

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Police Review Committee provides update, announces next public hearing and listening sessions

SARANAC LAKE — The Saranac Lake Police Review Committee has compiled a master document to track its progress and keep the public informed as it continues preparing its plan for the village Board of Trustees, in accordance with Gov. Cuomo’s Executive Order 203.

Additionally, the committee has scheduled its third virtual public forum, which will be held at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 17. The link to join is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89821455918?pwd=STdNTytFVVhiRmFzdTZjWnFQUFdxUT09>

Committee members have also been meeting with specific community groups to continue collecting input.

“Our work to meet the requirements of the governor’s executive order is on track,” said Trustee Melinda Little. “We are in the process of drafting recommendations that meet specific aspects of the state’s guidance and are working to propose additional programs based on public feedback we’ve received. We will present our plan to the village board by January or early February with the aim of sending an approved plan to Albany in time for the next state budget.”

The Police Review Committee, which consists of volunteer representatives from different community stakeholder groups, has been meeting weekly since Thursday, Aug. 13. Meetings and notes are recorded and posted to the village website, https://www.saranaclakeny.gov/index.php?section=about_forms_library. In addition to public hearings, the committee conducted a public survey to gain input on policing and public safety in the Saranac Lake area; this survey was developed using similar surveys in Plattsburgh and Saratoga Springs.

Concurrently, using the Resources & Guide Workbook provided by the governor’s office in August, the committee began a review of the evidence-based strategies outlined in EO203. For the purpose of prioritizing those strategies most applicable to the Saranac Lake Police Department and the community, the committee determined specific focus areas that should be given the highest priority in the review process. In these instances, the size of the police force and population served were the driving factors for selecting priority strategies. They are as follows:

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- Use of force policies
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- De-escalation training and practices
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- Procedural justice
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- Implicit bias awareness training
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- Community-based outreach and conflict resolution
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- Law enforcement assisted diversion programs
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It was also determined that violence prevention and reduction/intervention is blended throughout many of the above items and, therefore, will not be discussed as a singular item. The other strategies in the order that were deemed as less applicable or beyond the scope of the size of the Saranac Lake community and resources available included:

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- Problem oriented policing
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- Hot spot policing
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- Restorative justice
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- Focused deterrence
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- Crime prevention through environmental design
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Based on feedback from the survey and public forums, the committee is also discussing:

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- Establishment of an ongoing citizen outreach committee
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- A procedural justice strategy
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- Pairing of police with behavioral health professionals and other community-based resources in cases where additional support and specialized response is needed
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The full working master document can be viewed on the village's website:

https://saranacounty.ny.gov/corecode/uploads/document6/uploaded_pdfs/corecode/Police_Review_Committee_Discussion_and_Findings_To_Date_11.13.2020_1090.pdf

The full executive order can be viewed here:

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/no-203-new-york-state-police-reform-and-reinvention-collaborative>

The governor's guidance for local police review committees can be viewed here:

https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Police_Reform_Workbook81720.pdf