

Recommendations for Reform Action at Somers Police Department:

This draft may serve as framework to which can be added any additional suggestions or modified as the committee determines desirable. It is based on the 178 page Westchester County Police Reform document we received, using much of the language directly.

1. To prepare law enforcement personnel (civilian and uniformed) for consistent, positive community encounters and engagement, we recommend implicit bias training and intercultural competency training for all law enforcement personnel.

This recommendation is for all personnel, regardless of where and when they serve. Trainings should be offered in the Westchester County Academy and annually during in-service training.

2. Training facilitation should be a team approach between experts in these topics and law enforcement.

Trainings on implicit bias and intercultural competency should be in tandem with experts in the diversity, equity and inclusion field.

3. Create an environment that reinforces positive community engagement by identifying and valuing skills and competencies within police officers. These characteristics are essential for a successful officer-community engagement program to exist.

Identify skills and competencies needed for successful officer community engagement that can be recognized and valued in other officers.

4. There shall be a formal review of use of social media, and an analysis of how this medium could be used for branding and community outreach.

Electronic and specifically social media shall be used to provide information to bridge the gap between law enforcement and the community by sharing information about SPD and ways the Department may collaborate with the community.

SPD shall encourage its members to become an integral part of the community.

6. Consider the possibility of creating community liaisons to serve as ambassadors to various segments of the population, especially those that have traditionally been considered marginalized.

7. Somers police officers pledge to use force as a last resort and explore non-lethal technology.

The use of non-lethal technology such as net guns may be a possible alternative when dealing with unarmed people.

8. Consider the following:

Residents Advisory Board to hear issues/complaints from the community and act as a go-between for the neighborhoods, residents and police department.

SPD and NYS Police should jointly hold community forums to explain their policies and practices when responding to regular police calls and to 911 calls, as well as, update the public on any other issues that may arise. They should meet at least twice a year with the community.

Provide written reports to the local elected officials on a quarterly basis.

What kind of police calls do officers typically respond to?

What police actions are typically taken in response to calls?

What are interactions between individuals and the police like, and how do they proceed and resolve?

9. Create and add a series of questions regarding an officer's interaction with the community they serve when considering promotions and/or annual evaluations.

10. Establish a policy for peer-review error management training.

Engage in collaborative peer review to utilize real world scenarios in an effort to establish best practices.

11. SPD must commit to being transparent with the public, which means to embrace those principles and values that promote transparency in its internal and external policies and practices. This way, those principles will be ingrained in the culture of the current administration and hopefully for future administrations.

Some examples of those policies and practices include, but are not limited to:

(1) establishing a culture of transparency to build community trust;

(2) educating the public with respect to WCDPS's policies and procedures;

(3) making SPD policies, procedures, and law enforcement data available to the public

(4) proactively engaging in positive non-enforcement activities.

12. Promote and Engage in More Non-Investigatory Community Interaction.

Implement a program to encourage and support community engagement to build relationships. Examples of community engagement for police officers include, but are not limited to:

o Engaging in youth activities/sports (for example, establish a Police Athletic League, sponsoring/coaching community teams);

o Identifying and allowing police officers to engage in activities which are important to the community to build trust, and which have nothing to do with law enforcement. For example, collaborating with the community on a project or community event or bridging a gap with respect to a community need.

13. Endeavor to provide a body-worn camera to every police officer, no matter their rank, and equip every police vehicle with dashboard cameras.

14. Enhance officer training.

Training should include implicit bias training.
Crisis Intervention Training (CIT).

15. When a library of training videos is available from the County, State or make use of videos on wide topics; not used in place of in-person interactive trainings but to make best practices available to all members of SPD.

16. Identify liaison officers who are trained to respond to hate incidents.

Should be responsible for any reporting requirement to the Chief of Department and to any questions on incidents within the municipality.

17. Allow a broader base of persons to work as police officers. Will provide a more varied base of expertise and experience. Will make finding diverse candidates incrementally easier by increasing the pool of applicants.

18. Develop policy regarding the investigation of non-fatal police involved shootings.

SPD shall issue a publicly available written policy ensuring that any non-fatal shooting involving a member of the SPD be investigated by an outside law enforcement agency and identifying that agency in advance of any incident

19. Establish an Open Disciplinary Process.

Publish the procedures of disciplinary process on SPD's website.

Provide for anonymous and non-anonymous complaint procedures;

Provide procedure by which a member of the public may compliment a police

Implement a policy of providing for status updates to complainants upon request;

Implement a policy of speaking with a complainant prior to a final determination