

NYS Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan Meeting
October 1, 2020
1:00 p.m.

ATTENDEES:

Martha Sauerbrey, Chairwoman, Tioga County Legislature
Gary Howard, Sheriff, Tioga County Sheriff's Office
Peter DeWind, County Attorney, Tioga County Law Department
Cathy Haskell, Legislative Clerk, Tioga County Legislature

PURPOSE:

Chair Sauerbrey reported the purpose of today's meeting is to determine where we are currently in the process, lead role identification, Plan development and community involvement options, including possible local law enforcement participation, and County staff participation. In addition, timeline establishment to meet the required April 1, 2021 deadline for Plan submission.

DISCUSSION:

- **Lead Role** – Sheriff Howard was identified as the Lead Role for this Plan. Sheriff Howard noted he has read the NYS Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan and is in the process of talking to other law enforcement agencies.
- **Consultant** – The option of hiring a consultant for data collection and plan development was noted. Most likely, there would be little to no Legislative support financially to hire a consultant.
- **Local Law Enforcement Participation** – Sheriff Howard reported he met with the Owego and Waverly Police Departments. Sheriff Howard reported these agencies are talking with their respective Boards and are moving forward with their own independent plans, therefore, do not need to be included in the County Plan.
- **County Policies** – Sheriff Howard reported the Tioga County Sheriff's Office has 120 policies that are reviewed annually with the entire Department. Sheriff Howard identified the following policies are in existence and noted the ones in the process of being updated.
 - *Use of Force Policy – updating*
 - *Choke Hold Policy*
 - *Police Involving Death Policy*
 - *Jail Population*
 - *Discovery*
 - *Speedy Trial – this is handled through the District Attorney's Office*

- *Raise the Age – this is handled through the Probation Department.*
- *Video Recordings and Interrogations – this practice has been in place for over 20 years.*
- *Rules of Conduct Policy*
- *School Resource Officer Policy – currently, we do not have any SRO's.*
- *Crowd Control*
- *Shooting at Moving Vehicles*
- *High-Speed Pursuits Policy – this is not encouraged through the Sheriff's Office.*

Sheriff Howard reported every Division in the Sheriff's Office has NYS Accreditation, which solidifies the Sheriff's Office is doing what they need to do in meeting community standards. The local law enforcement agencies; Owego and Waverly Police Departments do not have such accreditation, as this involves a great deal of work and these agencies are mostly comprised of part-time personnel.

- **50-a Personnel Files** – Sheriff Howard reported personnel files older than three years are no longer required to be retained.
- **Staff Training** – Sheriff Howard reported the Departmental staff have access to the NYMIR portal to participate in various required trainings free of charge. Sheriff Howard reported he has thus far completed Part 1 of 2 of the Bias Awareness Training and he, along with other staff, will be taking the De-escalation Training.

Sheriff Howard reported the Sheriff's Office has accrued 3,342 hours of training in 2019, which includes internal staff meetings and trainings.

- **Metrics for Data Collection** – County Attorney DeWind inquired as to whether the metrics are known for Plan inclusion. This should identify problem areas. In addition, the question was raised as to who will be responsible for data and policy collection for Plan inclusion, which could also include prior complaint history and contracts such as police union contracts, court and school officials.

Of note, it is somewhat vague as to how the Plan should look and whether this could just be in the form of a summation report.

ACTION: Sheriff Howard's secretary, Diane Rockwell, will be asked to assume the responsibility of policy and data collection working with Chairwoman Sauerbrey and Sheriff Howard during the process.

- **Community Involvement** – Chair Sauerbrey suggested several ideas of engaging community involvement such as sending out a survey to the community through Survey Monkey, schedule a community Zoom meeting where specific questions are asked and outcomes are recorded.

Community involvement will allow for the identification of issues we have not taken into consideration.

Mr. DeWind reported all of these suggestions are acceptable and noted a Zoom meeting would satisfy the listening and learning phase of the Plan. This would be similar to a public hearing where information is gathered.

Mr. DeWind further reported the County could establish a mechanism to accept written comments from the community addressing interactions with County law enforcement through an established email address.

Of note, Tioga County's racial diversity is less than 1% of the overall population, however, we could solicit the participation of community organizations that represent the population of socio-economic diversity such as Tioga Opportunities, Inc. for low to moderate income housing, Tioga County Rural Ministries, Catholic Charities, and Open Door Mission to name a few.

ACTION: Chair Sauerbrey will take the lead role in formulating the community involvement group.

- **Agency Involvement** – In addition to the advocacy organizations listed above, it was noted the Tioga County District Attorney and Public Defender's Offices need to be stakeholders in this Plan.
- **Goal and Timeline** - The overall goal of the Plan is to demonstrate in good faith that Tioga County through interaction with the Sheriff's Office and local law enforcement agencies has identified no systemic issues, we have provided ample opportunity for public comment, and that we listened to the community fairly.

Chair Sauerbrey reported the following tentative timeline:

- ✓ Now through December 31, 2020 – Data and policy collection, identification of community stakeholders, and develop a community forum through either surveys, Zoom, written comment, etc. to garner community input.

- ✓ January 2021 – Completion of Draft Plan
- ✓ February 2021 – Finalize Plan for Legislature approval
- **Next Steps** – Develop a plan to talk with the community and develop a list of stakeholders.
ACTION: Chair Sauerbrey will send an email to Sheriff Howard and County Attorney DeWind soliciting potential stakeholders that should be included.

Meeting adjourned at 1:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Haskell

Legislative Clerk