

**Law Enforcement & Public Safety Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes**

DATE & TIME: February 3, 2021 – 5:15 PM
LOCATION: Powered by Zoom Meeting by Dialing (646) 558-8656
Meeting ID: 918 6610 4318
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chairwoman Eve Walter
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Jay Mahler, Deputy Clerk
PRESENT: Legislators Haynes, Heppner & Parete
ABSENT: Legislator Fabiano
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislator Cahill, Sheriff Figueroa, Undersheriff Benjamin, Detective Tagliaferro and former NYS Trooper Lt. Sam Lizzio – UC Sheriff’s Office, Director Schmidt – UC Probation, Public Defender Boyer, Director Peterson & Deputy Director/Fire Coordinator Erichsen – UC Emergency Management/Emergency Communications, Deputy County Executives Rider & Milgrim, Assistant Deputy County Executive Markowitz & Deputy Budget Director Kelly – UC Executive’s Office, Patricia Doxsey – Daily Freeman, Tom Kadgen – League of Women Voters, Penny Coleman - Citizen

Chairwoman Walter called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM.

Motion No. 1: **Moved to APPROVE the Minutes & Transcript of the December 2, 2020 Meeting**

Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Haynes

Discussion: None

Voting In Favor: Legislators Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Minutes & Transcripts APPROVED**

Resolutions for the February 16, 2021 Session of the Legislature

Resolution No. 60: Authorizing Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) Between Greene And Ulster Counties For A Regional Partnership Agreement And Resource Sharing Agreement For Fire/Emergency Services – Fire Coordinator – Emergency Management

Resolution Summary: This resolution authorizes the Chair of the Legislature to execute a MOU for a regional partnership and resource-sharing between Greene and Ulster Counties for the purposes of sharing resources, equipment and training opportunities in the area of technical rescue and response.

Motion No. 2: **Moved Resolution No. 60 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Haynes
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Heppner

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 9: Amending Funding Sources For Capital Project No. 483 – Public Safety Training Center – To Reflect Increase In State Share Of Construction Costs – Ulster County Community College

Resolution Summary: This resolution amends Capital Project 483 to reflect the availability of additional State funding in the amount of \$1,163,428.00.

Motion No. 3: **Moved Resolution No. 9 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Haynes

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 38: Approving The Execution Of A Contract Amendment For \$23,679.16, Causing The Aggregate Contract Plus Amendment Amount To Be In Excess Of \$50,000.00 Entered Into By The County – NDI Technologies, Inc. – Ulster County Sheriff

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves the execution of a contract amendment in the amount of \$23,679.16 with NDI Technologies, Inc. to extend the term of agreement for license plate reader maintenance from March 3, 2021 through March 31, 2022.

Motion No. 4: **Moved Resolution No. 38 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Haynes

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 59: Authorizing The Chair Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute An Agreement With The Town Of Ulster For Use Of The Ulster Police Firearms Range And Training Facility – Ulster County Sheriff

Resolution Summary: This resolution authorizes the Chair to execute an agreement with the Town of Ulster, providing for the use of the Facility by the Ulster County Sheriff's Office for the term beginning January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 at no cost to the county.

Motion No. 5: **Moved Resolution No. 59 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Haynes

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolutions ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 61: Authorizing The Chair Of The Ulster County Legislature To Enter Into An Agreement With The New York State Office Of Indigent Legal Services For Distribution #5 – Public Defender's Office

Resolution Summary: This resolution authorizes the Chair to execute an agreement with the New York State Office of Indigent Legal Services for the purpose of Ulster County's participation in Distribution #5, Contract No: C000751, for the period 01/01/2015 through 12/31/2017 totaling \$881,088.00.

Motion No. 6: **Moved Resolution No. 61 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Haynes

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolutions ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 78: Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$53,819.00 Entered Into By The County – Crystal Clear Mechanical, Inc. – Department Of Public Works

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves the execution of a contract with Crystal Clear Mechanical, Inc in the amount of \$53,819.00 for the removal and installation of condensing units at the Ulster County Law Enforcement Center.

Motion No. 7: **Moved Resolution No. 78 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Haynes

Discussion: See attached transcript
Voting In Favor: Legislators Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolutions ADOPTED**

Chairwoman Walter recognized Sheriff Figueroa who introduced former NYS Trooper Lieutenant Sam Lizzio to discuss “Officer-Citizen Interaction” training being conducted at the UC Law Enforcement Center.

See attached transcript.

Chairwoman Walter recognized Assistant Deputy County Executive Anna Markowitz to give a presentation on the Ulster County Justice and Reform Commission’s Final Report.

See attached transcript.

Chairwoman Walter updated the members on the Criminal Justice Reform Task Force.

See attached transcript.

Chairwoman Walter recognized Legislator Parete to discuss the report he recently forwarded to committee members.

See attached transcript.

Chairwoman Walter asked the members if there was any other new or old business, and hearing none;

Adjournment

Motion Made By: Legislator Parete
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Heppner
No. of Votes in Favor: 4
No. of Votes Against: 0

TIME: 6:16 PM

Respectfully submitted: Deputy Clerk Mahler
Approved: March 3, 2021

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Chairwoman Walter called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM.

Chairwoman Walter: Call the meeting to order Law Enforcement & Public Safety, February 3rd, 2021. Take a motion to approve the December 2nd, meeting minutes and transcripts?

Legislator Heppner: So moved

Legislator Haynes: Second it.

Chairwoman Walter: So, Legislator Heppner a second by Haynes. All in favor? Aye. Opposed? Abstain? Okay, perfect. I'm going to do some manipulation of the agenda. We're going to start with the resolutions. First, before we do the presentations. That's number one. Number two, we're gonna move if it's okay with everybody, move Resolution Number 60 up to the top so that Everett can go to his son's birthday. And then the Sheriff has a small presentation, and then we're gonna close it out with Anna's presentation. Does that sound okay to everybody? Terrific. Okay, so we're gonna start with Resolution Number 60, authorizing the memorandum of understanding between Greene and Ulster County for a Regional Partnership Agreement and resource sharing agreement for fire emergency services. A motion to discuss?

Legislator Heppner: So moved.

Chairwoman Walter: Second.

Legislator Haynes: Second.

Chairwoman Walter: Okay. Everett, is there some background you want to give us?

Everett Erichsen: So the, the, the resolution is a technical rescue grant from DHSES, for \$150,000. We did it regionally because we then have the possibility to obtain more funding that way. That's the way they want us going for grants is on a regional basis. So we did that we were successful. And we're, we would be using that funding to purchase additional equipment based off of a risk profile that we did for the county when it comes to technical rescue, which would be all rope, rope rescue, confined space rescue, low angle, high angle, etc.

Chairwoman Walter: Great, anybody have any questions about this? Well, the will the items be divided and stored in between Ulster and Greene, or how do you?

Everett Erichsen: So, so basically, we currently do this through, already with hazmat as well. And we're taking the same approach to this. So we look at the needs of equipment that we need to purchase. And you know, one year we may spend \$100,000, they may spend \$50K. Next year, they may spend a little bit more just based off of needs and the, based off the assessment that we do at the time for that year on what equipment is needed. So we will be purchasing what we need to handle our incidents in Ulster County. We will be storing them in Kingston. We work with the Kingston Fire Department to to provide these services throughout the county as long along with the other departments through our county mutual aid plan. So we'll be keeping that equipment here will you know, trailer additional equipment to to handle the incidents.

Chairwoman Walter: Right. Any other questions from the Legislators or others? Okay, all in favor of Resolution Number 60.

Committee Members: Aye

Chairwoman Walter: Abstained? All right, it moves. Thank you Happy birthday to your son.

Everett Erichsen: Thank you.

Legislator Heppner: All right, we'll go back to Resolution Number 9 amending funding sources for Ccapital Project Number 483. Public Safety Training Center to reflect an increase in state share of construction costs. A mothion to discuss? Was that you Jonathan?

Chairwoman Walter: Yeah. Okay. Second?

Legislator Haynes: Second. Haynes.

Chairwoman Walter: Haynes. Okay, any discussion on Resolution Number 9? Okay, all in favor of resolution number nine?

Committee Members: Aye.

Chairwoman Walter: Opposed? Abstain? So moved. Okay. Resolution 38 approving the execution of a contract amendment for \$23,679.16 causing aggregate contract plus amendment to be in excess of \$50,000 entered by the county for NDI technologies Ulster County Sheriff motion to discuss?

Legislator Heppner: So moved.

Chairwoman Walter: Heppner

Legislator Haynes: Second

Chairwoman Walter: Heppner, Haynes second. Sheriff, is there any background you would like to provide on this?

Sheriff Figueroa: This is for our license plate reader that we have. These are stationary license plate readers that we have in basic choke points. For example, Washington Avenue or 299 and 9W, and 52 and 209 in the Ellenville area.

Chairwoman Walter: I know Legislator Bartels had, just in terms of curiosity, but to understand how data is stored? Is there who controls like the private the storage of the private data? How long is it stored for it? Because it has individual license plates? Do you do have some, do you have knowledge about how that's all done?

Sheriff Figueroa: So NDI is the company that stores all that we do not, personally as an office store it. We do have, ironically, we're working on an updated policy from DCJS. And I'd be more than happy to share that with the committee when it's complete.

Chairwoman Walter: So is there an agreement that they don't provide that private data?

Sheriff Figueroa: They do not provide it. It's strictly for law enforcement use and official law enforcement use only?

Chairwoman Walter: Great. All right. Any other questions? Jonathan.

Legislator Heppner: Yes, Sheriff can just so how do you choose, I think you've called it a choke point, the location, how do you, what goes into your determination? You know, in placing those points, for example, and do they move around based on some information?

Sheriff Figueroa: No. So these are fixed locations, and it's where we have seen issues in the past, for example, SUNY New Paltz, and the Poughkeepsie Mid Hudson bridge. So that's why it's on 9W and 299. And it's it's, a lot of these resources are used, for example, if there's an Amber Alert or any type of situation like that, and for obviously, investigations involving pretty serious crimes.

Legislator Heppner: Thank you.

Chairwoman Walter: Any other questions, thoughts, comments? Okay. All in favor of Resolution Number 38?

Committee Members: Aye

Chairwoman Walter: Okay. That's everyone. Resolution Number 59, authorizing the Chair of the Ulster County Legislator, Legislature to execute an agreement with the Town of Ulster for use of the Ulster police firearms range and train, training facilities. Motion to discuss?

Legislator Heppner: Moved.

Chairwoman Walter: Hepner. Second?

Legislator Haynes: Haynes

Chairwoman Walter: Haynes. Any discussion on this, continuation of this agreement? Okay, all in favor of Resolution Number 59.

Committee Members: Aye

Chairwoman Walter: Okay, next we have Resolution 61, authorizing the chair of the Ulster County Legislature to enter into an agreement with the New York State Office of Indigent Legal Services for Distribution Number 5. Motion to discuss?

Legislator Heppner: Moved

Chairwoman Walter: Heppner

Legislator Haynes: Haynes

Chairwoman Walter: Haynes second. So, Marc, or John, does this catch us thoroughly up? Or are there more, or Ruth? Are there more to get us like, get us caught up? Or whoever wants to answer?

Public Defender Boyer: Christopher Kelly and I will ..

Chairwoman Walter: I realize there are several of you.

Chris Kelly: Yeah, no problem. Thank you, Legislator Walter. So this is the final contract to resolve all past claims. So this is kind of just a gap between Distributions 4 and 6 to cover some professional services, interpreter and psych evals. And this will catch us up on all past distributions.

Chairwoman Walter: That's great. Have we received reimbursement for the other ones yet?

Chris Kelly: 1., almost 1.6 million is the total that we've submitted claims for so yeah, we're, we're caught up in that. [inaudible] Yeah, I mean, when we issue a, when we submit a claim, we book it as a receivable. So ...

Chairwoman Walter: I'm just curious what the general turnaround is with them.

Chris Kelly: In terms of us submitting and actually getting the money wired to our account?

Chairwoman Walter: Yeah.

Chris Kelly: Okay. I'll follow up for you.

Chairwoman Walter: Is it years, I guess it's really what I'm wondering.

Chris Kelly: Yeah, I'll follow up on that actual part of it.

Chairwoman Walter: I'm just curious. You know, I'm following up from like the, when we had, didn't realize in the past, when we had FEMA put in things for FEMA, and it's like two years later, you get it. So I'm just curious whether this is a matter of weeks, months or years that we actually see that money.

Chris Kelly: It's not years. I can it is definitely not a FEMA reimbursement, which I know can take two to three years on a lag. This would be within the state fiscal calendar that we should receive that back depending on when submit. But I'll follow up on the past ones that we did during the 2020 calendar year and see what I can get for you. I'd be happy to do that.

Deputy Executive Milgrim: Just to clarify, Chris, it is bookable as revenue though for this year.

Chris Kelly: Yes, absolutely. Yeah. It's all going into the 2020. Yeah.

Chairwoman Walter: Yeah, I'm more just again, wondering, because the federal government is so slow and giving us money that the state's a little better. I want to actually take this moment to officially recognize Public Defender Boyer also. Because the last time we met her was in an interview process. And now she's here. And she was sorting things out in the end of our last year session. So welcome, Ruth. It's great to have you here. I'm not going to put you on the spot to say anything, but...

Public Defender Boyer: I'll just say thank you. And I'm thrilled to be in the position and thanks for you know, inviting me to the meeting. Happy to be here.

Chairwoman Walter: Okay, great. Thanks. Good to have you. Alright, so then we have Resolution Number 78. Oh, wait, did we vote on this?

Legislator Parete: No.

Chairwoman Walter: Oh, thank you. All in favor of Resolution Number 61.

Committee Members: Aye

Chairwoman Walter: Okay. I was so excited. Um, Resolution Number 78, approving the execution of a contract for \$53,819 and no cents entered into the county, Crystal Clear Mechanical for the Department of Public Works.

Legislator Heppner: Moved

Chairwoman Walter: Motion to discuss? Second.

Legislator Haynes: Second, Haynes.

Chairwoman Walter: Great. John, what is this for again? I forgot. Milgrim?

Deputy Executive Rider: This is to remove a condensing unit on the roof of the jail. The funding is actually coming out of the Sheriff's operation, operating funds, removing one condenser and replacing it with five newer condensers.

Chairwoman Walter: Was this, this was from the analysis of the boiler and how to make things more efficient? And this was part of that whole process of upgrades?

Deputy Executive Rider: I believe this is more of a failing condenser. I'm not sure this is part of that energy upgrade. The Sheriff may have a little bit more information. But I think that this is just replacing a failed condenser.

Sheriff Figueroa: Right. And it is a failed condenser that circulates the air throughout the building. And it's the small ones are more efficient, and least expensive.

Chairwoman Walter: Okay

Deputy Executive Rider: I can't tell you whether it came out of that energy efficiency study that's also circling this month.

Chairwoman Walter: Right. Alright. Thank you. All right. All in favor of Resolution Number 78.

Committee Members: Aye

Chairwoman Walter: John? Okay. Perfect. Okay, so next, I'm going to hand it over to the Sheriff, Oh, sorry Marc?

Deputy Executive Rider: Can I just ask, did I maybe I missed it. I did you go over Resolution 9. You did?

Chairwoman Walter: Yeah.

Deputy Executive Rider: The fire train, Public Safety Center. Okay. I'm sorry. Must not have been paying attention.

Chairwoman Walter: I wouldn't be surprised if I missed it. But I didn't. Right. Jay got it? Yeah, okay. So I know it's, I don't think it's you, I don't know if it's you Sheriff or who is presenting but I'll hand the mic over to you.

Sheriff Figueroa : Good afternoon, everyone. And thanks for having me here this evening. One of the things that I wanted to discuss and we were able to get the this important training that was part of, of our commission, as well as the current events that are going on, and that is the Officer Citizen Interaction Training. The County Execs office also assisted in this by moving this forward. And we were able to have the funding from classes that have been canceled due to COVID. And we were able to shift that to get this important training done. And I want to introduce the instructor that runs this. He's a retired New York State Police Lieutenant and has experience in officer citizen interaction. And his name is Sam Lizzio. Sam.

Lt. Lizzio: Oh, thank you, Sheriff. And thank you for having me everyone. I appreciate you being here. The Sheriff just wanted to kind of help me enlighten you a little bit about what the training program entails. We started this program back in the early 90s following the Rodney King incident. We realized in law enforcement at that point in time that we wanted to get out in front of any trends at that point in time, which may lead to situations such as that one. So this program was developed. Obviously it's been updated numerous times, especially in light of current events. But, but the goal of the program is to take officers, especially officers who have some time on the job. And we all things we've learned is, I use the analogy of an athlete, as an athlete plays sports, they develop bad habits, through their peers through their own actions.

And what the intent of the program is, is to break, basically give them a reset. We try to take them back to the original reason they entered law enforcement, to give them some communication skills, and to put them in actual roleplay scenarios where we stress them, and try to show them better ways of talking to people, to interacting with people and de-escalating situations. So that we can move away from hostile situations developing from very minor ones, especially. And the program has been successful over the years. Obviously, we would strongly desire to bring it to the Sheriff's office here and help you with your program as well. So, I'd be more than happy to answer any questions about the program. If there's anything I can tell you. It's a week long program. And we've had I know, when I formally did this with the New York State Police, a very high success rate. My, my personal feeling is, I'm a police officer, I like police officers. And I know there's a lot of good police officers out there. And certainly, sometimes people can head down the wrong path. And that's the goal of this program to make sure they don't do that. And if they have strayed a little bit that we can point them back in the right direction. So

Chairwoman Walter: Thank you

Sheriff Figueroa: Does anybody have any questions for Sam?

Chairwoman Walter: I do.

Lt. Lizzio: Okay

Chairwoman Walter: How do you figure out your success rate? What is that based on?

Lt. Lizzio: I'm basing my success rate on, because I knew from, from my former place, officers that did not repeat offender, you know, as far as having negative interactions with citizens, or obviously get themselves in situations which led to their termination. You know, we had a lot of individuals, my, my success rate also includes me. I was in the first class ever of this program. Like a reformed alcoholic, I support the program. Because as a young man, I had a lot more energy than I probably needed. So the program showed me a better way of doing things. I think I was probably on a path to ending my career with the New York State Police, if it hadn't been for this program. And I was able to, as, you know, the Sheriff said, turn my career around and not just survive, but ended up achieving the rank of Lieutenant and doing a 25 year career with the state police. So my heart's in it. So

Chairwoman Walter: What's the name of the program and who developed it initially?

Lt. Lizzio: Officer Citizen Interaction was developed by some of our people in New York State Police. And then they retired and the program was basically handed over to me, for lack of a better way of putting it, lack of desire

anyone else to run with the program. I saw its value. And there was always a need. And the job always realized there was a need, but it was, I guess the best way to put it, I had the desire to keep it going. Like I said, I hate to see, we put a lot of money into these people, to train them, to put them out in the field, to do you know, the work of the citizens. And I hate to see somebody get lost, because maybe they're following a path that other officers have led them down or just simply stress or other things have led them to make mistakes and law enforcement. We want to correct that. We want to make sure that they're treating people fairly, and we want to make sure that you're giving you the best service they can give you.

Chairwoman Walter: This doesn't sound like a new hire, because you're saying you want to remind them why they join. So what in, in a perfect gold standard how often would you advise that officers get something like this? Like every five years? Every 10 years? Once?

Lt. Lizzio: I think, you know, it's, it's best designed for mid career. Because hopefully, hopefully your new hires haven't developed the bad habits yet. We're keeping our fingers crossed that they're they're getting the training they need in the academy. And I'm not looking at stepping on the Academy's toes. I'm assuming they're giving you the best training they can possibly give them and getting them on the right path. So mid career, if I, if I, if I train somebody that's got 24 years on unless he's truly, truly you know, motivated to change his ways, I'm less likely to change him. But mid career the guy still sees that he has a lot of his career left ahead of him. And you know, he's willing to learn and he's willing to improve himself. We're, I think we have a much higher success rate with that group.

Sheriff Figueroa: I want to add, though, that one of the first things that Sam said to me, we spoke about new joins. And we do have new joins going through this course. My intent is to run everyone through the course, including myself, because I think it's important that you lead by example. We also have a couple of the town folks that that are on board. We have one Town of Ulster Police Officer this week., and one from the Town of New Paltz next week. The Town of Ulster Supervisor advised me that he's willing to go 50/50 in the next course, because he wants to put more of his officers through it. So I want to work with the, with the county and this committee, because I have enough funding for two weeks because of canceled training. But I do not have enough funding to put the entire office and to add the other local town police departments that are interested in the training. But going back to what I said initially, my first conversation with Sam about a new person coming in, and how generational impacts those new hires. Sam, can you talk about that for a second?

Lt. Lizzio: Well, what I, what I had said to the Sheriff is many of our issues with individuals that have come through the program, you know, we, we select, especially initially in the program with the state police, was by individuals that accumulated complaints. And what we had found that legacies, so to speak, or individuals who come from a law enforcement family might have more issues, because their views on law enforcement stem from, say, a grandfather, or father. And the views of policing during their timeframe, obviously, are not the views of policing today. We certainly don't do police work the way we did in the 60s, or the 70s. So, so what, that would carry, you know, they grew up listening to stories of the way police work was done, and then come on to job and they're in a world where it doesn't even match what their, what their fathers or grandfathers did. So those, sometimes it can tend to be an issue.

Chairwoman Walter: Other questions for? No? Well, thank you so much for sharing what you're doing. Hopefully, we'll be hearing more about it as we move along.

Lt. Lizzio: Well, thank you very much for for listening to me. Have a good day.

Sheriff Figueroa: Thanks. Thank you, Sam. And I just want to end up by saying Madam Chair about the potential issues that we're going to have with funding this training, because I didn't budget for this. In light of current events, as well as the implicit bias training that we want to have Dr. Lawson come in and talk to us about. So I wanted to discuss this with your committee. And of course, the, in conjunction with the County Executive's Office to get this training, not just here for the Sheriff's office, but I think it'll benefit the entire county.

Chairwoman Walter: And do you know if any other Supervisors are open to sort of, a shared service, kind of a shared plan?

Sheriff Figueroa: I've spoken with Supervisor Quigley. He is the only one that is interested. But I will be talking with the other supervisors in the other towns that have full time police department, Even those that have part time police department as well. And I'll be bringing that up to the Chiefs as well.

Chairwoman Walter: All right. Thank you. Anna, you ready? Oh, you're muted.

Assistant Deputy Executive Markowitz: Sorry. Um, all right, I'm going to just do a screen share, because I have a PowerPoint to accompany things. Let's see.

Chairwoman Walter: So while she's doing it, I'll just say Anna has worked very, very tirelessly for several months on this work and quite impressive.

Assistant Deputy Executive Markowitz: Thank you very much. And I'm gonna try to be brief and quick because I know, I recognize four people on this call who are on the commission. So I know that a lot of this isn't new to folks. But I just wanted to make sure that everybody had an overview of what was in this plan, because it's going to be submitted for the March meeting. And so I just wanted you all to have as much information as you needed to make decisions. So let me go to the view slide. All right, so, um, our task was to respond to Cuomo's Executive Order 203, which essentially was to review the current police policies and strategies, especially about racial bias, and come up with tweaks and reforms to help support communities of color. With our processes had 12 meetings, including three town halls, which had 75 participants. And we also had a forum where 100 people submitted ideas. After we gathered all the ideas from the community, we had each commission member, select one topic, and then they presented that at the town hall, in the middle one, the second town hall, for community feedback. This is the fabulous list of our members, I will not read it, but they're amazing and four of them are here.

Restorative Justice is our first topic. Our main reform is to expand our restorative justice program to 18 to 26 year olds with misdemeanors and non felonies. And the Woodstock 180 program already does this for our Probation Department. And so they're going to expand to work with Dave Clegg at the DA's office. And also, Nancy, I believe, is still on this call. I can only see a small window of people. But she, she and I spoke and, and she's going to be also using restorative justice to reduce the technical violations through probation. So that is another use. And then over the next five years, we hope to expand to school districts, and also to first time offenders of all ages. We really want to create a culture of restorative justice and Ulster County, and so we're trying to expand that as much as possible. Our second reform was to reduce recidivism. So our main plan was to create a discharge plan that connects incarcerated people to housing, mental health treatment and jobs. And we really wanted to have more mental health

supports within the jail not just for people who are at risk to themselves and others, but to have more of a sliding scale where people in the gray zone can also be rehabilitated. We also wanted to do more job training programs. Bread Alone is a great example, which currently work with the Sheriff's office and just to have more local partners. And then we also wanted to have a call to action for an increase of affordable and supportive housing. We realized that having a safe place for people to go after being released is extremely important. So that is kind of the recidivism plan.

The Ulster County Jail budget and size. We have reduced the jail budget by a million dollars this year and reduced the staffing. We did that without having any layoffs. We would like to continue to do that in future budgets. And if the jail population continues to be as low as it is now, we would love to continue to shrink the jail staffing accordingly. We realize that because of Coronavirus, as well as bail reforms that it's going to be very tricky to pin down the permanent size of the jail. And so we would like to give the Sheriff's office time to figure out what the long term population is. And so we are giving a few years to to come up with a permanent resizing plan. And then the main goal is to invest the money saved from from reducing the jail budget back into the community. We really want to fund our restorative justice, our mental health. You know, all of the other policies that you're seeing in this plan we're hoping will be funded through the savings from the jail.

School Resource Officers. We currently supply school resource officers for two school districts BOCES and Onteora. We do not actually have control over if a school chooses to have an SRO. We just choose whether or not we want to provide that staff member. So we came up with two possible reforms. We couldn't really fully agree on one within the commission and so we are asking for the Legislature to continue to examine this. One possible reform is that the Sheriff's office could not supply officers. The other reform is at the Sheriff's office could continue to provide officers to schools, with that they could come up with best practices to ensure that SROs is we're not being used for disciplinary action. So we are we are kind of putting the full information down on the plate and hope that you all will continue to look into SROs.

The Right To Know Act. And so every police encounter is going to be required that the deputy identifies themselves and provide their name, rank and agency as well as an explanation for the encounter. So they're going to provide a business card, so that people can easily contact the Sheriff's office if they had an incident or want to compliment or any, any of the above just so that there's transparency in every interaction. And so they're going to be evaluating how this works by serving the community. And the goal is to create more transparency and accountability for the community. We also are recommending the consent to search reform, which is a new form on odor recognition. So the Sheriff's actually already implementing this, I think as we speak, which is great. They are creating an odor recognition form for tracking the officers use of the smell of marijuana as a cause for searches. And they're going to be keeping track of how many times each officer is using this and if they have seized any drugs on, on the scene of the crime just to to make sure that there aren't people that are abusing that, that, that cause since it is something that is pretty hard for a community member to dispute. So that's another transparency.

Publicly disclosed data to build trust. So over the next year, and 2021, we're hoping to figure out exactly what data sets we would like to collect. We could work with partner organizations such as the Bureau Institute or the police... I'm blanking on the the other the other name, but so there are some partner organizations that have experience with working with police office, police offices on data. And so getting some best practices for what they're all tracking. And then in 2022, we will use that to build a dashboard. Similar to the Coronavirus dashboard, which we built with our IS department, there could be a longer term integration with the Sheriff's current website. But that would be kind of a larger build. And then over the five year period, we're going to continue to tweak and refine the data based on

you know, any other changes to reforms or anything that is, kind of seemed to be missing from any data that we're currently collecting.

Responding to mental health emergencies. We are currently funding a full time social worker in the 911 emergency center. And we are also adding a third team to the mobile mental health, which is a nurse practitioner and a access to a psychiatrist. That is going to be funded through our HEAL funds that third team. And we also are going to do crisis intervention trainings to 50% of the Sheriff's office and 25% of the local police departments. And that is funded through a, the BGA grant that we received. And, we're, the goal is that when someone is having a mental health emergency that they would be receiving help from from a social worker, if it is a case where they're not at risk of themselves or others. So that is the goal there.

Responding to addiction and overdose, overdoses with treatment. Also through the BGA grant that the Sheriff's office received along with the health department. They're going to hire a social worker and two peers to join the Sheriff's ORACLE team. And, they're going to work with the Kingston police and with opioid treatment partners to create a unified county system. There Ellenville Regional Hospital also received a BGA grant. And so we're going to be partnering with them to make sure that we're really all tackling this together. And we're going to collect data to show that this is working so that we can reduce our opioids by 50%.

Police Review Board. We reviewed the 11 models that other Sheriff's offices implemented around the country and the Justice and Reform Commission didn't want to appoint members and instead wanted any interested community member to participate. So they are recommend, recommending tweaking the Suffolk County model and having six regional community advisory boards, one in Kingston, Ellenville, New Paltz, Saugerties, Plattekill, and Woodstock so that as many people in Ulster County can participate as possible. So over the next year, they will work with the community to, to pick the best model and then in the next five years, they will be implementing these community advisory boards to increase transparency.

Preventing Excessive Use of Force. We're giving kudos to the Sheriff's office because they did in fact, prohibit chokeholds after George Floyd's death in July, and so that is really wonderful. And, yeah.

Require Intelligence and Evidence for Stops. In Oakland, they had a really interesting model where, prior to one reform, they had 32,000 stops across the city. And then in 2018, they added a question to a form: Is this stop intelligence led? In other words, do I have prior information to tie this specific person to a crime? And after they just added that simple question. In 2018, they made 19,000 stops and African American stops fell off, fell by over 43%. And the crime rate didn't go up. And so we are recommending adding a similar question to, to our forum so that we can hopefully reduce the number of people of color that are stopped.

Racial Bias Trainings. We will be partnering with Ed Lawson on racial bias trainings, in addition to other trainings that the Sheriff deems helpful, such as the one that we just heard about. And we will be creating yearly, a yearly training schedule that focuses on racial bias, communication and de escalation. And so our goal is for all officers to be trained to respond in a time of crisis.

And then, Prioritizing Hiring People of Color. We will be partnering with SUNY Ulster to create training courses for civil service, civil service, physical fitness and resume assistance. And we also recommend hiring a community liaison to prioritize outreach and community outreach and recruitment in diverse communities. And I would add, as well as

working with our Chief Diversity Officer, that that wasn't included in this plan. But I think that he's a great resource as well. Community Liaison Position. So we recommend hiring a community liaison. And we hoped that they would promote existing community building programs such as the cadet program and the summer camp, and that they would also increase the number of positive engagements between the police and the community.

And then lastly, we would like to use restorative justice center to hold community events. And, so some of the advisory board meetings will be held here as well as just police conversations between the community and the police. We would survey people on their baseline feelings and see if through this engagement process, the the feelings of the community improve. And, the goal is just to create a culture of trust and understanding.

So that, those are our reforms. These are all the fabulous people who are saying that they enjoyed this process and enjoyed the reforms, including fabulous Legislator Eve Walter, Ulster County Sheriff also great, Maude's not here, but let's see we have Dave Clegg and Citizen Action. So we have a diverse group of people who were all happy with this process. So thank you. Thanks for hearing.

Chairwoman Walter

Thanks Anna. So, questions, comments from the Legislature? Legislator Heppner. You're on mute, though.

Legislator Heppner: Thank you, and thank you for the presentation. I am currently serving on the Town of Woodstock Committee going through this very same process. So I commend you all for the work. I know how extensive it's been just for, you know, a small town. So I can't imagine for setting up an entire county. That's definitely a work. I just had two questions. One comment and one question. For the data collection part. You know, you said you're going, you know, to try and determine, you know, data collection and the best way to go forward with that. That's something we've talked a lot about. And I know how important it is. One thing I would suggest, or at least ask you to consider, is that how you might already be doing this, but how you collect that data. To make that data available to be broken down by municipality in order to be shareable to municipalities. I know, for example, Woodstock looks to, you know, continue in a more permanent way, a similar type committee that's been involved in the current mandate by the governor. But because the Sheriff's office is so active in you know, for example, Legislator Haynes, and I represent, you know, the Town of Hurley, that, you know, relies solely on the Sheriff patrol, as well as the state police. So it'd be a great way for town leaders to get even more information in that kind of collaboration. And then my second is actually a question, can you just go into a little bit more about the six regional advisory boards? So you said there'll be no appointed? There won't be like an appointment process for the review, for the board. But so when you break down regionally, how are they going to be set up? Who leads the meetings and so on?

Assistant Deputy Executive Markowitz : Sure, does. Juan, you're welcome to hop in there for that one, I know that you've done work on this.

Sheriff Figueroa: So on your first part, and I just I didn't get a chance to talk to Anna. But I did text her right now about it. The we had a meeting with chiefs today. And the discussion was brought up, the majority of the police departments have the Ulster, the county law enforcement records management system. And the dashboard that Anna was talking about, what the plan is, and I haven't had the opportunity to speak to Anna today, because it was a busy day. But the plan would be that that dashboard would include all of the local agencies, or the data, because it's the same records management system. And I guess we can talk about that and any potential costs. But I think if the dashboard is set up, we all have, they all use the same records management system that we would use, utilize a

dashboard for all the agencies so they could all have access to it. And it's just something that I think may work for all of the Commission's and in the towns.

Legislator Heppner: Thank you.

Sheriff Figueroa: In regards to the advisory board, the advisory board would be something that we all hear at the legislative front here, we'll have to talk and discuss on how to regionalize that and do that. But the purpose of breaking it up into the regions was that everyone can have a say and volunteer to this. So they can have if they have any issues or anything in regards to any policies that it could be discussed in that form. And we would have townhall meetings with the people in those regions as well.

Legislator Heppner: Thank you.

Chairwoman Walter: Other questions, comments?

Legislator Parete: Yeah, I do. If I might,

Chairwoman Walter: Legislator Haynes, then Legislator Parete.

Legislator Parete: Go ahead.

Legislator Haynes: Sure. I just would like to thank Anna for all of her hard work and energy that she put in towards this. You made it a pleasure to attend meetings. And we went through, you know, it was quite a bit of work at times. But thank you so much. And like I said, it's been a pleasure.

Assistant Deputy Executive Markowitz: Thank you. It has been a pleasure.

Chairwoman Walter: Legislator Parete.

Legislator Parete: Yeah, I do have a couple of questions or comments. You know, the, the title of this committee is law enforcement and public safety. I don't hear any components in this for law enforcement or public safety. Now, we all know, in our, in the county seat, there's been a significant, significant increase in violent crimes. And I don't hear any concerns any, it doesn't appear to have been any discussion as to the safety of the citizens of Ulster County, the City of Kingston. This is not a criminal justice committee. I understand it's related. But I hear over and over again, things like, well, you said it before, ma'am, the Resource Officer. A resource, a resource officer, school resource is a program. I'm not in the school board business. If the school board's don't want them, I don't think they go to the Sheriff and say you, you can't send them to us, it's voluntary. What is the school resource officer do? Does he, because he's in uniform, and some youngster sees him, that it makes the youngster go out and be nasty or violent or commit a crime. I mean, he's not teaching these kids quickdraw maneuvers, or how to shoot tin cans off of, off of fence posts. So there's something, there's something wrong. I get, you know, I've been around so long. I've seen the mad, sad, glad and all these other organizations, and sometimes these sort of things where you want to tweak everything they can make it easier to get engaged and, to engage in illegal or unlawful activity than not. And it just doesn't seem at all, that the public safety issue has been discussed. Thank you.

Chairwoman Walter: Anna, do you want to respond in any way? Or?

Assistant Deputy Executive Markowitz: I don't know, Juan, if you have any, any thoughts about that? Um, I mean, we were trying. Yeah ...

Sheriff Figueroa: I think what the, what John's trying to say, Mr. Parete's trying to say is that there wasn't enough talk of, of victims and, and not enough talk of, of how the, you know, there's still criminals out there. And I think I understand what the, what he's saying. But I think this process is, is about changing the behavior with folks that are obviously people of color and underprivileged folks. I, I agree that we still need to worry about our victims out there, and in the criminal justice system, as a whole. And I said that in my statement in the report, that is the entire criminal justice system that we have to look at, and crime because of the pandemic is still high. Our opioid overdoses and fatalities are sky high. And that's still a big issue and a problem. And I think, fighting that needs recognition, as well is what I think what the, Mr. Parete is trying to say. And I'm not saying that that's not 100% correct. I agree with what you're saying. But I think this particular program was, was made because of what happened in the history of law enforcement. And it's a reaction to certain folks in our community. And I think that's what this is focusing on. I hope that answers it.

Legislator Parete: May I respond?

Chairwoman Walter: Sure Legislator Parete

Legislator Parete: You know, I've heard a couple times today the, the opioid crisis. Now, this is not something new. And there's money to be spent in cooperations with Ellenville. For people that are already involved in it. Not one cent, not one bit of conversation is for prevention. It's all how to save lives. Wonderful. I think the state of New York in particular has done a good job. If you have a problem to try to get you in a treatment. And the local EMS people, the first responders have done a good job of saving somebody's life who's laying on the street. But, but we're not stopping it. The death rates are soaring, no conversation, and that's criminal activity.

Assistant Deputy Executive Markowitz: And, so actually, we did receive another grant from NACCHO on prevention, which is very exciting because our HEAL grant did not allow for prevention activities, which was disappointing. But with, with NACCHO, we are doing a large public awareness campaign to try to prevent people from becoming addicted. We also are doing some work with the prescribers to try to reduce the prescriptions of opioids. A lot of that wasn't in this plan. I, we focused mainly on the ORACLE team and kind of that interaction with, with law enforcement, but there is work that's being done on the preventative scale.

Sheriff Figueroa: I think, I think the, the pandemic really has hurt us in that awareness prevention part in the ORACLE team. Because we have a trailer that we've sent, we rolled it out in 2019 at the Ulster County Fair, and that was a huge component of prevention and awareness. On a side note, our arrests through URGENT have doubled and more quality cases, not cases out of individuals that are small time dealers, but you know, mid size and upper level dealers in this county. So those numbers have doubled in 2020 on the, on the arrests. And what's unique about ORACLE is even when URGENT goes in and makes an arrest and they see the users URGENT is calling ORACLE, and ORACLE is going out and getting these people help. And and it's been, we put 45 people into rehab and help, over 300 families who have that stigma that's associated with it. Because they're not going to call us, they know it's going to cost them money if there's any crime that was committed by their loved one, or they have to hire an attorney.

And so sending the ORACLE team out there to help has been very effective in the overall aspect of, of what we're trying to do that to stop this epidemic, which is really out of control.

Legislator Parete: And if I may, not to certainly never quibble with my good friend to Sheriff. There's been some folks that recognized this years ago, whether UCAN and everything else. And you guys are doing a good job, that's great. Law enforcement is doing a good job. It's great. It's out of control. The very nature of my job, made me aware of this, 8 or 10 years ago, when they'd be chatting with somebody here, and two days later, they're dead. And there's still dead. And I worry about all these other things, and losing sight of public safety, public health, and law enforcement. So I've said my piece for the night, at this point.

Chairwoman Walter: Thank you. I appreciate it. And you know, as Anna said that, and as was alluded. The, the HEAL grant does a very good job in Ellenville Regional Hospital in combining the public health and criminal justice nature of opioid response. And it is, you know, it's not doing primary prevention, Anna's right, but it does do secondary and tertiary where it keeps people from being very sick or dying. So I think Ulster County can be proud, it's unfortunate that we don't see our rates dropping. But again, I think all of these things, we all everyone in this room probably feels very strongly as something that we have to keep working towards. So I'll just say the, as you probably noticed from this, from Anna's presentation, some of the elements in the strategic plan have been implemented already. Some of them are proposed to be implemented now, some of them are proposed to be implemented in five years from now or next year.

When the, when the resolution comes before us next month it's really for us to acknowledge and approve that the process has completed. It's not necessarily that we are approving individual elements within the strategic plan. That takes much more time to discuss some very specific ideas that were brought up, as you mentioned, what what is community, a community not oversight, because I'm not going to use that word, but community Advisory Committee look like. Like that's a long, that, those things have a lot of time that have to take to to flesh those ideas out. So I just want to be clear that when, when we have this resolution in front of us next month, we are approving, if you approve, the the nature that this is the final strategic plan set forth by the county as opposed to approving the individual element, each individual element within that plan. And so we're gonna make sure and I talked to John about it, that the, that Clint really make sure the resolution specifies that it's about the overall plan and not the elements within the plan, because we will all probably want time to really explore more deeply the elements in the plan. And the the Legislative Criminal Justice Task Force is going to be looking at those elements and also proposing some specific resolutions that might be relevant now. But we are not, not with the April 1st timeline. So, so the process is continuing. It's not ending with that. So thank you again, Anna.

I'll say, to move to criminal justice task force reform, I just mentioned that they're going to be, they're reviewing this right now. They actually gave feedback on all of the different strategic elements that you saw, including specific resolutions. So perhaps there'll be some action, some specific resolutions to come in front of you. In the next, however many months, including some that are specifically in there. As the, the task force is also still exploring centralized arraignment. And the feasibility of doing that. The restorative justice got moved to under the District Attorney has their own particular group. And so because we're kind of coming to a close in the areas that we're looking at, I mean, the centralized arrangement is going to take some time, but the other pieces of it, the Task Force's task, Task Force is tasked, with really identifying what other specific areas might be important to drill down in and look more deeply at and make other suggestions for us in the Legislature.

So I, you know, I bring this up because Legislator Parete presented us with his report and brought up some very important elements, including the rise of violence, which while it has happened across our country doesn't mean that it's not important for us to understand what's going on in our county. And so, I mean, I'll open up more to anything that Legislator Parete wants to say about that. But just add that these, this and, and, and invite Legislator Parete to join the Criminal Justice Reform Task Force, and where we can use that time to really explore what we need to look at in terms of the rise of violence. Because it's a very important issue. And I think it's worth having that real time to drill down and understand what, or even know what the questions are, we want to ask and then figure out what what kinds of answers are out there. Okay, with that is, under new business. I don't know Legislator Parete, if you wanted to say anything more about the report.

Legislator Parete: I will just quickly. You know, I brought this up almost a year ago now when we were, in some folks in the, in the county were talking about getting help from various law enforcement agencies to combat the crime, violent crime. I happen to know, from people that I've dealt with at all levels, that the level of cooperation Ulster County, this year, last year, in the last bunch of years in crime prevention is unprecedented. And in the state of New York. And in the public safety issue, I wanted to dig down and find out why did this happen? I don't care what happened in Podunk, Illinois or, or Portland or anywhere else. My only concerns are for the people, my family, your family, the people that live here, the people in the city in New York, I don't care. What happened, why did it happen? And what do we need to do? You know, the, the crime rate, the violent crime rate in the City of Kingston, New York, going back to when I stopped looking, 2006 or 5, through to 2018, or into to 18. With some of the lowest in the nation. It was a very safe place to live. The policemen did a great job there. I didn't hear of any anger with the Sheriff's office or with the police departments. All of a sudden, something changed. I sent you guys, y'all, some of the quotes from the paper. I talked to a lot of people, you know, my methods and sources, as I said in my last paragraph, just to make, make something, to understand, you know, how you apply people to get information. We all do it differently, you know, and demon rum sometimes they tell a lot. So I think we should be concerned as a committee with public safety. Why did this happen? And what can we do to support law enforcement to protect our citizens. And I don't hear anything about that. And thank you for your time.

Chairwoman Walter: Thank you. So I you know, I invite you to come to the next Criminal Justice Reform Task Force meeting. And if you don't, I'm certainly going to bring up your concerns and you know, that is the place to drill down on those things. So anyone who is interested in that or other types of issues, I know that other things have come up such as tenant, tenants' rights and other kinds of things that we will see if these are elements that we want to start taking time and drilling down into. Any other new business? Sheriff?

Legislator Parete: Stay healthy.

Chairwoman Walter: Okay, we're not done yet though. Don't go.

Sheriff Figueroa: Actually, Legislator Parete. We have a meeting every Tuesday night usually it's at a, one of the local churches in regards directly to the City of Kingston. There's a about seven or eight people social distancing, and they discuss the issue. Some of the conversations are pretty rough. And it goes back to some of the history of the different, the folks involved that are both in law enforcement and in the community. But I invite you, if you can come down, I'll give you a call. And you can come down to the next meeting is next Tuesday night. I think it's at New, New Progressive Church, but it does go to different churches, in different locations every week and I'll let you know. I'll call you and we'll get someone to get you to come down.

Legislator Parete: Okay, great.

Chairwoman Walter: Any other new business? Any old business? All right, I'll take a motion to adjourn.

Legislator Parete: So moved.

Chairwoman Walter: All right. Second?

Legislator Heppner: Second

Chairwoman Walter: All in favor?

Committee Members: Aye

Chairwoman Walter: Thank you all and have a wonderful evening.

Legislator Heppner: Thank you, everyone.

Legislator Haynes: Thanks.