



PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

REPORT TO THE ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

DATE SUBMITTED: NOVEMBER 19, 2013

PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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CONDENSED REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COMMITTEE REPORT

The Committee understood that this study into Ulster County's Public Safety is, although comprehensive, not necessarily a complete study of all available resources, barriers, or needs. Guest speakers from a wide variety of agencies and services were invited to present on the Ulster County community as a whole. It was understood that for sake of time, not every agency or service that impacts the public safety topics specified in the Resolution could be heard.

At 400 pages and after 13 meetings spanning 9 months, this is a thorough look at Ulster County Public Safety resources, barriers, and needs. A condensed report of 86 pages, including the Executive Summary, Committee Charge, Committee Plan, Summary of Presentations by Speakers, Committee Recommendations/Suggestions, and the Committee members is being distributed to the community through the municipal leaders, Police Chiefs and School District Superintendents. The full document includes the items included in the condensed report as well as all appendices. It is recommended that anyone seeking to implement or review in greater detail the recommendations or suggestions of the Committee obtain a copy of the appendices; as they include the documentation to which the members made their decisions for final recommendations and suggestions.

Individuals and other agencies that have input on the Committee's report are encouraged to contact the Committee members listed on page 82 or the Clerk of the Legislature at PO Box 1800, Kingston, NY 12401 or 845-340-3900. Copies of the full report will be available at the office of the Clerk of the Legislature or online at the website of the Ulster County Legislature and the Ulster County Sheriff.

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COMMITTEE CHARGE & WORK PLAN

While the Committee undertook fully, the charge as specified in Resolution 32 of 2013, it also accepted the greater role of looking at the topic of Public Safety in a global view. Members understood right from the first meeting that the topic was broad in description and scope and proceeded to undertake this take in an orderly manner. The Resolution specified five topic areas to which the Committee sought a great understanding of each. The five topic areas were review current matters of public safety, review current matters of mental health, review ways in which to enhance the welfare of Ulster County residents, identify opportunities to increase safety in public areas such as schools, parks, and malls, and identify educational opportunities for law enforcement personnel.

The Committee first defined for themselves each of the five topic areas and then defined a measurement goal of anticipated results/accomplishments. In order for the Committee to fully review the various segments of public safety, as specified in the Resolution, as well as the impact on Ulster County, experts from a variety of fields and professions were invited to attend and speak on each of the five topic areas.

In addition, the public was invited to attend the Committee's open meetings and media was enthusiastically welcomed at all meetings. News coverage of the Committee's activities is included in the appendix section of the report. The agendas and audio from all of the Committee's meetings were available throughout the Committee's process and are maintained on the Ulster County Legislature's website.

SPEAKERS

During each of the Committee members, speakers presented ways to identify individuals who are at risk of causing violence, ways in which these individuals can be helped, other ways to prevent violence, how drug abuse and

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drug related crimes can be reduced, and ways in which to protect people in public places in Ulster County. Their presentations are summarized in detail in the report and are attached to the report as part of the minutes from each meeting. Committee members commented on the diverse and comprehensive presentations offered. Most Committee meetings were over three hours as the presentations were thorough in providing the insights into the available resources, needs, and barriers to ensuring public safety in Ulster County.

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

Throughout the Committee discussions, the Committee highlighted prior ideas and suggestions that had come and gone within the County and desired recommendations that, given support from the full Ulster County Legislature, could be implemented and benefit the greater Ulster County Community. The Committee separated their proposals into a higher priority of recommendations and a secondary group of suggestions. Suggestions included items that would require more time for review or commitment than the Committee felt could be implemented in a short term.

The Committee recommends 18 individual actions in the categories of school, community, and law enforcement/judicial. In addition, the Committee identified 20 suggested actions in those same categories. There are a number of sub-actions within each of the recommendations and suggestions that if implemented, the Committee determined they would benefit Ulster County as a whole. While the Committee does not expect all recommendations or suggestions will be implemented, they do agree, if some are implemented, the County will be moving forward.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

This dedicated group of volunteers submits to the Ulster County Legislature this expansive report as the end result of 23 hours of testimony and

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discussion held in 13 meetings over 9 months. Members found this Legislative Ad Hoc Committee to be the first of its kind, at this magnitude, to work so well together in bringing diverse experiences and insights to the table. The members encourage the Legislature to ensure the opportunity for other concerned and dedicated citizens to continue to meet in these forums for the betterment of Ulster County.

The individual members found exposure to new resources and knowledge as well as shared new, creative concepts. The experience was identified by all as beneficial in understanding the impact the Committee's recommendations can have. With Every speaker was summarized and the Committee took away something from everyone. The Committee urges the Legislature to

Mary Wawro, Committee Chair

On behalf of the Public Safety Advisory Committee

November 19, 2013

RECOMMENDATIONS – SCHOOL

RECOMMENDATIONS – SCHOOL

1. School

1.1 Increase School/Law Enforcement Collaboration in preparation for crisis situations.

- a. Install License Plate Readers at Entrances of School Campuses.
 - i. The first phase of this project should begin at the SUNY Ulster and SUNY New Paltz campuses.
- b. Establish a School Building Panic Button System in all school buildings in Ulster County.
 - i. A panic button system at all school buildings include a box which would summon help from law enforcement even if the phone lines were cut or power lines were out.
- c. Create A County Law to Require a Certain Amount of Lock Down Drills.
 - i. Lock down drills are done while the school is in session as well as during preparation weeks to ensure school personnel are educated and trained in their response to crisis situations.
 - (a) Every Substitute Teacher should be handed, upon arrival, a copy of the Lock Down Procedures and should be required to sign for receipt and review before entering classroom.
 - (b) All School District Personnel and Security should receive Emergency Response and Safety Training coordinated by the Ulster County Sheriff annually.
 - (c) Every police agency of jurisdiction should be invited to participate.
 - (d) Training of all Ulster County School District Personnel and Security should be consistent.
- d. Install Cameras in Public Areas on Campus and Ensure Law Enforcement Accessibility Through Password Protected Connections During Crisis Incidents and Situations.

RECOMMENDATIONS – SCHOOL

- i. Ensure law enforcement access is operable through periodic testing of the equipment.
- e. Establish Law Enforcement Community Offices in Schools.
 - i. A room or office in the school buildings would not only provide officers a location to do paperwork, take a break, or make phone calls, it would offer a physical presence in the building at random times and more importantly, a police car would be randomly stationed outside.
- f. Teach Students and Teachers How to Protect Themselves and Their Community with the Tools in their Environment.
 - i. With a plan and being proactive, individuals, including children, can protect themselves. Response is needed in seconds – not minutes.

1.2 Increase Parent Education on Adolescent Substance Use and Abuse Through the Schools.

- a. Provide information to parents at the orientations when there is a captive audience.
- b. Add Video Game Addiction and the lasting effects of young people not moving forward with their futures, not having families, and not benefiting the Country economically.

1.3 Follow-up on Local Law #2 of 2013, Ulster County School-based Mental Health And Safety Act of 2013.

- a. Request an Ulster County Department of Mental Health report regarding services of mental health in schools.
- b. Include Video Game Addiction and the impact of video gaming on relationships in this school mental health assessment.

RECOMMENDATIONS – COMMUNITY

RECOMMENDATIONS – COMMUNITY

2. Community Actions

2.1 Establish a CatchNet/SafetyNet Community Alert Program.

- a. Establish a anonymous tip line for reporting 3rd party concerns about children and adolescents
- b. Utilize the SAD PERSONS Program as established by Forensic Psychiatrist, Dr. Kevin Smith.
 - i. These risk factors would be a reason to alert authorities and an increased risk of dangerousness would lead to the development of an intervention plan by a professional mental health counselor to mitigate that risk.
 - ii. Approximately 5-6 factors, depending on which factors were identified, would constitute a risk. An individual may tell one factor to one person and another factor to another person and thus, the need to collate the reports to determine the true number of factors to assess the potential risk.
- c. Organize a community response team as a pyramid with the trained mental health providers at the top and the entire community as the base.
- d. Ensure there is only one entity compiling signs as identified and reported.
- e. Allow for four part questionnaires to be submitted to school counselors for compiling by law enforcement, teachers, parent/family member, and non-family members.
- f. Allow of anonymity in the community reporting process.
- g. Start on a small scale to bring the partners together.
- h. Include community education and resources to assist in identifying signs.
 - i. Signs of risk would be indicated on a wallet card as part of the community education and outreach.
- i. Include the central health care database as established under Affordable Care Act.
- j. County Legislators should host a SafeTalk Training.

2.2 Install License Plate Readers Posted Throughout the County.

RECOMMENDATIONS – COMMUNITY

- a. Stationary license plate readers would send up an alert if there was a wanted or missing person associated with that car, the car was reported as stolen, expired plates, and/or warrants.

2.3 Ensure the County Emergency Management Plan Includes Disaster and Incident Preparedness Through Regular Table Top Drills.

- a. Include American Red Cross in these regular response, preparedness, and recovery action table top drills in addition to the State Police, County Law Enforcement, County Mental Health Commissioner, Fire Personnel, Emergency Services, Municipal Leaders, and Clergy.

2.4 Ensure the County Emergency Management Plan Identified a County Disaster and Incident Response Team Vetter.

- a. Identify the American Red Cross as the Response Team Vetter as they would keep out anyone without the ARC approval.

2.5 Establish Inter-Municipal Collaboration Council Communication with Municipal Leaders regarding Public Safety.

- a. Urge Municipal Leaders to revisit their public areas annually to perform safety reviews (i.e. see through trash cans and the ability to clear an area quickly as a way to mitigate the risks).
- b. Establish a Countywide Protocol for Firearms to include a set checklist for all judges, police officers, emergency medical services, and other first responders.
 - i. This protocol would level the playing field and ensure everyone was being treated the same.
- c. Hold NIMS (National Incident Management System) and ICS (Incident Command System) Trainings for Every Elected Official.
 - i. As per a 2004 Presidential Directive, elected and appointed officials and policy makers, who are responsible for jurisdictional policy decisions, must have a clear understanding of NIMS to better serve their constituency.

RECOMMENDATIONS – COMMUNITY

- ii. Built on existing structures, such as the Incident Command System (ICS), NIMS creates a proactive system to assist those responding to incidents or planned events.

2.6 Encourage and support the County’s Prescription Drug Task Force in its efforts to decrease youth prescription drug abuse.

- a. Prepare parental pamphlets be prepared to teach specific safety concerns to children such as locking medicine cabinets and/or walk away from unused prescription drugs.
- b. Encourage the use of law enforcement and pharmacy unused medicines drop off boxes.
- c. Mandate county-wide parental workshops and trainings for the collection of social services and/or participation in youth programs.

2.7 Increase Knowledge and Distribution Methods of Available Community Resources.

- a. Develop a “What’s Available”/”Tourism Guide for Therapy” Resources Guide.
 - i. This should be a one-stop website, with a breakdown by category of what services someone is looking for.
 - ii. This should include a Safe Check program that will help to identify those in need.
- b. Parenting workshops should be available in person, online and via public access television.

2.8 Increase the availability of afterschool programs throughout Ulster County between the hours of 2-6 pm.

2.9 Urge Town, City, and State Leaders to “Not Upset the Equation” and support the “Whatta ya got, Whatta ya need” experience that is unique to the Ulster County Law Enforcement Community.

- a. This model, trend setting experience does not occur to this level anywhere else in the State of New York.

RECOMMENDATIONS – COMMUNITY

- b. Ulster County maintains a closest car concept. All officers, regardless of rank, respond to provide whatever services is needed and requested by the lead agency of a call. This
- c. There is a law enforcement equation in Ulster County that includes the locals, the Sheriff's Department, and the State Police. By removing one part of the equation, it could result in the balance not being fulfilled.
 - i. The development of the equation has been through the promotion of existing leadership. New officers are growing in the same environment and thus, will continue to improve the equation.
 - ii. The members of the law enforcement community meet once a month to discuss needs, resources and barriers and walk away knowing who has what in their toolbox.

RECOMMENDATIONS – LAW ENFORCEMENT/JUDICIAL

RECOMMENDATIONS – LAW ENFORCEMENT/JUDICIAL

3. Law Enforcement

3.1 Establish a Countywide Emergency Services Radio System.

- a. Creation of a county-owned multiplex Emergency Services Radio System would ensure cross department communications.
- b. System should be established with review and input from the Police Chiefs Association, Fire Advisory Board, Active Fire Departments, State Fire Department, and Department of Environmental Conservation.

3.2 Create at least the equivalent of one (1) full-time County Technology Specialist Position Responsible for All Law Enforcement Computer Systems.

- a. Currently, there is a part-time position. This position should be a technician that works with the offices of the District Attorney, the Sheriff, and the 911 Center and is subject to a criminal background check.

3.3 Urge the development of a Statewide Database of Deceased Gun Owners.

- a. While this effort is already being done in Ulster County, a death occurring in Dutchess, Westchester or Albany County will not be compared to the Ulster County gun owner data.

3.4 Establish communication between the Ulster County Legislature's Law Enforcement and Public Safety Committee with the Ulster County Magistrates Association

- a. Highlight available resources as well as determine reasons behind the lack of referrals to programs such as Evolve, Anger Management and Step One.

4. Judicial

4.1 Continue the effort to review alternatives that specifically address the impact of alcohol and substance abuse on our community.

RECOMMENDATIONS – LAW ENFORCEMENT/JUDICIAL

- a. Increase Education, Awareness, Exploration, and Research on the Success of Acupuncture/Auriculotherapy Detoxification and Chiropractic Programs in Drug Courts.
 - i. Establish a committee to further explore a Pilot Acupuncture/Auriculotherapy Detoxification and Chiropractic Program with the District Attorney and the Drug Court.
- b. Establish a legislative investigative committee to analyze the impact of parole processes on our local criminal justice system.
 - i. The criteria for release as well as the processes in place for remanding technical violations and those with new criminal charges.

4.2 Provide Funding for Awareness, Inc.

- a. Support the program by spreading the word that there is an alternative to entering the system which deserves County funds. The benefits to the County are in the cost savings to incarceration.

SUGGESTIONS - SCHOOL

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1. School/Law Enforcement Collaboration

1.1 Ensure all Schools implement the Ulster County Police Chiefs Association's "Sweet 16".

- a. These are sixteen (16) items, identified by law enforcement, that if implemented in all school buildings, would ensure law enforcement response is consistent.

1.2 Encourage Schools Districts to offer in-school safety awareness programs at age appropriate levels including:

- a. Gun safety, such as Eddie Eagle.
- b. Self defense trainings, such as Carlie's Crusade.
- c. Video Game Addiction and the long term impact.
- d. Scared Straight Programs.
 - i. The Eastern Correctional Youth Assistance Program (YAP) serves youth that are referred by their school counselors, probation, or health classes.
 - ii. This could also be offered with mental health and law enforcement coming together with a program that meets at four different locations each Saturday of the month.
 - iii. This would be for youth in need of prevention services and could be a last chance alternative to a School Superintendent's suspension.
 - iv. This would put students in need back in touch with mental health and law enforcement entities which can put the dots together.

1.3 Increase County Attention to the Prescription Drug Overdose Issue, a national epidemic.

- a. Provide General Assemblies at Schools which teach specific safety concerns to children such as locking medicine cabinets and/or walk away from unattended prescription drugs.

1.4 Increase school mental services and mobile mental health services.

SUGGESTIONS - SCHOOL

- a. Support the County's annual plan and its additional priorities of hospital diversion, mobile crisis units, and crisis respite.
- b. Include Teen Intervene Program in the School Needs Assessment Services Offered to the Schools.
- c. Establish a Mental Health First Aide program in Ulster County.
 - i. An evidence based, community education program that targets the community and schools to reduce stigma.
- d. Hire CASACs in the Schools.
 - i. CASACs are trained to identify the signs and symptoms of substance abuse. Clients reported they would be more likely to approach a case manager.

1.5 End the Use of Out-of-School Suspensions

- a. Encourage and support the establishment of in-school alternative programs.
 - i. Ultimately, Out-of-School Suspensions result in vacations from the structure.

SUGGESTIONS - COMMUNITY

SUGGESTIONS - COMMUNITY

2. Community Actions

2.1 Encourage simple community solutions, in collaboration with law enforcement, which would assist people in recognizing concerns and alerting appropriate authorities.

- a. "See Something, Say Something".
 - i. Law Enforcement would rather someone call 100 times for nothing and allow the officer to decide if it is "nothing" than the one time that the call is not made and should have been.
- b. Community viewing of the "Run, Hide, Fight" video
[<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VcSwejU2D0>]
 - i. This video provides those in schools, workplaces, and any public setting a perspective of what the police do when they arrive at an active shooter situation.
 - ii. Viewing the video puts people in survival mode. While people should continue to have fun while being safe and maintain the liberties that we enjoy, they are starting to position themselves with safety on their minds.
- c. Encourage community understanding of the importance of Lockdown Drills and Emergency Training Events (at schools, workplaces, and mass gathering areas)
 - i. Lock down drills are an eye opener for all. The lessons learned enhance the community's public safety preparation.
 - ii. Law enforcement has walked into classrooms under lockdown where the entire class is hidden as well as classrooms where the class continued as if no drill was occurring.
- d. Hold Civilian and/or Workforce Response to Active Shooter Trainings.
 - i. Trainings would be held on Saturday mornings from 9-12 at the Law Enforcement Center for any individual in the workforce (ages 16 and up).

SUGGESTIONS - COMMUNITY

- e. Encourage and support senior citizen community outreach initiatives, such as the Town of Rochester's Elder Care Initiative, which will outreach to those in need during emergency situations.

2.2 Encourage Dr. Jim Halpern of the SUNY New Paltz Institute of Disaster Mental Health to Return with a Presentation to the Ulster County Legislature with Updated Mass Shooter Research.

- a. As reliable research in the profiling and prevention activities is still in development, Dr. Halpern offered and should be asked to return with updated information.

2.3 Review the County's Emergency Response Capabilities to Mass Casualties.

- a. With the changes to a regional health care network, the County may not have the resources in County to handle the type of mass casualties that occurred at Sandy Hook, Connecticut.

2.4 Increase the Number of People Trained in CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management) or Similar Program.

2.5 Encourage the offering and participation at NRA (National Rifle Association) Certified Instruction Courses, including Gun Safety Classes, Home Defense Trainings, and Eddie Eagle.

2.6 Support Community Collaboration Clerical Resources.

- a. This will ensure the Collaboration members can participate and move forward with group activities while still fulfilling their primary employment responsibilities.

2.7 Expand the Evolve Program to a Southern New Paltz/Plattekill Area.

SUGGESTIONS – LAW ENFORCEMENT/JUDICIAL

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3. Law Enforcement

3.1 Continue and Support the Ulster County Sheriff's Provision of Training for All Police Officers in Ulster County.

- a. This offer has been made to all local law enforcement agencies.

3.2 Develop a County-Wide Training Facility.

- a. A County owned and operated range would ensure standardized training at a centralized location.

3.3 Establish Common Law Enforcement Records Management Software.

- a. While there are currently four (4) different records management software utilized by law enforcement agencies throughout Ulster County, New York State has an initiative to rollout, by 2015, a records management software for all police departments to use.
- b. AEGIS is currently available through the Ulster County Sheriff for free but is time consuming and not a windows platform.
- c. All municipalities should chip in toward an upgrade to one common system that meets the needs of all.

3.4 Encourage Local Law Enforcement Agency Use of Federation of Sportsmen Ranges.

- a. In particular, the available of flexible hours, including night time shoots, would be beneficial to Local Law Enforcement Agencies.

3.5 Establish a Countywide Protocol for Long and Hand Gun Removal.

- a. There is currently no protocol for removing long and hand guns from a person's legal possession and part-time police agencies could result in delays in court ordered removals.

SUGGESTIONS – LAW ENFORCEMENT/JUDICIAL

3.6 Encourage the Law Enforcement and Public Safety Committee to explore a move of the DWI Victim Memorial to the current location of the Victim Impact Panels at the Law Enforcement Center to ensure it is not only kept up to date but also utilized as part of the program.

- a. The Bruderhof masons have expressed willingness to move the memorial, if given permission.

4. Judicial

4.1 Increased Utilization of Ulster County Drug Court and Consider Curriculum Adjustment to Institute a “Baby” Drug Court.

- a. Committee members noted this would need commitments from both the judge and individual participants.

4.2 Increased Use of Community Service.

- a. District Attorney Carnright should send a communication to the Judges to explore their desire to re-establish this program.

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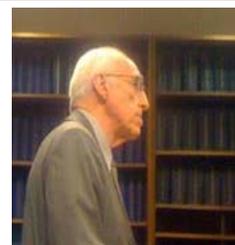
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