



Cobleskill Police Department

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Chief of Police Jeffery Brown



Thursday, November 5, 2020

Schoharie County Board of Supervisors
PO Box 429
Schoharie, NY 12157

Dear Chairman Federice and Honorable Town Supervisors:

Please accept this letter as public comment regarding the Cobleskill Police Department's support of the Schoharie County Youth Bureau.

As a police officer, a police supervisor, and Chief of Police, I have had the pleasure of interacting with the Youth Bureau on a professional level throughout my 28-year career with the Cobleskill Police Department. Director McDonnell and his staff have always provided meaningful, needed programs and services to the youth of Schoharie County. These programs and services have all had a positive impact on our youth and have helped them to develop into productive and successful adults.

A huge part of any police department's community outreach endeavors is building positive relationships with the youth of our community. Whenever possible, we try to engage with our youth in ways that will build that relationship and make it stronger. In Cobleskill, the Joint Youth Recreation Commission, with the assistance of the Youth Bureau, has helped to provide numerous activities and resources to Cobleskill's youth and helped to keep them engaged and out of trouble.

In today's society, keeping youth engaged and on the right track has become increasingly difficult. Competition for the time and attention of our youth seems to come from all directions. Social media, video services, and other forms of digital distractions all vie for the precious little unoccupied time that our children have in their day. It is a constant, ongoing battle.

The Youth Bureau helps to provide alternatives to all the digital noise and also helps our youth understand that there is much more to life than Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. The programs and services provided by the Youth Bureau allow our youth to explore many different ways to engage, develop, and grow as people (and also have a lot of fun in the process).

On a more personal level, I have a child who has participated in the Youth Bureau's "Youth As Leaders" program, and I can absolutely say that YAL has had an extremely positive impact on my own child.

As an administrator, I absolutely understand the financial situation that every municipality in the country finds itself in, mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The economies of Village of Cobleskill and of Schoharie County have been greatly affected as a result of the pandemic, and we can all see the bleak prospects ahead in terms of budget cuts and tax increases.

Our youth, however, remain an extremely important, if not vital, segment of our population, and our attention (or lack thereof) to their needs will have a huge impact on the future of our communities.

Although it is my current understanding that eliminating the Youth Bureau from the 2021 budget has been taken off the table, it is also my understanding that the Youth Bureau could experience budget cuts which could, if they were significant enough, cause the Youth Bureau to reach a point where it would not be viable to operate. If that were to happen, the youth of our county would suffer greatly as a result, and the effects would be felt for years to come.

I would urge the Finance Committee and the Board of Supervisors to closely weigh the risks and rewards associated with making too many cuts to the Youth's Bureau's 2021 budget and to make their decisions on this matter as fiscally responsible, yet also as socially responsible, as possible.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chief Jeffery Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chief Jeffery Brown