

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**DELAWARE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**DELAWARE COUNTY POLICE REFORM AND REINVENTION  
COLLABORATIVE PLAN**

**MARCH 10, 2021**

The Delaware County Board of Supervisors held a Public Hearing regarding Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan in the Board of Supervisors' Room of the Senator Charles D. Cook County Office Building, 111 Main Street, Delhi, New York, and via Zoom at 12:45 p.m. on Wednesday, March 10, 2021, Chairman Tina B. Molé presiding.

Chairman Molé called the hearing to order.

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**NYS POLICE REFORM AND REINVENTION PLAN**

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that the Delaware County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, March 10, 2021 at 12:45 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Room at the Senator Charles D. Cook County Office Building, 111 Main Street, Delhi, New York, on the NYS Police Reform and Reinvention Plan. A copy of the plan is available on the County website or by calling the office of Clerk of the Board at 607-832-5110.

All persons interested in speaking concerning the Plan may attend the hearing via Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89264647750>,

Meeting ID: 892 6464 7750

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Meeting ID: 892 6464 7750

To ensure that your comments are heard, they will also be accepted by email until 5:00 p.m. on

Monday, March 8, 2021 to: [christa.schafer@co.delaware.ny.us](mailto:christa.schafer@co.delaware.ny.us).

Dated: March 2, 2021

Christa M. Schafer  
Clerk of the Board  
Delaware County Board of Supervisors

Chairman Molé called the public hearing to order and stated this public hearing is on the New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Plan for Delaware County. The public hearing is being held for comments regarding the Police Reform and Reinvention Plan. She asked if anyone has a comment to make to please limit to the reform plan. All comments will be limited to two minutes to give everyone an opportunity to speak. She asked those wishing to speak to give their full name and the town in which they live for the record. Speakers will be notified when they have about 15 seconds left to speak. She stated that the hearing was going to start with the people that were there in person. They would be escorted up to the podium one at a time and then we will go to the Zoom screen and listen to comments from the Zoom members.

**Teddie Storey from Franklin** stated she has had the pleasure of working as the Personnel Officer for Delaware County. She first met Craig DuMond when he was the Masonville town supervisor and corrections supervisor at the Allen Residential Center. Even then, his law enforcement career was marked with a history of compassion for troubled youth, primarily from New York City. She was especially impressed with his equine therapy program for the residents and as the old saying goes, the outside of a horse is good for the inside of a person.

When she first learned that then Sheriff Mills proposed to then Chairman Jim Eisel that Craig DuMond be appointed as Undersheriff, I thought well he's a hell of a nice guy but how does his experience at the Allen Center prepare him to be Undersheriff. But Jim Eisel and Tom Mills displayed an amazing foresight that proved this be a perfect decision.

As Undersheriff and then as Sheriff, Craig DuMond has created an excellent law enforcement agency as demonstrated by their repeated successful accreditation by the accreditation program overseen by the Governor. He has been committed to the training and development of his deputies into a fine tuned law enforcement team to "serve and protect". At the same time, he has recognized that our environment has changed and brought forth enhancements to his Office including state of the art technology and the use of bodycams to protect both the public and the officers. He oversaw his Office and promptly followed up on any complaints. He took his oath of office seriously and expected the same from his team.

Most watched in horror as the events of 2019 and 2020 unfolded during cases of obvious police brutality which was highlighted by the death of George Floyd and the subsequent protests. Like many others, our governor's reaction was to make sure that this does not happen here and ordered a police reform initiative. Delaware County has complied and created a committee of both lay and professional people to represent a cross section of the community in the groups and services. Led by Chair Tina Molé, the goal was for unity, understanding and enhancement of an already stellar law enforcement agency. She watched the videos of the meetings and she felt the

group worked hard to accomplish its goals.

Even though all are well intentioned, knowledgeable and experts in their fields, including professors of criminal justice on the college level, she believed that none have actually walked in the shoes of a Deputy, a person who never knows how his or her shift will unfold. Will it be a normal road patrol or will they be called out to a horrible accident, a murder, suicide, domestic violence and child endangerment, a rape, robbery, dispute or be put in harm's way in the course of something as mundane as a traffic stop. We must remember who we call on in times of danger. We usually don't call a social services or mental health professional, we call a cop. We need to be as respectful of them as we expect them to be as respectful of us. We need to trust them and their leaders.

Ms. Storey hoped that the Board of Supervisors would acknowledge that a lot of hard work has gone into this and that even though some of the committee members may disagree with for whatever personal reason, a good comprehensive plan has been developed to address the governor's mandates and to ensure public safety. She asked all to be trustful of your Sheriff and his Office and please consider a unanimous vote of this plan. She thanked the Board for their time and consideration.

**Shirley Niebanck from Meredith** stated she supports the work the Board and the Sheriff has done in this County. She feels a complaint review board can be a place for resolution of conflict or a perceived tool of control. Many years ago, New York City had a civil complaint review board and when it ran into contractual obligations of the department, they put it on the ballot and the complaint review board of course was no more in New York City. She is looking for a way to make it viable so people can talk to each other. Community involvement in her mind would flow both ways. The police would get reports from the community and the community would get reports from the police. Whether it's good or bad, it should be aired in public. Her real concern is that the good will needs to prevail.

**Scott Glueckert, Delaware County Probation Director** expressed his complete support for the Police Reform and Reinvention Plan that has been developed on behalf of the Sheriff's Office. Since this process began several months ago, he has received over 250 emails and engaged in numerous phone calls, video meetings, and personal conversations. Unfortunately, a pandemic does not take into consideration the needs of committees and face-to-face meetings are high-risk activities. There were times he found himself frustrated at reading and trying to respond to a barrage of emails, but he believed that this is an important issue and it needs the attention that it's getting. Executive Order 203 requires the county to "perform a comprehensive review of current police force deployments, strategies, policies, procedures and practices, and develop a plan to improve them." In his opinion, it is very clear that the committee did that and this plan demonstrates that. Two surveys were issued and the result of those surveys displayed overwhelming approval of the Sheriff's Office.

Much of the discussion with the committee members involved seeking remedies for individuals who suffer from mental illness and substance use disorders. Over the last several years, police have unfortunately become the defacto first response to people who struggle with

these disorders and illnesses. In response to that, Sheriff DuMond and Cindy Heaney of the Mental Health Clinic collaborated on a program modeled after an Essex County program which is similar in demographics and geography to Delaware County, to address this issue. It is not a solution to the problem but is a step in the right direction and it is an essential component of this plan. Several committee members, himself included, gathered via Zoom on President's Day to discuss proposal of forming an ongoing board or committee to assist the Sheriff with community engagement. After robust conversation, it was decided a liaison board designed to bring to the Sheriff's attention, community issues and relay information back to the community from the Sheriff with a logical course of action. A board that would heighten awareness for everyone and act as a bridge between the people in the towns and villages of Delaware County and the Office of the Sheriff. The proposal for board construction was accepted and is also an essential part of this plan. He said that he has worked for Delaware County for about 25 years. During his terms of employment, I worked for several elected sheriffs and numerous members of the Sheriff's Office. He has seen an expansion of proactive community-based policing and citizen engagement under the steady guidance of Sheriff DuMond. Through the various programs implemented under his leadership, the Sheriff has fostered a culture of accountability for the community and for his agency as well as public assistance for Delaware County. Sheriff DuMond and his staff are assets to the Sheriff's Office, to Delaware County, and to all of our residents and visitors.

**Reverend John Grenier, Chaplin of the Delaware County Correctional Facility** stated he has been there since 2005. His interaction is with the inmates as well as the corrections officers and he helps out in any way he can in his profession. He is also a pastor of a church in Oneonta, Oneonta Assembly of God, and has been there now for going on 31 years. He has enjoyed both counties, Otsego and Delaware right on the border of where he lives. He was asked by the Sheriff to serve on this committee, which he was honored to do and to represent a segment of our population and be a voice for them as well. Throughout this whole process the procedure of it and the information that has been given is very enlightening to him and he is sure it is as well for the other committee members. He highly recommends the work that has been done and approves of it. They looked at the avenues of the executive order and the compliance to that executive order. They stayed in the scope they were asked to stay into. He comes to the understanding facts are facts, opinions are opinions but everything value is based on facts. He is sorry to say that, but that's the truth. He stands here with that. Everything they have looked at, everything they have done is based on facts. With saying that, he believes the compliance to the Governor's executive order has been fulfilled. The writing of the policy and the procedures are definitely something that he would recommend be adopted today. He thanked the Board.

**Larry Bennett from East Meredith** stated he has been a resident of this county for 20 years. He is recently retired from a second career. He has been engaged with other people in trying to follow this committee and what's going on since December. He has submitted a long list of comments which all should have and he had a couple of things he wanted to say here. He is sorry to be difficult about this but currently there are four crises going on in Delaware County. There is a mental health crisis, there's a drug addiction crisis which you are all aware of, there's a suicide crisis which is growing and there is domestic abuse. In the next year county residents will die of these things. Not maybe, not possibly, will certainly die of these things. The police

reform committee and the county board have an obligation to respond to these issues in some meaningful manner. This isn't about politics. This isn't about whether you're a republican or democrat. This is about your fellow human beings' lives.

This police reform plan, which he has been over many times, and has participated with some of the people who have submitted comments to it, pretty much fails to address these issues. It has some changes but there is not a whole lot that is meaningful. There is very little that's actually detailed; it's all promises. If you are representing the county and you vote to approve this plan today, which he fully expects it will, you will be complicit in the death of your fellow citizens. He would like you to think about that because again, this is not about politics; this isn't about many other things, this is about how our fellow citizens are treated. You can choose to protect the plan or you can choose to let people die.

**Kim Smith from Franklin** commented that as the person who oversees the accreditation and training programs at the Delaware County Sheriff's Office, she takes great pride in being a part in the continued growth and progressivism of this agency. The Sheriff's Office is an accredited agency through the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services who ensures that accredited agencies have appropriate policies in place and actively provides examples of policy activity to prove compliance within each standard. They are committed to not only maintaining their accreditation status but more importantly committed to providing the residents of this county with the best law enforcement services that they can provide through well-trained agency members and progressive-minded, need-based programs.

Despite COVID-19, their training program at the Sheriff's Office has flourished. Webinar-based trainings have become the new norm. They are committed to keeping their personnel progressive in regards to the training and knowledgeable in regards to societal changes. These webinar trainings have enabled them to commit a number of deputies to many new trainings at little to no cost to this agency. They've seen a massive change in demographics over the last year and with that marked increase, seen an increase in mental health incidents, domestic incidents, as well as overdose incidents. They recently contracted with Chenango Health Network to provide their deputies with mental health training for five years to enable them to better interact with both adults and youths in crisis. In addition, residents with substance abuse issues will be referred to substance services networks where they will be afforded opportunities for assistance with their addiction issues. In summation, she has great confidence in the leadership that Sheriff DuMond proactively provides to this county and the residents. She believes the Delaware County Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan thoroughly assesses not only the current needs of this county but also shows the longevity of the plan as well. She has little doubt in her mind that as the needs of this county evolve, the Delaware County Sheriff's Office will continue to evolve as well.

**Erdem Kâhyaoglu from Sidney Center** stated he is a small business owner and he is on the committee. He is part of the Osmanli Dergah which is a Muslim organization also in Sidney Center. He said his community has in the past experienced from law enforcement racial profiling, religious profiling but never have they ever had that with the Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's Department has always exemplified community policing. Not only are they

professional but they are friendly. They have had their people pulled over in local towns and asked for immigration documents when their people are even citizens. Sheriff Craig DuMond and his force have been quite the opposite and very sensitive to any of their needs that are specific to their community. He supports the Sheriff and the plan and he has reassured him that after the deadline, that he wants to keep the momentum going and continue discussing and see how to improve on any of the issues whether it's mental health or substance abuse, etc. He thanked the Board.

Chairman Molé announced all persons in attendance have spoken and called for comments from attendees on Zoom.

**Cindy Heaney, Director of Mental Health for Delaware County** stated she has been a member of the reform committee tasked with providing input regarding the development of a police reform plan with the Sheriff's Office. She has been present for all the meetings and has actively listened to an open dialogue where many diverse ideas were exchanged.

She considered her role on this committee to be a subject matter expert on mental health and substance abuse. To that end, she reviewed 21 sheriff office policies that could impact individuals with mental health concerns or addiction. She could offer no further policy recommendations to the Sheriff as all were professional, well written and comprehensive.

She noted that, mental health concerns and substance use disorders have reached crisis levels. In her role, she is cognizant of the resource gaps and needs of our county and recognize that mental health and addiction have risen to be a national pandemic. Locally, these needs are overwhelming at an individual, family, community, provider and county level. This population intersects with criminal justice and law enforcement at alarming rates.

Ms. Heaney is pleased that her suggestion for developing a behavioral health referral system was included in the final plan. It is low cost and relatively easy to implement. This behavioral health referral system is a good next step in our ongoing collaboration with the Sheriff's Office. Many details need to be still worked out but her goal was to look at sustainable incremental change respecting our limited resources and infrastructure.

She stated she is a county employee, yes, but also a county resident who has lived here for 40 plus years. She strives to consider the best interest of residents while balancing the realities of resource and practicality. She believes the presented plan is a strong and comprehensive one that fulfills the executive order directive and fully supports the plan as presented. Thank you.

**John Hubbard, County District Attorney** stated he is a member of the committee. He supports the proposed plan presented for the Board's consideration. He urged the Board to approve the plan as in his view, it fulfills the primary purposes of Executive Order 203. The stated primary purposes of Executive Order 203 are to promote and improve relationships between the police agency and the community that's based on trust, fairness, accountability, and transparency. And too, to seek to reduce any racial disparities in policing. He noted that

committee members from the mental health community have and will address the proposals they came up with to improve the delivery of those services. That that was a major concern of the whole committee and a main topic of discussion. However, he wanted to mention a few other recommendations that he thinks are important that you may not hear from the other speakers.

He believes transparency and accountability are promoted by the programs to be adopted by the Sheriff's Office as part of the plan. Those programs appear on pages 21 and 22 of the plan. Two of these recommendations he would like to single out are the following: an anonymous complaint program to augment an existing complaint system and also the creation of a community liaison committee. The complaint program that is recommended would provide an avenue for the community to raise any concerns about personnel or about policy. They can do that anonymously if they wish. That is an element that enhances accountability. The second thing he wants to draw attention to would be the liaison committee. That committee as proposed to be a group made up of interested and diverse citizens throughout the county. The committee would bring community concerns and problems to the Sheriff's Office and these concerns would be discussed and addressed. The committee would also be a good place to share ideas and make suggestions to improve the Sheriff's Office. In his view, both of those recommendations would promote trust and accountability between the Sheriff's Office and the community.

One thing the Sheriff's Office is doing that isn't mentioned is the use of body cameras. The cameras are now used by each deputy and this is promoting transparency and accountability between the Sheriff's Office and the community.

He concluded by saying that the committee has fulfilled its duties as set forth in the Executive Order in his view. The committee has researched and measured community views by means of two surveys. It has discussed and evaluated those results and received recommendations from community members and other recommendations from outside the committee from the community at large. As a result of those efforts, is the report presented. He urged the Board to adopt and approve this report. He thanked the Board.

**Jen Cutting from Walton** stated she is a woman in long-term recovery and also has been incarcerated in Delaware County and New York State prison. She has four years into her recovery as of now and she works in the community delivering supplies and helping people and family. She is a CARC certified rape crisis counselor and a NARCAN trainer. She was honored to be asked to sit on this committee and she has a great relationship with Sheriff DuMond.

The committee did a lot of work to present this final plan and although she feels the committee could have had more items regarding substance abuse disorder, but it's a start. She is glad the committee was involved and included in the plan and that the other four committee members that have stepped aside have proposed this community committee. Originally she was swayed by the other committee members to sign onto the minority report and at this time she has chosen not to because she doesn't agree with how it was presented in the public and how it was presented in the press. She truly feels that this is the first step in working towards our future. It opens a line of communication and gives us something we did not have before. She urged the Supervisors to approve this plan and to get them started working on more programs to help the

community of Delaware County. She thanked the Board.

**Maria Kelso from Davenport** thanked the Supervisors for their time and stated she has known Craig DuMond for over 20 years. She was on the advisory board at the Allen Residential Center in South Kortright, New York. She was a chair of the advisory board. She knows firsthand that Craig DuMond has a lifelong career of working with at-risk minority juveniles. She knows that he created policy and procedure. She knows that he is very capable. She is one of the Board of Elections Commissioners in which she is so proud that he and his deputies aids them in picking up all their bags at the end of the night; that goes without fail. She thinks his relationship with the community has always been the protection of our community and the friendship of our community. She gives all of her support to Craig DuMond. She thanked the Board for their time.

**Kyle Karcher, Delaware County Sheriff's Office Deputy** stated he is president of the Delaware County Sheriff's Office PBA. He has been a police officer for a little over 10 years. He has been with the Sheriff's Office since 2014 and he holds two part-time positions as a police officer in other agencies. He wanted to speak a little about addressing the problems we may foresee in the future. They have programs in place to stay ahead of these problematic issues, for instance their body cameras. What he sees is basically what you are going to see as well. In the accreditation program they are held to a higher standard than most other agencies. Just 30 percent of the agencies are accredited Delaware County is one of the accredited agencies which is great.

No one may know this, some may, that the Sheriff is working tirelessly. He sees him at the gas pumps in the middle of the night because he work nights many times coming from meetings whether it's the town meetings, the NYS Sheriff's Association or the conferences that he attends nationally. He is always ahead of the problematic issues that may come about. Figuratively, we on the road patrol say the Sheriff went out to a conference nationally so he's going to be throwing something new at us. They maintain the agency's preparedness for any and all issues at the Sheriff's Office. They are progressing as an agency in the last ten years offering canine. They have a special response team for critical incidents. Community interaction through school substations, school checks, and a school resource officer. They have a great amount of training and the best equipment there is to offer. They are grateful to the Sheriff and for his tireless efforts of policing. A lot of agencies throughout the country can take a page out of their book.

In conclusion, because of the training and the education the Sheriff's Office provides them, he believes Sheriff DuMond has prepared and put them in the best position possible to deal with any adversity that they may see as a deputy sheriff. He thanked the Board.



**Rachael Kadish from Walton** spoke more about the meeting process than about any of the specifics in the plan. She trusts that those who have spoken and those who will continue to speak to say things that are in line with her views. She was not sure if the chat feature is part of the public record but joined to make sure that what is going on in the chat is part of the public record. She appreciates that we are able to attend these meetings on Zoom and that they are posted after the fact for us to be able to watch through YouTube but at the same time, it has basically been impossible for anyone who is on Zoom to be able to hear what is actually going on in the room. Furthermore, that several folks in the room are not in compliance with the New York State mask mandate thereby making that room an unsafe space for many people to go to. She feels as if folks have effectively been asked to either show up in person and compromise their health and safety in order to understand what is going on in the room or to show up through Zoom and maybe hear little bits of what's going on but not really be able to fully participate, and that to her does not feel like proper democratic process. She recognizes that the technology can be difficult and that there are learning curves but with a little bit of extra effort it would be much easier for folks to participate virtually. Closed captioning is a fairly simple Zoom feature to turn on or maybe playing around with some better mic options and she believes it would be possible to make these meetings a lot more assessable for everyone. She wanted to make sure that that is recorded. She thanked the Board.

**Joyce St. George from Middletown** thanked everyone for attending this public hearing. She stated she was on the committee and is one of the committee members who has written the minority report and has argued with the committee to not write a final report before everybody has had their say. She wanted to clarify why they have a minority report. Number one, they do not have negative feelings toward the Sheriff's Office, Sheriff DuMond, or anyone at the Sheriff's Office. They think that they are doing a very good job. They think that they are very committed and are working very hard and actually commend them highly. Somebody said before that it's not about opinions. This is not about opinions—this is about process. The reason that they have written this report is not because of the Sheriff's Office as much as it is about the way in which this committee was run and the way in which the final report was written and the way in which committee members were left out. They wanted to make that really clear. They have a lot of respect for the Sheriff's Office. She believes that through publicity or whatever they have gotten themselves slandered by the impression that they are against the Sheriff. They are not. They think he is doing a good job; they think the deputies are wonderful and they are doing what they can.

The problem that they have is that there were several different recommendations that had been offered that were not in the final report. The problem they have is that the operative word in the title of this committee, Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Committee, the operative word collaborative was not there. They were able to speak and to offer ideas but when it came to writing any kind of a plan or report, they were given 24 hours once we received a draft.

The point she is making is that it's about process not about the Sheriff's Office. They never got to really look at the Sheriff's Office.

**Dottie Howe from Hamden** stated she does not have any problem with the Sheriff's Department or Sheriff DuMond or anything like that. What she is concerned with is the committee, whoever it was, nobody took into consideration to have a licensed clinician on board with the police department. She does not care how nice people are and pleasant, if you are not trauma informed, you are going to cause harm. The county that the Board is supervising is number one in suicide rates and has been before the pandemic. They have slim to no mental health services. The people who are suffering with addiction and mental illness are also residents and community members. And when you have people dying, you have people suffering; their family members; their kids and so on and so forth. You need a licensed clinician on staff because the police officers, no matter how wonderful they are, are not trained in trauma or informed to intervene on mental health and substance abuse calls that are plentiful now. She thanked the Board.

**Mina Tekahashi from Bovina Center** thanked the Board and stated she is pleased to address the Board of Supervisors to provide public comment on the police reform and reinvention collaborative plan. She wanted to pick up a little bit on what Joyce St. George was saying about collaborative because she believes that part of the executive order was also about collaboration with the community and being able to provide forums or listening sessions for the community. She feels that this public hearing might be the very first one that has been organized. She attended the committee meetings and could listen in but they weren't engaged to speak at those committee meetings. She feels that this public hearing is a way to be able to hear that feedback and for the committee to then be able to build upon that feedback. She stated she did submit comments to the clerk to be entered as part of the public record and since then she has had a chance to look at the Ulster County plan. She doesn't know if that has been circulated to the Board of Supervisor members and to the committee members but she urged Supervisors to look at that plan. She believes it is a great document that really does respond to Executive Order 203 in a way that she believes our draft plan that she saw online from Delaware County just does not really do that. One thing she thought was great about the Ulster County plan was that at the end, it has a compendium of all the community suggestions. She feels that would be a great place to house the recommendations that she read out of the minority report and also it would be a great place to put any analysis and public comment that came out of the survey process. She wanted to make that recommendation for what she hopes will be for a rewrite of the plan. She thanked the Board.

**Hannah Leighton from Bovina** stated she is a researcher specializing in local food systems and based in Bovina. She wanted to first say she can really appreciate how big of a task this executive order is and has been and she appreciates the work of the committee members as well as the opportunity to speak today. She has similar comments to Mina Tekahashi just more about the level of transparency and opportunity for collaboration involved in this process. She has been following along for the last several months and concerns from committee members in the minority report about their feedback not being incorporated as well as it being really challenging to see the survey data and when she was able to finally see the data that most of the open-ended responses were missing from that data so it is really hard for the community members to understand or frankly trust the process for choosing what has been included in that plan. She also took a look at the Ulster County plan and was really inspired by some of the

suggestions that they put in their plan. She believes the moment of reckoning that we are in right now and this unique opportunity in New York to redefine the way that our communities are protected and kept safe and to think creatively and strategically about what an inclusive and equitable and anti-racist and collaborative infrastructure can look like in our police department and county as a whole. This really an amazing opportunity and she would love to see us think a little more outside the box about the solutions that we come up with. She thinks this order was meant to give us that opportunity while also relieving the unbelievably disproportionate responsibility that we put on our police department to be social workers and substance abuse specialists and trauma specialists and school psychologists. She would also encourage others to look at that Ulster County report. They really get how to share that responsibility and take some of that pressure off the police department and create these more collaborative communities that keep each other safe. She encouraged the Board to really think about that call to action and some of those other recommendations. She thanked the Board.

**Dennis Morgan from Margaretville** thanked the Board for allowing him some time. He stated he is not a politician in any sense. He is the project director for the Catskills Addiction Coalition and really he wanted to thank the Sheriff and some of his deputies, Scott Glueckert, and Cindy Heaney. Many of the people on this call have given him time to help him get his feet under him in this project director role. All he wanted to do here is to express their willingness to work with you to collaborate with the Sheriff's Department, Probation, and Drug Court. We are in a location in Margaretville that really has a lack of services and we are asking you to utilize them. They fully want to support you and help you address this issue. The Coalition has a crew of volunteers. He is also a certified recovery peer advocate in Ulster County and a member of the Dutchess County subcommittee on chemical dependency. Obviously, this is near and dear to his heart. He is a person in long-term recovery. He got clean as a result of the intervention and treatment he received in the legal system. He has nothing but respect for the Sheriff and everything they are doing. He stated they are here to help. Please refer people to them for anything they can do to address this issue with you. There are people who need help and he would love to help them address this issue, especially in the Margaretville area. He thanked the Board.

**Simon Purdy from Delhi** thanked the Board for hearing him out today. He was also member of the committee and like Joyce St. George was saying, he also is one of the ones who authored the minority report. He hoped that the Board had that in front of them. They submitted it earlier today to the Clerk. It took them a while to write it. They collaborated on it and it took a while. It took more than 24 hours to put that together. Ultimately, the biggest concern besides the process and not having enough time for the committee to really craft a plan for the Sheriff's Department, it was really that the plan that was put before them is not a complete accounting of the work that the committee did. He stated he is proud to be a member of the committee and is glad he was able to work with everyone, but they did a lot more work than what comes across in that plan. He believes if the state were to look at that plan, they would probably think they did not do a whole lot. It appears they basically went through, patted the Sheriff's Department on the back and said they're doing a good job, and they made a few recommendations at the end. They did a lot more than that. They talked about the issues that are of concern in Delaware County. Right from the very beginning they talked about substance abuse, mental health, we

mentioned and discussed race none of which made it into the notes that are in the plan. Because of this, again, it does not seem that it's a full accounting of what the committee did. The plan does not address the very real challenges that our county faces. They know, as has been mentioned by others before him that we have very real problems with mental health and substance abuse disorder in this county. The plan as it stands is a start but again, it's just a start. He believes we could have done a lot more and we need to continue to do a lot more. Again, the process that got us to that point does not seem complete. He asked if you have a chance to, read through the minority report that several of them put together. It was not done lightheartedly. This is not something which they enjoyed doing. They very much want for this plan to be a tool for the county to grow into the future, not one that keeps us back where we have been. He thought they were doing a good job. Perhaps there are areas they can improve on but again it's one of those things where their task was reform and reinvention and it doesn't really seem that the plan in its current form does either of those things. There is not a whole lot of reform going on and very little reinvention of what our Sheriff's Office is doing.

The times are changing. The community is changing. We need to keep up with that. He asked to please take that into consideration as the Board considers this plan. He thanked the Board.

**Barbara O'Sullivan from Delhi** stated she is an incognito county resident. Most people don't know her. She said unfortunately she has not read the whole reform bill. Of course Eric Gardner was the first to get killed in New York City and that brought light to the reform and then we had the death of George Floyd. She stated she is a white female. She has been on both sides of the fence. She has worked in shock, she worked for corrections, and she has been abused by the system. She does not have a substance abuse problem. She does not have a criminal background. What she would like to say is reform has to be not only done through the Sheriff's Department, it has to be done at every level. Unfortunately, people don't care until it affects them. That's why you don't have too many people here. Unfortunately, she wasn't a part of the committee so she does not know what transpired but she and her daughter as individuals have been victims and being on both sides of the fence, what the community needs to know is, reform can't just be at the level of the Sheriff's Department, as a whole it has to start from the top. What people don't realize is everybody is intertwined. Intertwined means so and so knows this, they know the judge, the county judge, the village judge, the police officer. Just last night, she knew somebody that was stopped because the officer knew someone in Walton and it was a whole big fiasco. She stated her biggest issue is there needs to be yes accountability but at every level. Her main point is reform has to be done at every level. She thanked the Board.

**Gabriel Logue from Delhi** stated he has been a county resident for about three years now. Reading through the plan, he has several comments to make. The biggest comment that he doesn't think people have mentioned is the whole point of this plan and what sparked it. And that is historic systemic racism on the part of police all throughout the country. He believes that reform needs to come from the top down. He does not know how anybody can look at this plan seriously and when the conclusion was that race is not a problem in our community. If it's not a problem in your community or if you don't think it's a problem in your community with regards to policing, you're not looking hard enough. Because it's a problem all across the country.

That's a huge problem.

He also has problem with the way that the plan was drafted. There was no vote from the committee. The draft plan was submitted one day and the committee had until the next day to vote on any amendments. That does not seem very collaborative to him. Reform needs to come from the top down and we can't be blame shifting. The Sheriff's Office can't say well it's not us because they are in a position of leadership. So if they don't take it seriously, none of the town police are going to take it seriously. He thanked the Board.

**Joan Tubridy from Delhi** thanked the Board. She stated she is a retired teacher and a retired farmer from the town of Meredith. She did send a letter in with the survey that she completed and she read a little bit from the letter. As a white woman in Delaware County, she has no ill experience or actually no experience with the police and she has experienced, of course, no racism but as Gabriel Logue pointed out, racism exists in our country and we all are responsible to address the issue. It's a terrible stain on our nation. She has lived in the area for over 40 years and she has had no interactions with the police, the sheriff, the village, or the troopers. But there is another story to tell and that is a friend of hers who lived here about ten years ago for six years was stopped four or five times in the six years he lived here by a combination of the police members in the community. He had one incident with the county sheriff who stopped him one evening when he was not using his turn signal on an unoccupied rural road. The sheriff seemed to be looking for something to flag. He expressed that he wanted to see if there were any outstanding warrants. Her friend was motivated to engage the sheriff in a dialog to see what he thinks and feels when he sees a black man. Obviously the fact is this was a sad indictment. The sheriff admitted they don't see too many black guys up here. She is aware the survey was focused on the county sheriff, but her friend had incidents with the village police and with the state troopers being pulled over and said he seemed to be driving erratic although her friend wasn't. He was talking with another black man outside of the current Walgreens in Delhi and then made a Hollywood stop at the stop sign and was pulled over and told that he had been videotaped. She urged the county to perhaps make viewing *Driving While Black*, a film by SUNY Oneonta's Gretchen Sorin and Rick Burns part of training for sensitivity to racism. She thanked the Board.

**Joe Ermeti, Delaware County Public Defender** stated he is a member of this committee. The plan in front of the Board in his opinion does comply with Executive Order 203. It is important to keep in mind that this Executive Order came about to ensure that all citizens be treated fairly, equally, and justly before the law. As a committee they were charged with the duty to review the Sheriff's Department policies, procedures and practices and develop a plan. He asked the Sheriff for all of his policies and procedures which he sent; they were over two feet high, and he started reviewing them. He has always been impressed with the candor of the Sheriff in handing over all of his policies. That's normally not something they like to do with a defense attorney.

What he can tell you after reviewing the policies is that they are complete. He was quite impressed with that fact. When it comes to reforming and reinventing as they were asked to do here, he is not sure that that's a task they necessarily needed to do. He doesn't see anything that

needs to be reformed or reinvented with the Sheriff's Department. Their goal was to address the needs of the community to foster trust and fairness and address any racial bias if they found any. He does not recall anyone bringing up any instances of racial bias with the Sheriff's Department and he personally could not think of any.

To sum it up, he believes the plan is complete. There certainly are issues of addiction and mental health that need to be addressed in the future, but as he reviews the order, they are not specifically addressed and don't require a solution in the present plan. He thanked the Board.

**Quinn Kelley from Delhi** stated he has been a resident of Delhi for quite a long time; he is 25 and he's been a resident for 18 years. He stated he would echo a specific significant amount of concerns that other people have made. Basically how the plan was formed and with the issues he has found with the final draft of the plan. As some colleagues have stated already, forming the plan itself was not transparent. There were 2 surveys sent out. The first survey garnered around 125 responses and the second one garnered somewhere around 600 responses and that's out of nearly 50,000 county residents. Right there that indicates a very small sample size to represent a much larger population. He believes this method of conducting the survey and conducting the research is completely against the initial executive order. It had been stressed that the work should have been public, publicized, and transparent. He does not believe that the way this was conducted meets any of these needs.

Another big issue he had and that many people brought up already is that this specific executive order was spurred on specifically because George Floyd's death and the death of many other people and the following Black Lives Matter protests of which there was one in Delhi that was the largest in Delhi's history. Because of that, his concern with the plan is that there was no mention of race in the plan. He understands that a significant portion of our population, somewhere around 95%, is white but that doesn't mean that the people who do not fall into the white population aren't part of our community. We have to make sure that we are protecting their rights and interests in this community as a whole.

He is very concerned with the fact that a large portion of the plan, 9 pages of the plan, is dedicated to what the Sheriff's Department is doing right rather than what reform should be made. He thanked the Board.

**Jessica Farrel from Sidney** stated she was very honored to be selected to be part of the committee in mid-November. She agrees with what Joyce St. George was saying about the Sheriff not being the issue, it's about the process. She thought this was really an opportunity to help the people she cares about; people with mental health and substance abuse issues. For years she has heard that the County is restricted due to lack of resources and she found that this was hopefully an opportunity to explain the crisis to the community and to educate the community and problem solve around complex issues. After months of work, she was concerned about the community aspect; she really wanted to unite the community.

Also, the plan was submitted without a final vote from the committee members. So much of their work was missing and she lost trust in the process. That's why she decided to leave the

committee.

There are important things missing such as to have a partnership with community groups that are working on the forefront of mental health and substance abuse crises and that was left out and other ideas were adopted. Those are sensitive issues and she thought if we worked as a partnership, it would really help families mainly.

Also, there were two sentences that were added to the introduction. We needed more meaningful verbage about race. Despite our demographics, these tragedies have affected everyone in our community. She thanked the Board.

**Jehed Diamond from Delhi** stated she has already submitted written comments. She wants the Board of Supervisors to know that the guidance specifically calls for the plan to be posted for comments, for the committee to educate the public about it, and to revise the plan to incorporate public comments and ensure that it is addressed in the final plan. For those comments that are not incorporated, you have to talk about why according to the guidance.

Her main problem with all of this has been the process. She noted what Mr. Ermeti said that all policies are fine. That may be, but if you look at the plans of other counties, where she is sure all the policies were fine, you will see that they took a completely different view of what the mission was here. She thanked the Board.

Ms. Molé stated for the record that she has passed out to each Supervisor a copy of all of the written comments that were submitted to the Clerk of the Board. She has also supplied the Board of Supervisors with a copy of a support letter that was signed by the vast majority of the police reform committee and she also included and passed out to every Supervisor the minority report that will not be submitted as an addendum to the final report.

Since no one else wished to speak, Chairman Molé declared the hearing adjourned at 2:02 p.m.

Written comments received are listed below as part of this official record.

**Mark M. Rogers of Davenport by email dated March 2, 2021.** The Community Liaison Committee described in the report bears limited resemblance to the community oversight functional raised in the most recent survey report (pg. 17 Data Analysis and Interpretation Report, February 2021) and discussed during the February meeting. It involves more than just supporting the existing extensive and valuable community outreach practiced by the Sheriff's Department. I would appreciate it if you would read aloud and enter the following recommendation into the 10 March hearing on the proposed Plan on Police Reform and Reinvention.

“The Sheriff and/or the committee members of the Community Liaison Committee shall convene the committee for all use-of-force cases and all allegations of officer misconduct. This committee serves as an intermediary between the community and the Sheriff's Department,

working with the Sheriff to ensure accurate and timely information in cases, should they arise, where the Sheriff is in the position of policing the Sheriff's Department staff. This is a citizen's advisory committee that respects the sovereignty of the Sheriff's office. It is not intended to replace or substitute for the Sheriff's responsibilities in these types of cases. Instead, it is intended to bring civilian insights to bear on these types of cases and enhance community understanding of related police procedures and actual practices. The committee has no purview on hiring, firing, or other personnel matters stipulated by the Department's union contracts."

As I will not be able to attend the 10 March meeting in person, I would appreciate it if you would kindly acknowledge receipt of this e-mail and advise me of any other action on my part that is required for this recommendation to be part of the official record. Thank you.

**Jason Craig, Committee Member by email dated March 5, 2021.** Chairman Molé and the Delaware County Board of Supervisors. Thank you for the opportunity to serve the residents of Delaware County on the Delaware County Police Reform & Reinvention Collaborative Committee. The executive order signed by Governor Cuomo called for a *"comprehensive review of current police force deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, and develop a plan to improve such deployments, strategies, policies, procedures, and practices, for the purposes of addressing the particular needs of the communities served by such police agency and promote community engagement to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy, and to address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color"*.

This process gave me the opportunity to review the sheriff's office current policy and procedure manual and I found it to be very thorough. The work put in by Sheriff DuMond and his staff to acquire and maintain the NYS Law Enforcement Accreditation Program has helped put in place many policies that better the DCSO and our community is safer for it. This program also ensures proper training and police procedures are implemented to keep the office moving forward.

From the onset Sheriff DuMond expressed his office needed help in dealing with mental health and substance abuse calls. The results of two surveys the committee put out to the community backed up the sheriff's concerns and the committee did some valuable work to help develop a plan that will help his deputies carry out their duties to both protect and serve the community as a whole. The sheriff's office has already implemented mental health and crisis intervention training for first responders through a partnership with the Chenango Health Network and funded for a grant through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as part of this plan. It should also be noted that the surveys showed a lot of community support for the sheriff and his deputies as well as results asking for more community outreach and involvement which is also included in the plan.

It's unfortunate that the governor's order did not include all police agencies in New York State. I feel including all State Police agencies would not only have been fair and the right thing to do but it would have shown that every agency no matter the shoulder patch was held to an equal standard.



I feel the plan presented is well wrote and a great stepping stone for what can be achieved through the sheriff's office in helping those with mental health and substance abuse disorders as well as protecting and serving the citizens of Delaware County without bias.

**Cicada Musselman by email dated March 7, 2021.** I am incredibly disappointed with the "process" that was conducted in Delaware County by the "collaborative committee" in response to the Governor's Executive Order 203. The process as the minority report has claimed, "violated a number of mandates, failed to craft a transparent and well publicized process, failed to properly solicit feedback from the community or to base its recommendations on that feedback."

This is incredibly disappointing. I urge the town supervisors and the state agencies to reject the Delaware County Police Review boards "plan" as it was created without consensus, hurriedly, and without real address to the ACTUAL ISSUES THAT AFFECT REAL PEOPLE IN OUR COUNTY.

The process was not collaborative, transparent, nor does it address civil service reform. Dreadfully needed ALL over in our county and in our county too.

I urge you to reject the current plan. You cannot in good faith approve it.

**Gabriel Logue of Delhi by email dated March 7, 2021.** I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen of Delaware County in regards to the Delaware County Police "reform and reinvention" plan that is to be submitted to the state in compliance with the Governor's Executive Action 203, directing all local municipalities to perform an evaluation of its police force with input from key stakeholders in the community. I do not believe that the plan being put forth by Delaware County is substantive enough to comply with Executive Action 203, and I also do not believe that the final document was drafted in good faith.

The final plan, as it is currently written, does little to nothing to find and address problems that we face in our community with regards to the Sheriff's department, and instead mainly reads as a document showcasing what the sheriff's office is already doing. I believe that this is a complete and total waste of the opportunity this executive action has given police departments across the state. The purpose of Executive Action 203 as I understand it is to create a substantive plan of action as to how to improve the police forces within our community. However, the document, as I read it, has no community policing statistics, little to no documentation of issues in our community, and little to no action is suggested within the document, and the action that is suggested by the plan is toothless and non-committal, and seems to be offered as an afterthought. For instance, there is a suggestion that a community oversight committee should be implemented for the county Sheriff's office, but Sherriff DuMond even said himself that it would be difficult to impose any sort of punitive action that may be suggested by this committee for bad police work because of the strength of the policing unions and current civil labor law. I know some of these issues are too big for one department to solve on their own, but nowhere else is this even mentioned as an issue besides a small note in the meeting notes. If we are going to try to solve problems that may exist in our community, we first need to

address what those problems are.

The plan also makes no mention of race, and it was concluded that race is not an issue in our community in regards to the Sherriff's office.

I also would like to offer comment on the way this plan was drafted. After several meetings with stakeholders in the community, the draft plan was written entirely by our Chief Executive of the Board of Supervisors, and was submitted to the board on February 22, and the board was given until 5 P.M. the next day to offer amendments to the plan. There was no vote from the board, and after five committee members dissented and withdrew their names from the plan, an email was sent out disregarding their complaints. A board meeting is scheduled for March 10 to review and vote on the final plan, but as I understand it, there is not going to be any opportunity for residents of the community to voice their concerns.

In summation, I believe this plan was created undemocratically and in bad faith and offers little to no explanation of the issues facing our community or how the Sherriff's office can help solve those issues, or how we can change the Sheriff's office to better serve the community. I believe the plan was written in bad faith and should be rejected by the state, and local funding should be restricted until our county comes up with a better plan.

**Lennard J. Davis of East Meredith by email dated March 7, 2021.** I request the Board of Supervisors not to pass the Plan submitted by Chair Tina Molé in response to E.O. 203.

The process seems not to have followed many of the mandates: there was only one way used to collect community input—an on-line survey that could have been better publicized—which input was meant to be the foundation of any Plan recommendations. The concerns of five committee members were overlooked and there seems to be no process to incorporate community comments about the Plan. The Plan itself could have involved deeper examination, research, expert opinion, review of methods and programs used by other jurisdictions to address similar issues as a diligent effort should be. It seems that areas required under the Executive Order to be examined were not fully looked into. For example, people had had no opportunity to ask the Committee to look into de-escalation techniques or a civilian review committee. Thank you.

**Ryn Eichenlaub of Walton by email dated March 8, 2021.** I understand that the Board of Supervisors is about to review and potentially accept the Delaware County Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative's plan for addressing issues with policing in the community.

I am deeply disturbed by my understanding of how the work of this committee was approached. It is clear that the intent was for a collaborative project with community involvement. Instead, it appears that the voices of those who are most policed in the community were silenced, and that the voices of private citizens were rather systemically ignored, including 5 members of the committee. This rather smells like a "rubber stamp" process wherein the committee has attempted to go through the motions to get a "pass" on doing the real work of self-examination in the community.

As a resident of Walton I find this unacceptable, and I urge you to reject the plan so as to give our community another opportunity to grapple with these critical issues. Our world is facing many challenges, and many of them are nebulous or far away, but this is one we have the power to address, right here. The basis of democracy is citizen input and government responsiveness. The most basic level of democracy is the town and county. I urge you to stand behind the principles upon which our country was founded and continue this process rather than ending it by accepting a faulty document.

**Dotti Howe, LMHC, LPC, CASAC of Hamden by email dated March 8, 2021.** I am writing in reference to the lack of mental health and substance-use disorder support in the Police Reform plan. I hope this information will help the committee understand best practices that are evidence-based in supporting law enforcement combat addiction, overdose, and death.

Education is most important above all. This will help with not only promoting evidence-based services that actually work, but allow law enforcement to understand and make sense of why the suggestions are being made.

These training should include Narcan & Harm Reduction for the entire Sheriff's Department that include POs, COs, and it's administration. NYS OASAS has recently updated their clinical guidance and it is framed in harm reduction through person-centered treatment. Which, by the way, is how mental health diagnoses are treated. Here is the link for viewing. [Person-Centered Care Guidance \(ny.gov\)](#). For example, you don't have the same treatment modality for two people that are diagnosed with depression.

It's not a secret that those suffering with SUD and mental illness generally do not trust law enforcement. This does not necessarily imply that law enforcement has specifically done anything directly wrong to a particular person. At this point, drugs are illegal and many who struggle with mental illness have long histories with systemic flaws dating back to their elementary education days. So, they generally trust no one. This is just one factor why a PO would have a push back to someone jumping into their police vehicle to take a trip to a psych hospital, which again, won't provide them with the long-term treatment that they require. Because of these factors, law enforcement, EMTs, Fire, etc., should carry a handout for all SUD and mental health calls and allow them and their families to decide what to do. Many don't seek treatment, as they have no idea who to call or where to go, including the unfortunate mental health scams that are out there. The handout should not be the proposed wallet handout that Mary Rosenthal and Renee Stratton suggest "updating" and printing. The first one they made had several agencies marketing that they provide services in Delaware County, however, have never set foot here. People suffering do not have time to deal with trying to pan out what is legit and what isn't. The handout should be in magnet form to hang onto the fridge and have Harm Reduction contacts such as Truth Pharm, FOR-DO, and CAC, National crisis lifelines such as Suicide Prevention Lifeline, Crisis Text Line, etc.. As MCAT has proven to be useless, how to select a licensed clinician such as through Psychology Today, etc. and where to seek a treatment center such as Conifer Park, as to my knowledge it is the only facility nearby that has a detox.

Please do not include UHS “rehab” as there are zero licensed clinicians and zero CASACs, so I’m unsure exactly what they are trying to accomplish.

Please keep in mind Burn-Out or Compassion Fatigue has a major effect on many care-taking professions, which includes law enforcement. Please select wisely how you would like to protect the entire community and the ones protecting it.

**Anthony Beck of Walton by email dated March 8, 2021.** I am writing to provide public comment on Delaware County's draft Police Reform and Reinvention Plan. I share the concerns of the five citizen committee members who have publicly dissented, and thus urge the board to reject this plan as written until it undergoes further review and meaningfully integrates the input of the citizens of Delaware County.

I will not restate all concerns here, but some of my chief concerns are:

- That the committee drafting this plan consisted of only 5/17 members who are independent citizens, unaffiliated with the government of Delaware County or affiliated nonprofits.
- That, of 10 areas of non-government expertise recommended to be represented on the committee, most are unrepresented. These unrepresented perspectives include, but are not limited to residents who have had interactions with the police, local education officials, and local homeless and housing advocates.
- That, of the five independent citizens on the committee, all five have publically dissented to the Draft Final Plan after seeing their recommendations not integrated into the Draft Final Plan. That all committee members without governmental affiliation have dissented to this plan should immediately strike the committee as a red flag.
- That the Draft Final Plan makes little to no mention of race, despite the fact that the executive order that mandates this plan specifically calls on sheriff's departments to consider and respond to questions of how policing is racialized. This is also despite specific feedback on community surveys that raised some concerns about race and policing in Delaware County.
- That the process of drafting this plan and opportunities for public input have been generally opaque and poorly publicized. This includes that fact that one citizen requesting information on this process was actively denied such information and told to submit a FOIL request for what is mandated by executive order to be a transparent process.
- That a suggestion to give inmates at the county jail (i.e., the most heavily policed citizens of the county) an opportunity to respond to the committee's community survey was refused.

Overall, this Draft Final Plan is insufficient, does not accurately reflect the input of independent citizens of Delaware County, and does not meet the requirements put forth in the executive order that mandates its creation. Without further review and *actual* integration of citizen-input, the Draft Final Plan represents a missed, even ignored opportunity to improve

community oversight of policing in Delaware County and build a strong dialogue between citizens and the government that is charged with representing them. Instead, this plan skirts dialogue by focusing on what the Sheriff's Department has already done rather than considering what opportunities still need to be explored and conversations still need to be had. The way this plan was drafted is also a poor example of democratic process, as public input was not sufficiently sought, and recommendations of the committee's 5 independent citizens were largely ignored. Instead of making a good faith effort to hear and integrate the concerns of independent citizens, the plan as drafted appears to seek to check the boxes required by Governor Cuomo's executive order (which it does not even do particularly well) while maintaining the status quo to the greatest extent possible.

In conclusion, I echo the concerns of the five dissenting committee members. I also urge the Board of Supervisors to reject this plan until it sufficiently integrates the input of the committee's 5 independent citizens and the citizens of Delaware Country more widely.

**Katherine Mario of Delhi by email dated March 8, 2021.** I respectfully request that the BOS reject the submitted report on Police Reform.

This appears to be an excellent opportunity to our Sheriff and the impartial committee to reach out to our entire county—and even those who are not full-time residents, like students and weekenders.

I have been saddened by the need for many on the Reform committee to resign. Their formal listing of omissions from the report are important to me. I would have responded to any questionnaire I received from this group or from the Sheriff. I did respond to one from the Village. I realize that the Sheriff is an elected official. But he, like us all, are answerable to “the people.” Having been a public servant for 30 years, elected officials often questioned the actions of state or local employees and often it was justified. I tried to see these actions as an opportunity to examine my actions and motives and those of my co-workers.

In my opinion, one cannot honestly say that they have no bias—ever. Oversight is a method of examining where we are and where we wish to be.

Frankly, if people of color or people with disabilities or women or old people or any one expresses the FEELING that they are seen differently in the eyes of the law or authority, I believe that it is worth the time and effort — AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY — to examine those feelings further and to improve our method of communicating. What’s the big deal? Rarely do we truly know how we come across to others. Is it so terribly risky to examine this? To correct language or actions that result in the reducing of justice?

So very many of the required actions were not acted upon.

I would urge the BOS and others to just start over. Get this right. If done correctly, this exercise could effect positive change for years to come.

Act on this opportunity. Do what was demanded. There are plenty of smart people who have offered their expertise to help! Take advantage of your citizenry.

**Krisy Gashler of Delhi by email dated March 8, 2021.** I'm submitting this comment as part of the record for the public hearing associated with the NYS Police Reform and Reinvention Plan for Delaware County. I urge you to vote NO on adopting the plan as currently written for these reasons:

1. The committee is not representative. An overwhelming majority of committee members are beholden to Delaware County or Sheriff DuMond, either as employees, non-profit affiliates dependent upon county funding, or personal friends of the Sheriff. Only 5 of the 17 committee members are truly independent, and all 5 of them have publicly denounced the plan as currently written.
2. The plan is not collaborative. Almost none of the substantive input from the independent community members has been included in the plan. The plan contains no justification for why any recommendations are being suggested, and—most significantly—it includes no commentary whatsoever about race. As this entire process was predicated on nation-wide outrage over police killings of unarmed black people, such as George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Philando Castile, and many, many others, it is inexplicable to submit a report that does not document statistics by race on arrests, prosecutions, and convictions in Delaware County. There were dozens of protests in support of the Black lives matter movement in Delaware County last summer, including one in Delhi that drew 720 people, the largest public protest in the county's history.
3. The committee appointed to perform this work **never even voted on this plan.** If the Board of Supervisors accepts a plan that did not meet even this most basic procedural step, New York State can and should reject it, and appoint a separate committee that will perform this critically important work fairly and impartially.
4. There was insufficient public outreach, and little evidence that public comment has influenced this plan. There were no listening sessions, virtual town halls, or public comments allowed during committee meetings. Even the one state-mandated public hearing on this plan, scheduled for March 10th, seems to only allow 15 minutes total for public comment.
5. There is very little content in the plan about substance abuse and addiction, even though this is a topic that the committee discussed at length, and a very serious concern here in Delaware County. A truly collaborative and imaginative process would have explored what our community needs to be safe and healthy—for example, exploring the idea of diverting funds currently being misused at the near-empty county jail and using that money to support long-term mental health and substance use counseling and support.

I urge you to reject this plan as currently written. Thank you for your consideration.

**Quinn Kelley of Delhi by email dated March 8, 2021.** In light of the recent critiques regarding the “Police Reform and Reinvention Collaboration” plan, I am submitting the

subsequent statement as part of the record for the public hearing on the matter. I implore you to vote down the plan, reconvene with the Police Reform Committee, and address the following concerns.

For one, the plan makes no mention of race. Governor Cuomo's original executive order to re-examine local law enforcement policies within NYS was in direct response to the death of George Floyd and the following Black Lives Matter protests, including the largest known protest in Delhi's history. Despite this fact, there is no mention of the racial disparities that exist in Delaware County. The Police Reform Committee discussed at length the existence of these racial disparities in conviction data at the county level, but nowhere in the plan was this brought up.

Second, a significant portion of the development of this plan was inherently biased. Initially, Sheriff Craig DuMond was put in charge of the committee, which is a clear conflict of interest. The first iteration of the committee consisted almost entirely of county officials, when the original executive order made clear the importance of seeking community input. This initial committee issued an ill-conceived 'public survey', which consisted of a few general questions and was poorly publicized. This survey garnered 125 responses out of nearly 50,000 county residents. This method was contradictory to the initial executive order, which stressed that work should be public, publicized, and transparent.

Third, even though more independent members of the community were eventually added to the committee, they represented less than 30% (5 of 17 people) of the initiative as a whole. After Tina Molé created a draft of the plan for the committee, committee members were given a day to recommend changes to the final document. These five independent community members objected to the plan as it was written, and submitted a statement of concern. Their concerns went unaddressed by the board of supervisors and the committee did not vote on the plan. Because the needs of the committee were so blatantly disregarded, three of the objecting committee members have quit and two have asked that their names not be included on the document.

Finally, the plan does not make any connections to the needs of the community. The committee discussed at length the mental health and addiction crisis the county is currently facing, but nowhere in the document is this mentioned. Long term counseling and rehab options are sorely needed, but no solutions were discussed. Instead, 9 pages of the plan were devoted to commending what the Sheriff's department was already doing right, with any recommendations for reform as an afterthought.

I urge you to thoroughly address these concerns before moving forward with the plan, and to vote down this current iteration.

**Joan Tubridy of Delhi by email dated March 8, 2021.** The death of George Floyd under the knee of Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin sparked a worldwide movement of protest against racism and police misconduct. Just as the jury is being selected for Derek Chauvin's murder trial, Delaware County, NY, has been asked to reckon with these critical issues and to formulate a collaborative plan indicating that we take seriously the injustice of racism--a

plan that will ensure our policing is always just and colorblind.

To that end, I submitted the following letter with the survey I completed for the police reform committee. I am deeply concerned that, though racism was discussed during committee meetings, and public input was expected to be incorporated into the final plan from this committee, there is not one mention of the topic in the entire plan, as proposed. I feel this grossly negates the mandate and necessity for writing such a plan.

As a retired public school teacher, I am acutely aware of the responsibility to the public that all public servants bear, be they teachers, county employees, police officers or county board members. Whether racism is considered a large or small issue in a county with few residents of color, its affects on any one of our community members, past, present or future, affects us all and must be addressed. As an educator, I believe awareness and education are the strongest tools we have to eliminate the stain of racism.

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January 26, 2021

Dear Delaware County Sheriff's Police Reform Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your survey about the policing reform plan. I believe this effort will help create positive outcomes for all of the community—police and regular citizens alike. Following are my additional comments on one topic concerning policing.

I have lived 8 miles from the Village of Delhi in the Town of Meredith since 1979, on either Elk Creek Road or Monroe Road. For the first couple of years, I worked in the village at the Office for the Aging. Subsequently, I farmed with my ex-husband on Elk Creek for 23 years, residing there for 6 years and in my home on Monroe Road for the past 33 years. My three children attended Delaware Academy, and I was a substitute teacher there for a short time. I taught in Downsview Central School for 20 years, retiring in 2016. In all these 40+ years, I have had no interactions with Delaware County Sheriffs, be they casual, social, professional, or criminal. Thus I had to “neither agree nor disagree” with most survey statements.

But there's another story to tell. I am a white woman. I know that that involuntary status shields me from the scrutiny to which many non-whites are subjected. Not all Delaware County residents enjoy the freedom from being viewed as “other”.

I have a dear friend who moved away about a decade ago after living nearby for six years. He traveled the same roads that I have, and shopped, dined and worked in the same county. But in the six years he resided in the Town of Delhi, he was stopped in his vehicle by Delhi Village Police, County Sheriffs or State Troopers 4 or 5 times, more than during his entire driving career to that point. I'll relate one of the incidents below regarding an encounter with a



County Sheriff. My friend, as you've likely guessed, is a Black man--though acknowledging that that statement is obvious is a sad indictment of the racism inherent in our society.

A County Sheriff who had stopped my friend one evening for not using a turn signal on an unoccupied rural road seemed to be looking for something to flag, expressing that he wanted to see if there were any "outstanding warrants". My friend felt motivated to engage the Sheriff in a dialogue, trying to get to the root of what he thinks and feels when he sees a Black man. It was an attempt to "...reconcile my humanity and your humanity." The Sheriff admitted that, "We don't see too many Black guys up here," and my friend felt that, while the conversation had been worthwhile, there was still much that was beyond his power to change or correct.

Though this survey only focuses on interactions with County Sheriffs, I think it critical to add the common thread of my friend's interactions with the Delhi Village Police and State Troopers—the clear indications of racial profiling that left him feeling shaken, discouraged and eventually motivated to move away.

During one incident, a Trooper approached my friend's car, hand on his gun, after following him for two miles and claiming my friend "seemed to be driving erratic". He later suggested, after noticing the stick shift/standard transmission, that that may have been the cause. One other time, after chatting with another Black man outside the current Walgreens, my friend was pulled over by a Village Policeman for a "Hollywood stop" (at the stop sign) in that parking lot, and was told he'd been videotaped. No tickets were issued in the above incidents.

I think it's important to ask ourselves if these are standard procedures during routine traffic stops. I would add that my friend is a USMC combat veteran and has had an award-winning career in film and television, though that reality should have no more influence on his treatment by police than if he were me or you or a young Black Delhi college student.

This brings me to the heart of my desire to write this letter. Black Americans have fought to end racism in all of the four centuries since they were forced to leave their homes and homelands to supply the desire for slaves in this country. They have prayed and rallied, marched and demonstrated, sat and been arrested. They have been derided and scorned, beaten, bloodied and hanged, and mollified with shallow assertions that racism no longer exists. As my friend said to me recently, "Racism will stop not when African Americans make change, but when White folks decide to make change."

As the granddaughter of a New York City mounted police Captain (also the granddaughter of a NYC Fire Chief and the daughter of a NYC Fire Captain), and as someone who grew up believing in the honor of those who choose to serve and protect, I am certainly not advancing the notion that all police are racists. But as all young Black men and their mothers who have had "the talk" know—racism is inherent in the institution of policing.

I would urge you to make viewing the documentary "Driving While Black" an integral part of training for your sheriffs. It is co-directed by Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Ric Burns and SUNY Oneonta's Gretchen Sorin, and based on her book of the

same name <https://www.pbs.org/video/driving-while-black-race-space-and-mobility-in-america-achvfr/>

We -- White folks -- are all responsible. We must all decide to make change, and that change begins with understanding the problem and accepting the long historical arc of the part we each contribute to that problem. Thank you for your time and commitment to making these necessary changes.

**John Prance of Walton by email dated March 8, 2021.** I am a 69 year old retired man, currently a resident of Walton, NY. I was recently made aware of the fact that there is a police reform plan that was supposed to conduct a thorough review of the Sheriff's practices and policies, using input from the wider community to decide on priorities. My understanding is that in Delaware County, the commission that was to guide this process has ignored many, if not most, of the crucial parts of this review.

I have been told that the committee is not representative of the people who were supposed to be involved, lacking members from residents who have had interactions with the police, members of local police unions, local educators and education officials, local neighborhood, housing, and homeless advocates, leaders from the LGBTQ communities, business leaders, and transportation officials. Seven of the ten areas of non-government community expertise that were supposed to be considered for the Committee were not represented. Furthermore, selections for committee membership was not an open process. This contrasts with how many of the surrounding jurisdictions selected members.

Of the eighteen members of the committee, one dropped out of the process and I understand that another rarely, if ever, attended meetings. Out of the remaining sixteen members, ten were either directly employed or at least partially paid by the county. One was an executive director of a Delaware County non-profit agency. The remaining five members were academics and community volunteers with less connection to the county government. Therefore, it is notable that all five of these members have written a dissenting report that has been ignored by the commission. There were also no people of color on the committee. The commission as it is made up is heavily biased with defenders of the status quo. The Final Plan consequently offers few criticisms of current policing and offers no substantive discussion of issues such as race, mental health, and drug treatment.

Finally, there is supposed to be an open review of the needs of the community as served by police agencies, and an open evaluation of the department's current policies and practices. But, in fact, most Delaware County residents have not heard about the Reform initiative. Neither the County or the Sheriff's Department has issued news releases, held citizens' forums, or worked diligently to make the initiative visible.

The actions of the commission's leadership made it clear they neither valued nor wanted citizen input. There were apparently two surveys done, neither of which received many responses, and the survey results, which were to be used by the committee to identify and address community concerns, were rejected. The analysis posted by the survey maker was

publicly labeled as not the view of the committee, without further explanation. Citizen members of the committee asked for some forty points to be discussed by the committee and included in the Final Report Plan. A unilateral decision that was made to reject most of those points without discussion was contrary to the mandates for collaborative action and is, in itself, a reason to not accept the Plan. In addition, the dissenting members of the Committee have publicly denounced the “Plan” as not legitimate and do not support it. Their request for further discussion was turned down.

Thus, I am requesting that you reject this plan and mandate a restart of this process, this time with a committee that represents the community as stated in the requirements, with a well-publicized process for gathering public comments, and with real input from people affected by police actions.

**Mina Takahashi of Bovina Center by email dated March 8, 2021.** I am writing to urge the Delaware County Board to vote down the adoption of the draft Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan and to send it back to the committee after the public hearing scheduled for this Wednesday, 12:45 pm. This will allow the committee to consider and incorporate community feedback provided in the public hearing, and to re-draft the plan in a collaborative manner, as mandated by the Executive Order 203.

The process outlined in the executive order requires community involvement. I attended two committee meetings where there were no opportunities provided for community engagement. There has been no scheduled citizens’ forums or listening sessions, both suggested by the executive order. I don’t see any analysis or summary of the community survey results attached to the plan, and I understand that there were nearly 40 recommendations made by committee members based on committee discussions and survey results that were rejected unilaterally by the chair of the committee Tina Molé, who has been identified as the sole author of the plan.

I also wanted to point out a key flaw in the draft plan that I feel summarily disqualifies it for county approval and therefore disqualifies it for state certification. There is no mention in the plan of the stated objective of the executive order: to develop a plan in collaboration with the community to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy, and to address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color. In the wake of the extra-judicial police killing of George Floyd, over 700 Delaware County residents gathered in the county seat of Delhi village on June 6, 2020 for a peaceful rally and memorial honoring Black lives cut short by police violence. That was the largest protest event on record in the county’s history. Black Lives Matter in Delaware County, and racism is at the core of American police history. This fact must be acknowledged by the Delaware County Sheriff and addressed in Delaware County’s Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative plan. I request that this comment be recorded as part of the public hearing.

**Jehed Diamond of Delhi by email dated March 8, 2021.** I am writing to ask you to reject the Plan submitted by the Delaware County Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative which purports to fulfill the mandates of the Governor’s Executive Order 203. I have followed

the Delaware County response to this Order since late summer 2020 before the Committee was even constituted. I have written to your Chair, submitted comments to the Committee, “attended” or viewed each of the four meetings, read the Guidance accompanying the Order, and reviewed the plans of surrounding jurisdictions. I conclude that the process employed to create the Plan and the substance of the Plan itself violate or ignore the mandates of the E.O. and the Guidance incorporated into the E.O. I believe that, if you adopt the Plan, the Chair cannot make a good faith certification regarding the steps that were involved as is required. The Certification can be seen in Appendix B of the Guidance.

## **THE PROCESS**

The Board of Supervisors and the Committee made no effort to inform the citizens of the county about EO 203.

Although transparency, community involvement and collaboration are watch words of the E.O., the Committee has made no effort at compliance. No effort was made to inform the public at large about this undertaking or its operation despite my having written more than once to the Chair early on. Although I know there were a few short press releases issued, even I, as a person who was trying to follow the County’s efforts, was left in the dark. None of my friends and acquaintances became aware of the Committee and its mission through efforts of the Committee or the County. As recently as two weeks ago, the county website was bare of any reference.

Initial committee leadership and decision making was inappropriate.

Early on, I heard that the Sheriff had been put in charge of forming and leading the Committee. I considered that to be a conflict of interest and in opposition to the language of the Order. Chair Molé initially replied to my inquiry about this by stating that because he is “an instrumental part of the process”, she had requested the Sheriff’s assistance in aiding her “in designating the non-mandated members”. At the very first Committee meeting, she stated “As Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, I have asked Sheriff DuMond to lead this project.

The Sheriff led the first meeting and there announced that the [sole] method of gathering public input would be through a non-anonymous online survey that his Department would devise. Ignoring the fact that this should have been a Committee decision, the Sheriff also ignored his own promise to send the members the survey for comment before release [as several subsequently claimed], and it appeared on-line shortly thereafter. How anyone who didn’t stumble upon it, knew about the survey, was unclear and the one week deadline had to be extended. The results of that survey have never been released. The Sheriff also used COVID as an excuse for the fact that the initial meeting was not conducted in public or with press present (although digital distanced meetings were an available alternative used by many municipalities).

The complaints about these various usurpations of power caused the Sherriff to step back in various ways in a November 22, 2020 Facebook post. He claimed he did not chair the committee (despite Mole’s on -video statement otherwise and the post itself which announced various changes in his name), said the survey had been drafted by an independent contractor and that there would be at least one more survey, stated that new members would be added to the committee and explained further efforts being made to keep the public informed including the

live- streaming of future committee meetings. Chair Mole led the next three meetings.

The formation and composition of the Committee fails to meet parameters set forth in the EO and the Guidance.

The public was not told how the Committee members were picked; unlike other counties that invited the public in at the beginning—even soliciting letters of interest in participation from the public at large; Delaware County kept its entire process under wraps. At the initial November 4 meeting, it consisted in at least three members of the Sheriff’s Department and was comprised almost entirely of county employees. Two mandated members were not present and not mentioned. There were and are no persons of color. I and others wrote and emailed complaining about the committee make-up, selection process and lack of diversity—racially socio-economically, in terms of varying community interests, etc.; thereafter some government employees were removed and replaced with persons more in keeping with the guidance although the Committee make-up is still entirely lopsided and deficient.

The Guidance explains (p.110) that the county “... should ensure that participants bring to [the] process a broad range of the perspectives, experiences, knowledge and values of [the] community.” Of those explicitly mentioned, the Delaware county committee has wrapped *Residents who have had interactions with the police* and *Residents who have been incarcerated* into one person and has no *Local education officials*, *Local neighborhood, homeless, and housing advocates*, *LGBTQIA+ leaders and advocates*, *Business leaders* on the Committee.

The Committee has failed to engage in a transparent process or to involve the community as specified in the EO and the Guidance.

Committee Meetings

The first meeting was held without notice or press in November, 2020. It was recorded and subsequently posted on line. In a September 28, 2020 letter in response to my inquiry about when the Committee meetings might begin, Chair Molée informed me that meetings would begin in a few weeks and that *there was “no requirement” for the meetings to be public*, but they intended to do so. After several complaints, the meetings were live streamed. The public was not permitted to participate. No information was posted about what subcommittees had been formed until February 2021 after multiple requests. Except for purported notes from one subcommittee, no information has been provided about the work, if any, of the other subcommittees. Their meetings, if any, were held in private without documentation released to the public as the Guidance requires.

The Committee has failed to meet almost any of the hallmarks of transparency set forth in the Guidance. I wrote to Supervisor Mole in November suggesting the Board post a notice on their website, take an ad in the local papers and contact journalists to spread the word about the E.O. and the search for committee members. The Guidance specifically states that local media should be involved. None of that occurred.

Community Outreach

There have been no community town halls although many people have requested them

and pointed to the process in other communities. For example, Ulster County began their process with an online town hall and comment form and followed up with three town halls and Dutchess County held six community forums, one each for different areas of the county, and one Spanish language forum. The only attempts our Committee made to connect with the public were the two online surveys [see above and below]. Some interested members of the public offered to print and distribute hard copies of the survey; but the Committee itself did nothing to aid in that effort or to publicize its existence to any extent. The second survey improved on the first in that it asked more questions and enabled an anonymous reply. Further, there has been no attempt to involve community groups in the Plan creation save for one or two mental health and drug abuse related not-for-profits represented on the Committee. There has been no invitation to members of the public with specific expertise or interests to contribute ideas. This is in contravention of the spirit and letter of the E.O.

### **THE TASK**

The Committee has failed to identify all but a few issues and has not undertaken the kind of engagement, research and thinking outlined in the Guidance and urged in the EO.

Although the guidance warns at p. 111 “Your process will not be successful if it simply restates the current functions, strategies and operations of the police department, without deep and probing consideration of the perspectives of those who seek reform”, Chair Molé wrote in a September 28, 2020 letter, and later reiterated, orally, that since the Delaware County Sheriff’s Department is a NYS accredited agency “*virtually all of the requirements contained in the EO are already being met by the Sheriff’s office.*” The language in the Order and the Guidance supports a completely different view in which accreditation plays only a small part. The title of the Order, itself, tells the story – REINVENTION. The committee should have been involved in a discussion about the role of the police in the community and the specific E.O. topics mandated for consideration. An examination of the recordings of the four meetings clearly reflects the paucity of the work undertaken and the Committee’s failure to meet the EO mandates.

Beginning with the first meeting, it was evident that the Sheriff and Chair Mole believed that the County must merely show that his Department is checking or has checked all the boxes for certification; and, thereafter, nothing more remained to be done. Yet the E.O. is otherwise:

Each chief executive of such local government shall convene the head of the local police agency, and stakeholders in the community to develop such plan, which shall consider evidence-based policing strategies, including but not limited to, use of force policies, procedural justice; any studies addressing systemic racial bias or racial justice in policing; implicit bias awareness training; de-escalation training and practices; law enforcement assisted diversion programs; restorative justice practices; community-based outreach and conflict resolution; problem-oriented policing; hot spots policing; focused deterrence; crime prevention through environmental design; violence prevention and reduction interventions; model policies and guidelines promulgated by the New York State Municipal Police Training Council; and standards promulgated by the New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Program.

This was not done.

The Guidance presents an array of issues and links to materials about how think-tanks, advocates and other jurisdictions have approached various policing issues. These should have been examined and weren't. The Committee meeting videos illustrates a deep misunderstanding of or deliberate decisions to ignore the charge outlined in the Order. The discussion in the Guidance is both broad and detailed and even a brief once over would reveal the Sheriff's Department has not considered all of the possibilities or implemented many. The point is not that a lot must change; but, that a lot must be examined before deciding if changes are necessary and what they might be. A "check the box" approach to the process fails.

Further, the sole input from the community at large, survey data, was not provided to Committee members [raw] until 2/4/2021; they received a written analysis on 2/10/2020 only two days before the meeting at which they were to present their suggestions for the Plan to Chair Mole. Identification of community concerns was meant to be at the base of analysis and solutions. Under the circumstances, that was an impossibility.

By contrast, the Dutchess County Plan was organized around two primary parts. Part one provided a summary of the public's and the members of the Community Stakeholders' priorities, discussions themes, and ideas for reform and noted: "*This is the most important part of the plan as it communicates the will of the public* and sets the priorities that will guide not only the Sheriff's Office's reform plan but also help guide the members of Municipal Leaders and Police Chiefs Workgroup...".

Unfortunately, there is little to no evidence of any in-depth discussion about a myriad of issues. Almost all of E.O.--identified issues have been entirely ignored. Some were thrown on the table at the last meeting in a desperate attempt to have them included in the Plan. A good example of the failure to seriously address a substantive issue was how the Committee dealt with the topic of community review of police practices and policies at its February meeting. Various iterations of such review bodies are discussed in the Guidance at p 42-45 and 64-69 together with examples of existing models. When one Committee member broached the subject, the Sheriff immediately claimed that any such effort would violate the labor contract which has another five-year term and instead suggested discussion of more community relations events. No discussion was had about the kinds of oversight commissions and committees that already exist elsewhere, the various models, how they work and where, and which ones might be adapted for use in Delaware County. No one indicated they had researched the subject and almost no other member commented. In under five minutes an important topic was essentially laid to rest. By contrast, the Dutchess report notes: "Part two of the report is a collection of best practices, research, and guidance meant to help guide reform efforts."

Of the 14 odd topics of mandated examination set forth in the E.O. the Committee only addressed two [in so far as is revealed by their public postings and videos of their four meetings.]

Despite the name of the E.O. and the directives for collaboration five committee members ended up having to write a Statement of Concern about that fact their ideas were not properly addressed and were quoted specifically as noting that mention of race related issues, central to the purpose of the E.O., was not included in the plan at all. Contrast this with the

statement of the Ulster County Sheriff included in their plan: “True reform can be accomplished by working with those in our community who have suffered from negative and unjust enforcement of laws, and the system that unfairly metes out justice due to the color of their skin or how much money they make.”

(The five members who signed the statement were all civilian, non-government employee, members.)

Further, the efforts I and others made to provide the Committee with direction and examples of what nearby jurisdictions were doing went unheeded and questions we posted to the Committee on their face book page have been ignored. There was never one single indication that Committee members were interested in what community members wanted to know or were thinking about.

I believe the E.O. is an inspiring call to action. I had high hopes that we might truly move forward collaboratively. Unfortunately, it became clear that the “powers that be” never had any intention of addressing this task with anything more than the least bit of effort or engagement. The Plan should be rejected.

**Carla Nordstrom of Franklin by email dated March 8, 2021.** I am writing to ask the Delaware County Board to vote down the Police and Reinvention Collaborative Plan to allow the committee to incorporate community feedback from the public hearing.

From what I understand, the committee did not follow the executive order which stipulated that community feedback must be provided. Community involvement in addressing police reform is crucial to developing good policy that will foster trust within the community.

**Sunnie Joh of Hobart by email dated March 8, 2021.** I am a resident of Hobart, and I am writing to ask that the County Board vote down the plan and direct the police reform committee to reconvene and revise the plan to address the concerns of committee members and the community.

**Bonnie Ratnoff Seegmiller, PhD by email dated March 8, 2021.** The report disappoints and provides little direct data/evidence regarding specific policies of the dept. Where are the data??? It is therefore not surprising that it fails to address specific POLICY CHANGES. For example, what is the dept's policy regarding force and deadly force? How and when have these been applied? Have they been applied differentially based on an alleged perpetrator's race/ethnicity/gender? The main impetus for the report was to examine law enforcement's varying treatment of people who differ on such demographic characteristics, yet such characteristics are barely mentioned.

**Jenine Osbon-Crowell of Delhi by email dated March 8, 2021.** I am writing to urge the Delaware County Board to vote down the adoption of the draft Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan and to send it back to the committee after the public hearing scheduled for this Wednesday, 12:45 p.m. This will allow the committee to consider and



incorporate community feedback provided in the public hearing, and to re-draft the plan in a collaborative manner, as mandated by the Executive Order 203.

The process outlined in the executive order requires community involvement. I have spoken to several people involved in the committee hearings and they said that there were no opportunities provided for community engagement. There has been no scheduled citizens' forums or listening sessions, both suggested by the executive order. Additionally, I don't see any analysis or summary of the community survey results attached to the plan, and I understand that there were nearly 40 recommendations made by committee members based on committee discussions and survey results that were rejected unilaterally by the chair of the committee Tina Molé, who has been identified as the sole author of the plan.

I also wanted to point out a key flaw in the draft plan that I feel summarily disqualifies it for county approval and therefore disqualifies it for state certification. There is no mention in the plan of the stated objective of the executive order: to develop a plan in collaboration with the community to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy, and to address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color. In the wake of the extra-judicial police killing of George Floyd, over 700 Delaware County residents gathered in the county seat of Delhi village on June 6, 2020 for a peaceful rally and memorial honoring Black lives cut short by police violence. That was the largest protest event on record in the county's history. Black Lives Matter in Delaware County, and racism is at the core of American police history. This fact must be acknowledged by the Delaware County Sheriff and addressed in Delaware County's Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative plan. I request that this comment be recorded as part of the public hearing.

**Charissa Kinley of Andes by email dated March 8, 2021.** I am writing to urge the Delaware County Board to vote down the adoption of the draft Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan and to send it back to the committee after the public hearing scheduled for this Wednesday, 12:45 p.m. This will allow the committee to consider and incorporate community feedback provided in the public hearing, and to re-draft the plan in a collaborative manner, as mandated by the Executive Order 203.

The process outlined in the executive order requires community involvement. I attended one committee meeting where there were no opportunities provided for community engagement. There has been no scheduled citizens' forums or listening sessions, both suggested by the executive order. I don't see any analysis or summary of the community survey results attached to the plan, and I understand that there were nearly 40 recommendations made by committee members based on committee discussions and survey results that were rejected unilaterally by the chair of the committee Tina Molé, who has been identified as the sole author of the plan.

I also wanted to point out a key flaw in the draft plan that I feel summarily disqualifies it for county approval and therefore disqualifies it for state certification. There is no mention in the plan of the stated objective of the executive order: to develop a plan in collaboration with the community to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy, and to address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color. In the wake of the extra-judicial police

killing of George Floyd, over 700 Delaware County residents gathered in the county seat of Delhi village on June 6, 2020 for a peaceful rally and memorial honoring Black lives cut short by police violence. That was the largest protest event on record in the county's history. Black Lives Matter in Delaware County, and racism is at the core of American police history. This fact must be acknowledged by the Delaware County Sheriff and addressed in Delaware County's Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative plan. I request that this comment be recorded as part of the public hearing.

**Pat Sprott by email dated March 8, 2021.** Having read the Board of Supervisor plan and the plan put forward by Ulster County, there is a clear need to go back and do some more work. The fact that so many people on committees felt disenfranchised enough to remove their names is a big flashing alert sign that certain views are not being taken into account. Please read the Ulster county version to see a clear open working format. Possibly the big idea missing is just a means of collecting data and sharing it so we can all see what is going on with policing.

**Peter Kleeman by email dated March 8, 2021.** I am writing because I am alarmed by how the "committee of stakeholders" was formed and how they have inadequately addressed major issues around policing in our community. The current plan should not be passed and the development of a new plan needs to be facilitated in a way that focuses on the needs of the people rather than the police department. In particular, issues of race, mental health, and the current substance abuse crises need to be included as major factors which need new approaches.

Please address these important issues and allow the committee to have a democratic process rather than allowing the problematic plan on the table to pass.

**Annie Hope of Walton by email dated March 8, 2021.** My name is Annie Hope, and I'm a resident of Walton, NY in Delaware County. I am writing as a citizen of this county concerned with the upcoming vote by the County Board on March 10th 2021 on the ratification of the Draft Final Plan in response to Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 203. I am calling on you and other relevant supervisors and state agencies to **reject this plan** for the following reasons (and these are only a few!):

- The county government did not fulfill the executive order direction on committee membership. 7 of the 10 recommended perspectives by the E.O. were not represented in the committee, and the process was not open, as mandated.
- The 40 recommendations to the plan by the committee members who are not paid by the county were ignored by Chairwoman Tina Molé, who led the committee and drafted the plan. In fact, a recommendation by committee member John Grenier was rejected which recommended that inmates of the jail be given the opportunity to complete a community survey, violating another mandate of the E.O.—to listen to the voices of those directly impacted by policing.
- The E.O. mandated community participation and comments, and public accessibility to the stages of drafting the plan. There were not good faith efforts made by the Chairwoman or Sheriff to accomplish this, and several community members seeking access to the hearings and documents were denied. The surveys sent out to the

community received at maximum a 1.5% response rate, and the analysis of the survey was rejected anyway.

There are other ways that the committee, and specifically Chairwoman Tina Molé, violated the Executive Order 203, which was designed to review and implement comprehensive structural reforms to local police departments. The committee's final plan (which was dissented on by all of the citizen committee members) has only 5 recommendations, one of which is not even new. The E.O. was ordered so that communities and police can build increased trust, accountability and transparency, and to improve policing to better protect the whole population and to address community issues with policing, especially around mental health and communities of color. We need deep structural reform in order to increase the health and well-being of all our community members in Delaware County. PLEASE reject this plan! Thank you for your time.

**Gerry Gomez Pearlberg of Bloomville by email dated March 8, 2021.** I am deeply disappointed in Delaware County's response to the Governor's Executive Order 203. From start to finish, this process has been a failure and an embarrassment for our county. As a resident of Bloomville, I am writing to express my concerns.

So much has been handled wrongly and poorly, it's hard to know where to begin.

In the interests of brevity, I will focus on the most essential foundation for a meaningful plan: a well-rounded committee, in which everyone's voice has equal status. That crucial underpinning of good planning has been sidestepped.

The committee does not reflect our county's diversity. It has failed to include persons most at risk of over-policing, police violence, and discrimination. It does not engage a range of knowledgeable parties who could bring different perspectives and insights to the table. It clearly does not include people with the know-how, or desire, to engage in the kind of thoughtful dialogue and transparent processes to develop a well-rounded plan that would benefit us all. And it has sidelined the objections and concerns of those few representatives who DO represent the community.

It seems pretty clear that the resulting plan has arisen from a process designed to reinforce the status quo.

This is unacceptable.

What has happened here not only violates the Executive Order's clear instructions, it violates the spirit of the entire enterprise of shifting policing in ways that would keep us all safer and healthier, and bring us toward a more inclusive, just society.

Such shifts are long past overdue and it is disheartening and frankly, disturbing, that our county has deliberately missed the opportunity to do better.

**Hannah Leighton of Bovina by email dated March 8, 2021.** I am writing to urge the Delaware County Board to vote down the adoption of the draft Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative plan and request that this statement be recorded as part of the public hearing.

I have been following this process over the last several months and it is clear that the final product is not a reflection of the intended goals of this effort, nor is it a reflection of community input or committee feedback. According to the Executive Order, the goal of this process was to develop a plan in collaboration with the community to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy, and to address any racial bias and disproportionate policing of communities of color. We are at a moment of reckoning and have a unique opportunity to redefine the way our communities are protected and kept safe and to think creatively and strategically about what an inclusive, equitable, and anti-racist infrastructure can look like in our police department and county as a whole. This plan demonstrates a bare minimum response to that call to action and notably does not even mention race in any of the findings or recommendations.

Concerns from committee members about their feedback not being incorporated as well as published survey data that is missing almost all open-ended responses, make it hard to understand or trust the process for choosing what is included in this plan. In terms of the hearing, to schedule a vote 15 minutes after the open period for comments demonstrates that there is little interest in considering the feedback of community members in the voting process.

Other counties have produced thoughtful and innovative plans that demonstrate an eagerness to think outside the box and make collaborative, positive change. I encourage the board to vote this plan down and take it back to the committee.

**Nancy Fales Garrett of Delhi by email dated March 8, 2021.** I do not think that the current document, The Delaware County Plan, as presented by Ms. Molé represents a fair and thorough hearing of community concerns and I gather that five members of the committee feel the same way. I feel that the process has not been transparent nor inclusive and has not involved sufficient community notice or discussion of community concerns.

I have had a favorable impression of the Delhi police (and almost no interaction with them) but I think we have been given a valuable opportunity to air and discuss community concerns and to write a plan that acknowledges and reflects them and I do not think that that has been done. I do not think the current plan should be approved.

**Larry Bennett of East Meredith by email dated March 8, 2021.** In accordance with the Police Reform Committee's directions for public comments on The Draft Final Plan, I ask to enter these comments in the public record prior to the March 10 Supervisor's meeting.

I submit that the Committee has failed to fulfill the Governor's Executive Order 203 as following:

1. The E.O. asked that the Committee bring to the process a broad range of the perspectives, experiences, knowledge, and values of the community.

**(TEXT IN RED IDENTIFIES COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO WERE NEVER INCLUDED)**

1. Residents who have had interactions with the police **NONE ARE IDENTIFIED ON THE COMMITTEE**
2. Any local police unions **NONE ARE IDENTIFIED ON THE COMMITTEE TTEE**
3. Local education officials and educators **NONE ARE IDENTIFIED ON THE COMMITTEE**
4. Local neighborhood, homeless, and housing advocates **NONE ARE IDENTIFIED ON THE COMMITTEE**
5. LGBTQIA+ leaders and advocates **NONE ARE IDENTIFIED ON THE COMMITTEE**
6. The Local Health Department and healthcare leaders and advocates
7. Mental health professionals
8. Business leaders **NONE ARE IDENTIFIED ON THE COMMITTEE**
9. Transportation and transit officials **THERE ARE ON THE COMMITTEE.**
10. Legal and academic experts

**THEREFORE**, Committee make-up violates the Governor’s E.O. 203, which lists 10 areas of non-government community expertise to be considered for the Committee, of which 7 are not represented.

**THEREFORE**, The Committee make-up represents a bad-faith effort by county leaders to create a diverse committee that is representative of the community. It is heavily biased to defenders of the status quo.

**FURTHERMORE**, Committee make up was not a public process. It was a hand-picked group of people linked to the Sheriff and County Government, with little to no opportunity explore or given for other community members to apply or join.

## **2. Committee members’ employment and how that may have affected their roles.**

**DIRECTLY EMPLOYED, OR PARTIALLY PAID, BY THE COUNTY.** Generally aligned with county government’s existing policies.

**NON-PROFIT AFFILIATION.** Often dependent on county government for support. Unlikely to rock the boat.

**EDUCATION, OTHER NON-PROFITS, OR PRIVATE.** Theoretically independent of county government influence. This is the group that has publicly dissented from the Draft Final Plan.

1. Tina Molé –Delaware County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman / Town of Bovina Supervisor
2. Craig DuMond –Delaware County Sheriff
3. John Hubbard –Delaware County District Attorney
4. Joseph Ermeti –Delaware County Public Defender
5. Scott Glueckert –Delaware County Probation Director
6. Bud Gladstone –Town of Andes Supervisor

7. Cindy Heaney –Community Services of Delaware County Director
8. Debra Mierop –Delaware County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services Clinic Director
9. Reverend John Grenier –Oneonta Assembly of God Church / Delaware County Correctional Facility Chaplin
10. Jason Craig –Cedarwood Environmental, Village of Walton Wastewater Treatment Plant Assistant Chief Operator / Delaware County Fair Board / Community Volunteer
11. Mary Rosenthal –Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council of Delaware County Executive Director / Suicide Prevention Coalition of Delaware County Co-Chair / Non-profit
12. Dr. Samantha Cole /Private practice Community Mental Health Counselor & Advocate / **INACTIVE? NEVER SEEN AT MEETINGS**
13. Joyce St. George –SUNY Delhi Adjunct Instructor of Liberal Arts & Sciences / Catskills Addiction Coalition **DISSENTED**
14. Simon Purdy – SUNY Delhi Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice **DISSENTED**
15. Jen Cutting – CARC, CRPA, Rape Crisis Counselor / Community Volunteer **DISSENTED**
16. Jessica Farrell – NAMI Delaware & Otsego Counties / Mental Health Justice Project / Artist / Community Volunteer **DISSENTED**
17. Walt Keller –DEC Region 4, Regional Fisheries Manager and FEMA Reservist, Retired / NAMI Delaware & Otsego Counties, Advocacy / Mental Health Justice Project / Suicide Prevention Coalition of Delaware County **DISSENTED**
18. Erdem Kâhyaoglu – Osmanli Dergah, Sidney Center Member / Hamden Filling Station Owner **APPEARS TO HAVE WITHDRAWN**

**3. The E.O. mandates an open review of the needs of the community served by its police agency, and an open evaluation of the department’s current policies and practices.**

**THE COUNTY HAS KEPT THE PUBLIC IN THE DARK ABOUT THE REFORM INITIATIVE**

County leadership has undermined the E.O. by failing to inform citizens about the Police Reform initiative. The County website gives the initiative the same importance as the Animal Abuse Registry. To this day, 10 months after the state issued the E.O., most county residents have not heard about the Reform initiative. Neither the County or the Sheriff’s Dept has issued news releases, held citizens’ forums, or worked diligently to make the initiative visible. Leadership actions make it clear they neither value nor want citizen awareness or input.

**THE COUNTY HAS INTENTIONAL OBSTRUCTED RELEASE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION**

At least one citizen, asking the County Attorney for information on the County process, was told the county was taking care of it, and if they wanted more information, to submit a FOIL request. In opposition to what the E.O. mandate, the County refused to share what is public information and told the citizen they would not give information up without being forced to under FOIL law. This is indicative of County government’s well-known tendency to withhold what is supposed to be publicly available.

## **INTENTIONALLY IGNORING E.O. GUIDANCE ON REINVENTION**

The E.O. Guidance says the process will not be successful if it simply restates the current functions, strategies and operations of the police department, without serious consideration of the perspectives of those who seek reform. Chair Tina Mole's and Sheriff DuMond's response to questions on reform repeated said all the requirements of the E.O. are already being met by the sheriff's department. Despite the E.O.'s explicit mandate to look at the new rather than just trot out the old, the Chair and the Sheriff defied the E.O. and refused to consider "the perspectives of those who seek reform. "

## **PUTTING THE SHERIFF INITIALLY IN CHARGE OF THE REFORM COMMITTEE WAS A MISTAKE**

Tina Mole, the county executive, initially placed Sheriff DuMond in charge of the Police Reform Initiative. In the first meeting she said, "as Chair of the Board of Supervisors I have asked Sheriff DuMond to lead this project." This is contrary to spirit of the E.O. direction, and to common sense – as this initial action gave the sheriff the power to appoint all committee members, insuring there would be few or no members to challenge him. Public blowback followed, after which Tina Mole assumed the role for herself, claiming she never meant for DuMond to be in charge, despite having been recorded saying that. In subsequent meetings she acted as the chair, but DuMond did most of the talking.

## **THE SHERIFF THEN TOOK IT ON HIMSELF TO DECIDE HOW PUBLIC INPUT WOULD BE GATHERED: SUVEY #1**

Sheriff DuMond, put in charge by Mole, announced his decision to solicit public response **ONLY** by a survey. He said this would be the only public input. He then: **A.** Originated the survey, which had only five very broad open-ended questions, **B.** Didn't share it with committee members for public discussion before releasing it, **C.** Put it online in a virtually unfindable place. **D.** Did little to nothing to publicize it, and **E.** required survey takers to identify themselves and their addresses – a classic action taken to designed to stifle criticism, under the guise of confirming residency. The survey gathered 115 responses out of a population of 43,353 and was widely judged to be worthless.

## **SURVEY #2, STILL POOR RESPONSE RATES**

A new, professionally designed survey – which was much more detailed, more thought out, and permitted anonymous answers – was created. It too suffered from invisibility as the County again failed to promote it, hid it online, and did nothing to advertise it. In fact, the County refused to help volunteers distribute paper copies. In the end the survey gathered some 645 responses out of a 43,353 population. That's a 1.5% response rate. Professional survey managers state that 5% rate is a minimum for usefulness. 10-30% would be a reasonable goal. The survey did poorly, not because it was poorly designed, but because it was not publicized.

## **POOR REPOSESE RATES LIKELY FAILED TO CAPTURE MINORITY RATES**

The miniscule minority response rate gives reason to believe that the survey failed to capture or truly document the sentiments of minority population.

## **THE SURVEY MAKERS' VIEWS WERE REJECTED BY THE COMMITTEE**

The survey results were to be used by the committee to identify and address community concerns. However, the analysis posted by the survey maker was publicly labeled by the Chair as not the view of the committee, without further explanation. Subsequently, the citizen members of the committee asked for some 40 points to be discussed by the committee and included in the Final Report Plan. Chair Mole (presumably with Sheriff DuMond’s agreement) rejected most of those 40 points without further discussion among the committee as a whole.

**5. County leadership started late, made poor decisions, and wound up compressing the time line in such a way that left no real way for the public to participate**

**COMPRESSED TIME LINE ULTIMATELY DENIED PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Below is the suggested timeline from the NYS workbook. The County did not follow this. By late Sept there was still no public engagement by the Committee. A citizen who contacted Chairman Mole was told, “There is no requirement for the meetings to be public.” This is the opposite of what the E.O. requires. In the end the compressed the time line effectively denied time for the public to review what little was made public.



**SEP-OCT. SUGGESTED LISTENING AND LEARNING with COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DID NOT HAPPEN/FAILED**

During this time there were no public meetings or town halls in person or online, and therefore no way for citizens to engage. After community pressure the first putative public meeting was held Nov. 4. The meeting was recorded and posted. The meeting was mainly county employees, and the Sheriff used the meeting to state his department was already accredited and that there was no need for reform. There was no listening or learning from the public. Only the Sheriff could be listened to.

**NOV-DEC. SUGGESTED DRAFT INITIAL PROPOSALS with COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/FAILED**

No draft initial proposals were published for the public, as required. The second meeting was streamed on Dec 14. It was essentially an introduction of new committee members, brought



in to address public complaints about diversity. Again, no opportunity for public engagement was provided other than an online chat bar during the streaming.

### **JAN-FEB. PUBLIC COMMENT with COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ FAILED**

The third meeting was streamed on Jan 18. It was primarily a discussion of formatting and distribution of the new survey. There was still no public engagement nor any draft reform proposals. The fourth meeting was streamed on Feb 12 and survey results were discussed. It contained video of community committee members discussing possible actions on survey issues regarding race relations, mental health, and drug addiction issues. Again, no real opportunity for public engagement was provided.

### **JAN-FEB. PUBLIC COMMENT with COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ FAILED**

At the end of the Feb 12 meeting Chair Mole, who offered no other comments through the entire meeting, stated she would write up the committee commendations and create a Final Draft Plan. She then privately developed a document without committee collaboration. That document extolled the Sheriff's Department on in great detail about previously existing programs. It had little to say about citizen suggestions or responding to the reform process. There was no full committee approval or consensus before it was posted. That prompted the dissenting public letter from five committee members and the resignations under protest by two.

### **MARCH. REVISE AND RATIFY**

The "Draft Final Plan" was posted on the Sheriff's Department Facebook page. The county posted the plan for comment, without direction of when and where and how to comment. It has subsequently ignored questions posted on the Facebook site. There has been little effort at publicizing it from the government or the committee. Finally, the E.O. guidance states that the Committee must provide for a way to incorporate comments into the draft plan and explain why they chose not to incorporate others. There has been zero effort to do that. The draft plan is being presented to the board for a vote on March 10 is the exact same unmodified document posted by the Chair. The Chair has not responded to citizen comments and questions nor has she accommodated the group of five who dissented from her "Draft Final Plan."

#### **6. These are the reasons why the "Final Draft Plan" is unacceptable.**

- 1. MANDATED INITIAL PUBLIC INFORMATION WAS NEVER MADE PUBLIC**
- 2. THE COMMITTEE STARTED LATE AND POORLY AND NEVER RECOVERED**
- 3. VIRTUALLY NO COMMITTEE OR SUBCOMMITTEE NOTES, DISCUSSIONS, OR MINUTES HAVE BEEN MADE PUBLIC**
- 4. THE COMMITTEE HAS DONE A NON-COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF SURVEY DATA**
- 5. THE COMMITTEE HAS DISMISSED COMMITTEE MEMBERS REQUESTS AND CONCERNS**
- 6. VIRTUALLY ZERO NON-COMMITTEE CITIZEN INPUT HAS BEEN ACCEPTED, ACKNOWLEDGED, OR INCLUDED IN THE PLAN**

## **7. THE FIVE “FINAL PLAN” RECOMMENDATIONS ARE WEAK, HAVE NO DETAILS, AND ARE MOSTLY WINDOW-DRESSING**

### **7. In conclusion**

The Reform Process was supposed to be an exercise in participatory democracy with the goal of imaging better policing for the betterment of all, including the Sheriff’s Department, and of reestablishing diminished public trust in law enforcement. To the great disappointment of many citizens, our County Government and Sheriff’s Department has chosen to circle the wagons, protect itself from any criticism, and worsen public trust. It is a trifecta of failure.

**Susan Dapkins of Delhi by email dated March 8, 2021.** I was disappointed to read the draft Police Reform and Reinvention Plan that will be submitted to the Delaware County Board of Supervisors for their review. I attended two of the committee meetings. It was difficult to get information about the meetings, given that they were not publicized on the County’s website which seemed like the obvious place to publicize the endeavor. In the first meeting, the Chair of the Board of Supervisors turned the meeting over to the Sheriff who proceeded to describe all the accomplishments and strengths of his department. He introduced a survey that had been developed with his involvement, a survey that was not anonymous. I observed that most people on the Committee seemed to be paid County employees. There were very few questions asked at the end of the Sheriff’s presentation.

The second meeting I attended was much better, with active participation from community members. Everyone in attendance seemed encouraged by the realignment of the process to be more in synch with the Executive Order. A new survey was prepared by one of the community participants. There was energy and enthusiasm.

Fast forward to the County’s draft plan. It seems like a regurgitation of the Sheriff’s initial presentation, with a few minor tweaks. The community members were clearly blindsided by the final product and seemed to have had little involvement in the content of the plan. The draft plan was beyond disappointing for those community members who’d volunteered their time and energy with the goal of producing a thorough and comprehensive assessment of the relationship between the Sheriff’s department and the community, and to contribute to recommendations for improving that relationship.

The Executive Order demanded citizen and “stakeholder” participation. Community involvement shouldn’t be window dressing for an “in house” process. Community participation must be actively pursued and deeply respected. The draft plan does not reflect the necessary commitment to open and inclusive dialogue about policing required by the Executive Order. Delaware County government could have and should have done better.

**Ruben Reyes, Retired Juvenile Justice Administrator, Current Accreditation Auditor by email dated March 9, 2021.** As a former Delaware County resident for 30 plus years, a person of color who worked with various entities within the county (through employment as well as volunteerism), and as a former and current colleague in the field of corrections and juvenile justice and reform, I wish to comment on the proposed Delaware

County Police Reform & Reinvention Collaborative Plan as put forth by Delaware County Chairperson Tina Mole, Sheriff Craig DuMond, and the additional 14 member advisory committee who's collaborative efforts are reflected within.

As I understand it, the Governor's June/2020 Executive Order was prompted by recent incidents of racial injustice, bias, and inequality in police tactics and procedures on the national front. It called upon police agencies to engage with local stakeholders in the review and development of policies, procedures and practices reflective of, and responsive to, the needs of the community being served. The order included very specific reforms that needed to be addressed within the plan.

First and foremost, I applaud the work of the advisory committee in putting forth a comprehensive document. I also wish to acknowledge both the courage and confidence the County Leadership has demonstrated in its citizenry to work collaboratively towards a common goal. Having worked on many advisory committees, I understand both the challenge and frustration that comes with the role. I hear it echoed in some of the criticisms regarding feelings of "not being heard" or feeling not "totally included". An "advisory committee" is just that, a committee formulated to assist and advise those responsible for a particular task or set of responsibilities. It helps guide and frame the discussion, with limited authority to direct the final outcome. In the end, it falls upon leadership to evaluate each recommendation against what is practical and possible within the context of the current environment. A plan's effectiveness is based upon many factors. One important factor is its manageability. Towards that end I looked at what was expected, what was required, and what was achieved. The plan addressed all seven areas of legislative reform, included substantial input from a variety of community stakeholders, addressed a plan to ameliorate deficiencies regarding Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, and set forth a framework for continued growth through community oversight, transparency, and review. In short, it is not closed ended or complete, but makes significant gains in the right direction.

One of the plan's detractors, while acknowledging the worth of the plan, has stated that it doesn't go far enough in addressing future needs but merely shines a positive light i.e. "pat on the back", on the Delaware County Sheriff's Office. This is a key point worthy of addressing in some detail. The DCSO has a long standing history and commitment towards achieving excellence. To this end, it has voluntarily embraced the ideals and principles of Accreditation. The accreditation process is itself driven by standards and requirements promulgated by leaders in the field. The standards are under constant review and revision based on research, national trends, and statistics gathered by agencies that provide oversight for specific services. It includes research gathered at some of the nation's best universities and its scholars. It addresses current needs as well as future trends and ensures that an organization seeking accreditation must commit itself to forward and progressive thinking. Included in its purview are such areas as mental health, substance abuse, cultural sensitivity and community policing. Evidence based practices are shared across agencies and included in the preparation of Standards. The people of Delaware County should applaud the DCSO for its commitment to this rigorous process. It is because of their dogged adherence to accreditation standards that they have been in the forefront of many of the legislative reforms now being required of all law enforcement agencies. While

other agencies may struggle to implement these reforms, the DCSO can honestly say “already done”. In addition, because accreditation standards are under constant review and refinement, the people of the county can be assured that the DCSO will continue to evolve in order to meet both the current and future needs of its citizenry. It is something to be proud of by all and mocked by none.

Two final points that should bring some measure of comfort to anyone that may question the integrity of the county reform plan. First, the establishment of the Community Liaison Committee and the Sheriff’s App Complaint Function which can be accessed anonymously are just two of the many safeguards in the reform plan that will ensure continued openness, feedback, and oversight that will be able to address practices on an ongoing basis and in real time. Secondly, no plan will succeed without leadership that is committed. Sheriff DuMond has demonstrated his willingness and ability to work with all people towards a positive gain. He has a long history of effectively working with disadvantaged youth, marginalized individuals, and culturally/economically diverse populations. Time and time again, he has demonstrated his commitment to the needs of the people of Delaware County. He is not always right, but he is always fair, honest and open. You may not always like what he stands for, but you will always know where he stands. He is a person of integrity. That is a quality people can work with.

I submit that although I find some room for improvement in the plan as submitted, it should be applauded and accepted as a work in progress, an honest effort by honest people, a move in the right direction, and held up as a model worthy of emulation by others. Instead of questioning it for not going far enough, people should wonder why other agencies haven’t gone as far.