

## Schoharie County Law Enforcement Review

November 2, 2020

Attendees: see attached list

Meeting called to order at 5:15 pm.

Next meeting will be November 17, 2020 at 3:00 pm here in the Board of Supervisors Room. Please call ahead to reserve a seat.

Sheriff Stevens – today Sgt. McCoy and Sgt. Reinhart will discuss Lexipol and their role. But first I would like Mr. Harrison to tell his story.

Peter Harrison – please see attached story from the Times Journal regarding Mr. Harrison's story.

Sgt. McCoy, Sgt. Reinhart, and Inv. Baker –

Current Programs in Place or Being Implemented by SCSO:

- LEAD: Diversion program designed to offer low level offender alternate means of assistance. Focus on Addiction/Mental Illness/Poverty/Homelessness.
- County OWG for LEAD voted and approved "Social Contact Referrals" at October meeting; meaning subjects will not need to have immediate Law Enforcement contact to be offered assistance.
- Referrals will also be made for subjects who overdose and are administered NARCAN by patrols.
- Procedural Justice: All patrol deputies, corrections officers, court officers, civilian staff and communications officers will be trained in the principles being implemented agency wide. Patrols will be trained before Christmas; Corrections, Communications and Court staff after 1/1/21 but prior to 4/1/21.
- Evidence Based Strategies: Agency statistics indicate nearly ½ of all arrests are mental illness related. Continued LEAD diversions and in-service training with the OCS and OMH (NYS) for all patrols will be explored and implemented when available.
- De-Escalation training: Procedural Justice training will be an on-going strategy. Part 2, which will take place 6 months after the initial training will include a refresher of Procedural Justice Part 1 and include scenario based training in which officers are placed in situations that strive to de-escalate the situation

without the use of force when practical. These scenarios are all based on actual events from around the country and here in Schoharie. These scenarios will continue to be part of use of force training and firearms training as well.

- Bias training: While this is addressed at the academy, Procedural Justice Part 3 (still in development) will be focused on such training. DCJS is currently completing the curriculum and will have multiple trainings for instructors in the coming months.

- Community Policing:

Explorer program	Yellow Dot
SRO program	Child Safe ID
Toys for Tots	Life Saver

- Ideas to build on:

- Citizen Police Academy- giving citizens a chance to take part in portions of training police undergo.
- Development of a Community Engagement Deputy position: Deputy who will be charged with the responsibility to engage community groups and leaders. Attend community functions, hold monthly community “Town Hall” events throughout the County to address citizen concerns and offer insight into agency business. Discuss programs etc. Deputy will be a point of contact for citizens to obtain basic information and request a particular enforcement or presence. This is NOT a public information officer, but a liaison between the Sheriff and the citizens of the County.
- An agency “Vision Statement” formulated by this committee and citizens that will reflect the goals and desires of those who serve and whom they serve. The statement based on the Principled Policing Principles.
- A semi-annual statistical report published on multiple platforms for public review and transparency of agency progress.
- Increased social media presence and press release timeliness.
- Implement citizen complaint reporting standard and review.

Meeting adjourned at 6:11 pm.

# TIMES JOURNAL

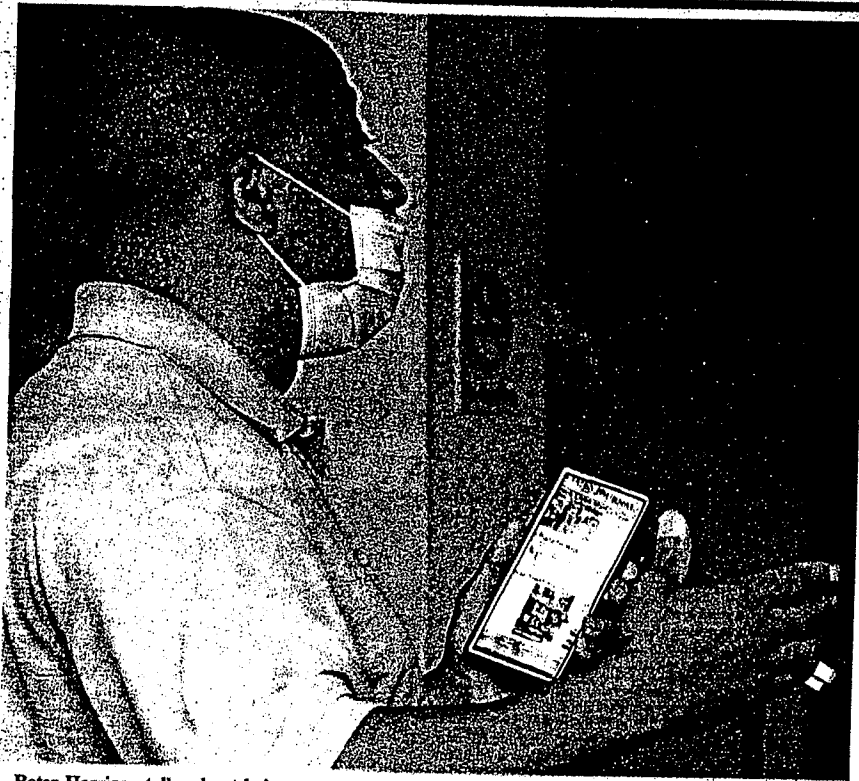
The News of Schoharie County

November 4, 2020

\$1.25  
The hometown paper of Peter Harrison.

www.timesjournalonline.com

Cobleskill, New York  
144th year - No. 45



Peter Harrison talks about being accused of being a stalker—or maybe a private eye—at a Schoharie County Law Enforcement Review Committee meeting Monday.—Photo by Patsy Nicolsa.

## His story: a police suspect

By Patsy Nicolsa  
Peter Harrison's story is hard to listen to.

And harder to tell. But Monday, he shared it with Schoharie County's Law Enforcement Review Committee as it continued the review of policies mandated under Executive Order 203—and embraced by the Sheriff's Office.

"I was hesitant to share [this] in the beginning," said Mr. Harrison, who lives a couple miles outside of Argusville in the Town of Root.

"I didn't want to be the guy who told the story all the time," and he wasn't sure it applied to Executive Order 203.

"But as I thought about it, most police interactions—good or bad—they start somewhere else. It starts with dominoes. It starts several steps down the road..."

Mr. Harrison's story started a year or two ago after he attended the county's auction of back tax properties, one of maybe two other people of color.

Afterwards, he stopped at a couple of places for food and coffee—running into some others he'd seen at the auction, ending up at Wal-Mart a few hours later.

Where he came out of the store to find a Cobleskill Police officer waiting for him, asking about his whereabouts.

"Was I in Schoharie? Am I a private investigator? Or was I a stalker?"

Because, the officer said, a woman reported seeing him at those places and feeling threatened by him.

"I'm a Black man, 6-1 or 6-2. I drive a black convertible," he said. "I stand out."

At first, Mr. Harrison said, he thought he'd been "punked"—captured on a hidden TV camera as a joke.

He even started looking around for the camera.

"But it turned out that someone, a female, felt I was stalking her."

From there, the conversation moved to then-Chief Rich Bialkowski's office, Mr. Harrison said, where it grew even more uncomfortable.

"When you don't have the facts, you imagine them," he said: Was there even a female or was someone spooked to see him at the auction, a Black man

"I'm a Black man, 6-1 or 6-2. I drive a black convertible. I stand out."

—Peter Harrison

interested in buying property, and trying to keep him out? Was this going to be on my record?

Mr. Harrison grew up in a law enforcement family, he said, where you got "the talk": deescalate, keep your hands where everyone can see them, don't make any sudden movements.

"I felt like I'd been assaulted, violated," he said, and he took his story to friend Pastor Ray Richards, a member of the LERC, who he knew lived nearby.

"We shared a little bit, he prayed with me, and that was mostly the end of it."

Except it never is, Mr. Harrison said.

He shared a little of his story at June's Black Lives rally at Doc Reilly Park—as well as what came next, pulling up a June 10 Times-Journal story on obscene, anti-gay, anti-Jewish and white power signs posted on a lawn in Argusville on his phone.

"This person lives on my block, three and a half minutes away," he said. "It only takes one person to be a little on edge...to throw things through my window..."

Choosing his next words carefully—"This is the sensitive part of what I'm saying"—Mr. Harrison said "a part of me

says, does he have law enforcement friends, who listen to him, tolerate his views, and bring that into law enforcement situations?" stressing the need to look at implicit bias.

"We have to be sensitive to what we let into our heads and minds because we let it bleed through."

The next LERC meeting will be 3pm Tuesday, November 17, in the Board of Supervisors' room in Schoharie.

Because of COVID, attendance is limited, but the meeting will be live-streamed on Facebook and broadcast on SCHOPEG.

## Carmella Smith

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**From:** Bruce Baker  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 4, 2020 1:16 PM  
**To:** Carmella Smith  
**Subject:** RE: Presentation/notes from Law Review Mtg.

CJ here is the gist of it.

EO 203 Talking Points/Programs

Current Programs in Place or Being Implemented by SCSO:

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Evidence Based Strategies: Agency statistics indicate nearly ½ of all arrests are mental illness related. Continued LEAD diversions, and in-service training with the OCS and OMH (NYS) for all patrols will be explored and implemented when available.

De-Escalation training: Procedural Justice training will be an on-going strategy. Part 2, which will take place 6 months after the initial training will include a refresher of PJ1 and include scenario based training in which officers are placed in situations that strive to de-escalate the situation without the use of force when practical. These scenarios are all based on actual events from around the country and here in Schoharie. These scenarios will continue to be part of use of force training and firearms training as well.

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A semi-annual statistical report published on multiple platforms for public review and transparency of agency progress.

Increased social media presence and press release timeliness.

Implement citizen complaint reporting standard and review

**From:** Carmella Smith <carmella.smith@co.schoharie.ny.us>

**Sent:** Wednesday, November 4, 2020 1:09 PM

**To:** Bruce Baker <bruce.baker@co.schoharie.ny.us>; Zachary Reinhart <zachary.reinhart@co.schoharie.ny.us>; Jeffrey McCoy <jeffrey.mccoy@co.schoharie.ny.us>

**Cc:** Ronald Stevens <ronald.stevens@co.schoharie.ny.us>; Sheryl Largeteau <slargeteau@co.schoharie.ny.us>

**Subject:** Presentation/notes from Law Review Mtg.

Good morning all:

Can you please provide me with a written form of your presentation from the Law Review meeting on Tuesday for the official minutes.

Thank you,  
C.J.

*C.J. Smith*

*Deputy Clerk/Auditor/Purchasing Agent*

*P.O. Box 429*

*Schoharie, NY 12157*

*Tel: 518-295-8347 or 8300*

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Law/Radio/Law Review Meeting November 2, 2020 (Board Chambers)

	<u>NAME</u>	<u>PHONE NUMBER</u>	<u>AGENCY/DEPT/VISITOR</u>
1	Bill Federice	607-353-2110	Chairman of the Board
2	Dick Lape	518-231-3084	Chair of Law Committee
3	Peggy Hait	607-652-7223	Chair of Radio Committee
4	John Leavitt	518-429-8365	Committee member
5	Harold Vroman	607-397-8187	Committee member
6	Steve Weinhofer	518-231-6681	Committee member
7	Indy Jaycox	518-295-8316	County Clerk
8	C.J. Smith	518-295-8300	BOS
9	Suzanne Graulich	518-295-8740	Legal Defense of Indigents
10	Denise Minton	518-295-2274	Probation Director
11	Sheriff Ron Stevens	518-295-2266	Sheriff's Dept.
12	Bruce Baker	518-295-2266	Sheriff's Dept.
13	Sgt. Jeff McCoy	518-295-2266	Sheriff's Dept.
14	Sgt. Zach Reinhart	518-295-2266	Sheriff's Dept.
15	Mike Hartzel	518-295-2276	OES Director
16	Colleen Flynn	518-295-2276	OES
17	Scott Haverly	518-295-8465	I.T. Director
18	Steve Wilson	518-295-8303	County Administrator
19	Pat Hults	518-441-2717	Community member
20	Pastor Ray Richards		Committee member
21	Dan Smith	518-231-3160	Community member
22	Wendy Cooke	612-554-7295	Community member
23	Peter Harrison	917-449-4512	Community member
24	Patsy Nicosia		Times Journal
25	Carl Walthers		SchoPeg
26	Debra Paden	518-295-8184	Community member
27	Mike Lent		SchoPeg
28			