

VILLAGE OF CHATHAM

POLICE REFORM & REINVENTION COLLABORATIVE

FINDINGS and RECOMMENDATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

State Mandate

The Village of Chatham Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative was convened by Mayor John Howe to perform a comprehensive review of the Village of Chatham Police Department. This review was mandated by an Executive Order by Governor Cuomo that required all local governments with a police department to develop and enact a policing reform plan.

The reform plan is to include any modifications and innovations to current police deployment policies and procedures based on the specific public safety needs of the community. The Executive Order calls for the plan to also include policies and procedures that promote trust, fairness, accountability, and transparency, and which seek to reduce any racial disparities in policing.

Members of the Collaborative

Mayor John Howe appointed six residents of the Village: Iris Waddell (co-chair), Gary Gelfenbien (co-chair), Adrienne Morrell, Michael Richardson, Lisa Light Rugen, and Katherine Stoessel; two Village Trustees: Jaime Boehme and Pete Minahan; and, two Village of Chatham Police Officers: Assistant Chief Joseph Alessi and Officer Jon Myers.

Community Outreach

“Focus groups” were formed so as to engage the community in meaningful conversations about policing within the Village and also reimagine ways to provide public safety. The focus groups were: Seniors; Substance Use Affected Community; and local businesses. Efforts were unsuccessful in organizing focus groups from the African-American community, Latina/o community, or from the youth.

Each focus group met separately and then reported their findings to the Collaborative with emphasis on experiences with the local police department and also their particular needs as they pertain to public safety.

To solicit broader community input, the Collaborative distributed an on-line questionnaire for people who 1) own property in the Village of Chatham (commercial or residential or commercial), 2) reside (renter or home-owner) in the Village of Chatham, and/or 3) operate a business in the Village of Chatham.

Finally, the draft of the policing reform plan was presented for public comment to all Village residents on February 16, 2021.

Objectives

The objectives of Collaborative's review included:

Assess Chatham Police Department internal operations, policies, procedures, and practices to detect the presence of implicit bias and systemic racial bias.

Collect and analyze data related to traffic patrol, use of force, and other police officer/civilian interactions and determine the effect on diverse community members.

Provide actionable recommendations for reforms that eliminate racial and implicit biases in policing deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, including: community engagement, transparency, professionalism, accountability, community inclusion, fairness, effectiveness, and public trust.

Areas of Focus

The Collaborative identified four areas of assessment for the report:

- 1) **Deployment and Patrol Operations** - traffic control; quality of life complaints; code violations; instances of violence; and, use of force (deadly and non-deadly).
- 2) **Policing policies and practices** - use of force; community policing; recruitment/retention; training; and, complaint process (internal and external)
- 3) **Experiences** - community experiences or interactions with the Village Police Department
- 4) **Needs** - other programs or additional services pertaining to public safety or other programs directed at mental health, the substance use affected community, youth-at-risk, sheltered residents.

1 DEPLOYMENT

The section pertains to the staffing, hours of service, demographics, and funding of the Village of Chatham Police Department.

1.1 Staffing

The Village of Chatham Police Department provides public safety services for a resident population of **1770** (2010 census) with significant commuters and visitors during working hours and nighttime entertainment venues, most of which close by 11:00 p.m.

There are **18 employees** classified as “**part-time**” by the Columbia County Civil Service Commission. Job titles include Chief (1), Assistant Chief (1), Sergeant (1), and Police Officer (15). There are no full-time personnel in the department.

In addition, there is one civilian Crossing Guard.

The Chief of Police is the functional department head and is responsible for all personnel. The Chief typically works twenty hours throughout the week without any fixed schedule.

The Deputy Chief performs supervisory duties in addition to routine patrol. Supervisory duties include managing the patrol schedule, oversight of investigations, and all in-house training.

1.2 Hours In-Service

The Village Police Department is in-service **83 hours** throughout the week of a possible 168 hours. [7 days X 24 hours = 168 hours]

Typical weekly schedule	Total: 83 hours
Monday-Friday	13 hours
Saturday	12 hours
Sunday	6 hours

Patrols are assigned to a daytime shift, evening shift, and occasional night shift.

The remaining 85 hours in the week are covered by the Columbia County Sheriff and the New York State Police.

Calls to the local telephone number for the Chatham Police Department are forwarded to the New York State Police Communication Center, which dispatches the call to the Chatham Village Police.

911 calls are similarly dispatched by the Columbia County 911 Center.

In 2018, 47% of 911 calls were dispatched to the Chatham Police Department and 53% to County Sheriff and State Police.

1.3 Department Demographics

As of December 2020, two Police Officers are female, two Police Officer is Black.

Chatham Police does not have a resident requirement for officers to live in the Village of Chatham.

13 employees have more than 5 years of service with the Village of Chatham Police Department.

Years of Service	18 employees
20+ years	1 employees
15 - 19 years	3 employees
10 - 14 years	4 employees
5 - 9 years	5 employees
1 - 4 years	5 employees

1.4 Village Demographics

2000 census:

1,758 people
742 households
425 families
802 housing units

Of the 1,758 residents:

26.1% were under the age of 18
6.8% from 18 to 24
27.6% from 25 to 44
24.6% from 45 to 64
15.0% who were 65 years of age or older

Of the 742 households:

31.1% had children under the age of 18 living with them
41.0% were married couples living together
12.4% had a female householder with no husband present
42.7% were non-families

Of the 742 households:

average household size = 2.33
average family size = 3.06
37.6% were made up of individuals
14.4% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older

2010 census:

86.5% white
5.0% Hispanic
3.3% Black
2.4% multiracial
2.0% Asian
0.3% Native American
0.3% other race

1.5 Annual Police Department Budget

Budget Year	TOTAL	Personnel	Pension/ Benefits*	Equipment	Cars	Gas - Clothing Utilities - Office
2020/2021	\$199,640	\$135,270	\$12,500	\$2,850	\$15,487	\$33,533
2019/2020	\$213,873	\$148,562	\$12,000	\$4,000	\$15,511	\$33,800
2018/2019	\$205,913	\$140,058	\$15,000	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$30,855
2017/2018	\$170,436	\$108,358	\$15,000	\$5,000	\$14,578	\$27,500
2016/2017	\$174,438	\$107,360	\$17,000	\$5,000	\$14,578	\$30,500
2015/2016	\$184,381	\$109,889	\$21,315	\$5,000	\$14,578	\$33,600
2014/2015	\$172,720	\$96,940	\$28,780	\$5,000	\$16,000	\$26,000
2013/2014	\$218,977	\$114,873	\$50,302	\$7,000	\$8,052	\$38,750
2012/2013	\$374,540	\$235,949	\$88,339	\$6,000	\$8,052	\$36,200
2011/2012	\$423,881	\$262,818	\$99,611	\$6,000	\$8,052	\$47,400

* 2013/2014 thru 2020/2021 does not include payroll taxes for social security and workers' compensation

Police Officer **hourly rate** (per collective bargaining agreement): \$16.20 to \$20.26

The Police Department deploys three patrol cars (2014, 2014, 2018) and three bicycles.

2 PATROL OPERATIONS

2.1 Calls for Service

In 2018, 47% of 911 calls were dispatched to the Chatham Police Department and 53% to County Sheriff and State Police.

Year	# Officers	Arrests	Incidents	Property Check	Community Policing	Other	Tickets
8-2020	21	13	1494	1007	141	346	143
2019	19	34	1897	1185	169	543	375
2018	22	27	2220	1547	145	528	240
2017	25	43	2092	1264	173	655	221
2016	24	63	3745	2553	273	919	463
2015	23	76	5161	3172	385	1604	581
2014	XX	51	4236	2759	268	1209	357
2013	XX	68	1551	418	39	1094	313

2.2 Arrests

In 2019, Chatham Police Department made 34 arrests.

The most common reasons for arrest included unlawful possession of drugs or alcohol, and Vehicle & Traffic arrests.

2.3 Call Dispositions

2018 - 911 Calls

911 Abandoned Call	22
911 Misdial Call	3
911 Poll	6
911-Non-Emergency Police Call	68
911-ROTATION POLICE	16
Accident - Personal Injury M/V	4
Alarm - Hold Up (Non Bank)	2
Alarm - Holdup (Not Bank)	1
Alarm - Panic (Not Bank)	1
Assist EMS	7
Assist FD	3
Criminal Mischief	1
Disorderly Conduct	15
Domestic Dispute	18
Erratic Driver	3
Erratic Driving	2
Larceny	1
Menacing	1
Mental Health Call	9
Road Hazard	5
Suspicious Activity	17
Welfare Check	12

2019 - 911 Calls

911 Abandoned Call	29
911 Misdial Call	4
911 Poll	15
911-Non Emergency Police Call	50
911-ROTATION POLICE	30
Accident - Personal Injury M/V	3
Assault	1
Assist EMS	12
Assist FD	1
Burglary	1
Disorderly Conduct	6
Domestic Dispute	22
Erratic Driver	7
Larceny of Vehicle	1
Mental Health Call	3
Road Hazard	7
Suspicious Activity	16
Vehicle Lockout	1
Welfare Check	4

2.4 Police Services for Special Events

April - National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day
May - Memorial Day Parade
May - Sean's Run
May - Sean's Ride
July - SummerFest
August - Fairground Overnight Security
August - Columbia County Fair
September - Operation Clear Track
September - Fireman's Parade
October - National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day
October - October feast
October - Halloween
November - Turkey Trot
December - Winterfest
December - Santa's Mailbox
Three Times a Year: Chatham School District Drills

3 POLICING POLICIES, PROCEDURES & PRACTICES

3.1 Use of Force

This section pertains to policies and procedures for use of force, both deadly and non-deadly.

Village of Chatham Police Department documented 0 incidences of force that occurred during 2018, 2019, and 2020

Each individual use of force incident can potentially include multiple officers, multiple community members, and multiple incidences of force.

Village of Chatham Police Department tracks the reason officers used force during an incident, categorizing it into eight options at the level of the incident.

300.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines on the reasonable use of force. While there is no way to specify the exact amount or type of reasonable force to be applied in any situation, every member of this agency is expected to use these guidelines to make such decisions in a professional, impartial, and reasonable manner (Executive Law § 840).

300.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Deadly force - Force reasonably anticipated and intended to create a substantial likelihood of causing death or very serious injury. This includes force that, under the circumstances, is readily capable of causing death or serious physical injury (Executive Law § 840).

Force - The application of physical techniques or tactics, chemical agents or weapons to another person. It is not a use of force when a person allows him/herself to be searched, escorted, handcuffed, or restrained.

300.2 POLICY

The use of force by law enforcement personnel is a matter of critical concern, both to the public and to the law enforcement community. Officers are involved on a daily basis in numerous and varied interactions and, when warranted, may use reasonable force in carrying out their duties.

Officers must have an understanding of, and true appreciation for, their authority and limitations. This is especially true with respect to overcoming resistance while engaged in the performance of law enforcement duties.

The Chatham Police Department recognizes and respects the value of all human life and dignity without prejudice to anyone. Vesting officers with the authority to use reasonable force and to protect the public welfare requires monitoring, evaluation and a careful balancing of all interests.

300.2.1 DUTY TO INTERCEDE

Any officer present and observing another officer using force that is clearly beyond that which is objectively reasonable under the circumstances shall, when in a position to do so, intercede to prevent the use of unreasonable force. An officer who observes another employee use force that exceeds the degree of force permitted by law should promptly report these observations to a supervisor.

300.3 USE OF FORCE

Officers shall use only that amount of force that reasonably appears necessary given the facts and circumstances perceived by the officer at the time of the event to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement purpose.

The reasonableness of force will be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene at the time of the incident. Any evaluation of reasonableness must allow for the fact that officers are often forced to make split-second decisions about the amount of force that reasonably appears necessary in a particular situation, with limited information and in circumstances that are tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving.

Given that no policy can realistically predict every possible situation an officer might encounter, officers are entrusted to use well-reasoned discretion in determining the appropriate use of force in each incident.

It is also recognized that circumstances may arise in which officers reasonably believe that it would be impractical or ineffective to use any of the tools, weapons or methods provided by this agency. Officers may find it more effective or reasonable to improvise their response to rapidly unfolding conditions that they are confronting. In such circumstances, the use of any improvised device or method must nonetheless be reasonable and utilized only to the degree that reasonably appears necessary to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement purpose.

While the ultimate objective of every law enforcement encounter is to avoid or minimize injury, nothing in this policy requires an officer to retreat or be exposed to possible physical injury before applying reasonable force.

300.3.1 USE OF FORCE TO EFFECT AN ARREST

A police officer or a peace officer may use reasonable physical force to effect an arrest, prevent escape of a person from custody, or in defense of self or others from imminent physical force (Penal Law § 35.30).

Force shall not be used by an officer to (Executive Law § 840):

- (a) Extract an item from the anus or vagina of a subject without a warrant, except where exigent circumstances are present.
- (b) Coerce a confession from a subject in custody.
- (c) Obtain blood, saliva, urine, or other bodily fluid or cells from an individual for scientific testing in lieu of a court order where required.

300.3.2 FACTORS USED TO DETERMINE THE REASONABLENESS OF FORCE

When determining whether to apply force and evaluating whether an officer has used reasonable force, a number of factors should be taken into consideration, as time and circumstances permit. These factors include but are not limited to:

- (a) Immediacy and severity of the threat to officers or others.
- (b) The conduct of the individual being confronted, as reasonably perceived by the officer at the time.
- (c) Officer/subject factors (i.e., age, size, relative strength, skill level, injuries sustained, level of exhaustion or fatigue, the number of officers available vs. subjects).
- (d) The effects of drugs or alcohol.
- (e) Individual's mental state or capacity.
- (f) Proximity of weapons or dangerous improvised devices.
- (g) The degree to which the individual has been effectively restrained and his/her ability to resist despite being restrained.
- (h) The availability of other options and their possible effectiveness.
- (i) Seriousness of the suspected offense or reason for contact with the individual.
- (j) Training and experience of the officer.
- (k) Potential for injury to officers, suspects and others.
- (l) Whether the individual appears to be resisting, attempting to evade arrest by flight or is attacking the officer.
- (m) The risk and reasonably foreseeable consequences of escape.
- (n) The apparent need for immediate control of the individual or a prompt resolution of the situation.
- (o) Whether the conduct of the individual being confronted no longer reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to the officer or others.
- (p) Prior contacts with the individual or awareness of any propensity for violence.
- (q) Any other exigent circumstances.

300.3.3 PAIN COMPLIANCE TECHNIQUES

Pain compliance techniques may be effective in controlling a physically or actively resisting individual. Officers may only apply those pain compliance techniques for which they have successfully completed agency-approved training. Officers utilizing any pain compliance technique should consider:

- (a) The degree to which the application of the technique may be controlled given the level of resistance.
- (b) Whether the individual can comply with the direction or orders of the officer.
- (c) Whether the individual has been given sufficient opportunity to comply.

The application of any pain compliance technique shall be discontinued once the officer determines that compliance has been achieved.

300.4 CAROTID CONTROL HOLD

The use of a chokehold or similar restraint, as described in paragraph b of subdivision one of section eight hundred thirty-seven-t of the executive law are prohibited.

- (a) Defined in NYS Penal Law Section 121.13-A as Aggravated strangulation is a class C felony.

300.5 DEADLY FORCE APPLICATIONS

Use of deadly force is justified in the following circumstances:

- (a) An officer may use deadly force to protect him/herself or others from what he/she reasonably believes would be an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury.
- (b) An officer may use deadly force to stop a fleeing subject when the officer has probable cause to believe that the individual has committed, or intends to commit, a felony involving the infliction or threatened infliction of serious bodily injury or death, and the officer reasonably believes that there is an imminent risk of serious bodily injury or death to any other person if the individual is not immediately apprehended. Under such circumstances, a verbal warning should precede the use of deadly force, where feasible.

Imminent does not mean immediate or instantaneous. An imminent danger may exist even if the suspect is not at that very moment pointing a weapon at someone. For example, an imminent danger may exist if an officer reasonably believes any of the following:

1. The individual has a weapon or is attempting to access one and it is reasonable to believe the individual intends to use it against the officer or another person.
2. The individual is capable of causing serious bodily injury or death without a weapon and it is reasonable to believe the individual intends to do so.

300.5.1 SHOOTING AT OR FROM MOVING VEHICLES

Shots fired at or from a moving vehicle are rarely effective. Officers should move out of the path of an approaching vehicle instead of discharging their firearm at the vehicle or any of its occupants. An officer should only discharge a firearm at a moving vehicle or its occupants when the officer reasonably believes there are no other reasonable means available to avert the threat of the vehicle, or if deadly force other than the vehicle is directed at the officer or others.

Officers should not shoot at any part of a vehicle in an attempt to disable the vehicle.

300.6 REPORTING THE USE OF FORCE

Any use of force by a member of this agency shall be documented promptly, completely and accurately in an appropriate report, depending on the nature of the incident. The officer should articulate the factors perceived and why he/she believed the use of force was reasonable under the circumstances. To collect data for purposes of training, resource allocation, analysis and related purposes, the Agency may require the completion of additional report forms, as specified in agency policy, procedure, or law (Executive Law § 840).

300.6.1 NOTIFICATIONS TO SUPERVISORS

Supervisory notification shall be made as soon as practicable following the application of force in any of the following circumstances:

- (a) The application caused a visible injury.
- (b) The application would lead a reasonable officer to conclude that the individual may have experienced more than momentary discomfort.
- (c) The individual subjected to the force complained of injury or continuing pain.
- (d) The individual indicates intent to pursue litigation.
- (e) Any application of the conducted energy device or control device.
- (f) Any application of a restraint device other than handcuffs, shackles or belly chains.
- (g) The individual subjected to the force was rendered unconscious.
- (h) An individual was struck or kicked.
- (i) An individual alleges any of the above has occurred.

300.7 MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Prior to booking or release, medical assistance shall be obtained for any person who exhibits signs of physical distress, has sustained visible injury, expresses a complaint of injury or continuing pain, or was rendered unconscious. Any individual exhibiting signs of physical distress after an encounter should be continuously monitored until he/she can be medically assessed.

Based upon the officer's initial assessment of the nature and extent of the individual's injuries, medical assistance may consist of examination by an emergency medical services provider or medical personnel at a hospital or jail. If any such individual refuses medical attention, such a refusal shall be fully documented in related reports and, whenever practicable, should be witnessed by another officer and/or medical personnel. If a recording is made of the contact or an interview with the individual, any refusal should be included in the recording, if possible.

The on-scene supervisor, or if not available, the primary handling officer shall ensure that any person providing medical care or receiving custody of a person following any use of force is informed that the person was subjected to force. This notification shall include a description of the force used and any other circumstances the officer reasonably believes would be potential safety or medical risks to the subject (e.g., prolonged struggle, extreme agitation, impaired respiration).

Individuals who exhibit extreme agitation, violent irrational behavior accompanied by profuse sweating, extraordinary strength beyond their physical characteristics and imperviousness to pain (sometimes called or who require a protracted physical encounter with multiple officers to be brought under control, may be at an increased risk of sudden death. Calls involving these persons should be considered medical emergencies. Officers who reasonably suspect a medical emergency should request medical assistance as soon as practicable and have medical personnel stage away (see the Medical Aid and Response Policy).

300.8 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

When a supervisor is able to respond to an incident in which there has been a reported application of force, the supervisor is expected to (Executive Law § 840):

(a) Obtain the basic facts from the involved officers. Absent an allegation of misconduct or excessive force, this will be considered a routine contact in the normal course of duties.

(b) Ensure that any injured parties are examined and treated.

(c) When possible, separately obtain a recorded interview with the individual upon whom force was applied. If this interview is conducted without the individual having voluntarily waived his/her Miranda rights, the following shall apply:

1. The content of the interview should not be summarized or included in any related criminal charges.

2. The fact that a recorded interview was conducted should be documented in a property or other report.

3. The recording of the interview should be distinctly marked for retention until all potential for civil litigation has expired.

(d) Once any initial medical assessment has been completed or first aid has been rendered, ensure that photographs have been taken of any areas involving visible injury or complaint of pain, as well as overall photographs of uninjured areas.

1. These photographs should be retained until all potential for civil litigation has expired.

(e) Identify any witnesses not already included in related reports, including any officers present at the incident.

(f) Review and approve all related reports.

1. Supervisors should require that officers who engaged in the use of force submit the appropriate report.

(g) Determine if there is any indication that the individual may pursue civil litigation.

1. If there is an indication of potential civil litigation, the supervisor should complete and route a notification of a potential claim through the appropriate channels.

(h) Evaluate the circumstances surrounding the incident and initiate an administrative investigation if there is a question of policy noncompliance or if for any reason further investigation may be appropriate.

1. Disciplinary actions will be consistent with any applicable disciplinary guidelines and collective bargaining agreements.

In the event that a supervisor is unable to respond to the scene of an incident involving the reported application of force, the supervisor is still expected to complete as many of the above items as circumstances permit.

300.8.1 SHIFT SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Shift Supervisor shall review each use of force by any personnel within his/her command to ensure compliance with this policy and to address any training issues.

The Shift Supervisor should ensure that the Records Manager is provided with enough information to meet the use of force reporting requirements for the DCJS (Executive Law § 837-t; 9 NYCRR 6058.3).

300.8.2 RECORDSHEAD RESPONSIBILITIES

The Records Manager shall ensure that reports are submitted to the DCJS when an officer (Executive Law § 837-t; 9 NYCRR 6058.3):

(a) Brandishes, uses, or discharges a firearm at or in the direction of another person.

(b) Uses a carotid control hold or similar restraint that applies pressure to the throat or windpipe of a person in a manner that is reasonably likely to hinder breathing or reduce intake of air.

(c) Displays, uses, or deploys a chemical agent or control device, including but not limited to oleoresin capsicum (OC), pepper projectiles, tear gas, batons, or kinetic energy projectiles (see the Control Devices Policy).

(d) Brandishes, uses, or deploys an impact weapon.

(e) Brandishes, uses, or deploys an electronic control weapon, including an electronic stun gun, flash bomb, or long-range acoustic device (see the Conducted Energy Device Policy).

(f) Engages in conduct which results in the death or serious bodily injury of another person.

300.9 TRAINING

Officers will receive annual training on this policy and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. Training topics should include applications of use of force and conflict strategies as required by the State Use of Force Model Policy (Executive Law § 840).

300.10 PUBLICATION OF POLICY

This policy shall be readily available to the public upon request and shall be posted on the agency website (Executive Law § 840).

3.2 Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention

This section pertains to policies and procedures for recruitment, hiring, and retention.

In accordance with applicable federal, state, and local law, the Chatham Police Department provides equal opportunities for applicants and employees, regardless of actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, pregnancy, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, or any other protected class or status. The Agency does not show partiality or grant any special status to any applicant, employee, or group of employees unless otherwise required by law.

The Agency will recruit and hire only those individuals who demonstrate a commitment to service and who possess the traits and characteristics that reflect personal integrity and high ethical standards.

RECRUITMENT

The Deputy Chief should select employees from a qualified and diverse pool of candidates.

The strategy should include:

- (a) Identification of racially and culturally diverse target markets.
- (b) Use of marketing strategies to target diverse applicant pools.
- (c) Expanded use of technology and maintenance of a strong internet presence. This may include an interactive agency website and the use of agency-managed social networking sites, if resources permit.
- (d) Expanded outreach through partnerships with media, community groups, citizen academies, local colleges, universities and the military.
- (e) Employee referral and recruitment incentive programs.
- (f) Consideration of shared or collaborative regional testing processes.

The Chief shall avoid advertising, recruiting and screening practices that tend to stereotype, focus on homogeneous applicant pools or screen applicants in a discriminatory manner.

All job announcements must include a description of the duties of the position.

The Agency should strive to facilitate and expedite the screening and testing process, and should periodically inform each candidate of his/her status in the recruiting process.

SELECTION PROCESS

Minimally, the Agency should employ a comprehensive screening, background investigation and selection process that assesses cognitive and physical abilities and includes review and verification of the following:

- (a) A comprehensive application for employment (including previous employment, references, current and prior addresses, education, military record).
- (b) Driving record.
- (c) Reference checks.
- (d) Employment eligibility, including U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and acceptable identity and employment authorization documents. This required documentation should not be requested until a candidate is hired. This does not prohibit obtaining documents required for other purposes.
- (e) Information obtained from public internet sites.
- (f) Financial history consistent with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) (15 USC § 1681 et seq.).
- (g) Local, state and federal criminal history record checks.
- (h) Polygraph examination (when legally permissible).
- (i) An impartial medical exam by a licensed physician or practitioner that meets the Municipal Police Training Council standards (may only be given after a conditional offer of employment).
- (j) A psychological examination administered by qualified professionals to ensure psychological fitness (may only be given after a conditional offer of employment).
- (k) Oral Review board or selection committee assessment based upon standardized questions with candidate's responses recorded on uniform reports.

VETERAN PREFERENCE

The Agency will provide veteran preference credits as required (Civil Service Law § 85).

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION

Every candidate shall undergo a thorough background investigation to verify his/her personal integrity and high ethical standards, and to identify any past behavior that may be indicative of the candidate's unsuitability to perform duties relevant to the operation of the Chatham Police Department.

Background investigators will be provided with instructions and checklists to ensure thorough, comprehensive and objective investigations of candidates. Elements of the background investigation will include verification of employment, education and residences; interviews with previous and current employers, family members, neighbors, social contacts, provided references, developed references and organizations; and review of credit history, military records, and other public records searches.

NOTICES

Background investigators shall ensure that investigations are conducted and notices provided in accordance with the requirements of the FCRA and the New York Fair Credit Reporting Act (15 USC § 1681d; General Business Law § 380-c).

STATE NOTICES

Every applicant disqualified due to facts discovered during the background investigation by the Chatham Police Department will be provided a written statement specifying the reasons for the disqualification and allowed an opportunity for rebuttal (Civil Service Law § 50).

Applicants who are or were subject to an extreme risk protection order (temporary or final) should be afforded an opportunity to explain the circumstances and provided with copies of records related to the order that are obtained by the Agency (CPLR § 6346).

REVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Due to the potential for accessing unsubstantiated, private or protected information, the Deputy Chief should not require candidates to provide passwords, account information or access to password-protected social media accounts.

The Deputy Chief should consider utilizing the services of an appropriately trained and experienced third party to conduct open source, internet-based searches and/or review information from social media sites to ensure that:

- (a) The legal rights of candidates are protected.
- (b) Material and information to be considered are verified, accurate and validated.
- (c) The Agency fully complies with applicable privacy protections and local, state and federal law.

Regardless of whether a third party is used, the Deputy Chief should ensure that potentially impermissible information is not available to any person involved in the candidate selection process.

3.4 Training

This section pertains to policies and procedures for training in the Village of Chatham Police Department.

3.4.1 Certification / Training Officers Receive

Every Year

Firearms qualifications on the range
Taser Review and Updates
Blood-borne Pathogens OSHA Training
Violence in the Workplace Training
Legislative and Policy updates
Sexual Harassment training

Every 2 Years

CPR / AED
First Aid

New Officers

Naloxone Training

Online Training implemented in 2020

Anti-Bias Training For Law Enforcement (01:00)
Implicit Bias (01:00)
Cultural Awareness and Diversity Overview (01:00)
De-Escalation and Minimizing Use of Force (02:00)
Racial Profiling (01:00)
Ethics in Law Enforcement (01:00)
Officer Liability (02:00)
Community Policing (02:00)

3.4.2 Basic Course for Police Officers: Police officers attend the Basic Course for Police Officers (BCPO) at a regional academy. The BCPO consists of a minimum of 700 hours established by the Municipal Police Training Council.

Basic Course for Police Officers includes, but is not limited to:

- Ethics & Professionalism
- Cultural Diversity
- Bias Related Incidents
- Professional Communication
- Persons with Disabilities
- Crisis Intervention
- Use of Physical Force & Deadly Force
- Active Shooter Response and Decision Making
- Reality Based Training Scenarios

3.4.3 Annual In-Service Training:

At least 21 hours of in-service training annually which includes, at a minimum, firearms training, legal updates, a review of the use of force and the use of deadly force. This training can be fulfilled through the use of formalized and documented training sessions where lesson plans and attendance records are maintained. This may include classroom training, roll call or video presentations. Note: officers who are officers in other departments may consider in-service training received at their full-time department toward meeting this requirement.

Note: With the exception of the Course in Police Supervision and “peace officer” annual firearms and other weapons courses, there is no mandate for “police officers” or “peace officers” to complete in-service training as a condition of continued employment.

<https://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/ops/docs/training/forms/insevrtrngguide.pdf>

3.5 Complaint Process

The Chatham Police Department takes seriously all complaints regarding the service provided by the Agency and the conduct of its members. The Agency will accept and address all complaints of misconduct in accordance with this policy and applicable federal, state and local law and municipal and county rules and the requirements of any collective bargaining agreements.

It is also the policy of this agency to ensure that the community can report misconduct without concern for reprisal or retaliation.

PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS

Personnel complaints include any allegation of misconduct or improper job performance that, if true, would constitute a violation of agency policy or federal, state or local law, policy or rule. Personnel complaints may be generated internally or by the public.

Inquiries about conduct or performance that, if true, would not violate agency policy or federal, state or local law, policy or rule may be handled informally by a supervisor and shall not be considered a personnel complaint. Such inquiries generally include clarification regarding policy, procedures or the response to specific incidents by the Agency.

ACCEPTANCE

All complaints will be courteously accepted by any agency member and promptly given to the appropriate supervisor. Although written complaints are preferred, a complaint may also be filed orally, either in person or by telephone. Such complaints will be directed to a supervisor. If a supervisor is not immediately available to take an oral complaint, the receiving member shall obtain contact information sufficient for the supervisor to contact the complainant. The supervisor, upon contact with the complainant, shall complete and submit a complaint as appropriate.

Although not required, complainants should be encouraged to file complaints in person so that proper identification, signatures, photographs or physical evidence may be obtained as necessary.

ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION FORMAT

Formal investigations of personnel complaints shall be thorough, complete and essentially follow this format:

Introduction - Include the identity of the members, the identity of the assigned investigators, the initial date and source of the complaint.

Synopsis - Provide a brief summary of the facts giving rise to the investigation.

Summary - List the allegations separately, including applicable policy sections, with a brief summary of the evidence relevant to each allegation. A separate recommended finding should be provided for each allegation.

Evidence - Each allegation should be set forth with the details of the evidence applicable to each allegation provided, including comprehensive summaries of member and witness statements. Other evidence related to each allegation should also be detailed in this section.

Conclusion - A recommendation regarding further action or disposition should be provided.

Exhibits - A separate list of exhibits (e.g., recordings, photos, documents) should be attached to the report.

DISPOSITIONS

Each personnel complaint shall be classified with one of the following dispositions:

Unfounded - When the investigation discloses that the alleged acts did not occur or did not involve agency members. Complaints that are determined to be frivolous will fall within the classification of unfounded.

Exonerated - When the investigation discloses that the alleged act occurred but that the act was justified, lawful and/or proper.

Not sustained - When the investigation discloses that there is insufficient evidence to sustain the complaint or fully exonerate the member.

Sustained - When the investigation discloses sufficient evidence to establish that the act occurred and that it constituted misconduct. If an investigation discloses misconduct or improper job performance that was not alleged in the original complaint, the investigator shall take appropriate action with regard to any additional allegations.

COMPLETION OF INVESTIGATIONS

Every investigator or supervisor assigned to investigate a personnel complaint or other alleged misconduct shall proceed with due diligence in an effort to complete the investigation within one year from the date of discovery by an individual authorized to initiate an investigation.

NOTICE TO COMPLAINANT OF INVESTIGATION STATUS

The member conducting the investigation should provide the complainant with periodic updates on the status of the investigation, as appropriate.

ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES OTHER EMPLOYEES

Whether conducted by a supervisor or a member of the Chief of Police, the following applies to employees:

(a) Interviews of an accused employee shall be conducted during reasonable hours and preferably when the employee is on-duty. If the employee is off-duty, he/she shall be compensated.

(b) Unless waived by the employee, interviews of an accused employee shall be at the Chatham Police Department or other reasonable and appropriate place.

(c) No more than two interviewers should ask questions of an accused employee.

(d) Prior to any interview, an employee should be informed of the nature of the investigation.

(e) All interviews should be for a reasonable period and the employee's personal needs should be accommodated.

(f) No employee should be subjected to offensive or threatening language, nor shall any promises, rewards or other inducements be used to obtain answers.

(g) Any employee refusing to answer questions directly related to the investigation may be ordered to answer questions administratively and may be subject to discipline for failing to do so.

1. An employee should be given an order to answer questions in an administrative investigation that might incriminate the employee in a criminal matter only after the employee has been given a Garrity advisement. Administrative investigators should consider the impact that compelling a statement from the employee may have on any related criminal investigation and should take reasonable steps to avoid creating any foreseeable conflicts between the two related investigations. This may include conferring with the person in charge of the criminal investigation (e.g., discussion of processes, timing, implications).

2. No information or evidence administratively coerced from an employee may be provided to anyone involved in conducting the criminal investigation or to any prosecutor.

(h) The interviewer should record all interviews of employees and witnesses. The employee may also record the interview. If the employee has been previously interviewed, a copy of that recorded interview should be provided to the employee prior to any subsequent interview.

(i) All employees subjected to interviews that could result in discipline have the right to have an uninvolved representative present during the interview. However, in order not consult or meet with a representative or attorney collectively or in groups prior to being interviewed.

(j) All employees shall provide complete and truthful responses to questions posed during interviews.

(k) No employee may be compelled to submit to a psychological stress evaluator examination, nor shall any refusal to submit to such examination be mentioned in any investigation (Labor Law § 735).

NOTICE OF CHARGES

Any charges brought against an employee shall be in writing and within the time frame prescribed by law (Civil Service Law § 75; Second Class Cities Law § 137; Town Law § 155; Village Law § 8-804).

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

Where a member is accused of potential criminal conduct, a separate supervisor or investigator shall be assigned to investigate the criminal allegations apart from any administrative investigation.

Any separate administrative investigation may parallel a criminal investigation.

The Chief of Police shall be notified as soon as practicable when a member is accused of criminal conduct. The Chief of Police may request a criminal investigation by an outside law enforcement agency.

A member accused of criminal conduct shall be provided with all rights afforded to a civilian.

The member should not be administratively ordered to provide any information in the criminal investigation. The Chatham Police Department may release information concerning the arrest or detention of any member, including an officer, that has not led to a conviction. No disciplinary action should be taken until an independent administrative investigation is conducted.

NOTICE OF FINAL DISPOSITION TO THE COMPLAINANT

The Chief of Police or the authorized designee should ensure that the complainant is notified of the disposition (i.e., sustained, not sustained, exonerated, unfounded) of the complaint.

RESIGNATIONS/RETIREMENTS PRIOR TO DISCIPLINE

In the event that a member tenders a written resignation or notice of retirement prior to the imposition of discipline, it shall be noted in the file. The tender of a resignation or retirement by itself shall not serve as grounds for the termination of any pending investigation or discipline.

4 COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES

4.1 Seniors Focus Group

Report compiled by Brin Quell. Other members of the group: Georgene Gardner; Eileen O'Mara-Garcia; Patricia McKeon; and the late Tom Kenny.

Questions:

Do seniors feel safe here? Does having a police department make a difference in that regard?

What are some experiences people have had with the PD that we can report on?

Is the cost of the PD worth the services we receive?

Does our PD have adequate training to address mental health concerns?

Does the senior community feel a personal connection to the PD? Do members of the PD know our community?

Responses: from randomly canvassed seniors in the community

People feel safe here.

I do feel safe living in the village, but can't say that has anything to do with the police.

I have lived here my whole life, and guess that Village police is a tradition. But, maybe we don't need them. What are they doing?

I had occasion to call rescue squad at 4AM, and they were terrific, here in a little more than five minutes. In retrospect, I was relieved there was no police presence. It would have just added to the tension of an already tense situation.

Many people view the PD here as a tradition. Been here forever. But things have changed. The old full-time force was a visible presence. Many of the officers knew us. Knew who lived on our streets. With a part-time force now, things are very different.

For the most part the officers are not visible. They work odd shifts that change all the time. We don't know any of them and they don't know us.

For the most part, people have had positive interactions with police BUT more often than not people end up talking to someone from the State Police anyhow if they have a problem that requires police intervention or guidance. With a part-time force, one rarely reaches one of the Chatham PD officers.

On a completely different matter: how do we insure that our officers are not linked in any way (past or present) to white supremacist movements and actions? While that may seem like a bizarre response, it's not. We know that all over the country there are white supremacists infiltrating community services and functions in various ways.

4.2 Substance Use Affected Community

Submitted by Lori Antonson - Acting President of Columbia County Pathways to Recovery (CCPR) in collaboration with other CCPR board members who collected information for this report.

Question: Have you ever had interactions/experiences with the Chatham Village Police Department, and if so, how would you describe those interactions/experiences?

Specific Responses: canvassed group consisted of approximately fifteen people

None of the respondents had had occasion to personally call the Chatham Village Police.

One respondent reported that in response to three different 911 calls due a family member's overdoses:

Chatham Village Police responded along with State Troopers and Columbia County police officers.

Chatham police were compassionate and non-judgmental; however, appeared to be unsure how to handle the nuances of the situation.

In one instance Chief Pete Volkmann responded and was very understanding, capable, and able to de-escalate the situation and engage in effective conversation with the family member regarding her substance use and moving forward with possible treatment.

Overall Experience with Chatham Village Police:

The majority reported: non-intimidating, friendly, accommodating, levelheaded, respectful, not out to antagonize.

A minority reported: experiences with feeling "harassed" because of prior drug/alcohol use; young drivers being pulled over for no apparent reason while driving through Village; repeated coercion to give up information or "snitch" on drug suppliers, etc; being stopped and questioned while innocuously standing outside a parent's home in the Village; teenagers/young adults feeling targeted even though not behaving suspiciously.

General Perspectives on Chatham Village Police:

Very good work with public safety at community events/traffic control.

Need to be more visible; people need to get to know the village police, particularly now with a part time police force. Many people have no interactions.

Enjoyed the previous police "walkabouts" in the Village and patrolling on bicycle.

Could be more effective in "taking down" drug dealers/suppliers.

Chatham Cares 4 U program respected and supported across the board, with some reporting it led to their recovery.

It is important to police with more compassion, understanding and without judgment.

Not enough mental health training to de-escalate crisis situations.

4.3 Business Community

Information compiled by Tom Crowell and Melony Spock

Responses: from canvass of businesses in the Village

Little need to call local police department.

Most calls go to County Sheriff or State Police.

Feel that Village is a safe place to operate their business.

Appreciate presence during street festivals.

Previously had interaction, but not much recently.

5 COMMUNITY NEEDS

5.1 Seniors Focus Group

Report compiled by Brin Quell. Other members of the group: Georgene Gardner; Eileen O'Mara-Garcia; Patricia McKeon; and the late Tom Kenny.

Question:

Are there particular needs that seniors have that are being address by the PD?

Public Safety Needs: from randomly canvassed seniors in the community

While everyone said they feel safe in the village, a number of people did express concern over these issues: speeding on certain streets; parking issues when weekenders are here; questioning whether Chatham can afford a program like Chatham Cares4U.

It can be appealing to see police officers driving around the village now and then. Maybe their presence adds to our safety. Visibility sometimes acts as a preventive measure.

Many people are aware of and concerned for people with mental health issues. In terms of police intervention in those cases it does not seem the Chatham PD are trained in such matters. They are often young officers just starting out. People would prefer to see such cases managed by county reps instead; there is much support for funding social service professionals to work alongside police in these matters. This is not possible in a small village such as ours.

Suggestions for Use of Budget Resources: from randomly canvassed seniors in the community

A PD of 19 part-time officers doing about 84 hours of scheduled shifts per week at a cost to the village of \$200K per year raises questions about whether a village this size can afford to maintain a PD. Other towns this size do not have one.

We heard from Copake Town Supervisor Jeanne Mettler that they dissolved their PD by referendum a few years ago, have seen no uptick in crime and have saved a lot of money. Not everyone is happy with the decision, of course.

We know the State Police will have a presence on Rt. 295 soon. That raises a big question of whether we also need a PD right in our village.

5.2 Substance Use Affected Community

Submitted by Lori Antonson - Acting President of Columbia County Pathways to Recovery (CCPR) in collaboration with other CCPR board members who collected information for this report.

Question: What are the community needs of people struggling with substance use disorder and/or mental health issues, and are there additional programs or services you would like to see in the Village and in our community?

Public Safety Needs:

Integrate social service/mental health professionals to ride along for mental health related calls.

Certified Peer Recovery Advocates (CRPAs) to ride along for overdose response and to help create a safe place for dialogue with person.

Training and/or ride alongs for assistance if an overdose occurs in the patrol car.

Cross training officers for better preparedness to handle substance use calls.

Community awareness of programs such as Chatham Cares 4 U.

Need for police referrals to other services for substance use and mental health support, i.e. MCAT (Mobile Crisis Assessment Team). Possibly establish a 311 call system for non-emergency calls for information about local services, support agencies, referrals, etc.

Work locally to staunch illegal drug commerce (not stand down awaiting drug task force units).

Suggestions for Use of Budget Resources:

Need for more local services for mental health support/substance use counseling.

Need for affordable housing and local support services upon release from detox/rehab facilities.

Need for transportation to/from local and non-local supports and services.

Develop a more involved and fully engaged community around substance use recovery and mental health supports and establish safe, sober events for youth as well as for adults.

Build local awareness/understanding of substance use and mental health needs.

Parent support programs run by social workers to help mediate family conflict which may prevent the need for police involvement.

As a preventative measure against drifting into substance use, need for more widespread youth activities as alternatives to idle time after school, and to provide snow days/winter vacation activities. Pool hall? Bowling alley? After school and Adult Ed classes? More use of local tennis courts? Community swimming pool? Skating rink?

Need for a community center as well as renovate/restore the Crellin Morris Memorial to utilize its full potential.

Youth programs relying on mentors from the community to teach skills that can help steer youth toward a passion and a focus.

Adult sports teams/clubs.

Better utilization of Crellin Park: flood parking lots for skating rink? Community kids' gardens? Rollerskate/rollerblade rink? Skateboarding area? Use of pavilions for community classes/regular events?

Invest in expanding music/arts programs in the Chatham Central School District. Establish scholarship funds for underprivileged and economically weaker families.

Expand use of PS21 to include free community summer activities other than stage performances: overnight camping? Weekly outdoor movie events?

More awareness of Chatham Library and their events, and better collaboration with community for more robust use of the facility to house/host supportive activities.

5.3 Business Community

Information compiled by Tom Crowell and Melony Spock

Responses: from canvass of businesses in the Village

Change hours to later in the day so there is less coverage in the morning but more in the evening.

Foot patrol on main street.

6 THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

A survey was composed and made available to Village residents through the Village website, emails, Facebook page and had mention in local papers. 175 people responded to the questionnaire. The results of the Village survey are listed below:

Q1: Do you own property (residential or commercial) in the Village of Chatham?

169 Answered / 1 Skipped
Yes = 119 or 70.41%
No = 50 or 29.59%

Q2: Do you reside (renter or home-owner) in the Village of Chatham?

170 Answered / 0 Skipped
Yes = 135 or 79.41%
No = 35 or 29.59%

Q3: If yes, do you live in a house or an apartment in the Village of Chatham?

134 Answered / 36 Skipped
House = 116 or 86.57%
Apartment = 18 or 13.43%

Q4: Do you operate a business in the Village of Chatham?

167 Answered / 3 skipped
Yes = 39 or 23.35%
No = 128 or 76.65%

Q5: What is your age?

18-24	3
25-34	21
35-44	21
45-54	8
55-64	35
65 +	40
No Response	44

Q6: What is your gender?

Female	78
Male	46
Non-Binary	3
No Response	40

Q7: What is your race and/or ethnicity?

White/Caucasian	104
Black	4
Hispanic	2
Arab American	1
Mixed	2
Hispanic Asian	1
Why? Shouldn't Matter	5
No response	50

Q8: What experiences or interactions have you had with the Village of Chatham Police?

113 answered / 54 skipped

A little more than 30% of survey participants did not respond to this question. Out of the 113 responses, many responded that they had little or no experience with the police and gave no descriptions. Most of the responses just answered the question so they weren't positive or negative responses. General responses mentioned speeding/parking tickets/traffic stops, assistance with problems, neighbors, teenage pranks and theft. Responses that were more detailed are listed below:

"I've had the village police ride my bumper when I came through the village late at night. They made me feel very nervous and worried that I might do something wrong while I was driving home. I pulled over to let them pass so that I could continue to drive in peace; however, they had the nerve to pull right up to my driver's window and stare at me. Scared and not sure what my rights were, I put down my window, as did he. He asked where I had been and where I was going. Truly none of his business!! A police state here in Chatham, NY. Another time, I went down into town to pick my son up at the brewery around midnight, and the Chatham Police car was stopped dead in the middle of the street right outside the pub and he wasn't moving. Making some point that he was watching the pub. Don't appreciate their sense of entitled power."

"I have been a business owner, I have had a family member arrested, I have had a child harassed and threatened by a police officer. I have had to call for assistance for a car robbery, I have had to call police for a neighbor dispute."

"Reported a possible child abuse and asked that someone with sensitivity respond. The Chief handled the incident himself. On another occasion the Chief accompanied the EMTs when called for a medical incident (myself)."

"Recently, officer responded to a report of signs stolen/vandalized on our lawn; officers direct traffic during events. A couple of years ago, officer stopped by to tell us about neighborhood program."

"Mostly good, a couple disconcerting. On two occasions officers acted in an unprofessional and threatening manner. Fortunately the chief at the time resolved the situation. None of the officers involved are still around."

"No interactions. I've only ever been stared at while walking down the street while an officer often idles and chats up a neighbor. They've never waved, smiled, or said hello."

"When we first moved here 5+ years ago and had some concerns about neighbors we were told by the chief to "move"."

"None over the past few years. Anything that happened prior to our experience is not relevant today."

"When we opened our store, they stopped to talk with us and introduce themselves."

"Overall I try to avoid them, but if I do experience them it's been fine probably because I'm a white male"

“Bad. Officers drove up and told my kids they couldn’t climb a tree in our yard. I had to go down and confirm there was no law against MY kids climbing MY tree in MY yard. They cost \$200K a year and provide no services. Guns in the hands of white men make me feel unsafe. Black cars, dark paramilitary outfits make me feel unsafe. I already pay for State and County police, I do not need a third police bill. There’s no crime in Chatham, police are unnerving, redundant and a luxury tax for themselves.”

“My interactions with Chatham police have been good. But I appreciated was but when I was in the office late at night and they saw the lights on the walking patrol would just stop by and make sure everything was OK. They would also check to make sure the business door was locked and let us know if it was not.”

“When I first moved to the Village many years ago, I was pulled over several times for minor issues like license plate light. I felt like honestly I was being targeted. Then I had to file a police report for a credit card fraud. When I went to the police to file such a claim, I was treated like I had something to do with the fraud. It was very surprising. I think things have changed a lot over the last several years. The police seem more approachable”

“I was pulled over for rolling through a stop sign on Sunday. They offered an outreach program a kind of get to know you which was nice.”

Q9: If you have not had any experiences with the Village of Chatham Police, please explain why. For example: never had a need to call for police, did not know how to call the Village Police directly; unsure of what kind of help the Village Police provides; called for help, and County Sheriff or State Police responded. 57 answered / 110 skipped

Most respondents stated that they never had a need to call the police. If they did call the police, many respondents said that the County or State Police responded. A few detailed responses below:

“It’s not clear what the PT village police actually do, you can’t reach them if you wanted to, seems like a total waste of tax dollars when we have a clear state police presence.”

“Kevin Boehm once held traffic for me while I set off a black powder explosion under the Crandall awning. sans firemen, sans a pyrotechnic license, this kind of “experience” epitomizes small town largess, was in many ways reckless. There’s no crime. I’ve never gotten a speeding ticket. I have called police on two occasions and never had Chatham police show up. An officer came by trying to sell me the MYCOP program. I let him talk, let him wind himself, then asked if I might make a recommendation: told him about the Menlo Park study (read about it on policeone.com) asked if he might consider wearing a light colored blazer instead of black paramilitary gear, “it’s’ not black. It’s blue”. I was standing 5 feet away and it looked black. “Ok, it’s blue. Would you consider wearing more of a street cloths look?” “it’s not paramilitary.” He argued. “Ok, argue with me.” He threw his MYCOP sheet on the ground, “Forget it, you don’t like cops.” He walked off. With such poor training, such lousy people skills, why on earth am I taxed for Village police?”

“When our security alarms were going off at the store, the Sheriff arrived. Sadly, the Village Police hours have been cut. So, even though our store is literally right next to the Police Dept, the Sheriff had to drive up to investigate. Luckily, it was a serious situation, but unfortunate that we don’t have a local police presence to protect us 24/7.”

“Never had the need to. Only experiences have been at fairs/festivals or public marches. At these times police officers seem to only helpful and polite.”

Q10: How would you describe your interactions/experiences with the Village of Chatham Police? 110 answered / 64 /Skipped / 13 No experiences

Positive – 47: e.g. cordial, friendly, positive, fine, professional, respectful, accommodating, willing to help, pleasant

Okay – 19: e.g. no detail, no follow up on an issue, one with harassment

Negative – 18: e.g. 'out to get me', 'could do without', unhappy with how teenage son was treated, 'inept', 'only out to get people', incident with young son, 'uncomfortable', 'no follow through', 'rude', 'arrogant', 'surlly', 'not friendly', 'sadly negative', 'ridiculous', 'not easily reached', 'waste of time', 'annoying', 'silly'

Handled problem – 3

Praise for Chief Volkmann – 3

Not easily reached, State Police better – 3

If a police department, full time better than part time - 1

Q11: Are you aware of any of the following programs provided through the Village of Chatham Police? (check any you know about) 96 Answered / 74 Skipped

Chatham Cares 4 U (83 or 86.46% know about this program.)

Your Cop (16 or 16.67%)

Dark House Checks (19 or 19.79%)

Bike Patrol (36 or 37.50%)

Foot Patrol (34 or 35.43%)

Sobriety Checkpoint (21 or 21.88%)

Enhanced/Focused Enforcement (6 or 6.25%)

Body Cameras (17 or 17.71%)

In-Car Cameras (18 or 18.75%)

Q12: If you have had occasion to be involved in/with any of these programs, please describe your experiences. 47 Answered /122 Skipped / 19 No experiences

Bike/Foot patrol - 4: Wanting officers on foot or bike.

Your Cop – 4: Mixed responses; overall liked meeting officer but lamented lack of follow up; program not effective because not followed through.

Chatham Cares 4 You – 10: Generally positive. 'Innovative', 'important'. Two had volunteered for program but others said they liked idea but had had no direct experience. Not a fan of CCares4U – 1 (didn't say why)

Dark House Check– 4: All positive.

Q13: Are there other programs or additional services you would like to see the Village, County, and/or State provide to our community to promote and enhance public safety? For example: programs directed at mental health, the substance use affected community, youth-at-risk, sheltered residents. 76 Answered / 93 Skipped

Note: For those who responded, support for these programs were strong. (47 explicitly in support)

A recurring theme: Support for and desire to see mental health, substance abuse programs, housing for homeless, youth programs, outreach and programs for elderly; that these were important and should *not* be run by police but by other social/community organizations.

Specific responses:

(Mental Health, substance abuse and recovery, emphasis on help not enforcement and that these be free of charge and of good quality – 4

Take CCares4U funds out of police budget and fund it as a county or village project – Spend police budget on village beautification, roads etc. -4

Use \$\$ from police to fund Youth at Risk – 5

Divert existing resources to non-police crisis response especially for vulnerable population, youth, mental health, and a commitment not to work with ICE - 1

Mental Health – 5

Police need to be more involved with community -2

Officers need crisis intervention and bias awareness training – 4

Cops **not** to respond to MH and substance abuse - 2

No police resources for social programs – 3

Outreach for elderly and homebound - 1

More resources for library, MH, substance abuse and rehab, Crellin Park, Youth support, good housing, these problems not solved by police – 3

Need to reconsider how police are deployed and for what, reimagine police interaction with community – 3

Officer to attend community social events to get to know people – 4

Free afterschool programs for all youth and MH support – all outside the PD -1

Speed cameras on Rt66 not police cars – 1

DARE program to continue in county - 2

Praise for Chief Volkman for opioid program; substance abuse and MH should NOT be through police. – 4

Prefers full time police (rather than part time officers)- 1

Stop police speeding through village – 1

Drug abuse a problem in our area – 2

Q14: If you would like someone from the Collaborative to follow up with you, please provide a way to contact you. 22 Answered / 147 Skipped

Six people requested follow up - (5 emails, 1 phone number). All six were contacted. One responded to email asking about when report was going to be published. He was given date report is to be posted on village website and date for public meeting.

Spoke to one respondent by phone. She wanted to discuss a very unpleasant experience with a village officer in 2019. The incident had to do with her son who has Asperger's. She described the officer as rude, arrogant and frightening. She asked if officers have training in mental health issues and how to de-escalate and manage these situations sensitively and non-violently. Her opinion is that these situations should not be handled by police but by trained mental health professionals.

Q15: How safe do you feel living in the Village of Chatham? 118 Answered / 52 Skipped

I feel very safe = 86 or 72.88%

I feel somewhat safe = 31 or 26.27%

I do not feel safe = 1 or .85%

Q16: If you answered above that you feel very safe, please tell us what contributes to your sense of safety. 81 Answered / 89 Skipped

Never had a problem. (10)

Nothing goes on here, quiet town, Low crime. (26)

Friendly neighbors/community, knowing neighbors. (25)

Vigilant community members/community working together. (6)

My own personal protective measures/I own gun(s). (3)

Police presence and responsiveness. (12)

Not the police. (3)

Street lights.

Good that we have a police department, but I think it could be smaller.

We don't have many issues with homelessness due to PTSD or substance abuse, as most people are sent to Albany. Because most people in a desperate situation don't leave here we tend to not have a lot of crime.

We do not need village, county sheriffs, and state police. Coverage by county/state police is sufficient.

Not a whole lot of traffic, easy to navigate, absence of surveillance technology in public space[s]

I used to feel more safe because I knew the police were patrolling at night, but now I don't feel that way because I have heard there's not as much coverage as there used to be.

I appreciate the Chatham police, they seem to have a nice relationship with the community and for the most part leave law abiding people alone.

Three police departments covering the area don't need Chatham.

Knowing some of the store owners. Residents and visitors appear orderly and cheerful.

I will say that the patrols are not every night which I understand but they could mix them up to keep everyone on their toes.

Having a local police dept is helpful because they get to know everyone too and do foot and bike patrol rather than just driving around. It's good that we're not depending only on state troopers or county sheriff.

I used to live in Brooklyn, this is very safe area compared to the city.

Outside of the Covid situation, there is a strong sense of community, and a good selection of local programs, churches and support.

Aware of my surroundings.

The demographics of a small mature population

I just do. It has very little to do with CPD.

Police , Fire, EMS all add to the safety of our village.

I am white and present as a cis woman so I hold a privileged identity that police are not interested in harassing.

I come from a large city things that happened there don't happen here.

My location: Sidewalk on other side of street (limits pedestrian traffic), limited neighbors.

The state police and Sheriffs patrols are often more visible than our part time police patrols.

My feeling of safety has nothing to do with the police.

Maybe I'm living with my head in the sand, but the Columbia County general community itself seems pretty sensible, I don't really hear much about scandal in local law enforcement, and the state is one of only four that doesn't allow 'open carry'. (If that ever changes, hello Canada.)

My legal status/race/gender.

We are on a private dead end street. No one comes here.

The Village Police do not make me feel any safer.

My neighbor situation has become unsafe, otherwise the village is wonderful.

Q17: If you answered above that you feel somewhat safe, please tell us why only somewhat safe. 32 Answered/ 138 Skipped

The Chatham police are rarely around when needed.

Crack head that rides his bike on Main Street and yells profanity. PD does their best with him politely but he's a detriment to the village.

There are too many drug deals that go on.

Concerned about potential extreme right wing violence, threats and harassment of demonstrators and activists, lack of accountability of law enforcement.

The lack of Police presents in the night hours.

Less safe due to bail reform not the pd.

It's a village with a wide range of residents. You never know what's in the hearts of men. Look at the riots this spring. Can't trust anyone.

My neighbor situation has become unsafe, otherwise the village is wonderful.

There is not any communication about crime in Chatham so I'm unaware of the crime stats and concerns. I would like more lighting of the County Fairgrounds.

Due to all the current events that happen around the country and how it's restrained the police presence is a concern.

The Village is a safe community but there are teenagers who play pranks with property and because of that, I'm vigilant.

White male officers, and there's been no diversity in the history of village police, no women, no people of color, create anxiety, and a pervasive sense of fear. Who can tell me they like being followed by police? with no crime, it's just a racket.

Police are not on duty all the time.

Aware of increased drug activity and reduced local police presence.

I lock my doors.

Limited availability of direct access.

Never any police officers on duty and cannot go in and speak to them.

Our community has changed over the years and as expected not what it once was. Drugs are still a problem but without arresting the dealers we will never see any improvement.

Too many unknown people around, drug use is on the rise.

Rednecks w/ monster diesel trucks, Rednecks w/ guns.

You can never be 100% safe.

Need more police for all the drug dealers and pot smokers.

As violence and looting round the country escalates, I would feel more safe if we had a consistent 24/7 police presence. We have security cameras (interior and exterior), but a physical presence would be more reassuring.

This summer not much of a police presence.

Part time force. Response time.

I feel unsafe from the BLM that targeted our home and character - LOCALS.

Traffic is not being regulated.

It's not an full time department now. So you never know how far away help is.

Something That has recently bothered me is that on several streets big pick up trucks will tailgate, rev their engines and accelerate down village streets. It is menacing and these drivers seem above the law.

Q18: If you answered above that you do not feel safe, please tell us in what way(s) do you not feel safe? 5 Answered / 165 Skipped

Less police presence.

Trumpites, Oath Keepers, Sovereign Citizens, White Supremacists and Fascists who threaten violence towards anyone who does not agree with them. Coal rollers who blow clouds of black smoke out of their illegally modified diesel trucks. I've seen this in Chatham.

Q19: What would make you feel safer? 70 Answered / 100 Skipped

Better lighting/more street lights. (3)

Full-time or More police presence/More Foot and bike patrols. (14)

Less police. (7)

Remove drugs from Chatham. (4)

A flashing crosswalk sign on railroad ave by the tracks.

Cops actually making themselves present in the community to make themselves known and residents can see them as neighbors, rather than them always sitting in their cars hiding out, trying to catch people speeding or leaving the bars.

Community watch programs.

More police patrols on dead streets like mine.

Village police, when I see state troopers or sheriff's I wonder what's going on that our local cops couldn't handle it.

Stronger mechanisms to hold law enforcement accountable for misconduct, diversion of responsibilities away from police to non-police crisis response.

A monumental severance to the Chatham police payroll, with those funds being redirected into bettering the wellbeing of the community.

The police do not make me feel safe. I think they need more training and less immunity. The family members of cops get away with whatever they want, even high school students. It's unacceptable.

Less police and better community programs to bolster the community.

Directing funding away from law enforcement towards social services so that people can get the help they need, so law enforcement is not overburdened with work that they are not trained for or should be engaging in.

More proactive. Less of the police being vilified.

Cops that actually cared about the community and its residents. They CARED and didn't regard citizens as just another suspect worthy of a ticket. I see them solely as ticket writers. Useless, actually.

I just remember when officers checked on Main St. Businesses at night and now that does not seem to be happening.

Action by the court to remove these neighbors from their dwelling.

Regular communication about crime stats in Chatham.

I would like more lighting of the County Fairgrounds.

We could further develop the sense of community by using the internet and local groups to reach out to more residents and make more personal connections between people. Setting up virtual neighborhoods where people can connect. This is probably what Facebook can do, but we aren't on social media, so maybe I'm just out of touch. But, now that many people only use cell phones, it would be nice to be able to have even stronger neighborhood bonds.

World peace.

Police that are trusted to serve and protect the honest taxpayers that pay their salaries and pensions. They have a tough job but also, unfortunately, a bad track record in too many places around our country, and that has, fairly or not, eroded trust here in Chatham. In this era of tight budgets and high taxes, every expenditure of the Village must be justified. If the Police are to remain in their present form, there ought to be a detailed justification presented to the public, a demonstration of what they do for us and what changes they intend to make in order to improve their service.

Less drugs and a more visible PD doing policing rather than social work.

The police patrolling my street and responding quickly to my calls have helped me feel safe.

If we removed Chatham police patrols from our streets and spent our money on food, housing, mental health, and drug treatment for our community.

Return to full-time police with foot patrols, more aggressively prosecute drug dealers.

I don't live in the village, so I can't answer this question the way it is asked, but my experience as someone who owns property there, is that the Chatham PD is a layer of service that is redundant. Chatham handles parking tickets and likes to chase speeders (something that could be addressed with speed cameras if needed..) and Sheriffs or State police get called for anything important. This scenario is not a good use of tax dollars. I would feel just as safe without a Chatham PD. Let's put our money into badly needed infrastructure repairs/upgrades (water system, sidewalks, street maintenance, etc.).

To actually SEE the police patrol and not sit doing speed traps.

To know how to reach someone local and the response time we would have.

Reflective paint on the crosswalks for those crossing the street at night

Be available-be seen and be present.

Do away with the part-time police dept and use the money saved to improve streets, water and sewer.

Being able to open carry a firearm and disband local pd.

More foot patrols, more PD facetime in the community.

I worry that attrition at the Chatham Fire Dept is a cause for concern.

Crack down on drug use by DEA.

No diesel trucks on public roads. Less weapons of mass destruction in our community (guns).

Everyone have a gun.

I am concerned about possible trouble from white supremacists.

In general I feel safe but I would love to see more help for people that could use it.

Keeping our 2nd Amendment.

Fewer people advocating violence against people who disagree with them.

We feel VERY aside from the group of people that emerged to tear our Village apart because "they could". Shameful.

This is a safe community with services from County Sheriff and State Police... I do NOT find a need for Village police too.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Recommendations from Seniors Focus Group

The biggest takeaway from our senior focus group is that as a part-time operation, our Village PD is fairly invisible to most of us. We don't feel any less safe because of that. In fact, safety is not mentioned as a reason to maintain a village PD. Instead, it raises the question of what is the real value of the PD to us at this time? Is it worth \$200,000 in the annual budget?

The police have been a fixture here for years. Older people especially know that. And have some good feelings about that. But the current force of part-time officers plays a very different role here and it's an unclear one since few of us ever see them at work. How is their time spent and how does it serve us?

Looking out for each other could be more of a community-wide focus if we want it to be. Concerns for our neighbors safety and well-being might be better and more cost-effectively served through other means such as establishing a neighborhood watch system with "block" captains. In the event of more short-term rentals in our village, the clarity of neighborhoods diminishes drastically. Building up connections amongst ourselves is important. When needed, we can call on State Police.

If we *are* to maintain our own PD, some neighbor express an interest in better communication between the PD and the public. That might mean having the PD send out a quarterly newsletter or have a regular column on the village website. That might include a photo of an officer along with his/her bio. Perhaps a meet and greet night for the community to meet officers could be valuable.

In general, the thinking is that IF we have a PD then they need to be visible to the community. Walk Main Street. Talk to people. Ride bikes around neighborhoods. And their actions and policies need to be transparent. That means all policies need to be readily available to anyone who wants to read them without the need for filing a FOIA request.

7.2 Recommendations from Substance Use Affected Community

The collective responses received by this focus group indicate that the vast majority of the respondents believe that investment in collaboration with social services and the Chatham Village Police may yield better results for enhancing public safety and policing as well as help to foster mutual trust and cement healthy, positive relationships with the Village Police.

While they realize that the resources are limited in a small village, they believe that there is great benefit in building community awareness, collaboration, and understanding of substance use disorders/mental health needs, and that developing and implementing community based supports for those suffering from these issues can be a positive force for change and crime reduction in the village of Chatham. To quote one participant: “the power of collaboration has the capacity to restore the lives of individuals, families, and communities”.

7.3 Neighborhood Liaison Program Recommendations

The Chatham Police Department will continue to build relationships with those in the community it serves. The Police Department acknowledges that to accomplish this the community and the police department must work together. One way of achieving this is by implementing a **Neighborhood Liaison Program**.

With this program, a police officer will be assigned to a section or neighborhood within the Village of Chatham as a police liaison to those particular residents. Each particular section or neighborhood will also have a civilian “Neighborhood Captain” who will represent the section or neighborhood as a spokesperson for such specified area of the village. The Neighborhood Captain will ensure that there are open lines of communication flowing between the residents and the Liaison Officer.

The Neighborhood Captain and the Liaison Officer will coordinate events such as periodic meetings to solve **quality of life issues** like motor vehicles speeding or ongoing noise complaints.

The officers will be encouraged to meet every member of their sector. This program will build trust and implement “ownership” into the community by not only the police but the citizens who they serve.

The Neighborhood Captain and the Liaison Officer will also coordinate events such as a yearly neighborhood picnic where the police department cooks and serves the food and beverage for the residents. The Police Department’s “traveling open house” program can be incorporated into the picnic.

The Deputy Chief will conduct a yearly review of the Neighborhood Liaison program to ensure it is operating properly.

7.4 Polices, Procedures and Practices Recommendations

CATEGORY	REFORM	DESCRIPTION	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE
Use of Force	Ban Choke Holds	Ban use of chokehold that causes serious physical injury or death.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include in CPD Use of Force policy. 2. Annual in-service training 	Completed
Use of Force	Recording of Law Enforcement Activity	Allow person not under arrest or in the custody of a police officer the right to record police activity and maintain custody and control of the recording and the recording device.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include in CPD Use of Force policy. 2. Annual in-service training 	Completed
Use of Force	Report Discharge of Weapons	Require police officer (on-duty or off-duty) who discharges weapon where a person could be struck by a bullet to verbally report the incident within 6 hours and file a written report within 48 hours.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include in CPD Use of Force policy. 2. Annual in-service training 	Completed
Search Warrants	Expand review of search warrant applications	Involve District Attorney in reviewing application for search warrants prior to being issued.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include in CPD policy on search warrants. 2. Contact District Attorney. 	Completed
Hate Groups	Prohibit association with hate groups.	Prohibit police officers from knowingly associating with any person or organization advocating hatred, oppression, or prejudice based on race, religion, gender, gender identity/ expression, sexual orientation, or disability.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include in CPD code of conduct. 2. Annual in-service training 	

CATEGORY	REFORM	DESCRIPTION	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE
Hate Groups	Prohibit disseminating defamatory material.	Prohibit police officers from disseminating defamatory material advocating hatred, oppression, or prejudice based on race, religion, gender, gender identity/ expression, sexual orientation, or disability.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include in CPD code of conduct. 2. <i>Annual</i> in-service training 	
Mental Health	Enhance access to Columbia County Dept. of Mental Health mobile crisis unit and to other mental health service providers.	Partner with Columbia County Department of Mental Health to increase field use of mobile crisis unit and provide in-service training of police officers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish protocols for expanded use of County's mobile crisis unit. 2. Contract with County Department of Mental Health to conduct crisis intervention training. 3. Establish links with area providers for mental health tele-medicine. 4. Explore 311 service (non-emergency, mental health, drug). 	
Substance Use Affected Community	Enhance access to Columbia County Pathways to Recovery and to other substance use support and intervention service providers.	Partner with Columbia County Pathways to Recovery to provide in-service training of police officers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contract with Columbia County Pathways to Recovery to conduct awareness and crisis intervention training. 2. 	

7.5 Training Recommendations

CATEGORY	REFORM	DESCRIPTION	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE
Training	Use of Force Training	All officers should receive training and demonstrate their understanding on the proper application of force.	Annual in-service training.	
Training	De-Escalation Training	All officers should receive training in conflict resolution and negotiation, and de-escalation techniques and strategies, including, but not limited to, interacting with persons presenting in an agitated condition as well as duty to intervene and prohibited conduct.	Annual in-service training.	
Training	Procedural Justice Training	Procedural justice focuses on the way police interact with the public, and how these interactions influence crime rates and the public's view of police and willingness to obey the law.	Annual in-service training.	

7.6 Social Justice Recommendations

CATEGORY	ITEM	DESCRIPTION	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE
Social Justice	Diversity Recruitment	Identify and recruit candidates from under-represented groups (gender, race, ethnicity, LGBTQ+).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborate with community-based organizations to promote entering police academy through grants. 2. Advertise on CPD webpage and social media. 	
Social Justice	Diversity & Implicit Bias Awareness Training	Expand diversity and implicit bias awareness training to recognize systemic racism and include gender, race, ethnicity, substance use, LGBTQ+.	Require <i>annual</i> Implicit Bias Awareness Training for all police officers.	Completed

7.7 Community Relations Recommendations

CATEGORY	ITEM	DESCRIPTION	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE
Community Relations	Increased Police Visibility in the Community	Provide opportunities for the public to be informed about police policies, procedures, and practices.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neighborhood Foot Patrol: assign officer on duty to walk five neighborhoods each weekday after school lets out for the day. 2. Business District Foot Patrol: assign officer on duty to walk central business district each day in the mid-afternoon. 	
Community Relations	Neighborhood Liaison Program	Provide police liaison to neighborhoods to respond to quality of life issues.	Refer to Section 7.3 above.	
Community Relations	Public Education on Policing Practices	Provide opportunities for the public to be informed about police policies, procedures, and practices.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publish relevant policies on CPD webpage (e.g. use of force; procedural justice). 2. Host <i>quarterly</i> "traveling open house" in specific neighborhoods for public to talk with officers (include informational handouts and tour of police car). 3. Host <i>semi-annual</i> informational meetings chaired by Police Commissioner for public to ask questions. 	

CATEGORY	ITEM	DESCRIPTION	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE
Community Relations	Customer Service	Expand positive communications through customer service and professional development training.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Require <i>annual</i> customer service training for all police officers. 2. Conduct <i>annual</i> community survey on public safety services at local and county level. 3. Utilize Village e-mail list to notify public of police department events; also changes in policies, procedures, practices, and programs. 	
Community Relations	Know Your Cop Program	Provide opportunities for residents and business to be acquainted with the police officers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publish “officer profiles” each month on the CPD website. 	

7.7 Accountability Recommendations

CATEGORY	ITEM	DESCRIPTION	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE
Accountability	Public Review of Policing Practices	Continue the Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative mandate.	Appoint committee of residents and business owners to meet bi-monthly with Police Commissioner and Police Chief to review deployment of police force.	
Accountability	Public Review of Calls for Policing Services	Expand dissemination of data on police calls and arrests (felony, misdemeanor, drug, violent felony, DWI, property) and include race/ethnicity, gender, and age	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publish data <i>monthly</i> on calls and arrests on CPD webpage. 2. Publish data <i>annually</i> on race/ethnicity, gender, and age. 3. Provide <i>monthly</i> local newspaper with report on police log activities. 	
Accountability	Public Complaints	Provide means for public to issues complaints and concerns about police officers.	Establish standardized personnel complaint process on CPD webpage.	
Accountability	Public Access to Disciplinary Records	Make certain records pertaining to disciplinary action available through Freedom of Information Law requests.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notify Village Clerks' office. 2. Notify Village attorney. 	Completed