



Bill Federice <federicebill@gmail.com>

Schoharie County Policing Policy Reforms

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To: Richard.lapeA@co.schoharie.ny.us, federicebill@gmail.com, Ronald.stevensA@schoharie.ny.us

To: William Federice, Chairman, Schoharie County Board of Supervisors
Richard Lape, Chairman, Schoharie County Board of Supervisors Law Enforcement, Judicial Committee
Ron Stevens, Schoharie County Sheriff

We are Schoharie County citizens interested in the local (including Schoharie County) implementation of Executive Order 203. Four of us attended the September meeting of the Law Enforcement, Judicial Committee of the Schoharie County Board of Supervisors; two of us attended (and one listened via streaming) the first breakout meeting, highlighting the LEAD program.

Thank you for taking seriously the law enforcement review called for by Executive Order 203. A fair, just legal system is vital to our safety and integral to our democracy, and local law enforcement policies and practices are the foundation to a just legal system. It is well-documented and researched that the legal system in America is tainted by racism. The fact that Schoharie County is overwhelmingly white does not excuse us from ensuring local law enforcement is fair for all, including however many or few people of color live here. So, again, thank you for taking seriously the law enforcement review currently underway. We would like to work with you to define the best policies for Schoharie County.

It is our understanding that the plan is to undertake a review of additional specific components of current programs and policies at bimonthly meetings of the Law Enforcement, Judicial Committee. We would like to participate, and ensure that the following questions are addressed.

1. What specific components are still to be reviewed and when is each slated to be discussed? We are especially interested in policies regarding:
 - use of force -- a total ban on chokeholds, strangleholds and hog ties; clearly defined gradient of use of force; mandatory reporting of each use of, or threat to use, force
 - traffic stops -- cause for a stop should not simply be the condition of the car or the race of the driver and/or occupants; body cameras should record all stops; sobriety tests should be recorded
 - civilian review board -- must be provided with a budget and investigating power
 - transparency following an incident -- prompt public access to body camera recordings, video, reports and other information (after a reasonable time to review for witness preservation)
 - qualified immunity -- permit civil lawsuits to hold officers accountable for their actions
2. How are you planning to invite and include widespread community input on current practices of the Schoharie County Sheriff's office? Specifically, including input from people of color is fundamental to eliminating racism in the law enforcement policies and practices in Schoharie County.
3. When and how will community input be sought on the policy reforms proposed by Lexipol? Will Lexipol seek community input before it drafts policies for Schoharie County? Will the County seek community input before adopting the policies proposed by Lexipol? It is important that sufficient time before the deadline of April 1, 2021, be allotted for community involvement in the final form of the revisions.

Sheriff Stevens, to begin our own understanding of possible revisions, we would appreciate obtaining a copy of the current manual of Schoharie County Sheriff's Department policies. What is the best way to obtain

this?

Thank you for all you do on behalf of the safety of Schoharie County residents. Your work is important and appreciated.

With Gratitude,

Wendy Cook
Debbie Paden
Theresa Heary
Pat Hults
Bobbi Wilding
Alyson Montione