

Police Reform Committee Meeting Notes

9/14/20 1:30 PM

Attendees:

Georgetown Supervisor Pete Walrod
City of Oneida Supervisor Mary Cavanaugh
County Administrator Mark Scimone
Sheriff Todd Hood
PIO Samantha Field
County Attorney Tina Waylon-Smith
Director of Mental Health Teisha Cook
Mick Keville, Crossroads Community Church
Dave Desantis, Local public defender
Mary Margaret Zehr, City of Oneida Schools Superintendent,
Capt. William Wilcox, Madison County Sheriff's Office,
Madison County Assistant District Attorney Robert Mascari
Jeff Leahey, Church on the Rock
Chris Lewis, Chairman of Board Oneida Baptist Church & inmate counselor at MC Jail
Secretary to the Board of MC, Emily Burns

Sheriff Hood gave an introduction and explains why and what we are doing here-- Governor Cuomo made an Executive order requesting every police agency in the State of New York review their Department and see if changes need to be made and formulate a plan.

- Sheriff Hood explains everyone is here for input/ if there are any suggestions or experiences to share.
- He continues to explain that if the Sheriff's Office does not go through this process, the State could reduce funding.
- Madison County Sheriff's Office has done a great job throughout the community. It is one of about 150 accredited agencies within NYS—this is a great accomplishment.

Samantha Field goes on to explain what our goal is for this meeting and moving forward.

- We are looking to start the conversation throughout our community
- Sam explains how we are reaching out the public—Public Comment Form on our website and Press release. Comments will be accepted until October 23

Supervisor Cavanaugh asked Sheriff Hood to explain what the accreditation means.

- Sheriff Hood explains that an accreditation from NYS means that our Police agency is in compliance with all of NYS standards with how we operate.
 - The Madison County Sheriff's Office is one of the highest agencies within NYS.

- Accreditation stands for a lot with their office, it helps with litigation as well. The MCSO is 1 of 135 in Compliance with NYS Standards.

OHS Superintendent Zehr spoke on their relationship with the Sheriff's Office- Sheriff Hood has great communication with the Superintendents. Overall the Schools have great experiences with the MCSO.

Assistant DA Bob Mascari comments on how he is always impressed with the time that members of the MCSO put into arresting people and determining whether or not it is appropriate situation and reasoning.

- Quality of work is great- he has never had to dismiss a case based on improper behavior, he has had to with other agencies before.

Director of Mental Health, Teisha Cook spoke on the Mental Health perspective. The MCSO has always embraced any education on the Mental Health front. Happy to continue meetings on Mental Health.

- Sheriff Hood further mentioned that the big struggle here is Mental Health and we aren't provided the proper facilities when they are being shut down.

Local Defense Attorney Dave Desantis explains that from the defense perspective, a lot of crime is drug related or Mental Health based and sometimes arrest isn't always the right option.

Sheriff Hood explains that Mental Health needs to be the #1 issue at hand.

Bob Mascari explains that Bail used to be used to keep people safe with Mental Health issues—we are lacking good alternatives with Bail Reform in place.

Mick Keville explains that Chittenango is very happy with the response from the SPO's. The kids are very receptive to the presence and overall has had a positive effect.

Jeff Leahey explains that the Oneida City Police as well as MCSO have always gone above and beyond. Oneida experiences drug/ alcohol issues especially on the North Side. Jeff thanked MCSO for their presence.

- Sheriff Hood explains that the presence of the MCSO will stay to assist with the North Side of Oneida—it's always the 1 person that takes the time to help out.

County Admin. Mark Scimone rounds up the meeting by thanking everyone for their presence and input and for being a part of this initiative, and for helping get the information out.

Sheriff Hood also thanks everyone for their input.

Samantha is going to send out information to attendees and Community Groups for input/
public comment form.

- Goal is to review plan then reconvene to engage with plan creation
- Looking for Community input by end of October/ Mid November
- This will also be sent out to Supervisors so it can get out to the community.