

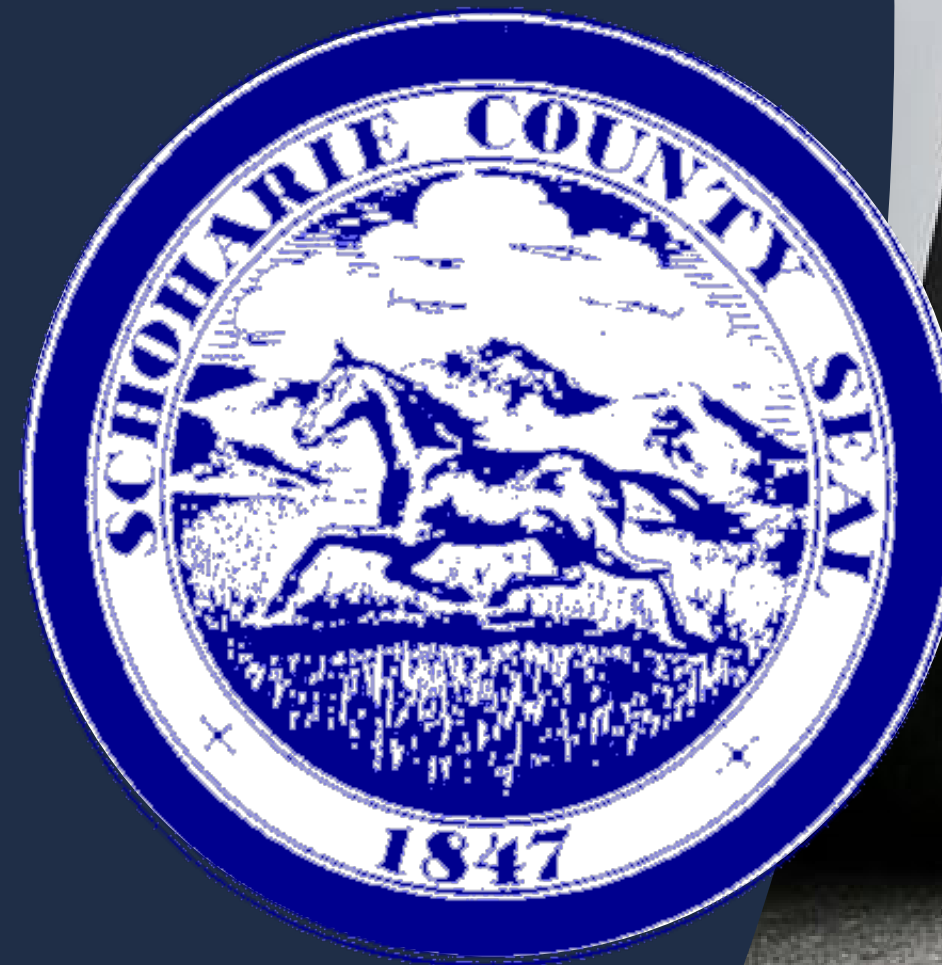
# COUNTY-WIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT FEASIBILITY STUDY

COUNTY OF SCHOHARIE  
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING #1  
JUNE 20, 2023

Laberge  
ENGINEERING  
ARCHITECTURE



Group  
SURVEYING  
PLANNING







# AGENDA

1

THE TEAM

2

PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

3

PROJECT APPROACH

4

COMMUNITY INPUT

5

NEXT STEPS





**BEN SYDEN, AICP**

**PRACTICE LEADER FOR GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND EFFICIENCY**

- Almost 30 years of experience in government efficiency and reorganization for communities across New York State, including police shared services and consolidation as part of dissolutions and as stand-alone initiatives.



**KATHLEEN ROONEY**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT SPECIALIST**

- Former Schenectady County Manager – more than 30 years of county management experience in:
  - Police and public safety operations.
  - Shared service development,
  - Unified Public Safety Communications – all emergency service dispatch on a county-wide platform.



**STEVEN HEIDER**

**POLICE SERVICES & OPERATIONS CONSULTANT**

- Former Chief of Police for the Town of Colonie, New York (retired 2015)
- Colonie Police Department frequently interfaced with SUNY University Police.
- Recognized authority, speaker, committee member, and consultant on the topic of police consolidation.
- Deep understanding of small community police departments.
- Collaboration and consensus-building skills.



## 2

# PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

## SITUATIONAL CONTEXT

- Schoharie County located along the Route 88 Corridor.
  - Rural community with strong agri-business and tourism focus
  - SUNY College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill (2,000 students) located in the Village of Cobleskill
- Schoharie County population: 29,714
- Village of Cobleskill population: 4,213
- Schoharie County land area: 620 sq. mi.
- Village of Cobleskill land area: 3.6 sq. mi.

SCHOHARIE COUNTY HARVEY E. STODDARD  
PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY





## 2

# PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

## LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

- Sheriff's Road Patrol
- Village of Cobleskill Police Dept.
- NYS Police
- Village of Schoharie part-time Police Department
- SUNY Police





## 2

# PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

## CURRENT CHALLENGES

- Lack of County-wide 24/7 local law enforcement coverage.
  - No Sheriff Patrol 1 am- 5am.
- Difficulty filling positions in the Village of Cobleskill.
  - 1 am – 7 am shift currently not staffed.
- Only 1 NYS Trooper car for 620 sq. mi. from 1am-5am.
- Unsustainable fiscal burden. Village of Cobleskill's Police Dept. net costs consumes 87% of Village property tax levy.
  - K-9 program deemed no longer affordable for the Village.
- Sheriff's Patrol has competing demands limiting its ability to put its scheduled 2 cars per shift on the road everyday.
  - Prisoner transports, pre-arraignment responsibilities, School Resource Officer, DSS Security, etc.







2

## CURRENT PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

### Potential Desired Community Outcomes

- 24/7 County-wide law enforcement patrol coverage.
- Long-term fiscal sustainability.
- Continued quality law enforcement services in the Village of Cobleskill.
- Stabilization of staffing through recruitment and retention strategies.
- Focus on proactive policing strategies.
- Gained operational efficiencies.



# 3

## PROJECT APPROACH

Active engagement of all parties in a collaborative, team-based approach.

Nuanced understanding of services and operations.

Focus on strategies that yield improved services and savings.

Community driven process.

Implementation planning.



# 3

## PROJECT APPROACH

Active engagement of all parties in a collaborative, team-based approach.

### Stakeholders

- Understand common interests to provide essential police services and maintain quality of life for their communities.
- Contribute to operational understanding and planning.
- Collaboratively identify and vet opportunities.
- Build consensus.





3

## PROJECT APPROACH

Nuanced understanding of services and operations.

### UNDERSTANDING CURRENT OPERATIONS AND SERVICES

CURRENT  
PROGRAMS  
&  
SERVICES

PATROL  
POSTS

SHIFTS & HOURS  
OF  
COVERAGE

COMPETING  
DEMANDS

CURRENT  
STAFFING &  
STAFFING LEVELS

CRIME AND  
ARREST DATA

CALLS FOR  
SERVICE /  
RESPONSE  
STATISTICS

SERVICE LEVEL EXPECTED BY RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS  
COMMUNITY



# 3

## PROJECT APPROACH

It's not always the what, but also the how

### COLLABORATIVELY DESIGN A COMMUNITY DRIVEN SOLUTION

- *WHAT solutions will overcome the current obstacles and challenges?*
- *WHAT services and service levels will be provided?*
- *HOW will services be delivered?*
- *WHAT is impact on employees?*
- *HOW can resident expectations best be met?*
- *HOW will services be provided under a new operational structure?*
- *WHAT will the re-imaged services cost?*
- *How will they be funded?*

### FOSTERS

- Trust.
- Accurate projections.
- Effective service provision.
- Cost savings.
- Smooth transition.
- Community support.



# 3

## PROJECT APPROACH

Focus on strategies that yield improved services and savings.

Identify potential options to work collaboratively to provide police services within the Village.

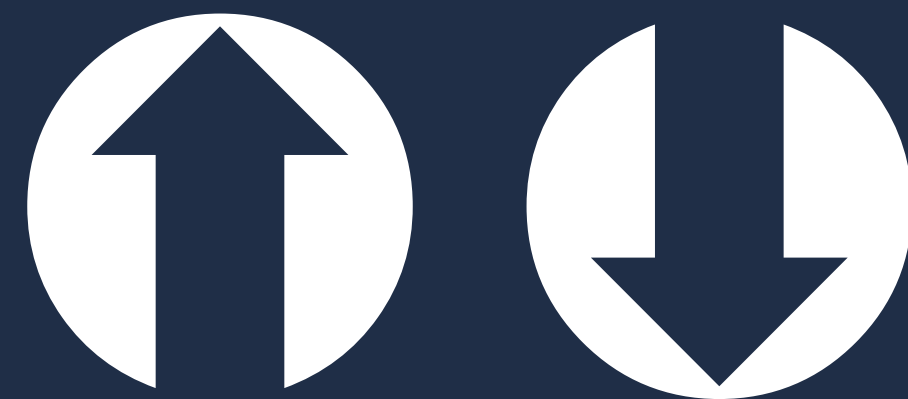
OPTION 1

OPTION 2

OPTION 3

OPTION 4

OPTION 5



- Public safety.
- Services Delivered.
- Fiscal impact.
- Staffing.
- Property taxes.
- Facilities and Equipment.
- Employee Concerns.
- Employee Compensation and Benefits.
- Operational culture and effectiveness.
- Organizational structure.
- Standard Operating Policies and Procedures.



# 3

## PROJECT APPROACH

### Implementation Planning

Prepare an action oriented road map to implementation.

- *Address anticipated obstacles.*
- *Develop a work plan with action steps and timeline.*
- *Incorporate employee concerns*
- *Define resources required for the transition: technology, equipment and vehicles.*
- *Recognize collective bargaining implications.*
- *Re-align shifts, work functions, etc.*
- *Set clear expectation and corresponding accountability systems.*
- *Incorporate Civil Service requirements and action steps.*
- *Re-align operating policy / procedure to meet re-imagined law enforcement model.*
- *Staff retention strategy*



# 4

## NEXT STEPS

Complete collection, analysis and presentation of data on current police operations, shifts, personnel, staffing, expenditures and revenues data, etc.

We are at this early stage.

Development preliminary options for County-wide law enforcement service models

Assess feasibility and impact of each option: Is it operationally and politically doable?  
Does it meet constituent expectations? Is it fiscally sustainable?

Hold second public informational meeting to present options and gain feedback on options.

Define potential preferred option and create an implementation plan.

Finalize County-wide Law Enforcement Feasibility Study.



5

# *Community Input*

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## 5

## WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Share your thoughts tonight or fill out the community survey:

- What is important to you?
- What are your initial thoughts on county-wide law enforcement?
- What do you think the community will gain?
- What do you think the community will lose?
- If nothing were to change, what do you think law enforcement services will look like in the Village and County-wide?





# 6

## Contact Information

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# THANK YOU

