



CITY OF WATERVLIET

Police Policy Review Committee

Final Report

A comprehensive report providing recommendations to help promote community relationships, reduce racial and minority disparities in policing, and foster trust, fairness and legitimacy between the Watervliet Police Department and the Watervliet Community.

Hon. Charles Patricelli
Mayor

March 4, 2021

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
<i>The Committee</i>	4
<i>The Department</i>	11
Current Practices	
<i>Recruitment & Training</i>	16
<i>Use of Force & De-escalation Practices</i>	18
<i>Mental Health Procedures</i>	19
<i>Violence Prevention & Reduction Strategies</i>	21
<i>Complaint & Discipline Procedures</i>	23
<i>Implicit Bias & Procedural Justice</i>	24
Recommendations	26
Conclusion	31
Appendix	
<i>Appendix A (Executive Order No. 203)</i>	32
<i>Appendix B (Topics)</i>	34
<i>Appendix C (Recruitment & Training Agenda)</i>	35
<i>Appendix D (Recruit Hiring Process)</i>	36
<i>Appendix E (Use of Force Agenda)</i>	37
<i>Appendix F (Mental Health Procedures & Practices Agenda)</i>	38
<i>Appendix G (Violence Prevention & Reduction Strategies Agenda)</i>	39
<i>Appendix H (Roundtable Questions)</i>	40
<i>Appendix I (Complaint & Discipline Procedures & Practices Agenda)</i>	41
<i>Appendix J (2021 Complaints & Discipline Cases)</i>	42

"Effective policing relies on the police having the confidence of the communities they serve, and this consultation gives the public an opportunity to contribute to the values and standards they expect of police officers." -Hazel Blears

Introduction

On June 12, 2020 Governor Andrew Cuomo signed Executive Order No. 203 (Appendix A) requiring each local government in the State of New York to adopt a policing reform plan by April 1, 2021. The City of Watervliet, under guidance from Acting Chief of Police Lieutenant Brian Strock, began mapping out how to best fulfill the various requirements contained within the Executive Order. Several internal meetings between various city leaders acted as brainstorming sessions to help guide the city with this endeavor. In October 2020 Mayor Charles Patricelli and General Manager Joseph LaCivita authorized the internal plan and set forth a timeline for implementation.

On October 15, 2020, the Watervliet City Council adopted Resolution No. 9781 which allowed for the creation of the Watervliet Police Policy Review Committee (WPPRC). The WPPRC was commissioned to achieve the goals set forth in the Executive Order No. 203. An immediate public call was put forth by General Manager LaCivita seeking interested members from the community to join the WPPRC. A total of 13 citizens answered that call. Under the guidance from the Governor's Executive Order and the City Resolution, committee member's names were sent to the City Council for review and approval. On November 5, 2020 the Watervliet City Council adopted Resolution No. 9782 which appointed twelve committee members to the WPPRC. Work started right away and throughout the next several months the WPPRC met publicly to discuss the topics contained herein. These meetings, which initially began as in-person meetings, were held at the Watervliet Senior Citizen Center, 1501 Broadway, Watervliet, NY. Unfortunately, the meetings were forced to go virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenge of conducting these meetings virtually, they remained open to the public via Zoom and routinely had several Watervliet residents present.



GOVERNOR ANDREW CUOMO SIGNING EXECUTIVE ORDER #203.
- PHOTO COURTESY OF NYS GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

At each meeting a specific topic relating to the mandates contained within the Executive Order was presented and analyzed to detect strengths and weaknesses relating to race/minority issues as well as overall community relations. The committee then attempted to identify measurable goals to improve upon. The recommendations from the committee are included within this plan.

In order to properly evaluate and provide recommendations, the committee was given unprecedented access to the police department's inner workings. Discussions about race relations, studying department statistics, reviewing policies, debates on the role of the police in the community & schools, and the examination of the Watervliet Police Department's strengths and weaknesses, took place. According to Acting Chief Lt. Brian Strock the committee's feedback has already made an impact with pointing the police department in the right direction on certain topics, prior to the final report being issued.

The City Administration and Police Department realize that some of the committee's recommendations are ambitious while others are easily attainable. Nonetheless, all the recommendations have and will continue to guide the police department. For some of the recommendations, two major hurdles are consistent; funding and staffing. For example, a recommendation to implement the use of body-worn cameras (BWC) to enhance transparency, trust, and legitimacy within the community would cost significant money annually. A preliminary cost analysis for the implementation of BWC shows a 5-year financial impact of \$120,000 to \$125,000¹ for the equipment. Additionally, a civilian video custodian position would need to be hired to manage the video evidence program. Including fringe benefits and salary, this position would cost the city approximately \$30,000 - \$40,000/yr. The total five-year cost estimate would be between \$270,000 to \$325,000. This would equate to a yearly budget increase for the police department of \$54,000 to \$65,000. Ultimately this would translate to an estimated property tax increase for Watervliet residents of approximately 1% to 1.5% *just to fund a BWC program*². At the time of this report, there is no grant funding available for small agencies, such as Watervliet PD. To implement such program would mean all total costs would be passed onto our citizens.

Once convened, the committee established a meeting schedule and identified topics to discuss (Appendix B). These core topics were:

- Recruitment & Training practices
- Use of Force & De-escalation practices
- Mental Health Procedures & practices
- Violence Prevention & Reduction strategies
- Complaint & Discipline Procedures and practices
- Implicit Bias & Procedural Justice practices

¹ Axon Enterprise, Inc estimate from Oct 2020: 5 yr contract: \$34,000 1st year, \$22,000/yr for 4yrs.

² Source: Watervliet's Finance Director Amanda Austin; For every \$50k in additional spending equates to 1% property tax increase.

For each topic, the department provided an overview of its relevant policies, procedures and practices. For some topics, subject matter experts were invited to provide greater insight to the committee members. At the conclusion of each presentation, committee members were asked to provide their feedback and recommendations. The information received from these meetings is what was used for this report.

The Committee

The Mayor, in consultation with the General Manager and Acting Chief of Police, nominated the below stakeholders to the City Council for appointment to the WPPRC. The City Council unanimously approved these stakeholders. Pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order, each stakeholder brought to the committee a specific set of views and skills. The WPPRC stakeholders included:

- members and leadership of the Watervliet Police Department;
- members of the community, with whom had high numbers of police interactions;
- non-profits and faith-based community groups;
- the Albany County District Attorney's Office;
- the Albany County Public Defender's Office; and
- local elected officials.

Charles V. Patricelli

Mayor of the City of Watervliet

Charles Patricelli is currently the Mayor of the City of Watervliet. He assumed this position January 2020. Prior to that he was a member of the City Council since 2017. Prior to his retirement in 2016 he was the Executive Director of the Watervliet Housing Authority for 35 years. He managed over 400 units and for the last 4 years he was the first area director to manage both the Watervliet and Cohoes Housing authorities, totaling over 700 units.

Over the 35 years at the Watervliet Housing and continuing to the present day he has been active in almost every city function, board and activity representing all the residents of the City. He has a BS of Marketing & Management from Siena College, graduated from Watervliet High School.

Lieutenant Brian J. Strock

Acting Chief of Police, City of Watervliet

Lt. Brian Strock assumed the duties of the Acting Chief of Police on May 13th, 2020 following the departure of the former Chief of Police. As the Acting Chief, he commands a 22-member department that provides services to a densely populated city.

Acting Chief Strock's career spans over the course of 20 years, beginning in 2001 as a correction officer for the Albany County Sheriff's Department. In 2005 he became a police officer for the City of Troy Police Department where he served for over a decade before transferring to the City of Watervliet Police Department in 2015. Throughout his career, Acting Chief Strock has worked in several specialized assignments including being a certified field training officer, NYS police instructor, and peer support team coordinator. Over the course of this career, he has extensive experience working in exclusive units such as an Street Crimes Unit, Community Policing Unit, and School Resource Officer (SRO). Prior to being selected as Acting Chief, he was promoted to Sergeant in 2016, Lieutenant in 2019, and named Executive Officer in the fall of 2019.

Acting Chief Strock is a third-generation police officer. His father, James, served for over 36 years with the City of Troy, New York Police Department before retiring with the rank of Detective. Strock's paternal grandfather had also served with the City of Troy Police Department before retiring with the rank of Sergeant.

Acting Chief Strock lives locally with his family. He enjoys spending his free time coaching football and baseball for various local youth sports programs.

Alexander Scher, Esq.

Albany County Assistant District Attorney

A 2014 graduate of Albany Law School, Mr. Scher has been an Assistant District Attorney with the Albany County District Attorney's Office since 2015. He was assigned as the prosecutor in the Town of Colonie Justice Court from 2015 to 2018 until he was shifted to the City of Watervliet Justice Court, where he remains the prosecutor. As the prosecutor for the Watervliet City Court, Mr. Scher is responsible for the handling of all violations of the Penal Code in as well as certain violations of the Vehicle and Traffic Law.

In Albany County Court, Mr. Scher is assigned to prosecute felony cases including homicides, firearms offenses, violent assaults and narcotic investigations. Throughout his time with the District Attorney's Office, he has worked closely with both Local and County level Drug and Substance Abuse Treatment Courts, the Felony Youth Diversion Board as well as a variety of other treatment and alternative to incarceration programs.

Anthony Huntley, Esq

Albany County Assistant Public Defender

Anthony is a proud native of Albany, NY. He received his Jurors Doctorate (JD) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) at Western New England University School of Law in Springfield, MA. Anthony is an Assistant Public Defender with the Albany County Public Defender's Office where he serves as a Felony Trial Attorney and as the Primary Public Defender assigned to Watervliet City Court, Coeymans and Rensselaerville Town Court. As a Public Defender, he zealously advocates for his clients to ensure their rights are protected.

Mr. Huntley is excited to not only listen, but to add his voice to any discussion on issues of race, community, and ethics within Watervliet City.

Sergeant Anthony Buttofuoco

President, Watervliet Police Benevolent Association

Sgt. Buttofuoco was honorably discharged from the US. Marine Corp in 1993 after four years of service. He is graduated of HVCC with an Associates in Applied Science Degree with a Major in Accounting. He had worked in the private sector within the health care field until 2003. With 9/11 serving as an inspiration, Sgt. Buttofuoco was hired in 2003 by the New York City Police Department where he worked patrol in Queens. For family reasons, Sgt. Buttofuoco later relocated back to the Capital District where he worked for the US Postal Service and the Green Island Police Department part time as a police officer. In 2006 Sgt. Buttofuoco was hired by the City of Troy Police Department and remained employed with them for almost 10 years. During his tenor with Troy Police, he became an Evidence Technician, assisting TPD's detective bureau with multiple homicide investigations and other violent crimes. Sgt. Buttofuoco was the recipient of the "Officer of The Year Award" for Troy Police Department in 2013 and served as a field training officer.

Sgt Buttofuoco's last assignment with Troy PD before transferring to Watervliet Police was working as a School Resource Officer for the Troy High School. In October of 2015, he left TPD and transferred to the City of Watervliet as a patrol officer. Within a year, he was promoted to sergeant and for the past 4-years served as a patrol sergeant for the 1st Platoon (midnight shift).

In addition to his patrol sergeant duties, Sgt. Buttofuoco also serves the department's PBA president representing both current and retired Watervliet police officers.

Yorden C. Huban, Esq

Corporation Counsel, City of Watervliet

Mr. Yorden Huban grew up in the City of Watervliet having graduated from Watervliet High School as a stand-out three sport student-athlete. He later attended George Washington University and Syracuse University.

As the City of Watervliet Corporation Counsel, Mr. Huban provides legal assistance and guidance to the Mayor, City Council and General Manager. He coordinates and defends all actions and proceedings involving the City. In addition, he negotiates and prepares legal documents such as contracts, agreements, deeds, leases, etc., and negotiates collective bargaining agreements and other labor matters.

It is also his responsibility to develop and assist in the drafting of proposed legislation, rules, regulations, and policies for City programs and operations; to review information and actions of other governments to assess the impact on the City; and to serve as Counsel to various municipal Boards.

Joan Massey

Watervliet Resident

Joan is the Principal of the Redemption Christian Academy in Troy, New York. She is a dedicated and passionate Assistant Pastor of Redemption Church of Christ of the Apostolic Faith located in Watervliet, NY.

In addition to her duties as a school principal and assistant pastor, Joan oversees the daily administrative functions of the Redemption Christian Academy and Goodway Bakery.

Joan enjoys bible teaching and mission work during her spare time. She has founded several community programs, personally overseeing their development and implantation. Those programs included a family camp, the Pathfinders program, which teaches youth abstinence and other character programs, and Woman of Faith, which conducts international and domestic bible teaching on women's issues.

Joan is a 1967 graduate of Hudson Valley Community College and a 1982 graduate of Gateway College of Evangelism where she earned a B.A. in Christian Education Studies.

Amanda Cavanaugh

President, Watervliet City School District's Board of Education

Amanda Cavanaugh is the mother to two children and wife to, Carolann Cavanaugh. Besides serving as the President of the Board of Education for the Watervliet City School District, she is the organizer for the CYO Basketball program and the head of the Cheer portion of the Watervliet Youth Football and Cheer group.

When she is not volunteering her time to the youth of the City, she is working her full-time job as a Campaign Manager for Compassion & Choices. Amanda's original hometown is Broadalbin-Perth, a town similar to that of Watervliet. Despite not growing up in Watervliet, Amanda has firmly planted her feet in this community, dedicated the past five years to making the Watervliet community a positive place for its youth.

Jasmine Norman, Esq.

Watervliet Resident

Jasmine Norman's inspiration for joining the Watervliet Police Policy Review Committee (WPPRC) was rooted in her background as a criminal and family law attorney, African American ancestry, and position as a homeowner in the City of Watervliet.

Originally from Queens New York, Jasmine studied Economics and Government at Smith College in Northampton Massachusetts, but, it was her desire to ensure that New Yorkers, especially Black citizens, are treated equally, fairly, and justly before the law, encouraged her to enroll at SUNY Buffalo Law School in 2011. Currently a Senior Licensing Attorney with the Department of State, Jasmine has been practicing litigation in the Capital Region over the course of the last five years. Above all else, Jasmine is committed to her obligation to help create an environment that is fair and just for her family, friends, and neighbors. She served almost three years as an Assistant Conflict Defender in Schenectady County representing a diverse group of clients in criminal and family litigation matters. Her position required her to work with judges, adversaries and clients in order to achieve the best outcome for her clients and also preserve judicial efficiency in a respectable, ethical manner. Her role as a public defender taught her how to listen to the needs of everyone involved in a matter and promote fairness.

Even further, living in Watervliet the past couple of years has been a delight to Jasmine, her husband and growing family. She enjoys her neighbors and is sure that Black Bear Inn knows her weekly food order by heart. She looks forward to showing others that living in Watervliet can be great if everyone invests in their appreciation of the community and all those living in it.

Bob Passonno

Watervliet Resident

Bob Passonno is a lifelong resident of the City of Watervliet living in the Port Schuyler section with his wife Ellen where they have raised four children. Bob served as uniformed patrol officer and sergeant in the Watervliet Police Department from 1976 until he retired in 1996.

Bob's was involved in several roles during his tenure as a police officer, including Watervliet Community Council, DARE program (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), Police liaison to the Watervliet Housing Authority, in-service police trainer, and instructor at regional police academies.

Throughout his police career and into the present, Bob has been involved in a variety of Watervliet community, church, and school projects, along with youth sports and activities. Currently, Bob serves in Watervliet as a Trustee at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish of Watervliet and Green Island, the Exalted Ruler at the Watervliet Lodge of Elks #1500, and the President of the City of Watervliet Civil Service Commission.

Bob earned his B.S. Degree in Finance from Siena College and holds master's degrees in both Public Administration and Criminal Justice from the Nelson A. Rockefeller College of the State University of New York at Albany. Bob is currently employed as a program administrator for the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV). At OPDV, Bob trains police officers throughout New York State in domestic violence and stalking issues, collaborating with social workers, police, and other criminal justice professionals to develop and implement statutes, laws, and policies.

Christina Yerry

Watervliet Resident

Christina Yerry currently serves as the Wellness and Mental Health Program Director for STRIVE, International. She supervises a staff of Mental Health Professionals while overseeing all aspects of the program. Christina works interdependently with the NYC Mayor's Office and several government agencies to carry out the mission of the NYC Thrive Initiative. While completing her Master of Arts Degree in Forensic Psychology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Christina researched methods for mitigating the social, psychological and behavioral challenges that often arise between law enforcement entities and the communities they serve.

Christina is an Associate Member of the New York State Psychological Association. As a Master's Level Psychological Associate and Certified Crisis Intervention Specialist, Christina works closely with the NYPD, the NYC Mayor's Office, NYC-DOC, and several NYS and Federal Government Agencies to make policy recommendations and implement programs that assist

law enforcement, legal actors, and community members to more closely align with a unified approach that fosters mutual respect.

Christina actively participates in the continued development of training methods and techniques through collaboration with Forensic Assertive Community Treatment Teams and community stakeholders to expand knowledge and awareness on diversity, de-escalation, and preemptive strategies designed to reduce crisis before it begins.

Although, her work requires frequent travel, Christina resides in Watervliet with her Husband, Frank and their daughter, Lauren.

Joseph Koyon, Jr.

Watervliet Resident

Mr. Joseph Koyon, Jr. has over 25 years of experience in operations management and human resources, including extensive work with policies, procedures and employee relations. He has led and supported a diverse workforce in a variety of industries and environments, with a focus on leadership development.

Since 2015, he has served on the board of the Capital Region Human Resource Association (CRHRA), including the last 2 years as President. His tenure has focused on improvement of day-to-day operations, expansion of community relationships, and re-organization of governance structure and practices. Joe is a graduate of Siena College and holds an M. S. in Organizational Management from Sage Graduate School.

The Department

In order to better understand the findings and recommendations from the committee, the WPPRC believed it was important to provide a general overview of the community and the police department in this report so to place their recommendations in proper context.

According to the U.S. Census 2019 estimates, the City of Watervliet has a population of 10,050 residents who are tightly packed into a 1.3 square mile mostly urban environment. The population density equates to 7,360.59 residents per square mile³. In comparison, Watervliet's population density outcores the cities of Albany (4,506.84/sq. mi)³, Schenectady (6,048.28/sq. mi)³, Troy (4,745.97/sq. mi)³, and Cohoes (4,422.74/ sq. mi)³. The median household income is \$43,803 with approximately 18.7% of the population living below the poverty line⁴. 7.9% of the population are military veterans. 86.8% of the residents speak English at home, while 7.5% speak other European languages, and 5% speak Spanish.

With regards to race, 75% of Watervliet's population are white. 9.7% are Black/African American, 3.9% are Asian, and 2.6% are classified by the census as "other". 8.8% of the population identify with two or more races.

19.7% of Watervliet's population are considered disabled according to the most recent census data. The three largest categories being independent living difficulty (10.6%), ambulatory difficulty (10.3%) and cognitive difficulty (9.3%). Of the city's residents, 84.9% are a high school graduate or higher. The city is serviced by the Watervliet City School District for which they have an Elementary School (pre-K t through 6th grade) and one High School (7th- 12th).

Watervliet Demographics

Population -	10,050
Median Income -	\$43,803
% below poverty line –	18.7%
Military Veterans –	7.9%
Language –	86.8% English 7.5% Other European 5% Spanish
Race -	75% white 9.7% Black/ African American 8.8% Two or more races 3.9% Asian 2.6% Other
Disabilities -	19.7% of population

-Source 2019 US Census Estimates

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watervliet,_New_York

⁴ <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=1600000US3678674>

Watervliet is bordered on three sides by the town of Colonie (on the north by the hamlet of Maplewood, on the west by the hamlets of Latham and Mannsville, and on the south by the hamlet of Schuyler Heights). The northeastern corner of Watervliet is bounded by the village of Green Island. Watervliet is bounded on the east by the Hudson River (which is the boundary between Albany County and Rensselaer County). The city of Troy is across the river from Watervliet.



The Watervliet Arsenal, which is the oldest continuously active arsenal in the United States and produces much of the artillery for the army, as well as gun tubes for cannons, mortars, and tanks, sits in the middle of the city splitting the city in two, the north end (“uptown”) and the south end (“Port Schuyler”). The Arsenal is federal property, managed by the United States Army. The base has its own police and fire departments, of which the City of Watervliet enjoys a close relationship between the respective police and fire departments.

Law enforcement in the city is supplemented by the New York State Police, who focus their patrols on Interstate 787, and Albany County Sheriff’s Department. The WPD has extensive history in providing and receiving mutual aid police and fire services from surrounding agencies, such as the Village of Green Island.

The Watervliet Police Department’s authorized strength is 26 members. (one Police Chief, one Lieutenant, eight sergeants, sixteen police officers). The department is currently operating with 22 members. At the time of this report, vacancies that exist include one Chief of Police, one Sergeant (patrol), two police officers (patrol officer & traffic safety officer).

The department is split into three main divisions; Operations, Criminal Investigations, and Administration. The Operations Division contains the Patrol Bureau and Animal Control Officer. The Patrol Bureau has three platoons: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Platoon. The platoon hours are 12am to 8am, 8am to 4pm, and 4pm to 12am respectively. When fully staffed, each platoon has a minimum of five police officers and two sergeants assigned to them, each with different days off which rotate every five weeks. Patrol officers are deployed on foot, bicycle and in mobile patrols. Officers assigned to the division serve as the department’s work-horse, handling thousands of calls for service every year. In between responding to calls and proactively patrolling, members are encouraged to engage in “Park, Walk, Talk” foot-patrols. The department attempts to operate with three to four members during a specific shift. At times, the shifts have been staffed with only two or three members depending on the circumstances

**Operations
Division**

with staffing. A patrol sergeant is not always on-duty. When a sergeant isn't working, the shift will operate with an "acting supervisor". The acting supervisor, which is generally the most senior patrol officer, will oversee the basic functions of the shift in lieu of the sergeant.

The Criminal Investigations Unit (CIU) is responsible for investigating property crimes, violent offenses, sex crimes, narcotics, domestic violence and financial crimes. Two members are assigned to the unit, both serving as task force officers with our federal law enforcement partners, such as the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Additionally, the unit oversees a police officer who is cross trained as a Field Intelligence Officer (FIO). The FIO's responsibility is to monitor crime trends, assist in compiling and analyzing data-driven policing reports, forwarding safety alerts to department members, and serving as a liaison to state and local intelligence centers. The CIU also manages the department's evidence technicians, who are certified to photograph, collect, preserve, and process evidence at crime scenes.

CIU Division

The Administration Division contains the Training Unit, District Attorney/Discovery liaison sergeant, and Policy Review Committee. The confidential assistant to the Chief of Police is responsible for records management, purchasing and payroll functions.

Administration Division

Since 2019, the department has incorporated the use of police officers cross trained as Public Information Officers (PIO's). This initiative was intended to provide the department with



PIO YERRY PROVIDING AN INTERVIEW TO NBC AFFILIATE WNYT.

a presence within social media while also establishing a relationship with local news media outlets. The department began Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts regularly posting on each. In late 2020, the police department's website underwent a complete overhaul with an emphasis on making it more user friendly. To be more transparent, the department began posting key department policies on the website for the public to view. To further promote these websites, the department placed decals on its patrol fleet and

created rack cards directing the public to WPD's

various social media platforms. Again, in an effort to be more transparent with WPD activities, a total of twenty-two press releases were sent out in 2020 announcing key arrests and initiatives. The department now routinely conducts interviews with local news media regarding law enforcement topics, both positive and negative.

It is important to note that several officers are cross trained to perform multiple jobs. For example, the FIO primarily serves as a patrol officer, however, they provide FIO services when not working as a patrol officer. The Training Unit is comprised of several members all of which are primarily assigned to patrol work. Members are asked to multitask their responsibilities and shift from being a training officer to a patrol officer multiple times throughout the year. By doing so allows the department to save staffing. However, without a full-time trainer, the process of implementing new or updated training is usually delayed.

Members of the department are issued various equipment to assist them in their daily job duties. All members are issued normal police equipment, such as soft body armor, portable radios, various lethal and less-lethal weapons, but also Narcan®, Individual First Aid Kits (tourniquets), Tasers, gas masks, riot helmets, and other personal and public safety equipment. The department relies on mutual aid services for certain specialized functions, such as SWAT, accident reconstruction, and major crimes.

The department previously dispatched itself utilizing a combination of civilian dispatchers and sworn police officers until early 2012 when dispatching services were consolidated with the Albany County Sheriff's Office Communications Center located in Voorheesville, NY⁵. The department currently receives these services at no cost to the city.

Of the department's twenty-two (22) sworn members, twenty (20) are white, one (1) member is Black/African-American, and one (1) member is Hispanic. All sworn members are males. The department's lone female officer retired in early 2020. There have been on-going efforts to recruit minorities and females, however, a lack of certified candidates is delaying this initiative.

The department's 2021 budget \$2,463,135⁶. As noted early, the budget is mostly comprised of salary/benefits, overtime allotment, and contractual expenses. The budget contains very minimal discretionary allowances outside these basic expenditures.

The department operates a fleet of eight (8) marked patrol vehicles and four (4) unmarked/administrative vehicles. The average age and mileage for the patrol vehicles is 2015 and 78,000 miles. The average age for the unmarked/administrative vehicles is 2012 and 81,000 miles.

⁵ <https://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Watervliet-Cohoes-will-see-savings-in-dispatch-3344973.php>

⁶ <https://www.watervliet.com/pulsepro/data/files/2021%20Budget%20For%20Public%20Hearing%2011.6.2020.pdf>

Policies and procedures are currently being updated to best practices. In 2019 WPD began the process to become a New York State Law Enforcement Accredited⁷ agency, however, the process has been delayed due to manpower and financial reasons.

The department has one main police station, which is located within City Hall. Inside the police department contains a locker facility for officers, workspace for patrol supervisors, various offices, evidence storage, booking facilities, and holding cells for prisoners. The department has a comprehensive public safety camera network on several main thoroughfares in the city. However, the camera system is outdated and has experienced numerous critical failures recently.



JUNE 2020: MEMBERS OF WPD OUTSIDE CITY HALL.

Additionally, the IT equipment (computers, printers, internet, etc.) is also outdated causing regular failures as well. A 2020 study conducted by the department estimated that between \$300,000 to \$350,000 was needed to update the department's IT and public safety camera systems. The department has solicited New York State for a State and Municipal Facilities grant and is currently awaiting final approval.

In 2020 the police department answered 14,816 calls for service. This number was down 10% from 2019 (16,468). WPD made 472 arrests in 2020 and issued 1,135 traffic tickets. The department responded to 529 traffic collisions, 474 mental health/welfare checks, and 558 domestic dispute incidents in 2020. Officer's initiated activities such as traffic stops, or property checks occurred 3,204 times in 2020.

14,816
of calls in 2020

Additional information regarding specific department statistics, such as the number of use of force incidents or number of civilian complaints, are contained in other sections of this report.

⁷ https://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/ops/docs/accred/standards_compliance_verification_manual.pdf

Recruitment & Training

On November 12, 2020 the committee met to discuss the WPD's recruitment and training practices (Appendix C). Present at the meeting was Sergeant Christopher Toleman who is the department's training supervisor. Sgt. Toleman oversees a Training Committee, which is comprised of several department police officers who have received specialized certifications from NYS DCJS to instruct. During the meeting, Sgt. Toleman explained the department's current training practices.

Acting Chief Strock discussed the three phases of the hiring and training of a new Watervliet Police Officer (Appendix D). Other topics covered during the presentation included the mandated initial training officers receive in the academy and immediately afterward through their field training. Acting Chief Strock and Sgt. Toleman advised the committee on how those standards are met and exceeded in some situations.

The presentation concluded with discussions about department continuing education training after the police academy, or more commonly referred to as "in-service" training. WPD strives to complete in-service training in several core topics, to include but not limited to use of force, firearms recertification, emergency medical care, and current topics deemed important by the Training Committee. In addition to in-service instruction, and when training opportunities arise, WPD will send police officers to specialized classes with the expectation that the knowledge received will be brought back to the department and shared. Examples of such specialized training recently attended by WPD have been Procedural Justice/ Principled Policing, Crowd Management/Civil Unrest, Reality based instructor certification, and Patrol Bicycle School.

A major hurdle the department faces with training is the cost to send an officer. With larger agencies, pulling an officer from patrol to attend training can usually be replaced with other on-duty officers. However, with a smaller agency such as WPD, if an officer is pulled from patrol, the department must usually spend overtime to backfill that post for the day. This is due to having minimal personnel available on any given patrol shift.

At the completion of the presentation, the WPPRC discussed and provided the following comments/recommendations:

1. As part of the Phase II process to become a police officer, WPPRC recommends that during the department's formal interview process the panel adds a scoring mechanism to rate the police officer candidates. This would assist with minimizing biases and standardizing the interview results.

2. The WPPRC identified that WPD's use of partner agencies for combined training is among several strengths with their training practices. The use of trainers from other agencies benefits WPD's ability to capitalize on specialized instruction which WPD would not normally have access to. Additionally, supplying WPD's specialized trainers to other agencies assists with building positive relationships and broadens the trainers' understanding with different audiences. The WPPRC recommends WPD continue such practices.
3. The WPPRC identified weaknesses in areas of diversity and implicit bias training. The committee acknowledges and applauds that the department is currently developing further training in this area and has already undergone an 8-hour training in 2020 regarding these topics. The WPPRC recommends the Training Committee focus on incorporating more diversity & implicit bias classes, to include the use of on-line training tools.
4. The WPPRC identified that WPD has limited leadership training for supervisors. The committee recommends establishing a training plan specific to department supervisors to supplement their initial 120-hour Course in Police Supervision class. One such idea would be establishing a reading list of key books/articles for supervisors (and officers) or on-line training tools.
5. The WPPRC identified that WPD should establish mechanisms to recruit minorities and female police candidates. Recommendations included:
 - a. Petition the Watervliet Civil Service Commission to remove the residency requirement for the entry level police officers.
 - b. The Police Department should work with the Watervliet Civil Service Commission to clarify or clearly explain what criminal offenses, if convicted, would disqualify a candidate from becoming a police officer.
 - c. Conduct test-prep sessions leading up to the entry level police officer exam where volunteer "teachers" would help interested applicants strengthen their test taking skills.
 - d. Begin recruitment efforts within local schools, specifically Watervliet High School, and local colleges. One such example would be establishing an Explorer/Cadet Program with the Watervliet youth to get them interested in a career in law enforcement.
 - e. The Watervliet Police Department should engage in recruitment efforts within local businesses, such as barber shops, with a focus being with minority groups.

USE OF FORCE & DE-ESCALATION PRACTICES

On November 18, 2020 the committee met to discuss the WPD's use of force and de-escalation practices (Appendix E).

Acting Chief Strock's presentation included discussions on New York State laws, specifically Penal Law Article 35, and department policies highlighting when a police officer can utilize force against another person. Prior to the meeting, all committee members were given the department's Use of Physical Force, Use of Deadly Physical Force and Officer-Involved Shooting policies to review and identify strengths & weaknesses within the policies.

At the time of the meeting, the following statistics were presented to the committee:

- *Jan 1st to Nov 18th* = (12,984) calls with (411) arrests made.
- (26) use of force incidents
- (0) injuries to officers or suspects
- (0) civilian complaints regarding use of force incidents
- (0) discharges of firearms
- (35) average age of the subject
- (18) use of force incidents had drug/alcohol involvement
- Race of subjects: (12) white, (14) black
- (22) incidents were "arrest situations", (4) incidents were investigation only incidents
- (21) were "hands-on" use of force, (8) involved an officer displaying their firearm toward the subject and (1) involved an officer displaying their taser towards a subject.
- (00.2%) of all interactions between the police & subjects lead to a use of force incident.

With regard to training on use of force, Acting Chief Strock advised the committee that it conducts yearly refreshers on department policies as well as requiring its members demonstrate firearms proficiently. However, the department does not have a NYS certified Defensive Tactics instructor on staff that could provide hands-on defensive tactics/arrest techniques refresher classes.

At the completion of the presentation, the WPPRC discussed and provided the following comments/recommendations:

1. The committee reviewed the department's applicable policies and indicated they were "very thorough". The mandates for all officers to have a duty to intercede (when they reasonable believe force is excessive) and the mandate for officers to de-escalate, if possible, prior to utilizing force were highlighted as key concepts. The committee recommended the department continue to follow progressive practices, as they evolve, so long as the practices are tolerated by the Watervliet community.
2. The committee recommends that, to promote transparency, the department should post use of force statistics for public viewing on its website and send the General Manager's office these figures at regular intervals (monthly, quarterly, etc.).
3. The WPPRC noted that the department lacks proper de-escalation and defensive tactics training. The committee recommends the department make it a priority to have an officer become a certified instructor on this topic or utilize another agency's instructor to implement annual refresher training.
4. The WPPRC acknowledges that no civilian complaints were received with use of force incidents recently, however, there is a high probability that if such a complaint were to be received, it would lead to contested facts about the situation (the officer's word vs such a complaint). The committee recommended that the department take measures to alleviate this potential conflict, such as the implementation of body worn cameras.

MENTAL HEALTH PROCEDURES & PRACTICES

On December 10, 2020 the committee met virtually to discuss WPD's mental health procedures and practices relating to how it handles emotional disturbed persons (EDPs) (Appendix F). A presentation was made by Acting Chief Lt. Brian Strock and Ms. Katie Flanagan, coordinator of the Albany County Mobile Crisis Team.

Albany County's MCT is a group of specially trained social workers who are available to respond to requests from police for assistance at mental health calls. The team does not replace the police officers but rather supplements them and serves as a resource for officers on scene of mental health calls. The team is staffed 24/7 but has limited workers on duty (only one team is on-duty for the entire county at a time).

Acting Chief Strock presented a department overview on current practices that WPD members follow when dealing with a person in crisis. As part of this section, each committee

member was provided a copy of the department's current policy and discussed the strengths and weaknesses. For the committee to understand what options are available locally, Ms. Flanigan discussed the short- and long-term care options, as well as their pros and cons. The department also provided the following statistics for the committee to review:

As of 11/30/2020:

- 33% increase in mental health calls when compared with 2019. This was most likely due to the addition stress of the COVID-19 crisis.
- (431) total mental health, welfare checks, and suicidal person calls
- (77) instances where police officers took someone into protective custody for mental health treatment
- (16%) of mental health calls resulted in emergency mental health treatment
- (1%) of mental health calls resulted in a use of force incident
- (83%) of emergency mental health treatment were adults, (17%) were juveniles

Committee members agreed that more pressure than ever has been placed on police officers to identify and manage members of the community who have a mental illness and may be in crisis. Despite these added expectations, training has not been upgraded to meet these needs. Ms. Flanigan discussed there is a lag in training but in the interim, the two best solutions to this issue is utilizing Albany County's Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) and having additional police officers trained in the county's Crisis Intervention Team (CIT).

The CIT program utilizes current police officers and provides them with 40-hours of specialized instruction on topics relating to metal illness identification and the best practices when interacting with someone in crisis. Currently the department has eight members trained as CIT. This equates to 36% of the department.

Lastly, the committee heard from Acting Chief Strock regarding ongoing efforts to provide mental health refresher training to current officers during in-service. Recent efforts have included having outreach workers from Albany County coming to WPD and conducting 1-hour training blocks with each officer. Other examples include the partnership developed with the Albany Stratton Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center and Watervliet Fire Department for dealing with veterans in crisis. The VA provided instructors who taught department members tips when dealing with veterans who may be experiencing a crisis episode. The VA instructors also provided the department with the available resources for veterans who are in crisis. 91% of the department received this training.

At the completion of the presentation, the WPPRC discussed and provided the following comments/recommendations:

1. The department make it a priority to have additional officers receive CIT training.
2. A block of instruction be developed and taught regarding cultural differences a person in crisis may experience and how those differences may complex any given situation.
3. The department implement a faith-awareness component to mental illness response, if possible.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION & REDUCTION STRATEGIES

On December 16th, 2020 the committee meet virtually to discuss WPD's overall crime reduction strategies and available resources (Appendix G). The committee participated in a presentation by Acting Chief Lt. Strock which emphasized the need for a mutual community-police partnership and the barriers that are currently being faced. Discussed were controversial strategies such as Stop & Frisk, Broken Windows, Hot Spot/Problem Oriented Policing, Pretextual Stops, and Dayton Foot Patrols. The department acknowledge the need for more community-based strategies to help prevent crime, such as youth development programs, parental support programs, crime prevention through environmental design, diversion programs and restorative justice programs. The department reported that due to the small size of the city police force and the lack of violence our city faces, most programs for community-based outreach are not readily available or do not have any significant presence in the city.

The focus of the conversation was geared towards how the department can improve the relationship between the police and minority community and how to best provide protection for the city's minority community.

During a roundtable discussion, several questions were posed to the committee (Appendix H). Some answers to these questions were placed into the recommendations below.

At the completion of the presentation, the WPPRC discussed and provided the following comments/recommendations:

1. Establish or continue race-neutral enforcement strategies following the national or state guidelines for best practices. The WPRC recommends WPD routinely review department records and statistics to identify potential issues with either individual officers, platoons, or department policies. The WPPRC further

recommends the department utilize a third-party or outside agency to conduct this review.

2. In order to achieve legitimacy and trustworthiness in the community, the committee recommended that the department regularly release its enforcement statistics, to include a breakdown of demographics of those stopped, arrested, and ticketed.
3. The committee recommended the department develop a mentor program with the area youth. As one committee member said, *“Watervliet students become Watervliet’s adults”*. Bridging the gap earlier on and encouraging relationship building between Watervliet’s youth and the police in non-adversarial situations will help build a path to changing future cultures. The WPPRC did provide suggestions for fostering this initiative:
 - a. *Mentor Program* – work with the Watervliet City School District to identify “troubled” youth and pair them up with a volunteer police officer to serve as a mentor.
 - b. *School Resource Officer (SRO) Program* – the department and school district should take advantage of current grant opportunities to begin an SRO/ juvenile detective program. The focus of this program should be to promote positive interactions with the police rather than typical enforcement duties.
 - c. *Cadet/Explorer Program* – The department should establish a youth mentoring program like other local police departments. The Cadet/Explorer program would serve to assist the department with guiding Watervliet youth interested in law enforcement. Additionally, the program would help identify, recruit, and develop future police officer candidates. The focus of the program should be with minority youths. Those youths interested in the program would receive knowledge of real-world policing activities and training. A byproduct of this program would be changing the youth’s perception of the police by combating the many inaccuracies portrayed within the media or from the opinion of others within the youth’s social network. The youth(s) involved in the program would be able to form their own educated opinion based on facts they receive from personally observing the police.
4. The committee recommended that the police department participate in restorative circles through both the Albany County District Attorney’s Office (for adults) and the Watervliet City School District (for youths).

COMPLAINT & DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

On January 6th, 2021 the committee meet virtually to discuss WPD's complaint and discipline procedures (Appendix I). Acting Chief Lt. Strock began the meeting with providing statistics which yielded that in 2020 one (1) formal civilian complaint was received, six (6) department internal affairs investigations were opened, one (1) officer was issued formal discipline, and six (6) officers were provided with either verbal or written counseling from their supervisors. A review of the six internal affairs investigations that occurred in 2020 were provided to the committee (see Appendix J). It was mentioned that out of the six investigations, five of them were initiated by the police department. Additionally, when the department believes a member's conduct may be criminal in nature, the WPD has a standing procedure to request an independent investigation from an outside agency, such as the New York State Police. This occurred once during 2020 when the department initiated an internal investigation in which the alleged conduct could have risen to a crime. The investigation was immediately turned over to the NYSP. The result from the NYSP yielded the allegation was unfounded.

The WPPRC was also provided the department's draft policy for complaint procedures. The draft policy had been updated recently but purposely held back from being issued pending input received from the WPPRC. The committee members were requested to review and provide feedback and recommendations. Their recommendations are included below.

Lastly, a discussion regarding body worn cameras took place. Funding, union issues, and the logistics surrounding the implementation of any such program were discussed. The WPPRC agreed the the benefits of a BWC program would help with combating significant issues troubling law enforcement today, most notably; *what actually happened* during an incident/complaint. Acting Chief Strock explained that a significant problem when handling complaint investigations is determining the facts. Absent any digital media or evidence, the department mostly relies on independent witnesses to shed light on disputed facts surrounding an incident. This especially comes into play when a civilian makes a complaint against an officer for being discourteous. The review may fail to disclose facts to prove or disprove the allegation made in the complaint. This results in frustrations from both the officer and civilian with not being able to properly substantiate the claim was founded (in the case of the civilian) or unfounded (in the case of an officer). With a BWC program, the facts may be easier to obtain. Additionally, a BWC can assist tremendously with the department's attempts to become more transparent with the public.

At the completion of the presentation, the WPPRC discussed and provided the following comments/recommendations:

1. The department issues a year-end review and publish statistics relating to internal investigations.
2. With regard to the department's Complaint Procedure policy, the WPPRC recommends:
 - a. A procedure for handling complaints against an on-duty supervisor.
 - b. A procedure for handling persons who have disabilities wishing to file a complaint (i.e. hearing or vision impaired).
 - c. Addition of another independent review for final dispositions of a complaint(s). A recommendation to include possible the Corporation Counsel as a reviewer of the complaint and investigation.
 - d. Addition of specific roles & responsibilities for the city's Corporation Counsel, General Manager, and Mayor.
 - e. The complaint form should be written in multiple languages. Guidance on what languages to be used should be taken from other NYS agencies.
3. The committee was pleased to see that a person can currently access the department's civilian complaint form either online (via the police department's website) or in the police department lobby. The WPPRC suggested the department work with City Hall leadership and consider implementing a policy for taking/receiving complaints from citizens in City Hall as another option for filing.
4. The committee recommends the department make it a priority to secure funding and implement a body worn camera system for its officers.
5. The committee recommends the department develop an internal anti-harassment policy to include protections for WPD police officers who file complaints against other officers.

IMPLICIT BIAS & PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

On January 20th, 2021 the committee meet virtually to discuss WPD's current practices and training in implicit bias and procedural justice. Acting Chief Lt. Strock began the meeting by introducing Sergeant Christopher Toleman and Sergeant Marc Langlais. Both sergeants are New York State DCJS certified procedural justice/policy legitimacy instructors. Acting Chief Strock advised the committee that since early 2020, under the department's former police chief's direction, the department began taking steps towards embracing


- **Fairness** in the processes
- **Transparency** in actions
- Opportunities for **voice**
- **Impartiality** in decision making

Four Pillars of Procedural Justice

and putting into practice the four pillars of procedural justice⁸. This first began with all department members attending a class on procedural justice. The sergeants presented the WPPRC with an overview of the class that WPD officers were taught.

Following the sergeant's presentation, a roundtable discussion was held between the WPPRC and police department. Topics that were discussed were how to change cultures, both in law enforcement and in the minority community, where legitimacy, trust, and mutual respect can be built. The core issues are much larger than the City of Watervliet but WPD officers can play a key role with every interaction they have with a citizen. The department explained to the WPPRC that law enforcement as a whole is trying to change from the *warrior* mentality to a *guardian* approach. WPD has embraced this cultural shift and is encouraging its officers to replace the "*us vs. them*" mentality with a "*caretaker*" mindset.

Cynicism in law enforcement is challenging. This attitude characteristic is usually more prevalent in senior police officers. A problematic area that was discussed specifically about Watervliet is, due to the small size of the city, there is a high number of negative police interactions with the same citizens. For example, one police officer may respond to the same "trouble" residence multiple times for the same complaint/issue. After a while, both the officer and the citizen understandably become frustrated. When this happens, it becomes difficult with each and every call for the police officer to contain their personal feelings and attitude towards the situation. This is when a breakdown with maintaining fairness, respect and neutrality can be expected. WPD is encouraging their officers to stop looking through their "blue lenses" in these situations.



"IT'S NOT NECESSARILY ABOUT THE
OUTCOME, BUT RATHER THE PROCESS ON
HOW THE OFFICER AND CITIZEN GOT THERE"

At the completion of the presentation, the WPPRC discussed and provided the following comments/recommendations:

1. To help reduce implicit bias and achieve positive reinforcement on both the police and citizen ends, the WPPRC recommends encouraging WPD officers to place themselves in as many non-adversarial situations as possible. Examples include playing basketball with youth, volunteering at events, following up with victims after a significant call, etc.

⁸ For more information about Procedural Justice, visit: <https://cops.usdoj.gov/prodceduraljustice>

2. The WPPRC recommends continuing with procedural justice/ implicit bias training and practices, both internal and external. In addition, the WPPRC recommends the department provide training to mitigate the natural emotions that an officer may feel during certain situations and replace them with critical thinking concepts.
3. The WPPRC recommends that WPD host a procedural justice class for the public, particularly focusing on the reconciliation portion of the program.
4. The WPPRC recommends that department find ways to humanize their police officers. One such example was to highlight officers on social media pages with their biography's.
5. To test if officers are following the pillars of procedural justice, the WPPRC recommended the department institute a *rate-your-service* type program following an officer's interaction with a community member. For example, after a call or other police interaction, the officer handling the incident would be mandated to provide the citizen with a card containing a link to a survey that can be assessed on-line. Standard questions can be answered and scored shedding light on how the officer's interaction was perceived by the citizen.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a summary of the recommendation from the Watervliet Police Policy Review Committee. As presented here, these recommendations are not ranked in any order.

1. As part of the Phase II process to become a police officer, WPPRC recommends that during the department's formal interview process the panel adds a scoring mechanism to rate the police officer candidates. This would assist with minimizing biases and standardizing interview results.
2. The WPPRC identified that WPD's use of partner agencies for combined training is among several strengths with their training practices. The use of other agencies trainers' benefits WPD's ability to capitalize on specialized instruction which WPD would not normally have access to. Additionally, by supplying WPD's specialized trainers to other agencies assists with building positive relationships and broadens the trainers understanding with different audiences. The WPPRC recommends WPD continue such practices.
3. The WPPRC identified weaknesses in areas of diversity and implicit bias training. The committee acknowledges and applauds that the department is currently

developing further training in this area and that all current police officers received a minimum of 8 hours training in these topics in 2020. The WPPRC recommends the Training Committee focus on incorporating more diversity & implicit bias classes, to include the use of on-line training tools. These classes should not be one-time events, but rather implemented as part of WPD regularly scheduled training events

4. The WPPRC identified that WPD has limited leadership training for supervisors. The committee recommends establishing a training plan specific to department supervisors to supplement their initial 120-hour Course in Police Supervision class. One such idea would be establishing a reading list of key books/articles for supervisors (and officers) or on-line training tools.
5. The WPPRC identified that WPD should establish mechanisms to recruit minorities and female police candidates. Recommendations included:
 - a. Petition the Watervliet Civil Service Commission to remove the residency requirement for the entry level police officers.
 - b. The Police Department should work with the Watervliet Civil Service Commission to clarify or clearly explain what criminal offenses, if convicted, would disqualify a candidate from becoming a police officer.
 - c. Conduct test-prep sessions leading up to the entry level police officer exam where volunteer “teachers” would help interested applicants strengthen their test taking skills.
 - d. Begin recruitment efforts within local schools, specifically Watervliet High School, and local colleges. One such example would be establishing an Explorer/Cadet Program with the Watervliet youth to get them interested in a career in law enforcement.
 - e. The Watervliet Police Department should engage in recruitment efforts within local businesses, such as barber shops, with a focus being with minority groups.
6. The committee reviewed the department’s applicable Use of Force related policies and indicated they were “very thorough”. The mandates for all officers to have a duty to intercede (when they reasonable believe force is excessive) and the mandate for officers to de-escalate, if possible, prior to utilizing force were highlighted as key concepts. The committee recommended the department continue to follow progressive practices, as they evolve, so long as the practices are tolerated by the Watervliet community.
7. The committee recommends that, to promote transparency, the department should post use of force statistics for public viewing (i.e., website) and send the

General Manager's office these figures at regular intervals (monthly, quarterly, etc.).

8. The WPPRC identified that the department lacks proper de-escalation and defensive tactics training. The committee recommends the department make it a priority to either certify a department instructor in these topics or utilize another agency's instructor to implement annual refresher training.
9. The WPPRC acknowledges that no civilian complaints were received with use of force incidents recently, however, there is a high probability that if such complaint were to be received, it would lead to contested facts about the situation (the officer's word vs the subject word). The committee recommended that the department take measures to alleviate this potential conflict, such as the implantation of body worn cameras.
10. The department should make it a priority to have additional officers receive Crisis Intervention Team training.
11. The department should develop a block of instruction to teach cultural differences a person in crisis may experience and how those differences may complex any given situation.
12. The department should implement a faith-awareness component to mental illness response, if possible.
13. The department should establish or continue race-neutral enforcement strategies following the national or state guidelines for best practices. The WPRC recommends WPD routinely review department records and statistics to identify potential issues with either individual officers, platoons, or department policies. The WPPRC further recommends the department utilize a third-party or outside agency to conduct this review.
14. In order to achieve legitimacy and trustworthiness in the community, the committee recommended that the department regularly release its enforcement statistics, to include a breakdown of demographics of those stopped, arrested, and ticketed.
15. The committee recommended the department develop a mentor program with the area youth. As one committee member said, "*Watervliet students become Watervliet's adults*". Bridging the gap earlier on and encouraging relationship building between Watervliet's youth and the police in non-adversarial situations will help build a path to changing future cultures. The WPPRC did provide suggestions for fostering this initiative:

- a. *Mentor Program* – work with the Watervliet City School District to identify “troubled” youth and pair them up with a volunteer police officer to serve as a mentor.
 - b. *School Resource Officer (SRO) Program* – the department and school district should take advantage of current grant opportunities to begin an SRO/ juvenile detective program. The focus of this program should be to promote positive interactions with the police rather than typical enforcement duties.
 - c. *Cadet/Explorer Program* – The department should establish a youth mentoring program like other local police departments. The Cadet/Explorer program would serve to assist the department with guiding Watervliet youth interested in law enforcement. Additionally, the program would help identify, recruit, and develop future police officer candidates. The focus of the program should be with minority youths. Those youths interested in the program would receive knowledge of real-world policing activities and training. A byproduct of this program would be changing the youth’s perception of the police by combating the many inaccuracies portrayed within the media or from the opinion of others within the youth’s social network. The youth(s) involved in the program would be able to form their own educated opinion based on facts they receive from personally observing the police.
16. The committee recommended that the police department participate in restorative circles through both the Albany County District Attorney’s Office (for adults) and the Watervliet City School District (for youths).
17. The department should issue a year-end review and publish statistics relating to internal investigations and citizen complaints.
18. With regard to the department’s Complaint Procedure policy, the WPPRC recommends:
- a. A procedure for handling complaints against an on-duty supervisor.
 - b. A procedure for handling persons who have disabilities wishing to file a complaint (i.e. hearing or vision impaired).
 - c. Addition of another independent review for final dispositions of a complaint(s). A recommendation to include possible the Corporation Counsel as a reviewer of the complaint and investigation.
 - d. Addition of specific roles & responsibilities for the city’s Corporation Counsel, General Manager, and Mayor.

- e. The complaint form should be written in multiple languages. Guidance on what languages to be used should be taken from other NYS agencies.
19. The WPPRC suggested the department work with City Hall leadership and consider implementing a policy for taking/receiving complaints from citizens in City Hall as another option for filing.
 20. The committee recommends the department make it a priority to secure funding and implement a body worn camera system for its officers.
 21. The committee recommends the department develop an internal anti-harassment policy to include protections for WPD police officers who file complaints against other officers.
 22. To help reduce implicit bias and achieve positive reinforcement on both the police and citizen ends, the WPPRC recommends encouraging WPD officers to place themselves in as many non-adversarial situations as possible. Examples include playing basketball with youth, volunteering at events, following up with victims after a significant call, etc.
 23. The WPPRC recommends continuing with procedural justice/ implicit bias training and practices, both internal and external. In addition, the WPPRC recommends the department provide training to mitigate the natural emotions that an officer may feel during certain situations and replace them with critical thinking concepts.
 24. The WPPRC recommends that WPD host a procedural justice class for the public, particularly focusing on the reconciliation portion of the program.
 25. The WPPRC recommends that department find ways to humanize their police officers. One such example was to highlight officers on social media pages with their biography's.
 26. To test if officers are following the pillars of procedural justice, the WPPRC recommended the department institute a *rate-your-service* type program following an officer's interaction with a community member. For example, after a call or other police interaction, the officer handling the incident would be mandated to provide the citizen with a card containing a link to a survey that can be assessed on-line. Standard questions can be answered and scored shedding light on how the officer's interaction was perceived by the citizen.

CONCLUSION

Regarding the Governor's Executive Order goals, the Watervliet Police Policy Review Committee can reasonably conclude that Watervliet does not face many of the challenges that other municipalities in New York State face with strained community-police relations. Nonetheless, the Watervliet Police Department can help contribute to improving mutual respect and trust with our minority community. As Governor Andrew Cuomo stated:

“Each community must envision for itself the appropriate role of the police. Policies must be developed to allow the police to do their jobs to protect the public and these policies must meet with the local communities’ acceptance”.⁹

Under this guidance, the committee approached the topics discussed realistically, providing what we believe are the best methods for improving our police department and our community as a whole. The WPPRC is proud to report the police department's policies, procedures, and initiatives are met with overall community approval but can be improved upon. The Watervliet Police Policy Review Committee has concluded that the police department has taken many steps towards achieving a better relationship with the community, especially the minority community. However, with the recommendations the committee has made, further steps can be made towards building and improving relationships.

⁹ <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-new-guidance-police-reform-collaborative-reinvent-and-modernize>

Appendix A



No. 203

EXECUTIVE ORDER

NEW YORK STATE POLICE REFORM AND REINVENTION COLLABORATIVE

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the State of New York obliges the Governor to take care that the laws of New York are faithfully executed; and

WHEREAS, I have solemnly sworn, pursuant to Article 13, Section 1 of the Constitution, to support the Constitution and faithfully discharge the duties of the Office of Governor; and

WHEREAS, beginning on May 25, 2020, following the police-involved death of George Floyd in Minnesota, protests have taken place daily throughout the nation and in communities across New York State in response to police-involved deaths and racially-biased law enforcement to demand change, action, and accountability; and

WHEREAS, there is a long and painful history in New York State of discrimination and mistreatment of black and African-American citizens dating back to the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in America; and

WHEREAS, this recent history includes a number of incidents involving the police that have resulted in the deaths of unarmed civilians, predominantly black and African-American men, that have undermined the public's confidence and trust in our system of law enforcement and criminal justice, and such condition is ongoing and urgently needs to be rectified; and

WHEREAS, these deaths in New York State include those of Anthony Baez, Amadou Diallo, Ousmane Zango, Sean Bell, Ramarley Graham, Patrick Dorismond, Akai Gurley, and Eric Garner, amongst others, and, in other states, include Oscar Grant, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Laquan McDonald, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray, Philando Castile, Antwon Rose Jr., Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd, amongst others,

WHEREAS, these needless deaths have led me to sign into law the Say Their Name Agenda which reforms aspects of policing in New York State; and

WHEREAS, government has a responsibility to ensure that all of its citizens are treated equally, fairly, and justly before the law; and

WHEREAS, recent outpouring of protests and demonstrations which have been manifested in every area of the state have illustrated the depth and breadth of the concern; and

WHEREAS, black lives matter; and

WHEREAS, the foregoing compels me to conclude that urgent and immediate action is needed to eliminate racial inequities in policing, to modify and modernize policing strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, and to develop practices to better address the particular needs of communities of color to promote public safety, improve community engagement, and foster trust; and

WHEREAS, the Division of the Budget is empowered to determine the appropriate use of funds in furtherance of the state laws and New York State Constitution; and

WHEREAS, in coordination with the resources of the Division of Criminal Justice Services, the Division of the Budget can increase the effectiveness of the criminal justice system by ensuring that the local police agencies within the state have been actively engaged with stakeholders in the local community and have locally-approved plans for the strategies, policies and procedures of local police agencies; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the Laws of the State of New York, in particular Article IV, section one, I do hereby order and direct as follows:

The director of the Division of the Budget, in consultation with the Division of Criminal Justice Services, shall promulgate guidance to be sent to all local governments directing that:

Each local government entity which has a police agency operating with police officers as defined under 1.20 of the criminal procedure law must perform a comprehensive review of current police force deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, and develop a plan to improve such deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, for the purposes of addressing the particular needs of the communities served by such police agency and promote community engagement to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy, and to address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color.

Each chief executive of such local government shall convene the head of the local police agency, and stakeholders in the community to develop such plan, which shall consider evidence-based policing strategies, including but not limited to, use of force policies, procedural justice; any studies addressing systemic racial bias or racial justice in policing; implicit bias awareness training; de-escalation training and practices; law enforcement assisted diversion programs; restorative justice practices; community-based outreach and conflict resolution; problem-oriented policing; hot spots policing; focused deterrence; crime prevention through environmental design; violence prevention and reduction interventions; model policies and guidelines promulgated by the New York State Municipal Police Training Council; and standards promulgated by the New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Program.

The political subdivision, in coordination with its police agency, must consult with stakeholders, including but not limited to membership and leadership of the local police force; members of the community, with emphasis in areas with high numbers of police and community interactions; interested non-profit and faith-based community groups; the local office of the district attorney; the local public defender; and local elected officials, and create a plan to adopt and implement the recommendations resulting from its review and consultation, including any modifications, modernizations, and innovations to its policing deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, tailored to the specific needs of the community and general promotion of improved police agency and community relationships based on trust, fairness, accountability, and transparency, and which seek to reduce any racial disparities in policing.

Such plan shall be offered for public comment to all citizens in the locality, and after consideration of such comments, shall be presented to the local legislative body in such political subdivision, which shall ratify or adopt such plan by local law or resolution, as appropriate, no later than April 1, 2021; and

Such local government shall transmit a certification to the Director of the Division of the Budget to affirm that such process has been complied with and such local law or resolution has been adopted; and

The Director of the Division of the Budget shall be authorized to condition receipt of future appropriated state or federal funds upon filing of such certification for which such local government would otherwise be eligible; and

The Director is authorized to seek the support and assistance of any state agency in order to effectuate these purposes.



GIVEN under my hand and the Privy Seal of the

State in the City of Albany this

twelfth day of June in the year two

thousand twenty.

BY THE GOVERNOR

Secretary to the Governor

Appendix B



**CITY OF WATERBURY POLICE
POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE**
2-15TH STREET WATERBURY, NEW YORK 12189 (518)270-3819



Modules:

1. **Review of Recruitment & Training practices**
 - *Thursday November 12th, 2020 6-8p*
2. **Review of our Use of Force & De-escalation Practices**
 - *Wednesday, November 18th, 2020 6-8p*
3. **Review of Mental Health Procedures & Practices**
 - *Thursday, December 10th, 2020 6-8p*
4. **Review of Violence Prevention & Reduction Strategies**
 - *Wednesday, December 16th, 2020 6-8p*
5. **Review of Complaint & Discipline Procedures & Practices**
 - *Wednesday, January 6th, 2021 6-8p*
6. **Implicit Bias & Procedure Justice practices**
 - *Wednesday, January 20th, 2021 6-8p*
7. **Draft Plan Meeting**
 - *Wednesday, February 3rd, 2021 6-8p*
8. **Public Comment (City Council Meeting)**
 - *Thursday, February 18th, 2021 6p*
9. **City Council Adopt/Ratify**
 - *Thursday, March 4th, 2021 6p*

Deadline to certify with NYS: April 1st, 2021

Appendix C



CITY OF WATERVLIET POLICE
POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE
2-15TH STREET WATERVLIET, NEW YORK 12189 (518)270-3819



Recruitment & Training Practices

Thursday, November, 12th, 2020

6pm- 8pm

Watervliet Senior Center

I. Welcome

II. Recruitment & Training Overview

- a. Current Hiring Practices:*
 - i. Recruits vs. Laterals*
- b. Initial Training (Basic Police Academy)*
- c. In-Service Trainings*
- d. Roll Call Trainings*

III. Identify:

- a. Strengths/Weaknesses*
- b. Identify Measurable Goals*

IV. Next Meeting's topic: Use of Force & De-Escalation Practices

- a. "Homework"*

Appendix D

Recruit

Phase I

- Meet Minimum Civil Service Requirements
- Pass NYS Written Test
- Pass Physical Agility Test

Phase II

- Background Check (professional, personal & financial in nature)
- Formal Interview Panel
- Medical & Drug Screening
- Psychological Assessment
- Final Interview

Phase III

- Police Academy*
*over 700 hours of instruction
- 8-12 Weeks of field training (“rook book”)
- 12-month probationary period



Lateral

Phase I

- Meet Minimum Civil Service Requirements
- Pass NYS Written Test
- Pass Physical Agility Test

Phase II

- Background Check (professional, personal & financial in nature)
- Formal Interview Panel
- Medical & Drug Screening
- Psychological Assessment
- Final Interview

Phase III

- Police Academy*
*over 700 hours of instruction
- 8-12 Weeks of field training (“rook book”)



Appendix E



**CITY OF WATERVLIET POLICE
POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE**
2-15TH STREET WATERVLIET, NEW YORK 12189 (518)270-3819



Use of Force and De-Escalation Practices

Thursday, November 18th, 2020

6pm- 8pm

Watervliet Senior Center

I. Welcome

II. Use of Force & De-Escalation Overview

- a. Article 35*
- b. Current UOF policies & procedures*
- c. UOF Training*

III. Identify:

- a. Strengths/Weaknesses*
- b. Identify Measurable Goals*

IV. Next Meeting's topic: Mental Health Practices

Appendix F



**CITY OF WATERBURY POLICE
POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE**
2-15TH STREET WATERBURY, NEW YORK 12189 (518)270-3819



Mental Health Procedures & Practices

Thursday, December 10th, 2020

6pm- 8pm

**Virtual Meeting (via Zoom)*

I. Welcome

a. Introduction of Subject Matter Expert (SME)

II. Department Overview

a. Mental Hygiene Law

b. Current WPD procedures

c. Mental Health awareness training

III. Albany County Resources

a. Short-term/ crisis care

b. Long-term care

IV. Identify:

a. Strengths/Weaknesses

b. Identify Measurable Goals

V. Next Meeting's topic: Violence Prevention & Reduction Strategies

Appendix G



CITY OF WATERBURY POLICE
POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE
2-15TH STREET WATERBURY, NEW YORK 12189 (518)270-3819



Violence Prevention & Reduction Strategies

Wednesday, December 16th, 2020

6pm- 8pm

**Virtual Meeting (via Zoom)*

- I. Welcome**
- II. Strategies**
- III. Available Albany County Resources**
- IV. Roundtable**
- V. Identify:**
 - a. Strengths/Weaknesses*
 - b. Identify Measurable Goals*
- VI. Next Meeting's topic: Complaint & Discipline Procedure (1/6/2021)**

Appendix H

Roundtable:

- 1. What are the top complaints from the community? Are they different from the minority community?*
- 2. Are these complaints a law enforcement issue, societal issue, or both?*
- 3. What reasonable steps can be taken to resolve these complaints?*
- 4. Should police officers be in 'Vliet schools?*
- 5. How should WPD address juvenile delinquency?*
- 6. How should officers address traffic safety issues?*
- 7. How can WPD help increase community engagement?*
- 8. How should WPD engage minority communities to become partners?*
- 9. How can WPD become more transparent with the community?*
- 10. Are WPD's current practices negatively impacting community relations, especially in the minority community?*



Appendix I



**CITY OF WATERBURY POLICE
POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE**
2-15TH STREET WATERBURY, NEW YORK 12189 (518)270-3819



Complaint & Discipline Procedures & Practices

Wednesday, January 6th, 2021

6pm- 8pm

**Virtual Meeting (via Zoom)*

- I. Welcome**
- II. Complaint Procedures**
- III. Discipline Procedures & Practices**
- IV. Roundtable**
- V. Identify:**
 - a. Strengths/Weaknesses*
 - b. Identify Measurable Goals*
- VI. Next Meeting's topic: Implicit Bias & Procedural Justice Practices (1/18/21)**

Appendix J

Complaints & Discipline, by the numbers

2020 IA cases:

IA Case #1	Department Initiated	Misconduct/Incompetence	Officer Disciplined
IA Case #2	Formal Civilian Complaint	Unprofessional conduct (traffic stop) “skipping” back to their police car	Not Sustained
IA Case #3	Department Initiated	Misconduct allegation from anonymous source	Unfounded
IA Case #4	Department Initiated	Misconduct allegation from anonymous source, TOT DA’s Office/NYSP for investigation	Unfounded
IA Case #5	Department Initiated	Procedural violations on a call	On-going
IA Case #6	Department Initiated	Procedural violations re: improper use of leave time	On-going

