

TOWN OF SHANDAKEN POLICE REFORM AND REINVENTION COLLABORATIVE COMMISSION

*Abbreviations in this document:

Shandaken Police: "SP"

Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Commission: "Commission"

People of Color: POC

Created in collaboration, this document reflects the public safety plan in pursuance to a community collaborative with the Shandaken Police Reform Commission. Members of the commission include Town of Shandaken Police Department (the Chief of Police and Sergeant of Police) and diverse stakeholders within the community. On June 12, 2020, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo signed an Executive Order requiring each local government to adopt a police reform plan by April 1, 2021.

I. COMMISSION PURPOSE

To participate in Governor Cuomo's Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative, the Town of Shandaken selected from a diverse group of community members to undertake the purpose of: "fostering trust, fairness and legitimacy" within communities throughout our state and "address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color." Given that Shandaken is widely dispersed geographically, has rural adult population of less than three thousand, and, is under COVID restrictions, meetings took place on zoom, and may not have reached as many of our stakeholders as we wished. Census estimates total Shandaken population at 2,846; 8.9% People of Color (POC); 32.3% 65 years and older.

Surveys dispensed throughout the town, placed on websites, were made available to the public. A public hearing- "Listening Session", conducted through zoom, allowed community members to speak freely of their experiences, impressions, and suggestions, and, to be heard directly, non-judgmentally by members of the commission. In efforts to connect with more of the community, email address <ShandakenReform@gmail.com> and webpage added onto the Shandaken town's site, as well as a FB page- for contact info. There is a portion of our residents who may not have internet service, may not speak English, and may be hesitant for fear of retribution, to come forward. For those left out at this time, it is our intention as we go forward on collaboration on public safety policy that efforts will be made for greater inclusion.

II. COMMISSION TIMELINE:

2020-2021 Calendar and Agenda for Meetings of the Commission

Discussion topics came from NYS Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Workbook issued by NYS. Activities suggested included: Plan community input- Public Survey, Public Listening Session through zoom. Outreach consist of a webpage linked to <https://www.shandaken-ny.com/>, FB page, flyers placed in local offices, stores, and email lists. Documents for review posted for review on google docs: Survey summary, draft plan. Outreach to people uncomfortable with police + Spanish speakers, will take place at a future date as part of our plan going forward.

Commission Meeting Dates: 11/12, 12/3, 12/10, 1/7, 1/28, 2/11, 3/11, 3/25

1/14 Public Hearing

2/1-2/14 Draft Plan released for Public Comment

2/22 Revised Plan and Submitted to Town Board for approval

3/1 Town Board Votes to approve the Action Plan, and hears public comment

3/11 Virtual Public Meeting Q & A on Action Plan with the Commission

4/1/2021 Shandaken Town Board submits Certification to NYS (meeting requirements of Exec. Order No. 203 to Division of Budget)

4/2023 Projected Two Year Timeline to enact Action Plan measures, through the collaboration with the public, the Shandaken Town Board, the Shandaken Police Commission Collaborative and existing Civilian Police Commission (CPC), and the Shandaken Police Department

III. COMMISSION SURVEY SUMMARY

The Shandaken Police Reform Commission elicited public feedback on interactions with the Shandaken Police (SP). The goals of the survey were to find out how the public thinks the police are doing, provide a way to give feedback anonymously, and identify race-based issues.

SURVEY LIMITATIONS:

Survey participation was voluntary. Given limited outreach tools and efforts, the Commission acknowledges that the respondents may not include at-risk populations, especially those who do not receive town alerts or have digital access, those passing through, or those who may fear retaliation or do not otherwise feel comfortable giving feedback.

The Commission further acknowledges that while all feedback from the public is invaluable, conclusions cannot be drawn from this survey alone, especially with regards to racial differences in policing in our community.

A. SURVEY STATISTICS:

The survey had 407 respondents; 7.1% POC; 35.4% 65 and older. (76.9 % age 45 or older). 14.7% of respondents did not indicate their race/ethnicity. Length of time living in Shandaken: 74.9% 11+ years. Gender divide: Female: 53.8%; Male: 42.3%; No Response or non-binary: 4%; 14.9% of respondents did not indicate their race/ethnicity. Gender: Female: 53.8%; Male: 42.3%; No Response or non-binary: 4%.

Please refer to the survey results for more detail.

The average rating for interactions with the Shandaken Police was 4.14 out of 5. Considering the environment of division and fear our country has experienced recently, this rating is extremely positive. It suggests, and is born out in public comments made both in the survey and the public listening session- that there is an appreciation for the SP department, the individual police officers, and the methods of engagement with the public both protective and in use of enforcement. 93.3% of respondents noted being comfortable with calling 911 for help.

In terms of looking at racial divides, there was no statistically significant difference in ratings of police interactions between white respondents (average rating 4.51) and People of Color (POC rating 4.27). Of 407 respondents, 14 reported seeing or experiencing racial bias or other forms of discrimination.

B. SURVEY TOPICS

1-EXPERIENCE of RACIAL BIAS

Ten Comments noted the predominance of white residents. As such, they feel they cannot answer this question adequately: Ex: "not really enough empirical data to answer accurately". "I haven't ever seen a member of the Shandaken Police interact with anyone who wasn't white." and, "I'm white so I really won't expect racial bias." Of the 407 respondents, when asked: Have you experienced or seen racial bias by SP? 392 answered "no". One comment by a POC did report she experienced racial bias.

However, in response to possible other bias, such as gender bias, seven comments suggested having a more gender diverse police force. 4 Comments described being harassed when they were pulled over, because of their female gender.

Tension between locals and weekender visitors/renters also noted, as a kind of bias or division, where locals need the support of ordinances like trash responsibility, noise, etc. One person noted homophobic statements from the SP.

Lastly, the observation of nepotistic attitudes and consequences that occur in small communities where there are multi-generations and familiarity: "Good ol'Boy" policy in place where long time locals commit serious and petty crimes, face no consequences, to the point where police criminalize the victims (often female

victims of domestic violence and harassment, etc.” Slight raising of concern for a nepotistic attitude: “Stop showing favoritism to friends and family of friends.” “Term limit on chief”.

2- TRAINING/BIAS/RACE-RELATED/TRANSPARENCY COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS

-Continuing education and training of police: trauma-informed and de-escalation training, Sensitivity training, domestic violence intervention.

-A community policing approach to protecting citizens

-Require officers enforce the masking social distancing mandates during the current pandemic

-Recommend a more diverse (“including race, gender, sexual orientation, and politics”) police force to address systemic racism (noted by 7)

-Transparency: require officers include demographic data and outcomes in their records of interactions.

3-COMMUNITY OUTREACH

From both the surveyed and the hearing, the community expressed a desire to familiarize themselves with the SP personnel and policies more fully.

-Eight comments suggested community events to have interactions and chances to get to know our police officers.

-Four comments asked for officers to be profiled or identified on Town website or Facebook page. A couple of comments mentioned not being able to get in touch or get a response in timely manner. The lack of comprehensive cell service makes access to “911” impossible for some. Consider TTY for the hard of hearing.

-Hold more community events-Meet The Police Day, or Community Connection Forum, where police and residents can meet, chat, learn.

-“Reach out to undocumented workers, people of color, compassion toward all residents, old and new, black and white, gay and straight”.

-“Be eager to meet people-say hello, try to get to know diff. people/ages/income etc. leave a business card under peoples' doors/mailbox”

-“Police should conduct themselves as peace officers, not as a paramilitary”. “More visibility walking down the streets, and “Wear suits and/ or sports jackets, get rid of military look”.

-“Lose the all-black cars, so people can easily recognize officers for help and to also serve a role in crime deterrence”

-Knowledge of autism spectrum disorder or other issues of communication”
“carrying epipen for emergencies”

-“We should pass the Right to Know Act in Shandaken. We should also form a Civilian Review Board.”

4-MORE OFFICERS/INCREASE PAYSCALE

-Eight comments asked for more police officers to be hired in the department. Though it is unclear how this request fits with the budget and needs of the town. Nine comments asked for (funding) increased pay scale, “they are underpaid”, reflecting the minimum wage of new hires.

-Police uniforms and cars must be very clearly identifiable to deter crime and deter abuse of power.

5- POLICE DUTIES/LESS POLICING/ REDUCE FUNDING

Two comments suggested we should reduce the size of our police department, because we are a small town. A suggestion: “Investigate merging the department with another town or with the county as we are too small to maintain a police department with the standards the public now expects.”

6-POSITIVE FEEDBACK

When asked whether we were satisfied with SP and what changes we should make to our SP, there were forty-eight responses of praise, expressing satisfaction and appreciation of the efforts of the SP department on behalf of community residents.

COMMENTS:

-“Dedicated and caring individuals with good working knowledge of their community. Heroes on a daily basis.”

-“They're the best in our area. / Thank you, for all you do.”

-“I think the Shandaken Police on the whole are doing a terrific job keeping our community safe. They deserve credit for keeping the peace in Shandaken and also involving themselves in community events.”

-“Since moving to Shandaken in 2005 my family have had nothing but great interaction with the Shandaken Police Dept.”

-“Nothing but praise for them”

-“Police officers I've dealt with have been wonderfully respectful and upstanding community members.”

7-POLICE DUTIES/APPEARENCE/Other Concerns

Clarification, and clearly stating what the SP jurisdiction and authority can and cannot do- is fundamental to community cooperation with our local force. The comment below points to the perhaps too unrealistic desire that the SP be a benevolent pervasive force in the following quality of life issues:

-“Monitor STRS short term rental houses, apartments, rooms, etc. for compliance of town ordinances like noise, trash, fire code violations, animals (bears, raccoons, rodents, unleashed pets, traffic violations, alcohol, drug use, privacy, trespassing/snooping.”

A clear and reasonable request by the community is the desire for a protective presence from the SP; as noted below such as patrols, and minor nuisances:

-“Routine patrols to check on areas where people congregate, such as parks, swimming holes or other public areas, to show a concerned and neutral presence.

-Advise on noise, garbage removal, and other public nuisance concerns, as appropriate: “The SP could assist with the kind of interference residents experience when there is need to keep the peace”

-“Requesting patrolling in specific areas: Pine Hill on weekends, Onteora before and after school, etc.”

-“More of a police presence in Phoenicia on weekends, there is only officer we ever see sitting in town on weekends.”

-“Stop graffiti in Ulster County.”

The community also asked for SP officers to set example for the rest of us: -
“Officers set a better example for the community by wearing masks”

Finally there are areas of concern that the community is supporting the SP department in its role of enforcing lawful behavior, and some expressed support for spending for updated equipment-body cameras:

-“Drug related and DWI enforcement”

-“Increase coordination with NYS troopers, NYC-DEP Police and, and Ulster County police”

8-TRAFFIC

A major State Route (#28) runs right through the heart of the Town of Shandaken. Therefore traffic, speeding and illegal, dangerous passing, and pullovers are a concern. The other county route feeders (#214, #42, Wittenberg) also have speeders, and this can be a danger to walkers.

There were sixteen traffic comments written on this subject, indicating the serious impact that driving Route #28 and its felt danger. Most comments stated a need for protection from dangerous driving by passing recklessly, and the fear of intoxicated drivers: “the drunk/drugged driving is out of control” is a huge worry.

-“The town should pressure NYS DOT to increase no passing zones on Route 28.”

Another anxiety over traffic is confusion about the overlap between State patrols and local patrols. The community could benefit from what the differing jurisdictions are. Residents aren't clear which "police" are pulling them over.

Some annoyance at being pulled over for minor infractions came up versus really doing adequate protection in the above dangers: "Don't focus on pulling over for broken taillights, failure to signal in situations where there are no other vehicles in sight, or similar minor infractions."

IV. PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION SUMMARY:

A zoom meeting took place 1/14/2021. In attendance: 9 Commission members, 21 community members. Two Shandaken Police Officers introduced the meeting, and left after introductory statements.

PUBLIC MEETING RESPONSES of NOTE:

Concern about racial bias was brought up as a subject for the commission to receive responses from the community. There was general appreciation that racial bias is being looked into, and that if there is any bias it can be brought forward and discussed freely. However, "relying on POC to come forward with their experiences, however welcoming and well-intentioned the committee is, might not be likely." The Commission needs to find ways to change this situation as we go forward. Outreach is essential.

1- RACIAL BIAS (Selected Comments):

-Call for transparency of data, especially arrests and race.

-Asking SP to take the Harvard implicit bias test:

(<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html>) and share results with community. Asking SP is educated in the history of policing in America; a system built over hundreds of years with relationship to racism:

(<https://plsonline.eku.edu/insidelook/history-policing-united-states-part-1>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPu6-1yy8-o>)

-We need to be asking ourselves why more POC don't feel safe moving here, and is it safe for friends hosting POC to visit?

-Wonder if I were not a young white woman and instead a POC, would a police officer have apologized after pulling me over; have never received a ticket in 7 times.

-There are immigrant populations here. How is the SP going to intervene in this situations/ work with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) or not? It could be a community in danger right now because they're afraid to get kicked out.

-Caution against over-generalizing [referring to a prior statement]; there are many non-white people here.

2- GENERAL CONCERNS and COMMENTS

-Noise The SP have been supportive, but here is no mechanism in place to take action if noise is excessive like gunfire or snowmobiles. With regard to noisy neighbors, can SP issue tickets in addition to quieting down noise situations?

-Good experience over 20 years resolving neighbor disputes. General concern (not SP specific) that people with guns and emotional issues get help before they inflict violence, especially with violence in Washington and strong political allegiances in our area.

3- POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Again, people offered many positive comments that echoed what was found to be true in the survey.

-“SP in issues with neighbors, supportive, helpful. Caring group, want them safe.”

-“More than positive experience, no hesitation to call the police, feel comfortable and safe, would support them, would try to give them a raise.”

-“They’re responsive, fair, and regardless of political leaning, looking at the matter at hand.”

-“Comfortable to bring the police into any interaction that I might expect to have.”

V. TOWN OF SHANDAKEN POLICE REFORM AND REINVENTION COLLABORATIVE COMMISSION ACTION PLAN

SUMMARY

Members of the community, who participated in this process, expressed definitive appreciation for and satisfaction with the individual police members of the team, the professional attitude, support, availability, and willing assistance of the SP department. Though mostly positive, people also expressed the need for assurance of accountability, and to be informed of policing policy, and procedures.

There is a basic trust in the training and procedures of the Shandaken Police Department. We rely on our police department greatly to safeguard many aspects of rural community life. We know that we have limited resources, and must make the best use of them, by cooperative work in the community.

The residents of Shandaken are 91.1% white. 32.6% are between the ages of 45 to 64, and 17.4% are 65 years of age or older. In terms of race and age, we are not diverse and are very rural, with population density of 27.0 people per square mile. Participants are open to looking into any racial bias that may emerge in future meetings and out reach.

The results of this process in our meetings, survey and public listening session point toward a future time, to reach out to residents who are POC, and non English speaking to further the Commission's addressing of racial bias, specific to the Shandaken Police department. A requirement for continuing future community gatherings: to inform and receive feedback from those in our community who were not included at this time.

One perception became evident in the public forum during the Commissions (the survey; public hearing), a demonstration of interest, concern, and response to policing in Shandaken. Many people understand the nature of what police can and can't do in our small town - in a general way both because of the law, police policy and procedures, and the limitations of a budgetary nature. However, there also exists a lack of realistic comprehension of policing in Shandaken. Therefore, in addition to widening the outreach to the public, our community police department along with the Town Board, could help educate the public as well. The public would like to know its police, and would also benefit from knowing specifics of their function and capability. A short summary PDF, or webpage description of police policy, training, and procedures would benefit realistic expectations.

The purpose of this document is to create a brief general outline or map on which to proceed, based on the activities thus so far conducted (public hearing, survey and Q & A). It is therefore, necessary to continue to define the specific implementation for the on-going collaboration between the public's understanding and desires, and the abilities, policies (required by county, and state), and procedures of the Shandaken Police Department.

Public input and suggestion are not only appreciated, necessary and needed. We ask the public to be patient in this process. Volunteers to continue this work are required and prized, as the people resources of Shandaken are sometimes insufficient to meet the needs of our small community.

The commission is projecting a Two Year Timeline (4/2023) to enact Action Plan measures, through the collaboration with the public, the Shandaken Town Board, the Shandaken Police Commission Collaborative and existing Civilian Police Commission (CPC), and the Shandaken Police Department.

VI. COMMISSION ACTION PLAN

1- RACIAL BIAS and PUBLIC DIALOGUE:

A.- Endorse SP officers taking the Harvard implicit bias test: (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html>) and share results with community. Ask SP to self-educate in the history of policing in America; a system built over hundreds of years with relationship to racism: (<https://plsonline.eku.edu/insideloook/history-policing-united-states-part-1>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPu6-1yy8-o>)

B.- Recommend selection of a more diverse (“including race, gender, sexual orientation, and politics”) police force to address systemic racism; with the understanding that candidates are chosen through the civil service system, (whose racial bias flaws) needs addressing elsewhere.

C.- Increase continuing education and training of police: Trauma-informed and de-escalation training; Sensitivity training, and domestic violence intervention. Future meetings for community to collaborate on style of Town Policing, i.e. Warrior vs Guardian style policing. Use community-policing approach to protecting citizens. Educate the public in what training is required policy at the county level. Share what training and policies are implemented with the public in SP updates.

D.- Support of existing Community Engagement / Outreach Programs: Coffee with a cop (Phoenicia Library sponsor), Community Outreach Program (C.O.P.) Program (food drives, meals, x-mas, etc.)

E. In joint community effort with SP, Explore ways of outreach to POC, and non-English speaking residents, and non-documented workers

2- TRANSPARENCY:

A.- Require officers include demographic data and outcomes in their records of interactions. Please see the Appendices: I: for data on 2020 Department Staff; Budget; and II: for 2020 Incidents Report.

B.- Explore police officers giving out business cards as they interact with the public.

C.- More public transparency on NYS Department of Criminal Justice Services Policy, the tracking of incidents, and body cameras.

D.- Ability to file (anonymous or not) complaint against a member of the police department, as a form uploaded onto the Town of Shandaken SP website.

E. Timeline Updates: Conduct an annual community survey; continue reporting monthly statistics at Town Board meetings.

F.- Commitment to Policy and Procedure Updates on a regular basis, as necessary: when there’s a change in law, and when required by the Department of criminal justice.

3- INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:

A.- Increase coordination with NYS Troopers, NYC-DEP Police and, and Ulster County “Police”. Work with the NYS DOT to increase no passing zones on Route 28. Community endorsement of enforcement of DWI, speeding, passing illegally, and drug violations.

B.- Support Town of Shandaken’s Police Department’s involvement (public outreach education) with the Ulster County Diversion Program: a. ORACLE b. Restorative Justice Center (run in conjunction with Ulster County District Attorney’s Office)

C.- Educate the public on the procedural interface between the town's police department and county social Services, i.e.,: CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) Trained Officers.

4- LOCAL PRESENCE:

A.- Increase areas of patrol especially on weekends so that people in the community feel a protective presence from the SP, such as parks, schools (before and after hours) swimming holes, etc. To fulfill this request, consider adding another patrol officer on staff.

5- INCREASE FAMILIARITY WITH SP OFFICERS:

A.- Profile officers on Town website or Facebook page, to let citizens know SP.

B.- Change the appearance of "military look" by having more visibility walking down the streets. "Lose the all-black cars, "stealth look", so people can easily recognize officers for help and to also serve a role in crime deterrence". As these dark cars were acquired "as is" consider having a "LOGO" add on contest in the community, to make them approach friendly.

6- ADVOCATE:

A.- Improve ability to contact police through cell service for 911, TTY for the hard of hearing-Pass the Right to Know Act in Shandaken. Expand the Civilian Police Commission (CPC) from three to five members, to increase community interaction with SP.

B.- Continue support of SP's updating equipment, such as body cameras

C.- Increase pay scale (funding)

VI. CONCLUSION

The Commission completes the plan's timeline by concluding with presentation for public comment and revision from February 1 to the 14th. Submitted to the Town Board by 2/21, for ratification by March 1. Finally the plan will be submitted to NYS as required, by April 1, 2021.

The Town of Shandaken Police Reform and Reinvention and Collaborative Commission brought to light community interest in understanding and supporting the SP department fair methods and practices, with regard racial biases, and other biases as well as to duties of the patrolling officers. The commission received feedback and suggestions to make specific recommendations for change as noted in the action plan above. It is recognized by commission, that SP are highly regarded and appreciated by community residents of Shandaken. It is also recognized we have work to do. Inclusion of residents we could not reach during this current

process crucial for the well being of our community. We commit to furthering dialogue and understanding in future.

Implementation of our plan requires further community gatherings for on-going cooperation between the public and the SP Department. The Collaborative is an important step in our continual process of building, maintaining and strengthening the relationship between our police department and our community.

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

- Liz Potter, Chair
- Charles Perez, Vice Chair
- Josh Brown
- Manuella Jean Pierre
- Wendy Lockwood
- William J. McGrath
- Syed Shahzad Adil Shah
- Tom Sharon
- Michelle Spark
- Chad Storey
- Kevin Van Blarcum
- Crystal Wei

APPENDIX I: Shandaken Police Department Staff & Budget:

STAFF: Police Chief (Part Time), Police Sergeant (Part Time), Four Full Time Officers, Eleven Part Time Officers

BUDGET:2020 Annual Budget \$357,500.00, 2021 Annual Budget \$362,500.00

Comparable Police Budgets with similar size police departments:

Town of Plattekill	\$643,685.00	(No full time Officers)
Town of Rosendale	\$454,650.00	(2 Full Time Officers)
Town of Olive	\$218,515.00	(No Full Time Officers)
Town of Woodstock	\$900,000.00	(10 Full Time Officers)

APPENDIX II: Shandaken Police Department 2020 Incident Report



SHANDAKEN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Post Office Box 134
 Shandaken, New York 12480
 845-688-9902 . 845-688-9748(b) . 845-688-5332(f)
CHIEF OF POLICE CHAD STOREY chief@shandakenpolice.org

Shandaken Police
 Yearly Report

2020

INCIDENT TYPE	NUMBER
911 Misdial/No Voice/Abandoned	69
Accident PIAA/PDAA	96
Abandoned Vehicle	2
Alarm Burglary	68
Animal Complaint/Investigation	28
Assist EMS/Fire	123
Disorderly Conduct	1
Assault	1
Community Oriented Policing Project	28
Custody Dispute	1
Burglary	1
Background Investigation	2
Criminal Mischief	57
Narcotic	1
Civil	3
Disabled Vehicle	17
Dispute	28
Domestic Dispute	12
Erratic Vehicle	1
Fraud/Larceny	27
Mental Health Law	1
Harassment	15
Lock Out	26
Lost/Missing Person	9
Property Retrieval	1
Public Service	6
Open Door	4
Property Check	2208
Road Hazard	19
School Check	157
Shots Fired	9
Suspicious Activity	80
Traffic Stop	65
Trespass	1
Vehicle and Traffic Complaint	25
Welfare Check	40
Total	3232

SUMMONS ISSUED	80
ARRESTS	42

Mileage	Start	End	Total
82	111520	111654	134
83	3360	11469	8109
84	93965	125617	31652
85	0	0	0
86	22650	52601	29951
TOTAL			69846