers. Assign a Lieutenant to review, refer and respond to complaints and commendations and provide a monthly report to the Chief.

Feasibility = 1  Cost estimate = $  Priority = High

4. Redesign Police Website: Create a more attractive and user friendly website, based on the design discussed in the committee, including new content related to policing data, such as calls for service, number of arrests of various types, and community engagement activity reports. Note that police activity data development and transparency is addressed separately in the Accountability and Transparency section.

Feasibility = 2  Cost estimate = $$  Priority = TBD

5. Update Police Mission Statement: A mission statement reminds staff and community of the basic values of the department, and will be more prominently incorporated into the police website, the police Department Manual and police training. Focus on values statement related to procedural justice, racial equity and public safety

Feasibility = 1  Cost estimate = 0  Priority = TBD

6. Revise Police Personnel Evaluation Form to Include Community Engagement Abilities of POs: While these abilities are currently considered, the evaluation could more thoroughly include these abilities.

Feasibility = 1  Cost estimate = 0  Priority = TBD

7. Meet and Greet Daily Report by POs: Each police officer will report one meet and greet conversation with a city resident to listen to community perspective and build relationships.

Feasibility = 1  Cost estimate = $  Priority = TBD

8. City Council Appoint a Liaison to the Police Department: Council to provide a list of duties for this role.

Feasibility = 1  Cost estimate = 0  Priority = TBD

9. Make Spanish Language Translation Available at Police Department Lobby on All Shifts: The Department currently has several bilingual POs, but they are not always available for walk-in service. As long as all dispatchers are not English-Spanish bilingual, develop a plan to provide this service to be available within 10 minutes of arrival of client with this need. Ensure that foreign language speakers are managed warmly while waiting for
service, such as providing Spanish language brochure about police services FAQs and providing signage in Spanish saying clients are entitled to this service.

Feasibility = 1  Cost estimate = $  Priority = TBD

10. Police Management Should Conduct a Periodic Internal Survey of Police Officers to Identify Ways to Optimize Community Engagement Programming: A key tenet of procedural justice is the cultivation of PO feedback and input into policing priorities. The addition of a periodic survey will help management to ensure POs know their ideas are taken seriously. Refer to Association of Chiefs of Police for policy guidance.

Feasibility = 1  Cost estimate = $  Priority = TBD

11. Create and Implement a Communications Plan Showing Community Policing Activities: Use diverse media to increase the frequency of positive messages regarding community engagement activities, events, personnel and partnerships. Incorporate these goals into the City’s annual contract for communications services and into the work of the dedicated Community Relations Officer (see Recruitment and Hiring).

Feasibility = 2  Cost estimate = $  Priority = TBD

12. Increase Police Department Community Engagement Activities in Public Housing: Examples could include infant CPR training, coffee with cop, back to school events, BBQs, and Halloween events. Assign PO to participate in event planning by other agencies within the public housing settings. These non-enforcement activities are the building blocks of trust.

Feasibility = 1  Cost estimate = $  Priority = TBD

13. Develop a LEAD Program in Partnership with County and Local Agencies: Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) is a community-based diversion approach with the goals of improving public safety and public order, and reducing unnecessary justice system involvement of people who participate in the program. Involves an MOU among social services agencies to “de-center” POs responding to incidents where referrals are needed.

Feasibility = 3  Cost estimate = $$  Priority = TBD

Recommendations for Policies and Procedures

Police policies and procedures are codified in the Police Department Manual. The Police Department Manual is hundreds of pages long and provides police officers with instructions for all significant tasks in their jobs. It must be updated regularly with changing laws, technologies, and discoveries. It is not unusual for cities to contract for third-party services to continuously review and update their police manuals and provide associated training resources. All contracts require approval by the Common Council. The Police Department does not currently have such a service agreement and is not proposing one at this time.

1. Revise the Police Department Manual as Continuing Project of Existing Committee: Police Chief will continue to work with members of this committee on an ad hoc basis to review and update police Department Manual in light of best practices. The Chief will
research and write policy changes, updates, removals, etc., in accordance with professional standards, new laws, new technology and other developments. (See Transparency and Accountability section for related recommendation to publish the Department Manual online. See Appendix for Police Department Manual Table of Contents). Updates are currently in progress on policies for (selected):

- Interview and Interrogation - Mandatory electronic recording of ALL juvenile prisoners in custody.
- Use of Force - Emphasized focus on de-escalation.
- Duty to Intervene -Mandate officers report other officers they witness using abusive language and/or excessive physical force
- Use of Deadly Physical Force - Updated directives for use of deadly physical force with firearms at or from a moving vehicle
- Mandate Times of Search Warrant Executions - Restrict time of search warrant executions exclusively from 6 AM - 9 PM, except with permission from a judge.
- Add to department manual the procedures to form a specialized response team of officers specifically proficient in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), including mental health awareness and de-escalation and/or non-violent tactics to respond to mental health calls within Peekskill.
- Prisoners – Clarify the current department manual in the best practices for the Strip Search and lodging of non-binary persons inside the Peekskill Police station house.
- Notifications to I.C.E (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) DELETED the entire section from the department manual.

Feasibility = 2         Cost estimate = 0         Priority = High

Recommendations for Transparency and Accountability

The committee explored various approaches to the creation of a type of Community Complaint Review Board (CCRB), as well as ways of making data on police activities more easily available and useful for public discussion. CCRBs are a complex policy and legal challenge. There are models and resources to draw upon for guidance. Westchester County is planning to create a type of CCRB as a shared service for local police agencies. Even if the County creates a County Review Board the City of Peekskill may still benefit from having its own CCRB. Other actions to increase transparency are aimed at gathering and presenting information and data to help the public better access and understand police services, and participate in policy discussions about them.

1. Recommend the Creation of a Community Complaint Review Board: Create a committee involving by current members of the Accountability and Transparency
committee to continue the work already researched for the City of Peekskill by this committee in applying models for providing citizens with independent oversight of police officers’ performance reviews. Committee should include a selection of subject matter experts. Many such models exist, balancing the internal performance review process with independent investigation powers. Consider hiring NACOLE (National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement) for consulting services to help the city identify the best policy options and tools. Recommend a shared services model with the County, as the County Police Task Force is working on such a proposal, details of which are currently not available.

Feasibility = 3         Cost estimate = TBD         Priority = High

2. Develop a New Webpage Dedicated to the Peekskill Police Department with Police Activity Data: The development of data from raw records into information and insights helpful for public discussion is a labor-intensive process. Presentation and discussion of this data is a project unto itself. The City should design an annual report on the Police Department that includes appropriate data on calls for service, local crime, demographics of arrests, police community engagement program activities and policy updates. The report should be presented annually to the city council and public for review. The report would be accessible online and provide analysis of data trends and program development, not just statistics with no context. The Peekskill Police Department already maintains and provides a wide range of data on its activities, but the data is not organized for public access or understanding.

Feasibility = 3         Cost estimate = $$         Priority = High

3. Publish Police Department Manual Online: As the Police Department’s guiding document, the Manual, properly redacted, can be made available for public access so those interested in a detailed understanding of police procedures can become better informed and participate in advising the police department on policy changes going forward. This requires completion of on-going revision process, review for public distribution, digitizing, indexing, and other preparation according to best practices for public access to police policy and procedure information.

Feasibility = 2         Cost estimate = $         Priority = High

4. Consider Accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA): The department currently is among many police departments accredited through a rigorous periodic review by the NYS Law Enforcement Accreditation Council (see Appendix), and was last assessed in 2019. CALEA offers an enhanced accreditation process as well as related services to support and track in-service training programs and keep the Department Manual updated according to new laws and best practices in the police profession. In addition, accreditation from CALEA is a nationally recognized accreditation and would allow the City of Peekskill to be one of
only two cities in Westchester County that is nationally accredited. National accreditation
gives benefits to the City and the members of the Police force.

Feasibility = 3 Cost estimate = $$$ Priority = TBD

5. Police Provide ID Cards at Incidents: The Police Department will review and redesign
the contact cards and information and referrals sheet they provide to people involved in
various types of incidents. Contact cards with basic incident and police officer
information (shield #) make it easy for subjects to follow up with the police department
regarding any aspect of an incident, whether to make a complaint, offer helpful
information, or obtain a report. Information sheets enable crime victims, family members,
and others to find help from a wide range of agencies specializing in mental health, drug
addiction, domestic violence and other topics.

Feasibility = 1 Cost estimate = $ Priority = High

6. State and County Agencies Should Address Certain Policy Issues: Police reform policy
debates often identify issues that ought to be addressed at the county, state or national
scales. These include: proposals to change “qualified immunity” to better balance the
goals of accountability and public safety; proposals impacting union contracts as they
pertain to disciplinary action; and proposals for increased public access to police
disciplinary records via online databases.

Feasibility = 3 Cost estimate = TBD Priority = High

Recommendations for Recruitment and Hiring

These recommendations address both the workforce development “pipeline” and the policy
environment in which hiring takes place, and include several recommendations to the county
civil service agency that would help local police hire qualified candidates.

1. State Civil Service Law Should Reform the “1 in 3” Rule: County should change the “1
in 3” rule to a “1 in 10” rule for the appointment of new police officers off the County
eligible list, and change the “1 in 3” rule to a “1 in 5” rule for the promotion of existing
police officers to positions of greater authority, or other reasonable change, whereby local
police departments would have a bigger pool of qualified candidates and more ability to
hire both more qualified and more diverse personnel.

Feasibility = 3 Cost estimate = $ Priority = TBD

2. State Civil Service Law Should Reduce Delays in Testing Process: The agency should
decrease the lag time between when tests occur and when candidate test results become
available in order to speed up the hiring process. Currently wait time can be 5-8 months.
Consider making the exam computerized, if this speeds the process. Delays cause
qualified candidates to lose interest and pursue other careers.

   a. Feasibility = 3 Cost estimate = $ Priority = TBD

3. State Civil Service Law Should Offer Police Exam Every Two Years: The agency
currently provides the exam only every 4 years. This results in a list of eligible candidates
that becomes burdened with candidates no police department wants to hire, preventing qualified and desirable candidates from entering the candidate pool.

Feasibility = 3        Cost estimate = $        Priority = TBD

4. State Civil Service Law Should Reform the Psychiatric Evaluation Rules: The agency should modify the requirement for psychiatric evaluation. As the regulation currently exists, the candidates for police officer from other police departments who are transfer-eligible but did not have a prior psychiatric evaluation as part of their first full time law enforcement job cannot be considered for hiring by another department. This eliminates qualified candidates from pursuing transfer opportunities. The candidates should be able to get a psych evaluation and be considered for employment.

Feasibility = 3        Cost estimate = $        Priority = TBD

5. Add a Dedicated Community Relations Police Officer to Staff: There needs to be constant contact and positive police community interaction throughout the city schools, youth groups, recreation activities, seniors, religious groups, and businesses within Peekskill. Adding a dedicated full-time position is the best way to ensure that all police officers maintain a focus on community engagement wherever possible. Consider adding a sergeant position with oversight of community relations work by all officers in the department. The Department currently has an unfilled downtown foot patrol title that could be upgraded to a Community Relations Officer for this purpose.

Feasibility = 2        Cost estimate = $$        Priority = TBD

6. Create an “Explorers” Program for Youth Ages 14-21: For youth ages 14-21, in collaboration with schools and youth agencies, the Explorers program aims to foster youth character and career development. Explorers learn the value of education, discipline, diversity and the Peekskill community, and gain an introduction into law enforcement careers. Police will have the opportunity to grow in sensitivity to youth concerns and ways of communicating. Program is already planned.

Feasibility = 1        Cost estimate = $        Priority = TBD

7. Create a “Public Safety Academy/Classes” at the High School Level: This program would run in conjunction with the Police Cadet program. It would offer a specialized preparation program where students could earn College credits from a local College/University while taking Criminal Justice classes and internships. Similar programs throughout the Country offer High School students to graduate in five years with a HS diploma and an Associate’s Degree. This gives them an added boost and pads their resume when interviewing for Peekskill PD because they now possess an Associate’s Degree.

Feasibility = 3        Cost estimate = $$$        Priority = TBD

8. Improve the SRO (School Resource Officer) Program: SROs are widely appreciated. School District and Police Department should work together to optimize this program so that more students understand and benefit from it, including review of DCJS program and training guidelines and current status of the program. Find ways of enhancing student access to police officers and student understanding of the SRO program and police
services. Consider increasing the frequency of SRO classroom visits versus other ways SROs spend time in schools. City currently has two SROs involved in the Middle School and High School.

Feasibility = 2  Cost estimate = $  Priority = TBD

9. NYS Create a Police Officer Recruitment Agency: Similar to military service, invest in recruiting young people into public service as POs. Focus on minority and female candidates. Use updated marketing methods including range of social media tools.

Feasibility: 3  Cost: TBD  Priority: TBD

10. Peekskill PD Should Make Better Use of Social Media Tools: Department currently uses Facebook and Instagram, but could add Twitter and more advanced audience targeting methods such as “geofencing” given that young people tend to rely on mobile devices for all information, including employment searches.

Feasibility: 3  Cost: TBD  Priority: TBD

Recommendations Related to Behavioral Health

The Police Department receives mental health-related calls for service during one out of five tours or shifts, or approximately once every couple of days. Police, ambulance, and paramedic personnel frequently manage incidents and provide services to people experiencing psychiatric crises and to their families. The Police Department also provides support to County Child Protective Services staff when they visit Peekskill homes. Given how common these calls are, and the necessity of collaborating with other agencies to serve them, this Plan includes the following recommendations that emerged from various committees:

1. Registry for Persons At-Risk: The Police Department will use its Records Management System (RMS) and website to create a tool whereby families can voluntarily register individuals with behavioral challenges so police responding to the address will be more aware of special needs, whether psychiatric, medical, physical or developmental disability, or other needs.

Feasibility = 2  Cost estimate = 0  Priority = TBD

2. Crisis Intervention Training: Police Department in-service training will include additional hours of training in mental health incident and behavior management, in collaboration with Westchester County Mental Health Department. This includes attention to the mental health of POs to ensure PO safety. Training is already available for officers through DCJS. All officers should be trained on recognizing mental illness and substance abuse. Crisis Intervention Training, including De-Escalation Training, should be included in the mandated list of In-Service Trainings as listed in the policies and procedures and attended annually. Some officers should be more extensively trained in specialized crisis intervention training such that each tour would have a specialist in this area. Specially trained Officers in addition to community behavioral specialist create a Crisis Intervention team.

Feasibility = 2  Cost estimate = $$  Priority = TBD
3. Crisis Intervention Coordination with Experts in Local, Faith, County and Medical Agencies: Schedule POs with CIT across all shifts or tours. Pursue teamwork with County agencies and staff for coordinated response to mental health crisis related emergency responses, including possible “ride along” program. Explore options for more coordination with EMS agencies.

Feasibility = 3        Cost estimate = $$        Priority = TBD

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