

# **Hudson Falls Police Department**

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New York State

Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative



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## Acknowledgement

The Village of Hudson Falls would like to thank the following members of the Police Reform and Reinvention Committee that have dedicated their time, talents and knowledge.

- Scott J. Gillis – Hudson Falls Police Department, Chief
- John Kibling - Hudson Falls Police Department, Captain
- Jeff Gaulin - Hudson Falls Police Department, Detective
- John Barton – Village of Hudson Falls, Mayor
- Robert Cook – Village of Hudson Falls, Deputy Mayor
- Tony Jordan – Washington County District Attorney
- Mike Mercure – Washington County Public Defender
- Dan Boucher – Washington County Probation
- Ben Bishop – Hudson Falls School District, Board President
- Jabes Prado – Executive Director LAVA
- Paul Dietrich – Carlton Funeral Home, Owner
- Doug Mackenzie – Village Resident
- Andrea Deepe – Warren/Washington Assn. for Mental Health, CEO
- Paul Mead – Gospel Lighthouse Church, Pastor

Carrie Wright – Office of Community Services Warren/Washington Cty.

The Village would also like to thank the community members that participated in this process.

A large, semi-transparent watermark of the Hudson Falls Police Department badge is centered on the page. The badge is shield-shaped with a yellow border and contains the text 'HUDSON FALLS' at the top and 'POLICE' at the bottom. In the center, there is a circular emblem featuring a landscape with a sun, a river, and a bridge.

## Police Department Mission

This department constitutes an organization whose very existence is justified on the basis of community service. Although department regulations provide a working pattern, our official activity must not be confined within the limited boundary described by them.

The Mission of this department is to serve and protect the persons and property within the Village of Hudson Falls and to enforce all State and local laws in a professional manner with fairness and courtesy.

Actually, that portion of police service dealing with criminal behavior is only a small part of our overall responsibility. The greater percentage of our time and energy is expended on non-criminal service functions and in dealing with law abiding citizens of the Village of Hudson Falls.

We should consider it our duty and privilege, not only to protect our citizens from unlawful behavior, but also to protect and defend the rights guaranteed under our structure of government.

It may be said that matters of civil law are not basic police responsibility and within reasonable limits, we should attempt to avoid becoming entangled in them. However, many situations can best be served only when we assist in such matters.

Our broad philosophy must embrace a wholehearted determination to protect and support individual rights while at all

times providing for the security of persons and property in the community. In meeting this objective, it is our duty to operate as a public service organization.

## Department Overview

The Village of Hudson Falls is located on the western border of Washington County. Washington County is a long narrow county located in the northeastern section of New York State and borders Essex County, Saratoga County, Rensselaer County and the State of Vermont. The population of the Village was 7,174 (per the 2017 census) which makes it the largest village located within Washington County. The Town of Fort Edward, which houses the county seat, borders the Village of Hudson Falls to the south. Warren County and Saratoga County border the village to the west. The City of Glens Falls is approximately 3 miles to the northwest of the village.



## Juckett Park

The Hudson Falls Police Department is a full-time, 24/7 Law Enforcement Agency that has maintained New York State Accreditation since 1994 and is the largest Police Department in Washington County. The department is comprised of 19 police officers, 13 full-time and 6 part-time. Our agency has a minimum staffing of at least two officers per shift (1 Sergeant and 1 Patrolman). Two 12-hour (7A-7P & 7P-7A) shifts are scheduled daily as well as one patrol officer scheduled 3P-3A as a third officer. Fully marked patrol cars are driven by patrol officers. The Chief, Captain and Detective work 40-hours a week Monday thru Friday and the Detective is on call continuously. The Chief and Captain handle administrative duties while the Detective handles all major cases. For the fiscal year 2020-2021 the police department budget is \$1,074,300.00. This budget pays for officer salaries, patrol cars, equipment upgrades, new equipment, operating costs, training, etc. Our agency works closely with surrounding agencies and supplies backup with manpower and equipment as needed.



St. Mary's / St. Paul's Church

# Introduction

The Village's reform and reinvention committee met several times beginning in November 2020. During the initial meeting, the committee was given a departmental overview explaining what tasks the police department currently is involved in as well as yearly statistics. Since the initial meeting, the committee did get together to discuss many different police and societal topics.

Social Media, Hudson Falls Village and Police Department websites as well as public surveys and police reform committee input were used to ascertain the thought's and needs of the village residents as it pertains to village policing moving into the future.

## Public Involvement

Per the Governor's orders found in the Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative guide dated August 2020 the Hudson Falls Police Department has sent out letters to the public explaining the functions that the police department performs for the community. The Committee decided that it would be best to send out letters to the community looking for responses of how the residents would like to see their community policing moving forward. These letters were labeled "Outline for Community Discussions on Reimagining Policing in the Village of Hudson Falls" This Letter is attached as Exhibit 1. The Village Clerk supplied this agency with the mailing addresses of village residents through the water bill address directory. These letters were sent out to the community with a requested return date of January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021. This letter could also be utilized as it was placed on the village police department's website and the Village of Hudson Falls website. Upon return receipt of the letters and the committee input we decided that the following topics were considered to be the most important for the village residents and this agency moving forward.

1. Mental Health
2. LEAD Programs
3. Departmental Transparency/Complaint Policy
4. Education/Training of Officers
5. Recruiting/Retention

Upon the committee discussing these topics as well as public input, a master plan has been created and will be addressed in the following pages.

## Mental Health/Drug Addiction

The conversation in reference to village residents with Mental Health and Drug Addiction problems was far reaching and of great concern to the committee. At this point the police department alone is only able to bring subjects to the hospital to seek mental health evaluations by professionals. Members of the police department are in need of further education on how to handle many of these calls in a safe manner for all parties involved. The following Committee members have spoken at great length with the committee and were very helpful with their suggestions and will continue to be an asset to the Hudson Falls Police Department moving forward.

Andrea Deepe – Warren/Washington Assn. for Mental Health, CEO

Carrie Wright – Office of Community Services Warren/Washington Cty.

The following Plan will be utilized moving forward:

- Advised by Carrie Wright of a Mobile Crisis Team that can respond to Mental Health calls if necessary. (Day/nighttime hour requests



can factor response as well as Response team distance from our jurisdiction.)

- A mobile Recovery Unit will be utilized by this office. This Unit will focus on providing substance abuse counseling and additional referrals to those community members struggling with drug use and abuse. This service is unique in that it offers in-person as well as telephone and virtual appointments for clients. Upon client request this service will visit clients in their home to eliminate barriers that are commonly faced by those in need, such as transportation costs.

1. Officers will be instructed to provide the Mobile Recovery Unit business card to the following subjects:

- a) Subjects experiencing an overdose.
- b) Subjects arrested for drug related offenses.
- c) Subjects seeking substance abuse treatment or demonstrating the potential need to benefit from the services.
- d) Parents or others who are requesting information to assist a friend or family member.

2. Often times, services are accepted or declined based on how the offer is presented to an individual. Officer will be required to mention the following two points when providing information to members of the community.

- a) The Mobile Recovery Unit means that the service provider will come to your home or location of your choosing to discuss ways they can assist you. They

can also discuss their services on the telephone or a web meeting.

b) The person who answers the phone number on the card is a person named, X. X is in long term recovery and his life experiences provide him insight into the needs and struggles of individuals experiencing issues with substance abuse.

c) The Mobile Recovery Unit is in no way associated with Law Enforcement as far as criminal cases are concerned.

- This department will exceed the minimum hours of mandated accreditation training on such topics as:

1. De-Escalation Techniques
2. Responding to Mental Illness
3. Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder
4. Mental Health Training (Suicide Screening)
5. Understanding LEAD Programs
6. Substance Abuse
7. Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)

# Law Enforcement and Diversion (LEAD) Programs

- LEAD (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion) Program has been in discussion for quite some time. LEAD is a program that can offer suspects of low-level criminal offenses resulting from mental health problems or substance abuse an opportunity to remove themselves from the criminal justice system by utilizing help that is offered to them from substance abuse and mental health professionals. The District Attorney has been involved in these talks and we will continue moving forward to incorporate this program.
- If Pre-Arrest the alleged subject may be turned over to alternative sentencing rather than being thrust into the Criminal Justice System.
- Work with the Washington County Probation Department in reference to potentially establishing a youth LEAD Program.

# Departmental Transparency/ Complaint Policy

- Upgrade the department's website to include access to some of the departmental policies, procedures, rules and regulations. Use of Force Policy is already on the site as is the Civilian Complaint form against departmental officers.
- Use the department website to better disseminate department statistics and data to include Monthly and Yearly statistics.
- Use social media applications for additional transparency and engagement.
- Use departmental website to explain to the public how entailed and rigorous it is to meet and maintain New York State Accreditation Status.
- Through Social media and the department website it was requested to explain to community members what the process is to become an accredited agency as well as the process for maintaining accreditation by adhering to states mandates.

## Education/Training of Officers

- NYS Accreditation requires a minimum of 21 hours of training per officer per year.
- Department will continue to offer training exceeding the yearly mandated amount of hours per officer.
- Re-evaluate and update training topics on a continual basis to meet departmental needs.
- Contact Josh Gray for more extreme training on Mental Health. Mr. Gray trains on Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)
- This department has already begun training on specific topics such as diversity training, anti-bias training, de-escalation and communication training and will continue to offer officers this training on a yearly basis.
- Continue to keep the Use of Force Policy updated and make sure all officers are apprised of the updates on a continual basis.
- Committee felt very strongly that an Officer Wellness Program should be incorporated within the Hudson Falls Village Police Department.

## Recruiting/Retention of Officers

- Send Police Officers to speak at the Hudson Falls High School when they have their annual “Career Days” program.
- Contact the Hudson Falls School District Administration in reference to engaging in a ride-a-long program for Juniors and Seniors in the school district that are interested in Law Enforcement.
- Contact SUNY Adirondack Criminal Justice Administration in reference to engaging in a ride-a-long program for college students that are interested in Law Enforcement.
- Assign an officer to begin a recruitment program and become a liaison between the Hudson Falls School District and local colleges to include SUNY Adirondack.
- Create recruitment material and information and supply to the Hudson Falls Central School District and SUNY Adirondack.
- Village Board agreeing to continue moving forward with fair and fiscally responsible contracts for village police officers that will help recruit and retain police officers for longer periods of time.

## **Exhibit 1.**

### **OUTLINE FOR COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS ON REIMAGINING POLICING IN THE VILLAGE OF HUDSON FALLS**

The Hudson Falls Police Department serves the law enforcement needs of all the citizens of the Village of Hudson Falls, and strives to do so in a professional manner, respecting the rights of all our citizens without regard to race, color, nationality, creed, gender or sexual orientation. Our policies and procedures are developed and carried out with that goal in mind, and our officers are selected, trained and supervised with that same goal in mind.

We use our knowledge, experience and professional judgment, combined with available information, data, analysis and research to develop our Police Department policing strategies, policies and procedures. Some of the relevant strategies, policies and procedures and related issues are set forth below for community discussion and comment.

1. **Deployment:** Here is how/where our officers are currently deployed:

- Prior to each shift our officers engage in shift briefings to familiarize themselves with locations of higher crime rate or where civilian complaints have come in.

**Policing Strategy:** Our reason for deploying our resources where and how we do so is:

- By reviewing previous shift synopsis and calls for service.
- Department uses a NYS Certified Crime Analyst to create data sheets from our reporting system for our use in locating and directing patrols.

Question: Do you see this deployment practice or policing strategy as demonstrating any racial bias?

Question: Do you feel that this deployment practice or policing strategy results in unfair, disproportionate policing of communities of color?

Question: Do you see any other problem with this deployment practice?

2. **Use of Force.** Our policy on use of force:

- Has recently been overhauled due to newly enacted laws. And it follows MPTC policy. Use of Force Policy can be found on the front page of the departments website: [www.hudsonfallspd.com](http://www.hudsonfallspd.com).

Question: Do you have questions/suggestions about our use of force policy?

3. **Procedural Justice:** Our policies that promote procedural justice are:

Departmental policies requiring courtesy, respect, responsiveness, equal treatment irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation, etc., transparency, citizen and community engagement.

Question: Are there additional steps you can suggest that would help give people confidence that we treat all citizens equally and fairly?

**4. Bias:** Our anti-bias policies and implicit bias training are:

- Newly enacted laws have created updated policies and training specifically addressing bias and discrimination. Our departmental policies follow MPTC model policy and training standards. As stated in the Procedural Justice Section we again have policies to promote courtesy, respect, etc.

Question: Are there additional steps we could take to assure citizens that our agency is free of bias in our actions? Are you aware of any studies that would support such additional steps?

**5. De-escalation:** Our de-escalation training and practice are:

- Newly enacted laws have created updated requirements specifically addressing De-escalation and discrimination. Our department has begun this training and this training is also required on a yearly basis. Our Use of Force Policy has been updated to include de-escalation tactics.

Question: Do you have questions/suggestions on our de-escalation policy?

**6. Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Programs:** We do the following things, in an appropriate case, to divert persons out of the normal criminal justice system in the early stages and into needed services and programs:

- Last year myself and Capt. Kibling began attending LEAD meetings and we are in the process of potentially adopting this program.
- Washington County Probation Department handles a large number of arrest cases that are made by members of the Hudson Falls Police Department.

Question: Do you have suggestions on additional programs and services to which our agency could divert individuals in an appropriate case?

**7. Restorative Justice:** “Restorative Justice” is a response to crime that involves organizing a meeting between an offender and the victim, so they share their experience of what happened, discuss who was harmed and how, and to create a consensus for what the offender can do to repair the harm.

Question: Do you think such a program should be run by a law enforcement agency such as your police department, or would it be more appropriately run by probation or a non-governmental agency?

**8. Community Based Outreach and Conflict Resolution:** The concept of community-based outreach works best in cities and smaller municipalities, where an officer can be regularly



assigned to the same neighborhood. With larger geographic jurisdictions, it is more difficult. However, we do foster community-based outreach and non-arrest conflict resolution by:

- Security Checks (Business, School, House), Church Crossings, Eddie Eagle Gun Safe Program (Pre K – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade - school), Coffee with a Cop – community, Stranger Safety (Pre K – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade – school) 911 Awareness (Pre K – 1<sup>st</sup> grade – school), Cyber Awareness/ Cyber Bullying (5<sup>th</sup> grade – 6<sup>th</sup> grade – school), Drug Awareness (4<sup>th</sup> grade– 6<sup>th</sup> grade – school)

Question: Are there ways we can expand community outreach without requiring additional resources. Are there additional community outreach programs that would justify expending additional village resources?

9. **Problem Oriented Policing and Hot Spot Policing:** Problem oriented policing and hot spot policing are similar concepts, involving identifying and analyzing specific crime problems and locations and targeting resources toward solving those problems. We employ those concepts, in effect, when we:

- As stated earlier, prior to each shift our officers engage in shift briefings to familiarize themselves with locations of higher crime rate or where civilian complaints have come in. Officers also reviewing previous shift synopsis and calls for service.

Question: Are there additional ways we can identify and target high crime areas, serious crime trends, etc.?

10. **Focused Deterrence:** “Focused Deterrence” is a crime reduction strategy which aims to deter crime by increasing the swiftness, severity and certainty of punishment, usually directed at a specific crime problem such as gun violence. Law enforcement can play a role in focused deterrence, but the swiftness, severity and certainty of punishment are primarily determined by actions of the prosecution and the courts.

- Traffic Safety Grants provide funding for officers to perform Road Checks and Traffic Safety Issues. (Seat Belt Enforcement)

Question: Is there a particular crime problem in our village that you think could be best addressed by devoting police resources and effort toward focused deterrence of that crime, and what steps would be taken to effectuate that?

11. **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design:** Attention to environmental design can help to increase the probability that an offender will be caught. Studies show that increased probability of capture tends to deter the commission of crime. Examples of crime prevention through environmental design would be better lighting in crime-prone areas, conspicuous placement of security cameras with attendant conspicuous signage, elimination of shrubbery where it could serve as a hiding place for an attacker, etc. Environmental design is not usually a function of law enforcement, but law enforcement can play a role by identifying possible improvements in the built environment which could help deter criminal activity in the area.

Question: Who should have primary responsibility for identifying and addressing crime-detering environmental design issues

12. **Violence Prevention and Reduction interventions:** Violence prevention refers to the reduction in the frequency of new cases of violent victimization or perpetration through direct efforts to remove or reduce the underlying causes and risk factors, such as alcohol abuse, drug abuse, gang activity, illegal weapons possession, domestic conflicts, etc.

- Our agency has an Officer assigned as a NYS Field Intelligence Officer
- Detective is assigned to monthly MDT meetings (Multi-Disciplinary Team for Abused Children)
- Detective is assigned to the local Drug Task Force
- Officer is assigned to Sex Offender Management
- Capt. Assigned to Domestic Violence Task Force
- Department involved with school safety committee

**Question:** Do you have suggestions on violence reduction strategies that could be implemented by the Police Department or by other entities?

13. **Model Policies Promulgated by the Municipal Police Training Council:** The State MPTC from time to time develops a model policy on one or another aspect of police operations, which it offers to police agencies for consideration for adoption. Other organizations also develop model policies. Not every model policy is suited to adoption by every agency. Many agencies develop their policies and procedures by studying model policies from many sources, and by studying actual policies being successfully used by other law enforcement agencies around the country.

- Our Police Department has adopted many model policies developed by MPTC, as being well suited to our agency. (ex. Use of Force, Suspect Identification, and more)

14. **The New York State Law Enforcement Agency Accreditation Standards:** The Law Enforcement Agency Accreditation Council establishes a set of standards with which a law enforcement agency seeking accreditation must comply. Law enforcement accreditation is not mandatory for police agencies in New York State, and not every agency is able to attain accreditation from the Council.

- The Hudson Falls Police Department meets all the standards established by the LEAC and has been an accredited agency since 1994. We were most recently re-accredited March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Re-Accreditation is performed every five years.

Upon reviewing this document, you may respond with any suggestions that you, as a Hudson Falls Village resident, may have. Please feel free to respond without fear of being punished for your thoughts or suggestions. This is your chance to let us know what services you are hoping to gain from your local police department. All responses **MUST** contain the address and name of the village resident as this document is intended for village residents **ONLY**. We will gladly accept positive responses about the Hudson Falls Police Department as well. As this reform moves forward committee meeting discussions will be posted for your review and response at [www.hudsonfallspd.com](http://www.hudsonfallspd.com). Thank you for your cooperation and I look forward to hearing from you. Chief Scott J. Gillis

All responses must be received by January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Responses can be dropped off in person, emailed or mailed via U.S. Postal Service:

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