



Ossining Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative

Working Committee Input on Subcommittee

The four subcommittees have developed Police Reform and Reinvention suggestions for the Working Committee as a whole to consider. We have created this document for the Working Committee to review and comment on prior to the meeting on Wednesday 1/13. Please use the 'comments' feature to provide your thoughts on these subcommittee results. This will be a living document over the next 24 hours as the other committees provide summaries of their work.

More specifics for these suggested recommendations will be developed based on Working Committee input and research by Matrix Consulting leading to the draft report brought to the community later this month.

1. Internal Operations Subcommittee

(1) Create a mental health crisis response unit – Work with Westchester County, neighboring communities and non-profit agencies to develop a mental health, homeless and substance abuse crisis response unit to co-respond with the Police Department and provide follow-up case management. The Ossining Volunteer Ambulance Corps could be a model for this. This is a long term improvement opportunity and would require additional resources to implement.

(2) Develop an emergency responder registry to assist police and fire responders in making a more appropriate response – Within the Village and Police Department and possibly non-profit agencies to create a voluntary response registry which would assist emergency communications and responders. This is a short term improvement opportunity and would not require significant additional resources to implement.

(3) Community policing improvements Work with the Police Department to implement new or improve existing community policing efforts, including:

- Create police officer liaisons (as added responsibilities) with community groups.

- Have a greater / more creative OPD presence at more community special events.
- Create education and mentoring in the schools toward violence reduction.
- Coordinate information and education efforts with other Village services.
- Post-Covid19, commit to more personal interaction in foot beats, etc.

These are short term improvement opportunities and would not require significant additional resources to implement, except additional schools programming which would.

(4) ICE – Develop a public awareness campaign in both English and Spanish to explain the Police Department’s role with respect to ICE activities in the community.

(5) Police officer mental health – Develop a police officer mental health program that includes some of the following elements:

- Counseling available on request
- Involve faith-based organizations
- Incentivize physical and mental health
- Develop a tele-therapy option, especially if counseling is mandated.
- Develop an Employee Assistance Program in support of this.
- Develop an ‘early intervention program’ for employees needing help.

These are mostly longer term improvement opportunities requiring additional resources and collective bargaining agreement.

2. Hiring and Training Subcommittee

Hiring

(1) Department Demographics Should Reflect the Community in Hiring and Promotions – Work to increase diversity in department hiring and on promotional processes.

(2) Start Recruiting Program / Police Department Introduction at Ossining High School – Work with Ossining High School to start a program to introduce high school students to the Ossining Police Department. This will help with future recruiting from the Ossining community.

Training

(3) The Police Department Should Add Training Topics - The Police Department should develop a multi-year training plan that includes the following topics by priority:

- **Anti-racism** - High Priority

- **Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)** - High Priority
- **Implicit Bias** – High Priority
- **De-escalation** – High Priority
- **Procedural Justice** - Medium Priority
- **Understanding Different Cultures / Cultural Competency** - Medium Priority
- **Handling Protests** - From safety and 1st Amendment perspective. High Priority
- **Spanish** – develop a plan to hire more bilingual officers or encourage fluency.

3. **Policy and Procedures Subcommittee**

(1) **The department should post its policies online.** In order to increase transparency and to better inform the public, police department policies should be posted online.

(2) **The department should adopt a bias-free policing policy.** The policy would expressly prohibit policing based on bias.

(3) **The department should adopt anti-racist / bias-free language in policies to guide policing or community contact.** All policies that deal with responding to calls for service or other community and internal interactions should expressly prohibit racist or biased conduct.

(4) **The department should modify its general orders to include OPD officers will not respond with ICE unless they are called to the location.** The policy should be adopted to reduce the appearance that OPD is working with ICE. The new general order would not prohibit OPD from responding.

(5) **Develop policy to require reporting misconduct by department personnel.** The policy would require department personnel to report misconduct.

4. **Oversight and Governance Subcommittee**

Oversight

(1) **Changes to the composition of the CPCR** – removing PD representation for a total of five seats and no alternates. Simple majority vote.

(2) Edits to the definitions of unfounded vs unsubstantiated complaints in order to make the distinction more clear, without changing the intent in order to address confusion.

(3) Consideration should be given to hiring an outside investigator to review complaint cases, as opposed to a department investigator.

- Potential fiscal cost will need to be examined. Peekskill is developing one, and Tarrytown is moving in that direction too.
- The investigation would be parallel to any concurrent OPD investigations.

(4) CPCRb procedural suggested recommended changes:

- Village counsel: Codifying that the village counsel or their deputy is in attendance at every meeting
- Recusal of a CPCRb member from voting if conflict of interest such as being related
- Virtual and hybrid meetings: Retaining ability to attend virtually
- Add to code that meeting is held at village property other than the PD

(5) CPCRb timeline changes:

- Change max length of time for complaints from 90 to 120 days
- Specifying that investigation will begin within 10 business days of the complaint being filed, and will complete within 30 days unless additional times, unless PD submits a justification for the delay in writing.

(6) Required training: Currently, 11 categories of training must be completed before a new member can review *any* case. Suggested change to only use of force, vehicle stops, constitutional issues, which would be defined as 'core training'. OPD would be responsible for providing all training; core three areas within a month, rest within six months.

(7) Cases reviewed by CPCRb: Remove rule that bars the CPCRb from reviewing complaint cases where either the OPD employee or complainant is the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation.

Governance

(1) New police board of commissioners: Police commission role transferred to new board, comprised of:

- Five community members
- Up to two Board of Trustees members

This would require a change to the Village Charter and to the Westchester County Police Act making this a longer term recommendation.

- (2) **Appointment/election:** Two ideas for selection of community members
- A. Mayor nominates, village board approves community members to serve on the board.
 - B. Initially for the first three years, the village board would determine the membership of the community member slots on the police commission. Mayor nominates, village board approves. Thereafter, elected.
- (3) **Eligibility and term:** Community members would serve three year terms. For appointed positions, it should be prioritized for the diversity of the community to be reflected on the board.
- Do not have to be American citizen to serve on the commission.
 - Commissioners can't be immediate family members of PD employees
 - Maximum of three consecutive terms.
 - Persons would not be eligible to serve on on both CPCRb and commission
- (4) Upon the new commission's creation, any Village Code reference to "village board who sits as commissioners" would be changed to the new board of commissioners.
- (5) Upon the creation of a new commission, the initial/acting board should have x number of people from the working committee.

Transparency

- (1) Report on implementation of the police reform plan should be given every month at Village Board meetings.
- (2) OPD policy manual should be more transparent and available on the village website. In addition, the policy manual should be made available in hard copy free of charge at the police department or village hall.
- (3) Tying in with the governance section suggested recommendations, **police commissioners would have role in reviewing policies:**
- Input and review of new policies from police commission
 - Specifically, use of force policies should be reviewed every five years.
- (4) **Names and contact info** for all police personnel that are ranked lieutenant and above should be listed on the website.

(5) Demographics of police personnel should be listed on the website.

(6) OPD should make regular reports on:

- Transparent reporting from OPD in how job opportunities and recruitment are conducted.
- Regular reporting to board/commission on arrest and stop statistics, as well as positive interactions.
- Additionally, reporting should be made specifically on the activities of 'unmarked marked' cars to board/commission.