

NYS Police Reform and Reinvention
Collaborative
Executive Order No. 203

PLAN
For The
VILLAGE OF CANTON

March 2021

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We thank the many community members who provided feedback throughout this process.

INTRODUCTION

In the Village of Canton, we recognize our differences as a strength in our community. We wish to embrace the diversity of our nation and our Village, to promote diversity in our thinking, and to encourage diversity and inclusion in our community.

In light of national events and our desire to address systemic racism and create a community that is inclusive and welcoming to everyone, the Mayor, Village Board of Trustees, and Canton Police Department's Chief of Police welcomed Governor Andrew Cuomo's *Executive Order 203: NYS Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative* as an opportunity to improve the relationship between the Canton community and the Canton Police Department, to improve policing policies and procedures, and to support the mental health and wellbeing of our officers.

The report that follows documents the process by which we implemented Executive Order 203. We summarize our efforts to engage the community through the creation of an Advisory Committee who reviewed the Canton Police Department's current deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, and developed recommendations for improvements and methods to gather feedback from the wider community. We provide a synopsis of that feedback and present the recommendations, finalized by the Committee in response to the community's input. We conclude this report by detailing next steps, where accountability for its implementation lies, and how the community will continue to be informed about progress to its objections.

We submit this report with the understanding that each recommendation will need to be reviewed carefully and specific plans for implementation and evaluation created. We welcome the opportunity that this provides the Village of Canton to continue to make improvements that strengthen the relationship between the community and the Canton Police Department and to have ongoing and robust public conversations about the community's needs and the best means of addressing those needs.

ABOUT THE VILLAGE OF CANTON AND THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

OVERVIEW

The Village of Canton occupies 3.58 square miles¹ within the Town of Canton near the border with Canada. The Village is the County Seat of St. Lawrence County and home to two universities, St. Lawrence University and the SUNY College of Technology at Canton (SUNY Canton). Primary economic drivers include education, healthcare, and government; the Village also has a vibrant downtown with retail stores and restaurants.

As of 2019, the Village was home to about 6,496 people,² with student enrollments of 2,434 at St. Lawrence University³ and 3,223 at SUNY Canton⁴ increasing the population to about 12,153 people. The Village's full-time resident population is predominately White (~86.6%); approximately 6.6% of full-time residents are Black American or African American, 2.5% are Asian, 0.5% are Native American, and 1.9% are bi- or multi-racial⁵. In terms of ethnicity, 4% full-time residents are Hispanic or Latino⁶. The diverse student populations bring additional racial and ethnic diversity to the Village. According to NCES data, as of 2019, the undergraduate population at St. Lawrence University (2,392) was comprised of students who were 76.8% White, 3.9% Black or African American, 1.7% Asian, 0.3% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 1.7% bi- or multi-racial and 5.3% Hispanic or Latino⁷. Of the students enrolled at SUNY Canton (3,223), 65.3% were White, 13.2% were Black or African American, 2.6% were bi- or multi-racial, 1.6% were Native American or Alaskan Native, 1.3% were Asian, and 11.2% were Hispanic or Latino.⁸

According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates for the period from 2015-2019, the median household income of full-time residents is about \$62,266, while the poverty rate is approximately 16.2%⁹. About 95% of full-time residents have a high school diploma and 54.5% have a bachelor's degree or higher.

The Village of Canton's total annual budget for fiscal year 2020-2021 is \$6,676,325. This includes an appropriation for the Canton Police Department of \$1,045,747, representing 15.6% of the total budget.

¹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/cantonvillagenewyork/EDU635219> (last viewed March 9, 2021).

² Id.

³ https://nces.ed.gov/globallocator/col_info_popup.asp?ID=195216 (last viewed March 9, 2021).

⁴ https://nces.ed.gov/globallocator/col_info_popup.asp?ID=196015 (last viewed March 9, 2021).

⁵ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/cantonvillagenewyork/EDU635219> (last viewed March 9, 2021).

⁶ Id.

⁷ https://nces.ed.gov/globallocator/col_info_popup.asp?ID=195216 (last viewed March 9, 2021).

⁸ https://nces.ed.gov/globallocator/col_info_popup.asp?ID=196015 (last viewed March 9, 2021).

⁹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/cantonvillagenewyork/EDU635219> (last viewed March 9, 2021).

CANTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Canton Police Department was established around 1880-1885 and initially consisted of a night officer who worked with local “merchants, professional men and others who believed in safeguarding the peace and quiet of the Village.” The department eventually grew into a 24-hour operation that today is staffed by the Chief, three sergeants, six officers, three dispatchers and two school crossing guards. Currently, of the uniformed staff, two are women, eight are men, all are White. Of the dispatchers, two are women, one is a man, all are White. The two school crossing guards are women and both are White.

The Mission of the Canton Police Department is to work with all citizens to preserve life, maintain human rights, protect property, and promote individual responsibility and community commitment.

The Canton Police Department continually strives for excellence in service to the community. Each day professional police services are offered to the resident and student populations, as well as the large daily influx of citizens from other communities who work, study, or seek the services and entertainment offered within the Village.

The Canton Police Department subscribes to the following values:

Service: We value the opportunity to provide service that is fair, courteous, responsive, and efficient. We strive to respect and protect the worth, dignity, and rights of all members and visitors to our diverse community.

Integrity: We value honesty and ethical behavior from all of the members of our department.

Responsibility and Accountability: We aim to accept responsibility for our actions and admit to our mistakes to ensure that our behavior earns the support and trust of all facets of the public that we serve.

Professionalism: We guarantee that the experience, education, and training of our staff will uniquely qualify us to meet the challenges present in a changing and dynamic society.

CANTON'S COMMUNITY-DRIVEN REVIEW AND PLANNING PROCESS

OVERVIEW

On June 12, 2020, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed Executive Order 203, requiring local governments in New York State to adopt a policing reform plan by April 01, 2021. To comply with the executive order, Mayor Michael Dalton and Chief James Santimaw asked Elizabeth (Beth) Larrabee and Anna Sorensen, the Village Trustees who serve on the Public Safety Committee, to assist with developing a strategic plan to address Executive Order 203. The goal was to facilitate a process that engaged the community in the comprehensive review of current policy and practices and the development of recommendations. The strategic plan included the establishment of an Advisory Committee that would collaborate to conduct the review, develop recommendations, and gather community input on those recommendations.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FORMS AND DRAFTS RECOMMENDATIONS

At the Canton Village Board meeting on Monday, August 17, 2020, Beth Larrabee and Anna Sorensen presented the strategic plan and invited people interested in participating on the Advisory Committee to complete an interest form on the Village website. To ensure that the composition of the Advisory Committee represented the diversity of the Canton community, recruitment continued throughout September 2020.

On Wednesday, September 30, 2020, the Advisory Committee convened a virtual meeting to discuss expectations and the review process. During subsequent meetings, subcommittees focusing on the different subsections of the Executive Order 203 Guidance were developed based on members' interest and expertise. At each meeting subcommittee members met in small groups to discuss the subsections and then shared their ideas, questions, and recommendations with the full group. Committee members requested and received documentation and information from the Chief and Mayor throughout the process.

The Advisory Committee conducted a thorough review of Executive Order 203 and concentrated on what they believed to be most relevant to the Canton community. Therefore, recommendations focused on issues pertinent to this community and did not address things like "stop and frisk" that are not practices of the Canton Police Department.

INPUT IS GATHERED FROM THE CANTON COMMUNITY

Once drafted by the Advisory Committee, the recommendations and a survey were made available on the Canton website. The Canton community, including the campus communities of SUNY Canton and St. Lawrence University, were invited to two open community forums and forums on each campus. All forums were held on Zoom due to COVID-19. Also, a presentation of the recommendations was made at a virtual Canton Central School District Board meeting. Efforts to reach particular constituencies were made by providing paper copies of the recommendations, survey, and a flier that provided information about how to access the public

forums, to residents of the three Housing Authority communities in the Village as well as anyone who wished to receive the packet by mail. In addition, the St. Lawrence County District Attorney's office, the Office of the Public Defender, members of the Canton Police Department, and the police union were invited to give comment.

The Canton community was invited to give feedback through a variety of mediums including press releases to local media (digital and print), a feature on local radio, the Canton website and social media platforms, and on the American Theater's marquee on Main Street.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

SURVEY RESULTS

The Advisory Committee's draft recommendations were released on the Canton website, along with a six-question survey. With the exception of the first two questions, which asked if the respondent was a resident of and/or worked in the Village of Canton, the questions were open-ended. Survey results were examined to identify the frequencies of themes in the data. Codes were developed to categorize the responses according to the identified themes. Quotations that illustrate the range and sentiment of responses are reported here; in some cases, responses are edited or excerpted for clarity.

Ninety-five people responded to the survey. Thirty-five percent (N=33¹⁰) reported residing and working in the Village of Canton, 21% (N=20) reported residing but not working in the Village, 31% (N=29) reported working but not residing in the Village, and 15% (N=14) reported neither residing nor working in the Village of Canton.

Eighty-eight percent of people (N=84) responded to Question 3: *How would you describe the role of the Canton Police Department in our community?* Forty percent of respondents spoke of the department's role as being to "protect and serve" the community; examples of responses include: "The role of the Chief and the Canton Police Department officers is to protect the safety and well being of all members of the community and to respond quickly and effectively in cases of emergency" and "They do a solid job protecting the assets and citizens of the community." Fourteen percent of responses included some mention of the department's role being to enforce law/address crime. These responses included statements such as "protect the citizenry, promote community safety, enforce state and local laws," and "The Canton Police Department has the duty to maintain law and order in the Village of Canton." Additionally, eight percent of the responses used the words "necessary" to characterize the police while six percent of responses indicated the belief that the department is "unnecessary."

Forty-three percent of responses to Question 3 indicated a positive or negative evaluation of the department. Of these responses, thirty-five percent were positive, using adjectives such as "positive," "responsive and respectful," "helpful," and "professional." Some responses indicated having a good experience with officers. Eight percent of the responses were coded as a negative evaluation; these comments included the department's role is to "increase property values and make money on tickets," comments that the police are "lax," "overbearing," and "not particularly visible." There was also one comment that suggested that people who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) do not have the same "invisible" experience of the police as is experienced by White residents.

Seventy-eight percent of people (N=74) responded to Question 4: *What does the Canton Police Department do well?* Of those, 81% of responses mentioned responding and helping,

¹⁰ N signifies the number of responses.

maintaining safety, and/or dealing with crime, presence in and support of the community. Nineteen percent of the responses mentioned responding and helping, with comments such as “Canton’s officers deal well with the community during large functions, such as the Dairy Princess Parade and other gatherings where they are present to provide assistance in traffic control and keeping everyone safe by acting as a community resources. They also do well in providing assistance to businesses who have trouble with patrons etc.” Other comments stated that the department is “very responsive to all citizens. Not out to make the arrest but to safeguard the community,” and that they “give help when needed, monitoring for unsafe conditions such as speeding in the village.”

Themes about maintaining safety and/or dealing with crime were mentioned in 35% of responses to Question 4. Comments included stories of assistance being given, recognition that they “protect persons and property,” “patrol the streets late at night,” and “provide safety and protection.” Twenty percent of comments mentioned the Canton Police Department’s presence in and support of the community, with comments such as “community policing. They socialize with the village residents,” “community relations,” and “They know how to deal with residents and visitors alike, especially students. I own property in the university area and between the drugs and drinking I am comforted knowing the pd is there to help. Local officers know the community better than county or state police.” Four percent of comments suggested that the Canton Police Department “have a deservedly good reputation. Are informal and not intimidating, approachable” and “I believe the Canton Police Department personnel are pretty well-known and respected at least by the local population. You trust them when they’ve grown up here, live in your community, and are your neighbors.” Nine percent of people indicated that they did not know what the police did well.

Seventy-seven percent of respondents (N=73) answered Question 5: What can the Canton Police Department do better? Twenty-five percent of comments stated that nothing needed improvement and/or the department should keep doing what they are doing. Twenty-three percent of responses reflected a desire for more presence/visibility in the community. Comments included statements such as, “Footbeat, more in-person visible presence, stop in and see the businesses even 5 a week, [...] it would be nice to see more visual interaction in the village,” “engagement with the populations...regardless of status, skin color, ability,” and “increase police presence by walking/visiting with businesses and the public. Boots on the ground.” Fifteen percent of responses spoke about diversity training/cultural sensitivity needs with comments such as, “learn more from the LGBTQ community by having direct meeting to listen about experiences the LGBTQ community has had,” “recognize areas of bias, profiling, discrimination,” “there needs to be increased awareness and consideration of folks different from us in all ways,” and “with any agency or profession, continued training is critical [...] I believe our officers are good people but may not recognize the need for diversity training.”

Eight percent of comments responding to Question 5 mentioned the need for transparency and communication/good public relations with comments such as, “transparency on the ways that the Canton Police Department is working to improve village life for ALL members of our community – the students, the locals, the visitors,” “public outreach (doing things that show

community that police are human too, not ‘the monsters’ the media portrays them as),” and “publicize mission statement.” Eight percent of responses to this question mentioned issues related to better traffic/parking enforcement while four comments requested more drug enforcement activity. Ten percent of comments mentioned various resources such as providing body cameras and training for officers, “a bigger and more modern space to work from” as well as one comment that suggested the department “exist smaller, on a smaller budget, or not exist at all.” Three percent of comments requested fewer tickets, and several others made comments seemingly unrelated to the question.

The sixth and final prompt was: *Please give us feedback on the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee. If you have feedback specific to any particular recommendation, please identify the number in your comments.* Sixty-four percent of respondents (N=61) provided a response to this question. Responses varied widely; some provided comments related to specific recommendations or themes from the recommendations while others mentioned the process itself. Some comments reflected personal experiences with officers or perspectives on the necessity of the Executive Order 203 process; some did not address the question at all.

The most commonly identified pattern in the responses to Question 6 were indications of support for the recommendations and/or the process (33%); examples include comments such as “they each make good sense, they add more accountability and transparency,” “[I] think they are reasonable,” they are “well thought out,” “thoughtful, well researched work,” and “I believe the recommendations are solid and in the right direction. Asking for public opinion and being transparent is essential. Thank you for making this happen.”

In contrast, the second most commonly identified pattern in the responses to Question 6 was suggestions that this community review process is not necessary, is politically motivated, and that there are no problems in our community with respect to policing (20%). Comments include the idea that Executive Order 203 is not “relevant to a community such as Canton,” that this process flows from an “assumption of bias” or that the Committee “wants to start issues;” other comments are derogatory to Governor Cuomo as well as efforts to address racism.

Fifteen percent of comments mentioned social services/ mental health, training/partnership with community agencies; two of these comments directly suggested that officers should not “do the work of social workers” or “respond to mental health calls.” Comments stated training about mental health was imperative for officers while others suggested support for collaborating with community social services agencies to handle problems related to homelessness, addiction services, and mental health. Examples include: “Seems like these established/strengthened relationships would be helpful in more situations than just notifying loved ones of a death, e.g., domestic abuse, family issues, threatened/attempted suicides, mental health crises, and more. This is an excellent example of how the Canton Police Department can rely on other professionals in the community for support,” “It doesn't seem like the Police Department's responsibility is to *combat* homelessness, domestic violence, and substance abuse, but to recognize them, be prepared for them, and know where to turn for help when they encounter those issues; maybe that is what this recommendation is saying, but

it's not clear," and "And I thought it was very positive to have an agreement with Reachout [local mobile mental health crisis center] to help address mental health related calls."

Five percent of responses to Question 6 mentioned officer well-being and mental health, such as the comment that "I like the idea of providing EAP services to officers. Some type of support system for counseling that doesn't get reported back to the village is appropriate. People under constant stress need somewhere to go." Another comment conveyed this theme and, referring to Recommendation 14, added that "surveying officers to get their input is also a welcome recommendation." Another comment specifically mentioned being "encouraged by Recommendation 16 to develop a critical incident debrief policy that addresses the need for support of an officer and awareness of the impact an incident may have on the officer's well-being."

Five percent of responses offered feedback regarding increasing diversity in the department, calling efforts, including efforts to try to address civil service constraints, "worth a try" and "encouraging." One comment noted that "greater collaboration with colleges and community will lead to improvement of operations in general" and "the development of internships and mentoring opportunities will help."

Another theme that was present in 11% of responses to Question 6, including several of those already presented, referenced the Committee's recommendations to collaborate with the community. In addition to the emphasis on working with community and expert partners to address issues related to mental health, addiction, and homelessness, commenters mentioned the need be more visible in the public, particularly with the campus communities. One example: "Good work, and thorough. Some of the goals (linking to colleges, hospitals) have to be filled in, as does hosting opportunities for meetings with the community 4 times a year. Chief Santimaw had a good idea about making "town-gown" relations the focus of one of these opportunities. I think an opportunity for students of color, at colleges and high school, to meet with the Canton Police would be effective -- because it would challenge their negative expectations, and that is important work to be done."

Similarly, another commenter spoke positively of Recommendation 13, which recommends the formation of an on-going Citizen Engagement Committee. "The creation of a Community Engagement Committee (13) that will make the good, collaborative work of the Advisory Committee a permanent part of Canton's civic life going forward."

Other specific feedback indicated in 8% of responses mentioned officer training and the recommendations that addressed training. Feedback ranged from general support to specific suggestions: "De-escalation training and bias training have to be central to the work of any police work," and "I was encouraged by the trainings, and hope that on-going opportunities for practice of the skills introduced in trainings are regularly provided (I noted that Verbal Judo training would be frequently provided)."

Eleven percent of comments referenced Recommendation 2. Comments suggested that “the idea of our officers being guardians as opposed to warriors makes a ton of sense,” suggesting that “instead of reframing themselves as ‘guardians’ they should reframe themselves as ‘public servants,’” and “I particularly like the goal to reorient officers’ thinking to a ‘guardian’ mentality.”

Another commented they were “skeptical of how any training can address problems that are ‘baked in’ systemically to the way that policing and justice are seen in the United States. I hope that training will not merely be tolerated and ‘checked off’ but that it will actually be applied in the field by police.”

As alluded to in the comment above, some commenters suggested that the recommendations lacked the specificity needed for implementation as well as the evaluative criteria to assess effectiveness. “A key component of any policy or programmatic change is evaluation. The draft recommendations document does not acknowledge the evaluative components or metrics that will be used to measure the baseline or ongoing progress of Canton Police Department on each recommendation referenced. Evaluation of these recommendations must be frequent, explicitly stated, and transparent to the community. Without an explicit evaluation plan in place there is no way for the community to hold the Advisory Committee or Canton Police Department accountable for their actions and progress (or lack thereof). These recommendations will not be easy to implement and they will require constant monitoring and I strongly recommend engaging an independent evaluator to assess the progress of the department and the recommendations provided. Each recommendation should contain a plan for how and when these recommendations will be implemented. This is important information that the community should weigh in on to provide input on the feasibility, urgency, or priority setting of these recommendations.”

Eleven percent of comments referenced concern about the cost of these initiatives. One comment stated that “many of the recommendations will increase the costs of the Village. The Canton Village Police Department does a great job policing the Village and instead should focus on reducing costs in order to save the tax payers money.” Another comment suggested that “the reason this Police Department cannot engage more with the community is because they are not staffed to do so” and that the Recommendations impose new duties that will require compensation. Another comment wondered “if there has been any discussion about the need for additional funding for more community policing activities.” One comment suggested concern at the current levels of spending on the department.

Finally, a couple of comments referenced the need for the development of processes with respect to internal affairs and the development of processes and practices, with one comment suggesting “a citizen review committee in regards to excessive force,” another suggesting that uninvolved administrators and officers be involved in the review, and another mentioning the use of evidence-based practices in policing.

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY INPUT

Feedback on the recommendations from community members from public forums and in other communications reflected similar themes as were present in the survey data. Some comments focused on specific recommendations while others were more general.

Respondents raised questions about accountability and transparency in the implementation of the plan with comments such as “who will hold the police accountable?” Several respondents spoke about the generality of many of the recommendations and suggested that each recommendation would need to be specified more clearly and that on-going assessment of the efficacy of the implemented changes would need to occur.

In terms of training, some comments of support were received for the idea of officers being trained to adopt the “guardian” mindset, or as one commenter put it, being encouraged to be “guardians of the community.” Some respondents supported the recommendations for additional training; other commenters sought specificity in terms of the types and frequencies of trainings while others suggested the necessity for developing processes of evaluation to assess their effectiveness. Some respondents asked that when the training recommendations are implemented, resources from community agencies as well as expertise from outside our region be employed to provide training rather than all trainings occurring from within the department and the Police Academy. Some comments mentioned the number of trainings and the costs that these will incur.

Some respondents mentioned support for the recommendations focusing on improving officer wellness; one suggested the establishment of a “wellness library” that provided trauma-informed resources and reading materials for officers.

Respondents asked questions about body cameras, expressed support for the Community Engagement Committee, and asked for public education about the roles and jurisdictions of the different policing agencies that are housed in the Village.

Comments from students also included requests for opportunities to participate in the implementation process, to have more information communicated from the Canton Police Department to the campuses, and to have opportunities for internships, jobs, and programming with the department. Students were also interested to know if, given the demographic differences between the Village residents and the campus populations, the racial diversity of the campus communities will be considered when trying to diversify the department.

Some respondents shared that they have had positive experiences with the Canton Police Department; comments included, “I called, he [the Chief] listened,” and “every experience the officers were professional, courteous, and kind.” Another spoke of the relationship with St. Lawrence University’s Security, saying that they have an “excellent history” of working together to address things “before they go awry” and that it is important to build on and “enhance” this relationship.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are the Advisory Committee's recommendations for improvements to the Canton Police Department's current deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices. These recommendations are based on the Committee's review of existing deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices per *New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative: Resources & Guide for Public Officials and Citizens* and the feedback received from the Canton community. These recommendations are designed to address the particular needs of the Canton community and to promote community engagement to foster relationships of trust and transparency, and to address any racial or other bias.

THE EFFECTIVE USE OF DATA

The Advisory Committee recognizes that a barrier to employing smart and effective policing standards and strategies occurs when there is a lack of data on the demographic characteristics of individuals with whom the police interact or that data are not publicly shared. Public perceptions of racial bias in law enforcement decision-making with respect to issuing summons or arresting individuals may be addressed by publicly sharing these data. Analysis of these data can identify the presence of bias and guide appropriate decision-making with respect to policies, procedure, and personnel¹¹.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Canton Police Department will strengthen data collection, analysis, and public reporting on all interactions with the public. These data will inform future department policy and procedural decisions with respect to eliminating any bias that may be present in police-community interactions. Transparent reporting will reduce distrust, increase law enforcement personnel safety, and provide opportunities for community police engagement. The recent implementation of the Spillman Technologies database technology supports this recommendation.

OFFICER TRAINING

It is recognized that effective policing requires that officers receive on-going training in areas such as legal policies, policing procedures, tactical and communication skills, and cultural competency¹².

¹¹ Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. (2019). *New Era of Public Safety: A guide to Fair, Safe, and Effective Community Policing*. pp.65.

¹² Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. (2019). *New Era of Public Safety: A guide to Fair, Safe, and Effective Community Policing*. Pp.301.

Blumberg DM, Schlosser MD, Papazoglou K, Creighton S, Kaye CC. New Directions in Police Academy Training: A Call to Action. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2019;16(24):4941. Published 2019 Dec 6. doi:10.3390/ijerph16244941.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Because of the danger inherent in law enforcement work, police academy training models are often organized around the idea of officers as “warriors” whose every encounter with the public must be treated as a potential threat¹³. This approach is incompatible with community policing principles, which depend on building relationships of trust between the police and the community. Others have suggested that an alternative, the “guardian,” mindset is more in line with community policing as it emphasizes building relationships with community members and collaborating with the community to solve problems and reduce crime. Canton Police Department officers will receive training that is aligned with community-policing goals; officers will be encouraged to adopt a “guardian” mindset that emphasizes building relationships with community members and collaborating with the community to solve problems and reduce crime.

Law enforcement agencies often need specialized training for working with particular populations or for responding to particular incidents.¹⁴ Canton Police Department officers will receive training as follows:

RECOMMENDATION 3

Canton Police Department officers will be trained in trauma-informed investigative strategies.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Canton Police Department officers will receive additional and on-going training in implicit bias and diversity and inclusion training (e.g., training on antiracism, best practices for working with LGBTQ+ populations).

Research shows that de-escalation strategies are effective for reducing the risk that a situation may become violent and require the use of force. Using de-escalation strategies “protects public and officer safety because it teaches strategic communication skills that enable officers to affirmatively defuse crises and gain voluntary compliance.”¹⁵

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Canton Police Department will continue to participate in de-escalation training, ensuring that all officers receive refresher training and continued training when possible. For example, training in Verbal Judo should be frequently provided.

¹³ Law Enforcement’s “Warrior” Problem, *Harvard Law Review* 128(6), pp. 225-234.

<https://harvardlawreview.org/2015/04/law-enforcements-warrior-problem/>

¹⁴ Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. (2019). *New Era of Public Safety: A guide to Fair, Safe, and Effective Community Policing*. pp.300.

¹⁵ Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. (2019). *New Era of Public Safety: A guide to Fair, Safe, and Effective Community Policing*. pp.123

Best practices suggest that training programs be formally evaluated for efficacy and to ensure that they remain in line with professional standards and community needs. The latter can be addressed by involving the community in developing and implementing training.¹⁶

RECOMMENDATION 6

The training that officers receive will be evaluated for effectiveness through analysis of incident data, public comments, and officer feedback.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Canton Police Department will collaborate with the local college campuses, chambers of commerce, local hospitals, and other relevant local agencies to provide training. Employing community resources will ease the fiscal costs associated with training and will further strengthen communication and partnership between the department and the community.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS & REVIEW PROCESS

Impartiality in determination of potential officer misconduct will promote adherence to departmental policies and increase community trust. Including community members in internal affairs processes increases the community's trust that officers are held accountable and offers departments additional perspectives on community needs.¹⁷

RECOMMENDATION 8

The Canton Police Department and municipal officials will work together to identify and implement a process for reviewing allegations of incidents of misconduct, use of force, and complaints; this process should include a non-uniformed reviewer.

Many stakeholders and legal complexities are involved in personnel and internal affairs processes and many details need to be addressed (e.g. which complaints rise to the level of review, what confidentiality agreements must be in place, the process for recruitment and selection of the non-uniformed reviewer, etc.); this recommendation speaks to the community's desire for such a process to be developed. The complaint process will continue to be publicly available on the Canton website.

SUSTAINED & FREQUENT COMMUNITY-POLICE ENGAGEMENT

Sustained and frequent community engagement with law enforcement is necessary to increase communication, trust, and transparency between officers and the community. Every interaction between law enforcement and members of the public is an opportunity for building positive

¹⁶ Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. (2019). *New Era of Public Safety: A guide to Fair, Safe, and Effective Community Policing*. pp.346.

¹⁷ Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. (2019). *New Era of Public Safety: A guide to Fair, Safe, and Effective Community Policing*. pp.198

relationships based in mutual trust and respect. In addition, collaboration with social service and healthcare agencies, community nonprofits, faith communities, and business groups allows law enforcement to effectively respond to people in crisis and to develop proactive solutions to reduce crime and improve public safety.¹⁸

RECOMMENDATION 9

Because there are multiple law enforcement agencies housed within the Village of Canton--Sheriff, New York State Police, SUNY Canton, Village of Canton Police Department--residents may experience confusion about each agency's role and purview within the Village. The Canton Police Department will work with other agencies to strengthen inter-agency communication channels. In addition, the Canton Police Department will seek to provide education to the community about the four agencies so that the public can distinguish among them, understand their various roles and jurisdictions, and access the appropriate agency as necessary.

RECOMMENDATION 10

When calls with mental health implications are received, Canton Police Department should coordinate with Reachout's Mobile Crisis Team who will either provide phone consultation or, when possible, go to the scene. The Canton Police Department will develop a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize the relationship with Reachout.

RECOMMENDATION 11

Efforts will be made to create relationships with interfaith chaplain(s), or multiple chaplains from diverse faiths, who would accompany officers when notifying family of a loved ones' death.

RECOMMENDATION 12

The Canton Police Department will work to improve, and when possible formalize, relationships with referral agencies to assist in combating homelessness, domestic violence, and substance abuse in the community.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Canton Police Department will continue to engage with the wider community in intentional ways. The department will collaborate with interested community members to form a Community Engagement Committee that will meet quarterly to discuss current challenges and opportunities with respect to public safety. The committee will identify and promote community engagement events such as open forums, BBQs, and picnics.

¹⁸ Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. (2019). *New Era of Public Safety: A guide to Fair, Safe, and Effective Community Policing*. pp.158

SUPPORTING OFFICER HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Ensuring officer wellness and well-being is a critical component of reinforcing trust between law enforcement and the community because the physical and mental health of officers is critical to their ability to effectively perform their job duties.¹⁹

RECOMMENDATION 14

The Canton Police Department officers will be surveyed annually to provide input on job satisfaction, officer wellness, the perceived effectiveness of training, and any gaps in training.

RECOMMENDATION 15

The Canton Police Department will make efforts to normalize officers' use of confidential mental health services and substance abuse and addiction services by communicating that such services are available and it is expected that officers will participate when needed. Information about Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services and a list of local practitioners will be provided to officers.

RECOMMENDATION 16

The Canton Police Department will develop a critical incident debrief policy and plan of action to support and assess officer well-being after a critical incident.

RECRUITING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

One way that communities and police departments can build trust is through the recruitment of officers with diverse backgrounds²⁰. Recruitment for the department is challenging given our rural geographic location that is comprised of a majority White population. In addition, there are structural barriers to hiring a diverse workforce due to State civil service rules. These factors contribute to the lack of applications from a more diverse population. The following recommendations attempt to address the constraints faced when trying to recruit a diverse workforce to our community.

RECOMMENDATION 17

The Canton Police Department and municipal officials will work with State and County officials to research possible changes to civil service rules and laws to remove roadblocks to recruiting a diverse workforce.

¹⁹ Police Executive Research Forum. 2018. *Building and Sustaining an Officer Wellness Program: Lessons from the San Diego Police Department*. Washington, D.C.: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

²⁰ Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. (2019). *New Era of Public Safety: A guide to Fair, Safe, and Effective Community Policing*. pp.278.

RECOMMENDATION 18

To attempt to increase diversity within the candidate pool, the Canton Police Department will take advantage of opportunities for collaboration with other agencies to raise awareness and educate the wider community about job opportunities within law enforcement and the hiring process. Additionally, the Canton Police Department will work with the local colleges to identify potential internship and mentoring opportunities for college students who may be interested in a career in law enforcement.

NEXT STEPS: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

This plan will be ratified by the Village of Canton Board of Trustees.

Once ratified, the Village Board will be responsible to ensure that the recommendations are implemented by the Canton Police Department. Because many of the recommendations are broad, more specificity is needed about the processes of implementation and assessment and identification of the stakeholders who should be involved in those processes. The Public Safety Committee will work with the Mayor and Chief to create a strategic implementation plan with short- and long-term goals; the Public Safety Committee will maintain oversight of the plan and will provide regular status reports to the Board. In addition, the strategic implementation plan will be reviewed and updated annually or more frequently if necessary.

The Canton community will be kept informed about the implementation plan through the Public Safety Committee's regular status reports to the Board as well as through interaction with the Community Engagement Committee, which will be formed per Recommendation 13 of this plan.

APPENDICES

ACCREDITATION

The Canton Police Department has been continuously accredited with New York State since 1993, and was most recently re-accredited by the New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Program in December 2019. Accreditation is granted for a five-year period and formally recognizes that an agency's policies and practices are conceptually sound and effective. The department must abide by the 110 different standards that are meant as ongoing means to guide police agencies to evaluate and improve the overall performance of the agency and staff. The standards are divided into three categories: administrative, training, and operations. At the end of the accreditation period, the department undergoes a thorough, on-site assessment by designated NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services assessors who verify compliance for re-accreditation. To remain in good standing, agencies must maintain compliance with all program standards throughout the accreditation period and must complete an annual compliance survey that is submitted, each year, to the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services.

The NYS Accreditation Program has four principal goals:

1. To increase the effectiveness and efficiency of law enforcement agencies utilizing existing personnel, equipment and facilities to the extent possible;
2. To promote increased cooperation and coordination among law enforcement agencies and other criminal justice services;
3. To ensure the appropriate training of law enforcement personnel; and
4. To promote public confidence.

To see a copy of the Village of Canton's Accreditation Certificate, visit <https://cantonny.gov/government/village/departments/police/>.

USE OF FORCE

On September 22, 2020, the New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services advised agencies that on September 2, 2020, the Municipal Police Training Council adopted changes to the Use of Force model policy to address recently enacted legislation. Policy modifications include: the new crime of aggravated strangulation by a police or peace officer; a new section of Civil Rights Law designed to ensure medical and mental health attention to a person in custody; and changes to the timely reporting of discharging a weapon in the direction of a person, while on duty or off duty. These updates were made to the Canton Police Department policy and were submitted to NYS for evaluation by the Accreditation Council. The department policy was subsequently approved on November 24, 2020, and it has been uploaded to the Canton website for public view.

The Canton Police Department's Use of Force Policy can be viewed at:

<https://hhi.2c2.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/20.1-Necessary-Force-3-24-10-2-1.pdf>

BODY CAMS

At the September 4, 2020, special meeting of the Canton Village Board, Chief Santimaw presented a request and budget information for body cameras, which were being requested by the department officers. Research was presented that indicated that body cameras may lead to increased trust between the community and law enforcement; empirical data suggest that body cams lead to an increased willingness by the public to report crime, decreased incidents of the use of force, and decreased incidents of resistance and external complaints.²¹ The Village Board unanimously approved purchase of body cameras and supporting software services. Due to high demand, expected arrival and implementation of body cameras is April 2021.

SPILLMAN

In addition to the work that is being done in response to Executive Order 203, in the early months of 2020 the Village of Canton was proactive regarding police department needs. Chief Santimaw researched and reported to the Board on the benefits of Spillman Technologies, the software solution for the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) used at the St Lawrence County 911 Center. Spillman provides comprehensive law enforcement and public safety software solutions and records management systems that help the Canton Police Department track and better monitor reports, including types of incidents and traffic stops, and facilitate improved interaction with dispatchers, each other, and surrounding agencies. The Village Board unanimously approved funding for the additional Spillman Technology Modules at the monthly meeting in December of 2019.

²¹ Ariel, B., Farrar, W., and Sutherland, A. (2014). *The Effect of Police Body-Worn Cameras on Use of Force and Citizens' Complaints Against the Police: A Randomized Controlled Trial*. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*. 31, 509–535 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10940-014-9236-3>

BIOS OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Basil Cheney, Sergeant, Canton Village Police Department

Sergeant Basil Cheney was born and raised in Potsdam NY. He received an Associate Degree in Criminal Justice from North Country Community College in Saranac Lake. In 1991, he started his law enforcement career with the Saranac Lake police department; in 1994 he transferred to the Canton Police Department where he is currently employed. He was promoted to the rank of sergeant in 1999 and will be retiring in January 2022. Sergeant Cheney is married and has one son.

Ilene J Burke, Executive Director, St. Lawrence Valley Renewal House

Ilene J Burke has been working in the field of domestic violence and sexual assault for over 24 years. She is in her 19th year as the Executive Director of Renewal House giving her the opportunity to put victims first; recognizing that their rights, needs and concerns are priorities essential in promoting justice, safety and equal rights for all. She is a certified domestic violence instructor with NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, and for the past 17 years co-teaches 16 hours of training to cadets at the David Sullivan – St. Lawrence County Law Enforcement Academy. She is a recipient of the Sunshine Peace Award in recognition of her contributions toward ending domestic violence and received the 2014 Woman of Distinction Award from Senator Patty Ritchie.

Robert Crowe, Fire Chief, Canton Fire & Rescue

Chief Robert Crowe has been a lifelong resident of Canton. He has been actively involved in public safety in Canton as a member of the Canton Fire Department for 30 years, 17 as an EMT and is in his 7th year as the Fire Chief. He holds an A.A.S. in Fire Protection Technology for Onondaga Community College and a B.S. in Fire Protection and Safety Engineering Technology from Oklahoma State University. He currently works full time as a Firefighter/Fire Driver with the Village of Potsdam Fire Department and part time as a New York State Fire Instructor. He serves on the St. Lawrence County Fire Advisory Board and is a Deputy Fire Coordinator for the St. Lawrence County Office of Emergency Services.

Lauren Diop, Community Member

Lauren is a lifelong resident of Canton where she earned her B.A. in Sociology from St. Lawrence University and her M.S.T. in Childhood Education from SUNY Potsdam. For ten years she ran an in-home Child Care and Nursery School program providing a child centered and multicultural early education to those entrusted in her care. Lauren is dedicated to social justice and doing her part to make her community a welcoming and inclusive place for all people, especially her multicultural family. She lives in the village of Canton with her husband and their four young daughters.

Kelly Finnerty, Director of Special Education, Canton Central School District

Kelly Finnerty is currently the Director of Special Education at Canton Central school. She has been in that role for five years after working as a public school administrator at Malone Central School for eight years and a school counselor at Gouverneur Central School for eight years. She

grew up in Canton and attended St. Lawrence University for both her undergraduate and graduate degrees. She and her husband have three children who either attend or have graduated from Canton Central School prior to attending college.

Dr. Kimberly Flint-Hamilton, Associate Dean for Diversity & Inclusion, St. Lawrence University
Kimberly Flint-Hamilton, Ph.D., was appointed the inaugural Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer at St. Lawrence University in 2017. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Notre Dame and her PhD from Duke University. She served as a faculty member in the Sociology and Anthropology Department at Stetson University for 18 years before moving to St. Lawrence University, where her work focuses on helping to create and sustain a diverse and inclusive community for students, faculty, and staff, and she works collaboratively in developing programming to raise cultural awareness and inclusion for the whole St. Lawrence community. Her main responsibilities include chairing the University Diversity Committee, which is developing a Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Action Plan to be launched in Spring 2021, and developing programming and trainings for students, faculty, and staff on building an inclusive community.

Patrick W. Gagnon, AVP of Safety & Security and Emergency Management, St. Lawrence University.

Pat Gagnon began working as a System Administrator for Safety & Security in 1997 and was later promoted to the positions of Assistant Director and Associate Director /Deputy Chief. After serving as Interim Director from two years, Pat was appointed to Director /Chief of Safety & Security in 2005. Pat created the St. Lawrence University Campus Safety & Security Academy in 2006, offering affordable, required training for university safety and security officers. Pat also serves as the Senior Deputy Title IX Coordinator and Lead Investigator for the University. Pat holds an Associate Degree in Criminal Justice Leadership, a Certification in Homeland Security Level III, is a Licensed Private Investigator, is a NYS Certified Trainer in the Security Officer Program. He is a lifelong resident of the area and in his free time, he enjoys spending time with family and friends, hunting and riding ATVs.

Rev. James Galasinski, Minister of The Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

The Rev. James Galasinski has been serving the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton as its settled minister since 2016. He has a Master of Divinity from Meadville Lombard Theological School and a BFA in Jazz Studies from Cardinal Stritch University. Justice, equity, inclusion and anti-racism have been hallmarks of his ministry. James wants to build a world of collective liberation, where every person has worth and dignity, and where everyone practices peace. James loves poetry and hiking to nearby waterfalls with his two boys, Miles and Oskar, and his wife, Ulrike.

Dr. Emily Hamilton-Honey, Associate Professor and Co-Chief Diversity Officer at SUNY Canton
Emily Hamilton-Honey is an Associate Professor of English and Gender Studies, and Co-Chief Diversity Officer, at SUNY Canton. As Co-CDO, she has engaged in both university and community education to promote greater understanding of minority groups. She has been on the Executive Committee of the Associated Colleges Gender, Sex, and Sexuality Conference

since 2015. She is demisexual and pansexual and has been married for 15 years to her wonderful gender non-conforming spouse. She has lived in the North Country since 2012, and is deeply dedicated to equality and justice for all, particularly women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ and T/GNC folks. She loves to sing and is a member of the Potsdam Community Chorus.

Sara Hutcheson, LCSW-r Reachout of St. Lawrence County

Having worked 37 years for the Office of Mental Health, Sara Hutcheson retired as the director of the Gouverneur Wellness Center. Ms. Hutcheson now works part time as a Mobile Crisis Counselor for Reachout of St. Lawrence County. She is active on the Mental Health Subcommittee for St. Lawrence County and the Opioid task force. Ms. Hutcheson earned her B.A. in psychology from Wells College and obtained her M.S.W. from the University of South Carolina. Ms. Hutcheson is interested in social Justice and very involved with the Unitarian Church in Canton. She is the mother to a son Zachary and enjoys travel, reading and sports of any kind.

Emily Marquart, Community Member

Emily Marquart is the Inpatient Director for Substance Use Disorder Services at St. Lawrence Health System, managing the Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit at Canton-Potsdam Hospital and the Detox Service at Gouverneur Hospital. Emily is a licensed mental health counselor, credentialed alcoholism and substance abuse counselor, and reiki master practitioner. She provides online counseling services throughout the country on the Talkspace platform and is also a practitioner at Grasse River Wellness in Canton offering mental health counseling and reiki services for the Canton community. Emily has been an active member of the St. Lawrence County Substance Abuse Subcommittee and is a member of The Care Team for the hospital system, offering critical incident stress debriefing services to staff and community members. Emily has specialized in fostering a trauma-informed treatment approach with her clients, focusing on the development of personal safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness and empowerment. As a Canton resident and mother of two, she's passionate about partnering with her neighbors to create a safe, supportive, and socially just community for all.

Alan Mulkin, Chief of University Police, SUNY Canton Chaplain

Alan Mulkin currently serves as the Chief of Police of the New York State University Police at SUNY Canton. He served as the Chief of Police for the Village of Canton Police Department until his retirement in 2013. He has served on the Board of Directors for Renewal House since 2002 and as President since 2016. He is an Instructor for Domestic Violence and Fair and Impartial Policing at the David Sullivan St. Lawrence County Law Enforcement Academy. Chief Mulkin holds an M.S. in Educational Leadership from St. Lawrence University, a B.A., Industrial Labor Relations from SUNY Potsdam, and is a graduate of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, VA.

Tricia Pethic, Founder & Director, Muslim Prisoner Project

Tricia Pethic is a community chaplain and founder and director of the nonprofit prison ministry, Muslim Prisoner Project which provides updated and informed religious literature to Muslim inmates, as well as gifts to their children on Islamic holidays. She obtained her Master's degree in Near Eastern Studies from the University of Arizona, and her Masters in Divinity from

Hartford Seminary. In her previous roles in prisons and hospitals she provided a compassionate presence to inmates and correctional staff of all faiths, as well as organ donor families in hospitals across Western NY. Chaplain Pethic has relocated back to this area where her ancestors first settled in the mid 1850's.

Dr. Eileen Raymond, Professor of Special Education, SUNY Potsdam (retired)

Dr. Eileen Raymond moved to St Lawrence County in 1992 to teach at SUNY Potsdam, preparing special educators for our local schools. Her career has focused on persons with disabilities, teaching for 10 years in public schools and in university teacher education programs for 26 years. Upon retirement, she was a Fulbright Scholar at Nelson Mandela University in South Africa in 2009-2010, working on inclusive education and barriers to learning. As a longtime member of the League of Women Voters, she has worked on a variety of voter education and citizen advocacy projects. In 2019, she was elected to the Canton Central School Board. In 2019, she chaired the Social Justice Initiative conference (Justice for All: Community Conversations on Crime and Imprisonment in the North Country) at the Unitarian Universalist Church.

Lynn Snow, Assistant, SUNY Canton Chapter of United University Professions

Ms. Snow earned her B.A. in Sociology from SUNY Plattsburgh and worked the next 29 years doing social work and case management. She is currently working as an assistant for the SUNY Canton Chapter of United University Professions. Being raised to value the importance of community service, Lynn took her youth Girl Scouting experience, and moved over to Cub and Boy Scouts with her sons and continues to serve on Boy Scout Troop 27 committee. With the exception of a few years, Lynn has been a lifelong resident of Canton. She and her husband Ed have raised two sons here, supported their school activities and will continue supporting residents of the North Country through work and volunteerism.

Public Safety Committee Conveners

Michael Dalton, Mayor, Village of Canton

Michael Dalton is currently serving as Mayor of the Village of Canton. He was first elected to the office in 2015, after having served as Trustee and Deputy Mayor. Michael retired from Verizon in 2015 after 37 years in the telecommunications industry. His education includes degrees in Forestry and Telecommunications Technology. In addition, Michael has a background in Emergency Management, and has served in the Canton Fire Department and Rescue Squad since 1991. Since making the Village of Canton his home in 1985, Michael has made service to the community his primary focus, working to help the Village stay a great place to live and raise a family. His goal is to help the Village be as welcoming to others as it was to him.

Elizabeth Bullock Larrabee, Trustee, Village of Canton (Co-Facilitator)

Appointed as a Canton Village Trustee in August 2014, Beth Larrabee continues her work as an elected village board member in her second term serving on the Public Safety, Recreation, Golf, and Tree Committees. Ms. Larrabee earned her B.A. in Government and M.Ed. in Human Development and Counseling from St. Lawrence University. Currently she is an Associate Director for the Center of Career Excellence at her alma mater, with professional experience in both college admissions and pre-k-12 guidance counseling. As a founding member of a local

non-profit, the Women's Leadership Initiative, she has co-chaired the Student Leadership Conference Committee. She and her family have also hosted 7 international students since 2009. Beth is community-minded, loves raising her five daughters with her husband in her hometown, and is dedicated to women's empowerment, education, and leadership.

James Santimaw, Chief of Police, Village of Canton

Chief Santimaw attended SUNY Canton and graduated with degrees in Business Management and Criminal Justice. He attended the David Sullivan Law Enforcement Police Academy at SUNY Canton and was hired as a police officer at the Canton Village Police Department in 1998. Jim is a winner of the New York State MADD (Mother's Against Drunk Driving) Award, served as the Canton Police Department's New York State Accreditation Manager, and has taught as a certified trainer at the Police Academy at SUNY Canton for 20 years. In 2003, he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant, and in 2016 he was promoted to the rank of Chief of Police. Jim is a lifelong resident of the area and resides locally with his wife and young adult children.

Dr. Anna Sorensen, Trustee, Village of Canton (Co-Facilitator)

Anna Sorensen is serving her first term on the Village of Canton Board of Trustees. She is currently a member of the Public Safety, Economic Development, and Communications & Technology Committees. Dr. Sorensen earned her Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 2015 and is an Assistant Professor at SUNY Potsdam, where she teaches in the Sociology and Criminal Justice Studies Department. She lives in the Village of Canton with her wife and family.

Ex-Officio

Gerald Ducharme, Attorney, Village of Canton

Gerald Ducharme has served as Attorney for the Village of Canton since December 1990. He is a partner with Conboy, McKay, Bachman & Kendall, LLP. He received his law degree from Albany Law School in May 1980 and was admitted to the New York State bar in January 1981. He has been a resident of Canton since October 1980.