

# ROSENDALE POLICE REFORM REPORT ACTION PLAN

## 1.3 Recommendations

**Measure and report on the percentage of minorities involved in interactions with the RPD** - While we do not believe specific goals should be set, regularly measuring and reporting on the percentage of minorities will help the RPD and Town understand trends and patterns in their interactions with the public. We believe it would be important to measure and report where possible, the percentage of minorities engaging with the RPD Officer vs. Dispatch initiated. As noted in other sections, presenting and reviewing this data at each Police Commission meeting and providing it to the public is highly recommended.

**Action: Annual report at Police Commission meeting. Each year, at the January Police Commission meeting and the 1<sup>st</sup> February Town Board meeting, the Chief of Police will provide data for the previous year to compare, track, and improve policing in Rosendale.**

**Further strengthen relations with the community** - Feedback recorded during this committee's public listening sessions noted concerns by some residents of Rosendale that the RPD could redouble their efforts to build greater rapport with the public by demonstrating that they are not just Police Officers but community members themselves. This can be achieved by attending community events, talking with pedestrians, and visiting storekeepers.

**Action: See section 5.3**

**Educate the public on minor infractions** - RPD officers should make greater efforts to educate the public about minor infractions and give warnings, rather than issuing tickets for first offenses. This could go a long way to improve the RPD's reputation as public safety officers.

**Action: Bi-annual safety checks on main thoroughfares in Rosendale to educate public on minor infractions without penalty at time of stop.**

## 2.3 Recommendations

The Committee recommends a more in-depth review of the total costs for community policing in Rosendale per capita vs. other municipalities with Police forces within the county.

**Action: Police Commission will investigate total costs for community policing in Rosendale per capita vs. other Ulster County municipalities and report findings at the January Police Commission meeting and 1<sup>st</sup> February Town Board meeting.**

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## 3.3 Recommendations

**Conduct Annual Community Policing Survey** - We strongly recommend that the RPD administer an Annual Community Policing Survey, using the one conducted by the RCPRC as a baseline, to measure progress on issues of procedural justice. We would further recommend that the RPD set annual goals regarding the average percentage of negative responses to these questions and launch specific initiatives designed to reduce percentages over time.

**Action: Supervisor's office will conduct annual community policing survey every November and report findings at January Police Commission meeting, and 1<sup>st</sup> February Town Board meeting.**

**Hold an Annual Public Town Hall Meeting** - To continually build and increase trust with the community, the RPD should hold an annual "Town Hall" meeting to report their survey findings and engage in a public dialog to better understand what the data indicates.

**Action: Town Board will designate the 1<sup>st</sup> February Town Board meeting as Annual Meeting to report on all Police Reform Committee recommendations and invite the public to engage.**

**Identify Independent Third Party to Engage Minorities** - Based on feedback the Committee has received, we believe that some residents, particularly minorities, may feel uncomfortable sharing concerns and feedback directly with the RPD, It is important to stress here that this is not necessarily due to any negative interactions they have had with the RPD but rather general concerns they have regarding law enforcement, possibly based on prior experience with other agencies. Given this, we would recommend that an independent third party, someone who is familiar with the minority community, be identified to confidentially engage with the Town's minorities when input is needed.

**Action: See section 5.3, Community Liaison**

## 4.3 Recommendations

**Emphasize De-escalation Tactics Earlier in Section 300.3 (Use of Force)** - The current RPD Policy Manual makes a note of using de-escalation tactics at the end of the Use of Force section and does not list specific tactics to use in this section (instead, specific tactics are listed in Section 407.6 related to situations involving persons experiencing a mental health crisis). We would recommend referencing the use of de-escalation tactics earlier in Section 300.3 and provided a list of specific tactics as well as means to emphasize their use.

**Action: De-escalation tactics and examples have been added to Section 300.3. Due to format of policy software, section on de-escalation must remain in numerical order to receive automatic updates from 3<sup>rd</sup> party contractor.**

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**Promote Examples of De-escalation on Facebook Group** - To build more community awareness of their use of de-escalation strategies, we would recommend that the RPD post more examples of de-escalated situations or where force was avoided.

**Action: When de-escalation tactics are deployed, such instances, as permitted within the law, will be posted to Facebook to build community awareness of Rosendale policing efforts.**

**Make More of the RPD Policy Manual Publicly Available** - While some aspects of the Policy Manual may need to be kept confidential to address security concerns, we would encourage the RPD to make as much of it available to the public as possible, particularly those sections that speak to issues such as policies regarding situations that involve people experiencing a mental health crisis. We would also encourage the RPD to hold annual public meetings on their Policy Manual to answer questions from the community and gain input and feedback on it.

**Action: The RPD will publicly release the Policy Manual except for sections needed to be kept confidential for security concerns, by the end of 2021, with the 1<sup>st</sup> February Town Board meeting designated when all residents can ask questions on policing. As always, individual inquiries are welcome and will be responded to throughout the year at the Police Commission meetings.**

## 5-3 Recommendations

**Acknowledge and Discuss with Your Communities the Challenges You Are Facing** - Controversial incidents can damage relationships between Police and their communities. In some cases, a perceived act of misconduct by a single officer (anywhere) damages Police-community relationships locally and reduces the trust of the Police generally.

Police should acknowledge the history of racial minorities and others who have faced injustice at the hands of the law. And officers should never discount the negative experiences of individuals with the Police.

**Action: All police officers will receive annual updated diversity, inclusivity, anti-racism, anti-bias training and sign off that they have received and understand training.**

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**Be Accountable and Transparent** - Transparency is essential to positive Police-community relationships. When a critical incident occurs, agencies should try to release as much information about it as possible, as soon as possible, so the community will not feel that information is being purposefully hidden. On a day-to-day level, Police departments should post information on their websites detailing policies on the use of force, substantiated community member complaints, and other issues. This information should be easily accessible so the community feels they are being kept "in the loop."

**Action: At each monthly Police Commission meeting, the Chief will report on all matters of substance occurring the previous month, and the information will be posted on the Town's website. On a case-by-case basis, the Chief of Police or the Town Supervisor will publish information relating to police activity when it rises to the level where immediate public dissemination is essential to the security, awareness, and proper functioning of the Rosendale community.**

**Reduce Bias and Improve Cultural Competency** - Rosendale Police Officers should continue receiving training on diversity, implicit bias, language, and cultural competency. Even though Rosendale has a small percentage of communities with a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds and cultures, officers need to be able to communicate effectively with and understand the cultural norms of these different groups.

**Action: All Police Officers will receive annual updated diversity, inclusivity, anti-racism, anti-bias training and sign off that they have received and understand training.**

**Community Walks** - once a month, the Chief/Officer takes to the streets within a specified neighborhood and goes door to door to meet with residents. Also joining is (one-or-two) representatives from the Town Board, Town, Commission, or local Clergy, all in attendance to get an accurate depiction of how things look from the ground and join in the RPD's community outreach initiative.

**Action: Starting in September 2021, monthly community meet-ups will be announced via Facebook. Community members will be encouraged to speak with Officers and other attendees in their respective neighborhoods.**

**Community Liaisons** - The Rosendale Police Commission should add Community Liaisons of neighborhoods, districts, businesses, churches, community agencies, and youth groups. These community members are responsible for developing, overseeing, and assisting with implementing effective strategies to reduce crime and disorder, change perceptions and facilitate positive engagement and increased trust between Rosendale PD and the neighborhoods they serve by implementing community-Police relations groups to provide venues for the community to have the ability to speak, be heard, and have their perspective considered. They should continually re-evaluate the effectiveness, services, and professionalism of Police officers' performance in the Rosendale community. The Rosendale Police Commission Liaison member should work in neighborhoods throughout the town to develop ongoing

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relationships of trust with the community, assist with neighborhood meetings and watch groups, and coordinate info between the RPD, Code Enforcement, the Town Board, businesses, and the residents.

**Action: Two Community Liaisons positions are approved. Target start date is September 2021.**

**Community Service** - All Rosendale Police Officers should be encouraged to perform community service activities each year. They are encouraged to choose activities that match their skills and interests, such as conducting CPR training, mentoring at-risk teens, answering questions at classes for recent immigrants, serving food at a church's community dinner, or holding 'Coffee with an Officer' open hours, where residents are free to speak their minds with officers.

**Action: Within the negotiated framework of the Police Union contract, On-Duty Officers will be afforded the opportunity to interact in more community building activities.**

**citizen Comment Cards** - The Police Department gives out 'Citizen Comment Cards' in traffic contacts and other calls service.

**Action: For a period of one months in Sept 2021, RPD will hand out Comment Cards, after which program will be accessed for usefulness and accuracy.**

**Education of the community and the private sector as a tool in advancing community policing -**

- a. Meth/drug awareness
- b. Elder education seminar
- c. Effective alcohol management
- d. Domestic intervention response
- e. Street crime & traffic activity patterns

**Action: Police Chief will organize annual meeting for public with subject matter experts to address drug and alcohol abuse, and violence within the community.**

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## 6.3 Recommendations

In the future, the Chief should maintain scrutiny over Officers who are demonstrating low or no concern for the application of the new laws or who have expressed their disapproval of the latest round of implicit bias and antiracist training being recommended by this committee. The Chief could also note an officer's performance in adopting new practices and include this as a consideration for promotion.

In light of recent events in Washington DC, this committee recommends that the Chief redoubles his efforts to monitor behavior and communication. This includes Officers' social media accounts, e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Parler, etc., ensuring that officers are not making threats to public safety using disrespectful racial slurs or making racist comments.

**Action: Using lawful means, the RPD is now monitoring RPD Officer's compliance with RPD social media rules and will address any incident with a proportional response.**

## 7.3 Recommendations

The RPD and Town of Rosendale should make all future annual de-identified use-of-force analyses available to the public on the Town website in addition to being presented at Police Commission meetings.

**Action: The RPD will publish data for previous year use-of-force incidents, with as much detail as permissible within the law, at the January Police Commission meeting and the 1<sup>st</sup> February Town Board meeting.**

## 8.3 Recommendations

The Committee recommends the Rosendale Police Department add a written policy governing the reporting of misconduct by Officers beyond the use of force. This policy should both encourage Officers to report misconduct by other officers and protect Officers against retaliation. Best practices also suggest an anonymous option for internal complaints should be explored to encourage reporting. When the new internal accountability policies are complete, immediate training should occur, followed by annual training.

**Action: Policy is in the following sections of the Manual; a. Code of Conduct, b. section 300.2.1, c. section 319.5.9, d. 1007.3.2**

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All complaints involving civil rights violations must be sent to the Town Supervisor, Town Board, the Police Commission for discussion in Executive Session, and the Ulster County District Attorney.

**Action: All complaints involving civil rights violations will be sent to the Town Supervisor, Town Board, the Police Commission for discussion in executive session, and the Ulster County District Attorney.**

## 9.3 Recommendations

**Regarding citizen oversight and external accountability:** this committee recommends adding another citizen as a Liaison, perhaps someone who is familiar with the minority community to the Police Commission to enhance representation. The Town Board may also consider removing Police Commission members who formerly served as law enforcement officers.

**Action: Two Community Liaisons positions are approved. Target start date is September 2021.**

**Regarding the complaint/commendation protocol** - this Committee recommended changing the complaint/commendation protocol so that all formal and informal complaints and commendations are filed with the Chief of Police and the Town Supervisor and then referred to the Police Commission. This will add another layer of transparency to RPD conduct.

**Action: This policy is in effect.**

## 10.3 Recommendations

**Set goals for change and measure progress over time towards those goals** - Accurate and regularly reported data is central to this, as without it, one cannot measure progress and thus cannot know if reforms are working.

**Action: The Police Commission will research goals for policing. Once adopted, these goals will be reported on at the January meeting of the Police Commission and 1<sup>st</sup> February meeting of the Town Board.**

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**Create a data dashboard.** We recommend that the RPD, working with the Ulster County Law Enforcement Center, develop a "data dashboard" that can be accessed by the public via their website that would provide timely de-identified data analysis in a format easily understood by the public. While the Committee's work is focused primarily on making demographic information more broadly available, other data may be of value to include as well. Finally, we would strongly recommend that the RPC have a standing agenda item to review both the data dashboard and more confidential data related to Police conduct at each meeting. This could include data associated with any reform goals established by the Committee.

**Action: The Chief of Police will work closely with the Ulster County Sheriffs Department, which is the lead agency on developing the data dashboard, to quickly and accurately deploy the dashboard. Progress report on the data dashboard will be given monthly at the Police Commission meeting.**

**Enhance representation on Rosendale's Police Commission** - regarding citizen oversight and external accountability, the Police Commission is fulfilling its mandate as one layer of accountability and the Town Board as another layer of Police oversight. A suggestion would be to add two liaison positions, who are familiar with minority and traditionally marginalized communities, to the Police Commission, to enhance representation.

**Action: Two Community Liaisons positions are approved. Target start date is September 2021.**

**Upgrade RPD's technology to enhance Transparency** - Regarding data technology and transparency, the RPD operates with dated technology, which needs to be upgraded for Body Worn Cameras to be operational and for records management to be functional. Another suggestion is to make redacted arrest data more readily available to the public via the Town website.

**Action: Body camera equipment and supporting technology is on order and will be deployed upon reception. Delays are largely pandemic related.**

## 11.3 Recommendations

**Intentional Community Engagement:** Reach out to build relationships with the minority population in our community can only help in attracting and recruiting more diversity in RPD.

**Action: Two Community Liaisons positions are approved. Target start date is September 2021.**

It is recommended that Ulster County Civil Service cast as wide a net as possible to attract a diverse pool of Candidates.

**Action: At July 2021 Town Board meeting, the Town Board will send resolution to Ulster County Personnel, and SUNY Ulster asking them to recruit a diverse pool of candidates for their program.**



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Plan an inclusive community event.

Action: Community liaisons to the Police Commission will plan an inclusive post-COVID community event for 2022. All RPD community-attended events will be reported on by the Police Chief at the monthly Police Commission meetings starting in September 2021.

## 12.3 Recommendations

The committee recommends additional training:

Cultural Diversity, Bias-related training for officers, including the latest training on anti-racism. The contents of the annual four-part cycle training for RPD officers should be reviewed to include anti-racist training.

Action: All Police Officers will receive annual updated diversity, inclusivity, anti-racism, anti-bias training and sign off that they have received and understand training.

**13.3 Recommendations** Chief Schaffrick is intentional in his relationship with his Officers in monitoring their mental health. He understands the importance of family and models work and life balance and the importance of physical exercise. Professional counseling is available to Officers and is utilized by them.

Action: RPD and Town Supervisor will work closely to ensure police mental health is monitored and medical help is provided to those in need. At July 2021 Town Board meeting, a resolution will be passed acknowledging the stress of policing, and encouraging all Officers to seek mental health treatment when in need.