

POLICE REFORM AND REINVENTION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

Catskill High School Auditorium, 6:00 p.m.

Present:

Staff: Shaun S. Groden, Chairperson and County Administrator; Sheriff Kusminsky; Undersheriff Brainard; Warren Hart, Deputy County Administrator and Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning; Sheriff Kusminsky; Undersheriff Brainard; and stenographer Linda Dunn.

Members: Dr. Ronel Cook; Gary Slutzky; Jeff Friedman; Katie Oldakowski; Rabbi Zoe B. Zak; Reverend Turpin; Pastor Snowden; Angelo Scaturro; and Joe Stanzione. Rita Taylor was absent.

This meeting began at about 6:03 p.m.

Mr. Groden stated: "I'm going to do a brief presentation, introduce you all and then I think we're just going to open it up and allow questions to be asked. I've asked people to come up to the podium and write your name and contact information down so we have you listed. I'm going to introduce the panel in a second. Depending upon your question, it's going to be difficult I think for them to provide an answer for you this evening. However, they may engage you a little bit and try to elicit from you any clarity they may need and then if necessary we will take the question back to whatever receptive agency if necessary to give you an answer back. The session tonight, we do have a scribe so there will be minutes taken and shortly, in a week or two, we will post those minutes on our website. If you haven't been to the website yet, the Greene County website, we have a whole section just for this endeavor. Any of the paperwork that I've handed out to the Committee members is on the website. Any information that we take in during these public sessions and are given to the committee members, will also be placed on the website. So the purpose for tonight's meeting is for you to be heard, to listen to your questions or concerns so I'm going to start by doing a brief introduction and I would ask the Committee members to just raise their hand for acknowledgements. Rita Taylor from Hop-O-Nose is not here tonight; next is Dr. Ronel Cook, the Superintendent of the Catskill School District; next to him the Rev. Turpin from Second Baptist Church here in Catskill; on my right side, your left, Gary Slutzky, businessman from the mountaintop; Pastor Rick Snowden here; then the Rabbi Zak here in front of me and then Katie Oldakowski over here from MCAT and I'll ask her to describe what MCAT is in a minute, and behind me in the top row are our District Attorney, Joseph Stanzione, next to Linda my scribe is Angelo Scaturro, he's our Public Defender and then there is Jeff Friedman, who is the President of the Greene County Chamber of Commerce. That is the Committee that has been appointed by the Legislature. I have some members of the Legislature who are in attendance tonight. However, I'm not going to do any introduction of them. They feel that they want to take a, very much a hands-off approach to this Committee. They do not want it politicized. They want it kept as open as possible. And eventually this Committee will draft a Report including any recommendations thereof, to the Legislature at a later date, is another reason why the Legislature did not want to be involved with the crafting of that, because you can't write your own report. The Governor has asked us

to meet collectively as a committee and to conduct at least two public forums, one for this. And then submit to the Legislature a report. That report has to be submitted to the Governor's office by April 1st. There is a really heavy lift in order to get through the mound of data that I'm about to share with you and so our tentative schedule, I put those in quotes, our tentative schedule is to meet twice a month and then include in there additional public forums. We most likely will change venues to give geography of the county some relevance, so that people don't have to drive too far. Two meetings in November, two meetings in December and then in January we will issue a draft report, again this is all tentative so, then that report will be given to my Board in the February cycle of the Legislature as a draft and then in March the Legislature would then officially accept the report either in any means or in any condition that it's in they find, and then we have to Legislatively approve the acceptance of the report, although it does not necessarily mean an approval of any recommendations from us. That's, the Committee Report is our recommendations, the Board accepts them. The key being we have to get the Committee Report out by April 1st or thanks to the Governor, he ceases to send Greene County any money, any state aid, any sales tax owed. But there's a big lift here, there's a lot of information that we're going to have to go through and as we move geographically around, when I have new attendees I'm going to have to start over again for their benefit as well, so that's why the timing here is so critical because when you see the volume of information we're about to go through, and any abilities to comprehend it and change it, make recommendations and suggest it in February is really going to be complicated and again, that heavy lift in order to meet that schedule. So the binder that I'm referring to, that I've given to each member of the Committee, is a large three-ring binder, probably has two inches of paper in there. Everything here (holds one up) is on the website. I want to repeat that: everything here is on the website for you to review and as this process goes through, you'll become more educated, will ask more questions and get into more detail, but the purpose here is to really give you as much data as possible, give you as much education as we can. The binder of course is divided into tabs. The first Tab is actually Executive Order of the Governor. It's 133 pages I believe something like that. Quite in detail, but if you haven't gone on the website to read it, I suggest that you do. We also included the County's Code of Ethics. This Committee as a volunteer Committee of the Board has to review that Code of Ethics and meet the terms and conditions thereof. Now we're going to get into some specifics. We have a map of the County divided by the fourteen towns. The purpose of that is to illustrate to you that the number of law enforcement agencies that cover the county. So let's say at 30,000 feet is the New York State Police, that covers the entire county. I believe it has 44 or 41, or 42 assigned troopers to the county. From that level is the Sheriff's Department, which I believe has 27 uniformed persons covering the same geographic area. And then there are four towns and three villages that all have their own police department and I say that with emphasis, because there is a significant legal difference between a police department and a Sheriff's Department. A Sheriff is a constitutional office of the State. Sheriff Kusminsky runs for office. He is voted in, he is elected. The police departments, either village or town, are a creation of that Village Board or that Town Board and can be abolished or expanded by that village or that town board. The office of the Sheriff cannot be abolished. It is a constitutional office. There is a little bit of a difference there but

you need to understand both the legal framework but also the coverage. Now when you call 911, depending upon if you're using this (cell phone) or if you're using the old fashioned one, the placement of that call determines where your 911 call will be answered. We have what's called three PSAPs in the County. PSAP being the acronym for Public Service Answering Point, really meaning a 911 Center. So the State Police has a PSAP center, the county has a PSAP center and the Village of Catskill has a PSAP. For those of you who still have landlines, remember those, you are hard-wired to one of those three PSAPs. If you're using this (cell phone) depending upon what tower is picking you up, you will then be ushered to that PSAP. If the county 911 center gets a call for the village of Catskill, we transfer the call. Let's say it's the Town of Durham. That calls comes in to the County Dispatch Center, then depending upon the availability of the car, one of the three jurisdictions of the car, the State Police, County, Town, what's then used is what's called the 'Closest Car Doctrine', meaning the dispatch center doesn't care what color car it is. The dispatcher's care is who can get there the fastest, so that closest car doctrine the nuance here, depending upon who is going to be answering that emergency law enforcement call. Don't mean to bore you with the details, but I think some of this information you need to understand how the system works in order to understand who's going to receive the call and by under what authority they're going to operate. The next tab, again listed on the website, is the existing or the current Sheriff's Department policy and procedures, how do they operate and why. What is not attached is the seven other police jurisdictions of their policies and procedures. Those seven departments have to go through this effort on their own. We can't do it for them. So we're only going to look at the Sheriff's policy and procedures. The State Police is exempted from this entire effort, meaning they don't have to have a Police Reform and Reinvention Collaboration. They are exempted. It's only the local police departments that get to go through this exercise, and it causes a little bit of an issue for me because I estimate that about forty per cent of the law enforcement calls that are answered probably get answered by the State Police." A man in the audience questioned this, asking Mr. Groden if he just said that the State Police are exempt from this and Mr. Groden replied: "Correct". Mr. Groden continued: "The Governor, look, this is not politics. I'm not going to get into it. I'm just saying that the task of, we have to do this, the seven local jurisdictions have to do this, but the State Police does not. My concern is that with forty per cent of the calls being answered by the State Police, how do we address any issues that this agency could have? So I'd ask you to go through those policies and procedures, if you haven't already. In fact, for those of you that have this evening when we open the floor, I'd ask that you sign the contact information and ask your question or let's get into a dialogue if the board wants to engage you, seek clarity in your questions, I will try to pass around a microphone here. Please keep your masks on and Warren has a very loud microphone. So you don't need to talk very loudly into that. And that, unless my committee members have any opening statements or any thoughts at this point? Your goal on this Committee, was who requested this first meeting tonight. They have had one meeting prior to this. And that meeting really was just to go over what I basically went over for you just now. We got into much more detail because of the volume of paper that's right here. So they wanted to hear from you and..." Someone reminded Mr. Groden that he was going to ask Committee member Katie Oldakowski to

explain MCAT. Mr. Groden replied: "Oh, yes. Thank you very much. Our member here, Katie, MCAT and this is an important introduction because I think one of the things that we need to talk a lot about is the issue of substance abuse, so." Mr. Groden gave the microphone to Katie Oldakowski and she stated: "I'm Katie, the Director of the Mobile Crisis Assessment Team which is operated through the Mental Health Association of Columbia and Greene Counties. So my crisis team, my partner covers a lot of work in Columbia County. And we respond to a lot of different crisis intervention calls in Greene County itself. So, (to Mr. Groden) I don't know how much detail you want me to get into." Mr. Groden replied that she could give an example. Ms. Oldakowski stated: "So we get calls for people who are actively suicidal who don't necessarily need to go to the hospital. We have a hospital diversion program in order to prevent people from going to the hospital if they don't need to be there. Instead we'll make sure they have the necessary services and support without having to go to a hospital." She gave microphone back to Mr. Groden. Mr. Groden continued: "We can delve deeper if discussions move us that way. I guess before I turn it over the floor, unless some other board member have any opening statement or whatever?" There was no reply. Mr. Groden continued: "I'll ask you to come up to the podium. Sign your name, ask any question. I'm going to assume most of the questions will be aimed directly to the Sheriff and the Undersheriff, who I didn't introduce, my apologies. Sheriff Kusminsky on the left and Undersheriff Adam Brainard on the right. So, the floor's open."

A man came up to the podium and signed in and then stated: "Hi, my name is Robert Merangelo. I own property in Greene County. I don't have questions, I have suggestions, okay? Over a decade ago, there was some issues in Greene County of police corruption and I was part of that. What became clear to us was the political involvement of police with the District Attorney's office. And so one of my suggestions is that the police unions not be allowed to engage in politics. What happened with us was we called the District Attorney and he did nothing. He went beyond doing nothing. He issued arrest warrants for us without probable cause. It wasn't this District Attorney, it was the previous District Attorney so if there is a way for the police to be prohibited from being involved in politics, police unions..." Mr. Groden stated: "I need to clarify, because by the basic nature of civil service law, every uniformed officer is going to be in a union. Those are the only two who are not going to be in a union." Mr. Merangelo replied: "I'm not saying they can't have a union." Mr. Groden replied: "Union involvement with a political party or a political endeavor, is a different issue. I just wanted to clarify." Mr. Merangelo replied: "Correct. I'm saying the District Attorney doesn't get elected without police union support, but when they get that support then that District Attorney owes them something and in this case, I mean this was some serious criminal conduct by members of the police in Greene County on a daily basis and we called the District Attorney on a daily basis and he did nothing. And some of the crimes were serious, and, but he did issue arrest warrants without probable cause. I was one of them. There was a four day trial in Greene County. I was acquitted. I then sued that police officer and won and after being on Fred Dicker's radio station, then that police office was removed. Okay, so that's one thing. Another thing is police officers issue a card to friends and family, with their name on it, with their phone number on it and they're told if they ever get stopped, to give that card to the officer. What they are saying essentially is that they, their

family and their friends are not required to follow, you know, they're exempt from the laws that the rest of us have to follow. That shouldn't be allowed. And the final suggestion which might be minor but a police officer, off-duty, doing 100 miles an hour, clipped a pick-up truck on Route 32 near Story's Corners, went off the road and was killed. He was breaking the law. He was committing a crime and the County Legislature named that section of highway after him. That should be removed. You don't name a section of highway after someone who is in the act of committing a crime. So."

Mr. Groden acknowledged a woman in the audience with a question. She stated (to Mr. Merangelo): "Sir, first I believe that was Trooper Lane. I don't believe it was a sheriff that you're talking about." Mr. Merangelo replied: "It wasn't. It was Trooper Lane, correct." The lady replied: "It was a New York State Trooper and I believe we're here just on the Sheriff. And with respect to your personal story from the beginning, was it a state trooper, was it a Greene County Sheriff or was it a local police officer?" Mr. Merangelo replied: "It was the State Police." The lady continued: "We are here on the Greene County Sheriff unfortunately."

Mr. Merangelo stated: "I understand. I just found out after I came here that it had nothing to do with them." The lady stated: "I heard you behind me and I don't think that the Sheriff's do those courtesy cards that you're talking about. I think those are only Troopers." Mr. Merangelo replied: "Right, but the issue more important than whether it was a state troopers or the police was the political involvement. That unions should not be allowed to support for or against any candidate running for office." The lady replied: "And unfortunately I believe the unions have a First Amendment Right, just as you and I would, so I don't know if the Greene County Legislature can really put that on the police unions." Mr. Merangelo replied: "Right, it puts pressure on District Attorneys to protect their kind. And that's what we saw happen. Thank you." Mr. Groden then stated: "I don't want anybody being shy tonight, so. We're asking you to participate, ask your questions, or if you have a concern, even if you think it's an ignorance question. I learned a long time ago there's no such thing as a dumb question. There's just questions you don't have an answer to. So I'd ask you to come on up. Here we go. Thank you." Mr. Groden added: "Yes, your focus here is to speak to the Committee members, unless I need to have clarity from the Sheriff or the District Attorney or Public Defender."

The next speaker stated: "Good afternoon everyone. Thank you very much for being here to take on this very important work. I have a few quick questions." Mr. Groden asked his name at this point and he replied: "I'm sorry. My name is Stephen Nash-Webber and I'm a resident of Tannersville. One of the key take-aways from the Governor's Executive Order is the goal of maximizing or improving trust between the police forces and the effected populations. And towards that goal, it appears that in the national conversation, that there's been a breakdown on that front. Certainly, there are plenty of cases in this State that have turned out very, very poorly. And so I guess my first question is sort of open to the Committee members, do you have anything that you are currently contemplating to improve that trust? Is there something that's on the table that you're bringing as various stakeholders to pick that up?" Rev. Turpin asked: "Your first name again?" The speaker replied: "Stephen." Rev. Turpin continued: "Stephen, we're here to hear if there's complaints. We have nothing on the

table until we actually hear what the community is saying. And once we hear what the community is saying, then we will try to address those issues.” Mr. Nash-Webber replied: “Very fair, thank you so much. I guess in part you were chosen to represent sectors of our population so I was wondering if you had already brought, you know, or had received feedback that should be brought on the table, more broadly and openly.” Rabbi Zak then stated: “I just wanted to respond Stephen to your first question. I think that one way to build trust is to have open conversations. So just the fact that a Committee has been formed and we’re here listening, asking, learning, engaging, both with our officers who serve all of us in the community and those of us who live here, is a first and I think essential step in creating that trust that so many of us really yearn for. It’s a wonderful question. Thank you.” Mr. Nash-Webber stated: “Yep. To that end and looking specifically at the Greene County Sheriff’s Department, a first suggestion that I may throw out then in terms of that transparency, is a process of feedback, which is to say that if there is a complaint or a concern or as an observation, that there be a mechanism for getting that information back, not only to the Sheriff’s Department but to some, I don’t know, a third party, if you’ve seen CCRPs before where we can be sure that any concern with police conduct is taken care of appropriately and that the method of getting that information reported is secure and trustworthy.” Mr. Groden asked: “For clarity, what was the word you used again?” Mr. Nash-Webber replied: “I used the word ‘feedback’.” Mr. Groden replied: “Oh feedback. I’m sorry.” Mr. Nash-Webber continued: “So, yeah, if that could be on the agenda going forward. It seems like for example, putting a form on the County, on the Sheriff’s office website for example, that it is properly distributed, would be a pretty low hanging for a first step. Thank you.”

A woman in the audience asked if she could speak from her seat. Mr. Groden told her he would come to her with the microphone. She then stated: “I’m Karen Rivers. I’m from Durham. With all due respect, none of you is that young and most of the people who have interactions with the police are young and I wonder if you could talk about what you’re going to do to get, to reach out to the young people in the communities here and get their feelings. They’re not likely to come to a meeting like this. You are going to have to go out and talk to them so what are your plans?”

Katie Oldakowski replied: “Hi Karen. Thank you for saying that I’m not young anymore, that I’m at that level now (laughter). So I think, I’d like to bring up one of the things we had talked about as a Committee is about doing an on-line survey or looking for community feedback online, to address some of the people who don’t come to the Committee here. So that is something that we have talked about in the committee already and putting it on online platforms that are more acceptable to our younger generation. Does that answer your question a little bit?” Ms. Rivers said yes and Ms. Oldakowski said “Good”. Ms. Rivers stated: “I think it may take more than just putting a notice that your website is receiving comments online.” Ms. Oldakowski then asked: “Do you have suggestions on how to better reach them? We’re totally open for suggestions like that.” Ms. Rivers replied: “Well, I haven’t thought about it a lot but I know that like in own high-school, Cairo-Durham, I know kids there who’ve had interactions with police. And I think that if one of you, not a uniformed policeman, one of you were to go to the high school and have a meeting with everyone who’s

interested and just listened to the kids and see what they have to say, that would be much more likely to get some responses than just posting on Facebook that they can talk to you. If I was a kid of 16, first of all, I'm not sure I would be on your Facebook page, I wouldn't even care about it, and second of all, I might be very reluctant to put anything out there that could cause me problems, but if one of you was there and made yourselves accessible to them, I think they might talk to you." Mr. Groden stated: "Dr. Cook, you wanted the mic?" Dr. Cook then stated: "Thank you. Good evening. You know, as a Superintendent here in Catskill, we do have conversations, lots of courageous conversations with all the students, about a variety of topics. I think the advantage of me being a Superintendent before this Committee, is that we can help, at least I can help spearhead those conversations with our high school, middle school and elementary school students as far as interactions with the police. I do have weekly conversations with other Greene County Superintendents and we could put this on our weekly Agenda, but we do need to hear their voice and to hear what concerns they do have. So, I think the survey's important because students do interact using social media, media interaction right now with virtual learning, so they are receptive to using social media to express their point of view but at the same time many of the school districts are coming back but bringing a hybrid program where many of the students are here at least once or twice a week, and we could form smaller committees, at least have meaningful conversations, if not in person but virtually, so there are opportunities for them to express their point of view and you know that's something that we're definitely going to do here in the Catskill Central School District but I can also express that sentiment to other Superintendents and leaders in Greene County. But that's a very good point."

Rabbi Zak then stated: "It's a really great question and I just wanted to say that those of us on this committee have been tasked with, because we're connected, each of us, to a community or communities and we have each been asked to go to our communities and see what questions the people that we each know and interact with, what questions they might have to bring back, so each of us represents a lot of people and hopefully that will help because we're not all as youthful as you might want us you know to get that information from, but thank you for the question." Mr. Groden stated: "I'm actually going to turn this over to the Sheriff because I want to make sure everybody understands part of the presentation for the committee previously was the review of the School Resource Officer that is now in place at all of the schools. Catskill has security people as well. I'm going to let the Sheriff explain that program and either the Sheriff or Adam (Undersheriff) to antidotally provide you perhaps with an example of how communication has improved or opened up." Sheriff Kusminsky stated: "Thank you. Just to address that along the SRO program, we do have SROs in five schools in Greene County, excuse me four schools, five SROs. We do participate regularly in the Career Gates of all of these schools. We also participate heavily in the Youth Fair, the Trunk or Treat, and we also sponsor the Sheriff's Summer Camp, where we send roughly twenty underprivileged children to camp for summers each year. And we regularly, I regularly engage with just about every school district in Greene County. So, I don't know if there's a perception that we're not available to them, but I specifically go out of the way to make sure that we are receptive to concerns that they have. The SROs themselves are extremely communicative and responsive to the students. We have a safety

patrol in Cairo that there's a waiting list to get onto to be with that Deputy. For example what he's done is he has bought them winter coats last year, these guys go out of their way to make a relationship with these children and make them feel safe around us. Other than that, can you think of anything else Adam?" Undersheriff Brainard stated: "One of the biggest, I guess misconceptions when we started the SRO program was that the kids were going to be afraid of the officers. We heard that a lot, initially, they're going to be afraid, they're in uniform. And very early on in that program, we realized from our feedback from our guys and from parents that the children in school were actually trusting the deputies more than some of the teachers, with problems they were having at home, bullying and things like that where teachers were unaware of certain circumstances and our SROs made those children comfortable to come to them, so I do, I agree with the Sheriff that we are very accessible and interactive with the children in each of the schools." Sheriff Kusminsky added: "One other thing I forgot to mention, we have a K-9 Unit which does demonstrations at each school several times a year. We also participate in Greenville Day, the Youth Fair, anywhere we can show a relationship with the community and show them what we do we certainly are interested in and by all means, if there's another suggestion, we're listening. Thank you." Mr. Groden stated: "Just a follow-up before the next speaker, again at our Organizational meeting we had, this issue was brought up and the concept, I think everybody understands the concept of 'PAL', Police Athletic Leagues, try to get kids involved with you know intramural-style sports versus the more competitive baseball, soccer, football type things or tryouts. PALs don't have tryouts, it's just every kid comes out and shoots hoops, in an effort to have that image, that 'I'm not here to be the bad guy and arrest you, I'm here to be the good guy, play hoops with you'. You just have to build trust right and so each of the departments that we have varying levels of PAL type programs, whether or not, how active they are, I can't give you a specific answer, but I will try to get that information for the Committee to review for our draft report. Young lady?"

The next speaker stated: "Hello everybody. My name is Christine Wade and I live in the Village of Hunter and I own, I'm a property owner there and a taxpayer for a long time. And I support my local first responders through my taxes and my contributions. And on Aug 23rd which was a Sunday, there was a large vehicle, large, over 200-vehicle parade in my very small town and it did include a lot of official vehicles including from the Sheriff's Department and from the local police and from the local, by local I mean the Hunter Police and also the Durham Police and some of the other villages I believe and all the Fire trucks and the ambulances. So a lot of official vehicles in this parade and I didn't entirely understand the purpose of this parade and I try to stay active locally and be aware of issues in the community. So, I wasn't aware, I was told by several people, including a police officer, that it was to support the local police, to support the police. And I hadn't been aware through my activity in the town that the police needed support. I understand they're all struggling with the small budgets and influxes in this time and that they probably have many issues like child care, and mental health and substance abuse, and a lot of issues. It's a difficult job, being a police officer. So my question, I guess is directed to the Sheriff's officers here tonight, is could you explain to me the purpose of that parade?" Sheriff Kusminsky replied: "Sure. First off, the parade as you so call it..." Ms. Wade stated: "Well, I didn't know what

to call it." Sheriff Kusminsky continued: "...it was a motorcade and it was not organized by us." Ms. Wade asked: "Who was it organized by?" The Sheriff replied: "A group supporting I think it was "Back the Blue". I don't know if they're an official group or it's a Facebook group. So that was organized by them but in context of what you're referring to, we participated in and walked with, either walked with or drove vehicles in front of four protests, two Back the Blue events, five protests and two Back the Blue. It didn't matter what the cause was. We were going to be present. So we're there to protect the public and/or show them our support as well. So, it's not something that we organized but we would be allowed to any type of, you will see our cars at funeral processions, anything where there's a traffic issue, we will be present." Ms. Wade asked: "So, you were working?" The Sheriff replied: "Some of them I imagine were. I can only, the Sheriff's Department personnel is the only ones that I can be answering for. And I was present." Ms. Wade asked: "So you were working doing traffic control?" The Sheriff replied: "Well, I work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week." Ms. Wade stated: "No, no, I'm not, I'm just asking like, there were all these official vehicles. They were not all working, and I..." The Sheriff replied: "Any marked patrol vehicles from the Sheriff's Office that would have been there, how many were there, one or two? One or two would have been the post cars at work that day." Ms. Wade replied: "Would have been the post?" The Sheriff explained: "They were covering that post so if there was a call, they would respond." Ms. Wade stated: "So covering the event?" Sheriff Kusminsky replied: "They would be working, right." Ms. Wade continued: "So, if I wanted to organize a dog, a puppy event..." Sheriff Kusminsky replied: "If you wanted to organize something?" Ms. Wade continued: "...you would be there for me?" Sheriff Kusminsky replied: "If it was going to be a large, if you expected a large traffic, either obstruction or somewhere where we need to do it for traffic safety, yes, we would be present." Ms. Wade asked: "And so, but, all the, not only the Sheriff, I know you're just speaking for the Sheriff's Department and you're saying you were working a big event and it wasn't related to you?" The Sheriff replied: "No, of course it was related to, it was a Back the Blue event and we're police officers, so. Theoretically, yes of course it's related to us. I'm trying to understand where you're going with the question?" Ms. Wade replied: "Well, I, I'm trying to understand what the, how that event created trust in the community and what its purpose was. I want to support my first responders if they need support and I was told it was a big event where they were expressing their need for support and I haven't seen that in any other venue, like our town meetings, where they might come to us with what, I guess I'm asking, what do you need support for? And you're saying you wouldn't speak for that event, because you were just working that event." Sheriff Kusminsky replied: "No, I didn't..." Ms. Wade said: "Or, or..., I'm sorry." The Sheriff replied: "I was present because I go to all the events. I went to every protest as well, so. Any event, it doesn't matter what the cause is, or what protest or what the march or parade or motorcade is, if it's going to be a large event, we're going to be present." Ms. Wade replied: "I understand that. So I'm saying, can you tell me your personal opinion about what support the event was..." The Sheriff replied: "Well I think you, are you talking about monetary support or moral support? I mean, the Back the Blue group, if there is such a group, that exists clearly supporting law enforcement. And it's not monetarily, but..." Ms. Wade then asked: "But what is that support, what is the need for support? What is the need?"

The Sheriff replied: "I don't think we personally have a need. I think the public wanted to speak up, just as they did on the other side..." Ms. Wade stated: "Wait a minute, what other side? What other side? I don't understand." Both Ms. Wade and the Sheriff were speaking at same time. The Sheriff stated: "...criticized this entire event." Ms. Wade stated again: "I don't understand." Sheriff Kusminsky replied: "You're moving this to a political discussion..." Ms. Wade replied: "I am not. I'm asking about my police, I saw a big event in my town, with all the public service, all the first responders, which I support by donation and with my taxes, big show of a need for support. And now I'm asking..." The Sheriff stated: "That event, just so you know, as far as taxes go, they didn't incur any additional..." Ms. Wade replied: "Well, I'm not saying it incurred any additional, but you did work the event and that's not my point. My point is there was a big event in my community which said the police need support. And I'm asking now the police officers..." The Sheriff replied: "It didn't say the police need support. The community said they would like to support, it's the other way around." A lady from the audience then stated: "If I may, I'm a part of that group. I may be able to answer your question. I'm next, in what I'm looking to say. I was one of the organizers of the Cairo and the Tannersville." Ms. Wade replied: "So my question is really for law enforcement in my community, I'd like to know what problems you're having, what you need to be more efficient, or more healthy or more happy in your jobs? I think that's an important part of how the community relates to the police department and I'm just asking a question." The Sheriff stated: "I think this was a show of solidarity with public safety. I don't know what other way..." Mr. Groden stated: "I think perhaps the next speaker will clarify the intent of the organization. Maybe it will answer the question." The lady from the audience stated: "Exactly. The Sheriff had nothing to do with the organization of that. No police department had anything to do with the organization..." Mr. Groden stated: "Hang on. Until you can come to the podium so that everyone can hear you." Ms. Wade stated: "Pardon?" Mr. Groden explained that he asked the lady from the audience to hold her comments until she comes to the podium. Ms. Wade asked: "Oh. Okay. Will I have a chance to ask follow-up questions?" Mr. Groden replied: "Absolutely." Ms. Wade replied: "Thank you." The lady from the audience then spoke: "So, I'll answer her in just a moment. My name is Monica Keff. Some of you know me, some of you don't. I'm a local attorney in the area. I work with the Sheriff's Department a lot and the reason I do is I'm in Family Court. With respect to the youth and I think my timing is almost impeccable, with respect to the question about the youth's connection, and the availability of the Sheriff's Department to the youth, I can tell you I've had numerous cases where I am actually the attorney for the child, what is also previously known as Law Guardians. I can't tell you how many clients, also parents, but how many of those clients from barely able to talk and explain the situation, to 17, 18 years old, that have told me they thought that a deputy sheriff saved their life. Or that they only felt safe when the deputy was there. And I'm only talking about deputies, because deputies are the ones that I care about the most. Our Greene County Sheriffs respond to horrific, horrific scenes, that I have had to deal with, that others have had to deal with. There's another attorney, another colleague of mine who wishes to speak today, that she can explain to you, these deputies not only make themselves available to the youth and to the parents, but to us as attorneys and to the District Attorney, to the Public Defender's office even, where when

we're getting more information about a case to find out exactly what happened, those deputies will answer the phone off-duty. They will answer the phone on weekends. They will answer their e-mail off of their phone, which I can see that the Sheriff is doing right now. They are, they are community members. Every single solitary deputy sheriff in Greene County that I have ever dealt with has been down to earth, has reached out, any that I've dealt with on a case, will reach out to my clients later, and ask 'how are you doing? Is there anything I can do for you?' So honestly, the fact that we're here on just the Sheriff's is a shame. Because I don't believe and I've never had a single incident with a Greene County Sheriffs that I feel needs to be changed in any way. Prior to getting into Family Court, I was criminal defense. I'll say the same thing: not one time, not one criminal defendant that I have represented has ever told me that they were a victim of prejudice, racism, excessive force by a Deputy Sheriff. I can't say that about the other tiers that we have here in Greene County. But I can say it about the Sheriffs' Department. In response to you (to Ms. Wade) with respect to the Back the Blue March, I was one of four individuals, four women, who organized the Cairo Back the Blue. We organized that because of what we were seeing on the news. Because of what we were seeing on social media and because we, as community members in the Town of Cairo, that was the first one, in the Town of Cairo, saw was being taking, I hate to say it but the one bad apple, and trying to destroy the entire batch. We don't have those bad applies that I've ever seen in my personal experience or my professional experience in the Greene County Sheriffs. So unfortunately, it's my opinion that you guys have a really, really easy job because there's not much if anything that needs to be changed with the Greene County Sheriffs, and the other outreach programs and I'm going ask the Sheriff to explain these. These are already put into practice. Or were starting as he took office. So we, as organizers, we decided to take our personal time, get the proper approvals from the Town of Cairo and we marched to show them they're not alone; to show them that we appreciate them; to show them that we honor the job they're doing. These guys go out every day, and girls, sorry, and risk their lives. We've lost Greene County Sheriffs. They risk their lives for people they have no idea who they are. And you know what, they don't care. When that call comes into 911 if their the closest car, they're going, they're not asking if you are a democrat, republican, independent, white, black, Hispanic, they don't care. They're on their way. So that's why we did that. In Tannersville, I believe half of the reason it ended up as long as it was, is after being requested, a permit to do a March as we did in Cairo, Tannersville denied that request. After having just approved other requests, they denied that request. That's why that became a motorcade that went on for I think approximately 25 minutes, if not more from the beginning to the end. So the only question I can really come up to is, if the Sheriff's Department can explain what community outreach programs have you done for the elderly, for the youth or for those who are dealing with addiction, because I think the community and the committee members need to hear those policies and those programs."

Mr. Groden asked Ms. Wade if she wanted to respond, or otherwise he would move on. Ms. Wade replied: "I'm really glad that you're finding great experiences in the police department for your work and I totally, you didn't answer any of my questions, so I'll just, I don't know, restate them. I think it's fine for people to get together on purpose to support, I support my

first responders. I've only had good experiences with the police in my town where I've lived for 35 years, as well. So, but it didn't answer my questions. So that was a private parade in which many, many, many, all of the, I mean it was a, it was a, what did you call it?" Ms. Keff replied: "It was a motorcade." Ms. Wade stated: "Your motorcade included all of the vehicles, all of the public vehicles. And that raises questions in my mind about how to support our first responders, what they need, how they're going to use their vehicles, so that they're available for everybody who needs them. It's just, you asked me, you asked us to bring our questions. That's a big question I've have." Ms. Keff replied from the audience: "And I've answered it." A few other people in the audience began speaking, then Ms. Wade stated: "And nothing that you said answered it. So, and my question is, I'd be happy to talk to you, but my question is addressed to this Committee." Rev. Turpin replied: "Miss, we would like to know what is your complaint? Is the complaint that the motorcade was too loud going through the area? Is the complaint that too many official vehicles were being used in the motorcade that would make them less capable for them answering a call somewhere?" Ms. Wade replied: "I'm not complaining. I'm asking a question." Rev. Turpin responded: "Thank you." Ms. Wade stated: "If my question isn't clear, I'll be glad to restate it." Rev. Turpin stated: "Your question is clear, but we're, as a Committee, we're trying to get your complaint from your coming tonight, so that we can have something to work with." The Sheriff then stated: "Ma'am, I think I can answer. I think I know where you're going with this, but I can only answer for the Sheriff's Office. I go to all the events regardless of what they or its purpose. So I'm going to be there anyway. I get paid whether I'm, wherever I am going, whether or whether I don't go. There was one Sheriff's marked car present and there would at least one assigned to every event or anything to do with traffic whether again, it's a funeral procession, anything, so it does not effect the coverage in that particular area whatsoever." Ms. Wade responded: "I heard that and I understand you were working that day and that you would work at any large event, no matter the content. You've said that before. I took it in. I understand." Several people asked to move on from this discussion. Mr. Groden spotted four people in the audience who would like to speak and assigned them first, second, third and fourth. Then Ms. Keff spoke again and asked: "Sorry, can the Sheriff answer the question about the community outreach programs now offered?" Mr. Groden said yes and the Sheriff replied: "In reference to what Ms. Keff was saying, we activated a Senior Call-in Program throughout the county. Prior to January it was only in Windham. What that is basically if you're homebound or mostly senior citizens that are alone, they call into our office every morning by ten o'clock; if they fail to make that call, we will call them; and if they don't call back, we will send a deputy to check on them to make sure they're okay. That's been in effect for about six months now and working pretty well. We just recently expanded it to any disabled person as well that may be homebound and we'll take any requests from any other person who may need that type of service. We also started an 'Impacted Citizens' Program', which Katie (Oldakowski) could speak a little bit about this because she's involved, but any overdose that occurs in Greene County, our overdoses went up 1.10. We're up a hundred and fifty per cent since the onset of this pandemic, so what we do is we respond a plainclothes sheriff's deputy, two of them actually, will go out and make contact with every overdose that is reported in Greene County within seventy-two hours.

They will offer them services, you know, whether that be mental health, rehabilitation, counseling, whatever it may be because they're often intertwined. But we then refer them to an agency such as MCAT and they will connect those dots and make sure those people get those services and we'll follow up with them, continuously and I think we're up to an 85% success rate with people signed up. Also, we're working on developing a "LEAD", which is in this book somewhere, but that was already started long before this book came out. That would be a Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program. I think we have a meeting actually on the 27th I believe Mr. Stanzione, and that's with all the shareholders to potentially defer people from the criminal justice system prior to them getting arrested for a minor offense. So we use that to refer to that." Someone from the audience mentioned Project Lifesaver.

The Sheriff replied: "Oh, Project Lifesaver has been in effect for quite a long time. It's for people with Alzheimer's, we get them a bracelet basically with a GPS unit so if they wonder out, now we have two deputies trained with the equipment to activate the transceiver and we'll go look for those people." Undersheriff Brainard stated: "We do a couple of others too. We do like an apprenticeship situation with different colleges and residents that are going to college upon request, so we do the classic drive-along program, where somebody can come spend the day with us and see what a sheriff's deputy does in the course of their 12 hours that they're out there working. There's some colleges that require it for credit eligibility for certain programs to complete their education so we do that. We're very closely associated with Columbia-Greene Community College and we have several referrals a year that we entertain where the individual will come over and basically earn credit hours and get to see what law enforcement in the Greene County Sheriff's Office do on a daily basis. So, it's a good program."

Mr. Groden asked the next speaker to come to the podium and he asked her name.

The next speaker stated: "My name is Jan Perlin. Hi. I just wanted to comment on the prior discussion without reviving it, just to say that I think it's unfortunate that an exercise designed to promote more communication arises out of a kind of polarization and I think that, it's a personal opinion. The question about support for the police and having marches in some ways draws on this national conflict, if it doesn't exist here then you know, we're just exacerbating the problem before we get to even begin to have a conversation. And I think it's unfortunate that we're not including at least local town police in the conversation because..." Someone from the audience said something to the speaker and she replied: "Yes, I know, and our Police Chief from Durham is here as well. And so I just think it's unfortunate to start from an us-them perspective. I'm hoping that this Committee can keep the conversation one of open consultation and opening up spaces where it's not, you know, the police having to defend themselves and people being maybe afraid to speak or not, saying what they need to say. This Committee, I think, needs to open up those spaces to have those conversations and to be productive. I think a lot of what the Sheriff's office has said is a reflection of changed policies in terms of prevention rather than prosecuting. Trying to prevent crimes, things that cause dissidence in the community and getting to those issues before they happen. That is one of the conflicts you see in some of the national cases that have erupted where there are issues with confrontation due to a bunch of social issues including mental health problems

but also racism that still exists in our society. I don't think we can deny it. It's there. I know even in my small community there have been some minor, but maybe they're not minor, hate crimes and I think it's important for the society to pay attention to it and maybe the solution is not only figuring out who did it, but doing some other things in the community that shows that those kinds of actions and activities are not going to be tolerated. Some kind of public show of support for our shared morals in this society can repudiate some of the more negative attitudes that hurt other people. Anyway, without going on too long, I applaud your exercise and I really hope that you can bring to the table things that can share information between community and law enforcement and that can help to think about the role in different ways that our different community organizations can also support the welfare of the community without always have to rely on a show of force."

The next lady came: "Could I just say one thing, I can't stand here too long. I'd like an e-mail so I can address questions to this group. Thank you." Mr. Groden referred to Mr. Hart. Mr. Hart replied: "On the Greene County website, there is a portal that gives you the opportunity to put in your name, your address, comments or questions and it'll be part of the record. We'll attempt to answer every question we can. We may put out some frequently asked questions. Everything will go to the Committee and everything will eventually be on-line. So it's the Greene County website: "greenegovernment.gov."

The next speaker was Dr. Patricia Rossi and she stated: "Hi well, firstly, I'd just like to thank the powers that be, you know, who formed this Committee and has welcomed the Q and A community." Mr. Groden asked for her name. She stated: "By way of introduction, my name is Dr. Patricia Rossi and I've been a taxpayer and homeowner here in Greene County, specifically in Hunter on the mountaintop of Hunter for the past forty years. I was always a skier and just came up on a part-time basis up until you know four years ago when I retired and now I'm here full time. Well, you know, with that being said, I feel I have a baseline of personal reference to you know where the police force, the Sheriff's Department was then forty years ago and how its changed and progressed to where it is now. My not so abbreviated question, my curiosity, my concern is to ask what the Greene County Police Force, the Sheriff's Department has planned in the way of safety measures to combat a possible up-rise of far right supporters and groups who identify with the 'proud boy' mentality, should Donald Trump not be re-elected which is right around the corner." The Sheriff asked: "So, you're asking me what preparation we've made, so you're telling because there might be a right wing revolution of some sort?" Ms. Rossi replied: "Well, I mean..." A lady from the audience stated: "She said 'farm-boy mentality', how are you guys going to deal with that in Greene County?" The Sheriff asked Ms. Rossi: "You're going to have to tell me what that mentality is." Ms. Rossi replied: "Well, the proud-boy supporters I mean as we know have warned that there will be a civil war if Donald Trump does not get re-elected and you know, advises people to stock up on guns. I mean, this has been on the news. I'm just wondering what safety measures you have in place if this comes about, if he does not get re-elected?" The Sheriff replied: "Well, we, I don't think it matters who gets elected here. We have to protect the public safety as best we can. So our preparations would be only that, in the event there is a, we're going to have to call for help, if that's what you're looking at. We're not a large metropolitan police department. We do not have crowd control units. We don't

have the resources to deal with a large uprising. We would have to call the State Police in and any other forces to potentially be here. But fortunately we live in Greene County. I don't think that we're going to see those kind of reactions here that you're going to see in these big metropolitan areas. If we do we'll have to bring in every resource we have and just deal with it the best we can, but I don't have the, I think this is an urban concern more than any rural upstate New York concern. Not that we're not aware there may be a potential, for any type of event, but again as the Administrator said, we have 27 deputies and we've got no intelligence whatsoever that there's any organization like that in this area. Now whether there's people that support that kind of movement, potentially, but they're not going to be looking to come, there's no target, there's no viable target in Greene County that I can see them focusing on for that type of event. The infrastructure is just not here." Dr. Rossi replied: "Well, there's a definite undercurrent of which I'm personally aware, gone to a bonfire party in, I don't know what you want to call it, the woods or the forest, whatever and there's definitely issues of undercurrent activity growing and I was just wondering if you're aware of it and..." The Sheriff replied: "We are aware. We're monitoring social media. The State Police are also associated with the New York State Intelligence Center. So anything like that we would get a bulletin on, if there was any kind of, you know, there's a geofence locator looking for social media targeting words that are used. If anything like that comes across we will certainly address it as best we can. But as far as an operational plan, we're not prepared to a large scale revolution if that's what you're asking." Ms. Rossi thanked him. Mr. Groden asked: "Do you have riot gear?" The Sheriff replied: "Limited, a very limited amount, we don't, we're not prepared for that." A newspaper reporter asked Ms. Rossi how to spell her name and she replied: "'Patricia Rossi, R-O-S-S-I.'" The man thanked her.

Mr. Groden then stated: "The woman in the white, you're next. Then the lady with glasses in the middle. Then the gentleman in the back."

The next speaker stated: "Hi everyone. My name is Amy Jones. I'm from the Hudson-Catskill Housing Coalition. I'm an organizer there and I am new to it. I actually live in the City of Albany and I've worked in the law enforcement assisted diversion program, doing outreach there for many years. And I've been an outreach coordinator with the New York State Department of Criminal Justice's Gun Involved Violence Elimination program because we are an urban place and it we are, it is, we face a lot of the things that you guys are talking about. But we're kind of like tap dancing around the issue because what's happening nationally and what's happening you know right here and unfortunately I can't speak to what happens here because I am new to here. I grow up on a farm in Berne however, so I understand rural life and I understand rural poverty. And poverty is a huge driver of violence and poverty is a huge driver of survival crime. I'm happy to learn of your MCAT program, so when the Country is talking about, part of the country is talking about defunding the police right now and they're talking about taking money from local law enforcements who don't need tanks and things of that nature for a very small areas that they police, and taking that money and spending it on education, taking that money and spending it on mental health, crisis mobilization for mental health and crisis mobilization for substance abuse and alternatives to incarceration and the rest, like the law enforcement assisted diversion program, which is the only pre-arrest diversion program in the country, I think that this is an

important conversation. It sounds like the Greene County Sheriff is looking into these programs. It's important. I would say after my four years of working on the LEAD, which I do not do anymore, I would say that it is really important to collect your data and make your data transparent and look at your demographic of who you are not arresting? Who you are diverting? And I think also as far as the national conversation is concerned, this is just like we're having a global pandemic, this is a humanitarian crisis that we're facing. And I just want to say that as someone that is formerly incarcerated, formerly addicted, I've been working on the ground and organizing and working in substance abuse, homelessness, mental health. I'm direct service for over twenty years, after my incarceration and after being clean for 15 years. Well, I guess we don't say 'clean' anymore. We say abstaining from my drug of choice. And I'm almost fifty years old and I've raised two daughters and I am the black child of one white parent and where we are in our world right now, is heartbreaking. You did say when we were talking about the Back the Blue rally, yo did say 'the other side'. We're all, the woman who organized the Back the Blue talked about passionately, how important law enforcement has been to the people that she tried to protect. And I felt that. Riding along with the enhanced supervision unit, I saw atrocious things, worse things than I saw when I was actually engaging in criminal behavior. And I have a deep dear, dear friends that are police officers that call me and they cry and they say 'what do I do? what do I do? I'm afraid for my family.' And I also have that I'll still be fond with, it's very sad, called me and they cried,. And they said "what do I do, what do I do? I'm afraid for my family.' And then I also have my community is extremely important to me and I've raised over two hundred thousand dollars on my own, during Corona, since March, since the pandemic hit, for food, for kids coming out of school and things of that nature. Keeping people in their homes, getting people's cars out of repossession. I gave \$5,000 to a correctional officer who was facing immeasurable racism at the Albany County Correctional Facility at her job. I gave her \$5,000 so she could go out on disability because she was being, because the racism was unbearable for her. She was a black woman correctional officer with over 20 years in. So, I'm saying all that to say that we are facing a humanitarian crisis and it's important that we look internally and externally without calling it politics, but the personal is political and we understand that. We all have our own socialization which is why the way we think because of the way we've been socialized and I think it's an extremely important time, right now, to begin to look at our internal socialization and begin to be more human towards one another. I'm really happy to be here. I know I'm kind of an outsider because I don't live here but I'm part of the national conversation and anything that is local is also a part of the national conversation. So I appreciate this Committee. I appreciate the Governor asking to reimagine what law enforcement and public safety look like. It's been my life's work. And so thanks for listening to me." (There was applause.)

The next speaker stated: "Good evening ladies and gentlemen. My name is Jody Lynn Devine. I live in Catskill. I'm a transplant from New York City, a former law enforcement officer and my question is basically, while it's important that all officers have the basics in first aid, social training, emotional development of affected individuals, are we not putting too much on their shoulders? Asking them to do ten jobs, but not fully qualified to do any of them? I don't know if I'm making myself clear. You can be a police officer, you can be a

social worker, you can be a doctor, you can be a paramedic. You can't be all four and be one hundred per cent all the time. So, are we asking them to do too much. Thank you very much." Mr. Groden stated: "Interesting question. I think that same goes for teachers."

The next speaker stated: "My name is Annie Lansfield. I live in the Town of Catskill but in Round Top and the issue of too many hats I think is really important. I think we ask our policemen to do too many things and I think that a lot of what you talked about doing is wonderful, but tracking the people with the Alzheimer's, it's a great thing and I can see where the Sheriff should track it, but that could be a job of other people that have the skills to help the disabled or the elderly. That, I think you're trying to wear too many hats without a depth of experience or knowledge that social workers might have and I think that should be looked at in terms of what other people in the community, what other agencies can be doing some of this work. I also think we're, and I'm not in any way criticizing you specifically or any other policeman, but I think there needs to be an outside evaluation by, I heard about Albany County or Albany City Police have hired an outside agency to look through their records, to see if there's examples of racial profiling. To look at the percentages of arrests based on race. I think that needs to be looked at and not by, internally, not by saying 'you're always great'. I mean, I understand, I didn't get your name, but I think that an outside agency needs to look at the issue, not internally and those are my two points." Katie Oldakowski then stated: "So I just wanted to address the law enforcement having too many hats issue, it's really important to remember that a lot of the community organizations like specifically Mobile Crisis, we're grant funded and that might disappear in a second, where law enforcement is consistent, they have to be here, it's a constitutional thing that we have to have law enforcement and a Sheriff. And when you have a program like mine and Twin Counties we're looking at all of these cuts for 20% so when you look at these it's important to remember a lot of our programs can disappear. Hopefully, they'll still get funded." Ms. Lansfield replied: "That's my exact point. You shouldn't depend on a grant. You should be funded. That's my exact point. It shouldn't disappear. It should grow."

The next speaker stated: "Hi. So my name is Carol Morgan. I'm a criminal defense attorney. I initially started out interning with the Greene County Public Defender's office with Mr. Stanzone actually in 2001. I have a significant amount of experience with the police department and a lot of the local police agencies and what's interesting, when you're talking about the transparency of police departments, they did as of this year repeal 50A, which formerly protected the records of police personnel. So if you're looking to really access their files, I mean you could have previously FOILED it and found out it was protected under 50A. That was repealed, so we do have access to look at police department. But I think that also in my experience and I do a lot of criminal law, I usually do 3 to 4 court appearances per day minimum, five days a week and I've been doing it for almost twenty years and I can tell you without hesitation that I have not had any issues with the Greene County Sheriff's Department. I don't have clients telling me 'they've been unfair to me', 'they've treated me poorly'. I mean, of course we're going to have complaints from my clients but you know, that's, it comes with part of what we do, but I can tell you that I have not had those type of complaints where I'm so concerned that I have to contact higher ups, so I have to reach out to higher ups. So, when we're talking about Backing the Blue, or talking about the Back the

Blue march, we're not trying to politicize this but I personally could never do what these law enforcement officers do and I've seen some horrific pictures. I've seen dead bodies and I've seen, you know, people who've been harmed by other people, and stabbed or shot. I've seen all that. I don't want to go in on that scene. So we have to have a police department. We have to have these people to rely on. I want to backup and go 'you know what? I can't do that, so could you please do that.' And that's what we need these people for. And when we're talking about the Back the Blue March, my colleague that organized it, I was so happy to be a part of that, because I felt that I've relied on these people for a very long time to enforce the law because I want to live in a civilized society. I want to be able to walk my horse through the woods and you know, I want to be, I want to have that freedom. It is the only way we can do it, to have these people to enforce the laws. So what's interesting is about the woman who spoke about her concern about the, I don't know, people coming out of the woods and shooting or something if Trump is not elected, I personally attended the Back the Blue March in Cairo and I was originally going to bring my horse. But then we heard an undercurrent of protestors potentially coming, disrupting the march or doing things to harm some of the people who supported the police and I would not bring my horse to a Back the Blue march, because I thought there is going to be people who were going to cause harm to my horse. So that was a concern. But when I saw that there was police agencies there, and everybody was calm and everyone was respectful, to show their support for police, I felt a lot better. But you know what, I needed the police presence for that. And they can't be everywhere. So I think that the thought of defunding the police is just not something anyone should or could support. They're here for us and they don't get paid a lot to do it. I mean, higher up, sure, they probably make more money, but they're voluntarily putting on their outfit. They're going 'okay, I heard this domestic and I'm gonna roll on down there and I'm gonna walk in there. I could get shot. I could get stabbed. Someone could jump me from behind.' And they still show up. They show up for us, as part of our community, they help to support us so I'm here to help support them and if you have questions, you could ask a criminal defense attorney, local practicing criminal defense attorneys and they'll tell you. You know, 'I've worked with this agency. I don't have problems with this agency.' We should continue to support them. Are there things that could change? I mean off the top of my head, no, it's what we do. And now with repeal of 50A, we have access to their personnel files, so I think they're doing a pretty good job."

Mr. Groden stated: "Sir, yep. Thank you for your patience sir." The next speaker stated: "Hi. My name is Bernard Rivers. I live in the Town of Durham. I asked myself, and nothing antagonistic when I do this, why are we here? We are here because the Committee exists and it is seeking thoughts from us and questions. Why does the committee exist? Because the Governor asked that it should exist. Why did the Governor ask that it should exist? Basically, George Floyd plus Black Lives Matter. I'm simplifying, but there's something there, right? There were protests. There was a terrible death and that lead to the suggestion that committees like this exist in various places. So if I were a member of the committee I would be asking a question that I, Bernard Rivers, have no idea what the answer is, which is: is there any chance at all that another death like George Floyd could happen in Catskill? And let's be specific, under the Sheriff's Department, because the Sheriff's Department is the only

police department that has the spotlight being shown on it by this Committee. Is there any chance this could happen? I have no idea. And I'm certainly hoping the answer is no, but that's what I think the committee should be looking at. I think they should be looking at it in two sections: 1. Are there any bad apples in Sheriff's Department, because it only takes one bad apple, maybe a couple, in a large police department to do something like that. So the question is not, are 90% of the Sheriff's Department good guys? I'm sure they are. The question is are there one or two in that Department who could perhaps when sorely provoked when, whatever, they just had a row with the wife, whatever it is, something caused them to do something really stupid and bad with fatal consequences and of course much wider consequences than merely one person's death, everything else that follows. Is there any chance that that could happen and so the committee I hope would look into A) Are there any people like that in the Department? and B) Are there procedures in the department to look for problem people like that and to control them? If not throw them out then at least prevent them from doing anything like that. I think that's what the real purpose of this committee is. I can't do your work for you. I come in with no preset opinion. I've only met three members of the Sheriff's Department, two of them are sitting up there. I've met them for at least ten seconds each. I live in Cornwallville. They know Cornwallville. And I know one other. I do notice that there is only one member of the Sheriff's Department who is anything other than white. I think that's a pity. I'd like to see the balance be a little bit different but just having two or three black officers would not solve the problem if there is a problem. That, it's important, but the real problem is, could it happen here? How can we prevent it from happening here? Thank you very much."

The next speaker stated: "Hi again (Mr. Nash-Webber). So far I've heard quite a good conversation with a lot of different tentacles, a lot of different places to look at. So let me just pull up my notes. Because I wanted to get into just a couple of quick ones. The first one is actually on that similar idea, and this directly to the Sheriff. Looking specifically at one case, of Daniel Prude, this is the gentleman who was having a mental case and died as the result of police contact in, I believe it was Buffalo, Western New York, right?" (Some people said it was Rochester). Rochester. I'm sorry. My mistake. How do we assess the risk, the probability, the possibility, that a similar incident could happen with your police force, with your force and what mitigating measures can we bring about now to prevent it from happening at all and what can we do or plan for, on the back end. I come from a safety background, where I do a lot of work on the rules and the avoidance, but I also do a lot of work on how do we make people whole that are right on the backslide. So how do you assess risk, then how to prevent and then finally how to deal with it on the back." Sheriff Kusminsky stated: "It's a very complicated question. Because you're asking about an event that we don't really know the whole circumstances of exactly which portion of that went which way, but. The result, sure. You know I would hope that there's no change of that happening. Can I be a hundred percent positive of that, I don't know, but we do have de-escalation training; we have several crisis negotiators and we deal with, luckily it is a small enough community where most of the people with those issues we know. And we deal with them on a daily basis and that familiarity, most of the time, if that's the case, will prevent an

incident like that. Tragic and clearly not acceptable. How exactly those events unfolded I'm still not sure because the video is not that clear." A lady in the audience stated: "He's dead". The sheriff stated: "Yeah, we do have policies and procedures that...". The same lady in the audience said: "He's dead." The Sheriff asked: "I'm sorry?" The lady said again: "He's dead." Undersheriff Brainard stated: "Yes, he's dead. That's kind of the, the big deal is the fatal outcome, right." The lady said again: "He's dead." The Sheriff stated: "We know he's deceased. We just don't know the exact, I don't even know what the cause of death actually is listed on that, but." A lady in the audience stated: "It's 'murder'. He did a triangle push-up on his sternum. The officer did a triangle push up on his sternum, effectively and on the death certificate it says 'murder'." The Sheriff replied: "Okay. We would, our policies prohibit that type of obstruction of breathing, clearly. I don't know what the circumstances were, so that's an extremely hard question because of that." Mr. Nash-Webber stated: "Okay, fair enough. So you mentioned a couple of mitigating measures, one of which was de-escalation training. And my follow-up to that is how would you rate its effectiveness and absorption in your police force and is there a way of measuring that? There are, do we look across the broad spectrum of policing and we see other countries that see for example disarm the police officers who are motivated to de-escalate simply to keep themselves safe in a way, right?" The Sheriff replied: "We're in a different generation here with police officers. Our guys, they're more likely to talk their way out of something. It's not 20 years ago where, you know, when everyone would carry batons. That's not the type of policing we do." A lady in the audience asked if there were some women on the force. The Sheriff replied: "We have three." Lady replied: "So it's guys and gals." The Sheriff stated to Mr. Nash-Webber: "But as to your question, these individuals are much more likely to talk to people then they are to use force." Mr. Nash-Webber replied: "That's encouraging. Thank you." The Sheriff continued: "And we work very closely with MCAT and if we see that, you know, immediately see that there is a need for that, we do not hesitate to contact, they're out on my calls then..." Mr. Nash-Webber stated: "Well, that's great news. I'm glad. I'm just wondering about your program but quickly, are you, do you have monitors available 24/7? Is that something that's part of what you're doing, or?" Katie Oldakowski replied: "So we currently operate from 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m., 7 days a week, 365 days a year. From 10:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. it goes to an answering service that is specific to our team and they can take a message, they will route them directly to 911 if it's an emergency and then if it's not an emergency, take the message back that at 8:00 a.m. you can contact the person." Mr. Nash-Webber stated: "Okay. I guess for the next meeting, I'm going to look for more information about how you're funded and your..." Ms. Oldakowski replied: "You can absolutely find me afterwards." Mr. Nash-Webber stated: "Yeah, because I'd like to know how to get to you there at any time that you may be needed and more secure funding." Undersheriff Brainard then stated: "I just wanted to comment on your comfort level or how, why you folks should be comfortable with law enforcement not reacting in that way, if that situation were to come about, so you have to start off with the process of hiring a law enforcement officer in New York State. It's a very extensive process, their backgrounds are scrutinized, their friends are scrutinized, their social contacts, their professional contacts. What you see in those binders is probably about the same width of the applications they have

to fill out you know everything about them. They do our criminal history checks, they do our polygraphs, mental health, personality, scrutiny on a very high level all the way through so is there a potential for people to slip through that process that maybe have some sort of a temper or propensity to react negatively in a situation like that, absolutely. But I believe that the process that we have is very, it's very complex and I think it's very comprehensive to weed that out, I mean. One thing that I was a little taken back reading the Governor's handbook in relation to this was the suggestion that meeting those standards that we have in place should be reduced. I think that would actually negatively impact the comfort level of the community. In New York State, if you are convicted of a felony, you can't be a police officer or if you have a, what's considered a serious crime, you can't possess a weapon, so in his document that he presented, suggesting that reduction, I don't see how that would make the public more comfortable if a convicted felon was able to be a police officer, so that's just something to think about."

Mr. Nash-Webber replied: "Sure. Thank you for that. Looking at the tail end of the incident, God forbid you have a fatal incident or any other contentious call it incident, right? How do you deal with that and what sort of transparency can the community expect when that contentiousness appears? The first thing that I want to consider for example, and I don't have the answer, is does your force have a hundred per cent police scanners for transparency? Body cameras?" Mr. Groden asked: "Do you mean a body cam?" and Mr. Nash-Webber replied: "Yes." Mr. Groden stated: "At this time they do not. It was something that was brought up in the budgetary process for this cycle and it is something that will be considered in the next fiscal year." Mr. Nash-Webber stated: "I would like to voice my request that we give it some consideration. On the notion that a bad situation can quickly get worse if you don't have the transparency and the full knowledge of the incident. This day and age, not having transparency does not seem to be really an option. The records I have with regarding right sizing of the force and how that's determined. Is that in your packet, I just, I've only gotten so far through my reading." Both the Sheriff and County Administrator Groden said no. Mr. Nash-Webber then asked: "Can you or anyone tell me how the size of the force is determined for Greene County?" Sheriff Kusminsky stated: "First of all, I've only been Sheriff for about 9 months, so the force has not increased any since I've become the Sheriff. The process for it was basically the need for patrol coverage. This is a very rural community and at night, the only police departments that work twenty-four hours a day in Greene County are the Sheriff's Office, the State Police and the Village of Catskill. So, with that in mind, the 14 towns that we cover, may only have three or four patrol cars on the entire shift, so you know..." Mr. Nash-Webber stated: "I'm not, I'm not. I'm really just wondering where the formula was..." Sheriff Kusminsky replied: "I'm trying to explain to you. I believe they recommend 3 per, there is a formula, 3.6 per thousand and we're well within that range but we also want to make sure that we're able to respond in the event that there's a call. It's 650 square miles that we're covering with four patrol cars." Mr. Nash-Webber replied: "It's a big county." The Sheriff stated: "It's a lot of ground covering." Mr. Nash-Webber replied: "Agreed. Maybe for the next public hearing you'll have some sort of baseline on how the numbers vary. That's all I'm asking. And then finally, there are two others, so sorry for the time, but there is an audit for certification that was recently approved. I don't remember the

name of the company but they'll be doing an audit of your force? For \$15,000 I believe." The Sheriff replied: "Correct. Yes, we hired a consultant who actually worked for DCJS and wrote the accreditation program so we hired the best of the best basically to help us do that." Mr. Nash-Webber stated: "Wonderful. What is the scope of the audit, or what is the scope of their certification?" Sheriff Kusminsky replied: "It's basically, best practices accepted by Division of Criminal Justice Services, so we have to meet those 115 points I believe it is. We have to meet or exceed those in order to be accredited." Mr. Nash-Webber stated: "Do you know how much if any weight is put on transparency in your operations, in your open bookkeeping interpretive, I know you do a police blotter and stuff like that but I'm just wondering is any of that measured in the audit?" The Sheriff replied: "There is a degree of it. But I couldn't even tell you what without researching it, which I will do." Mr. Nash-Webber stated: "Okay. Alright, and then the last topic I wanted to touch on was the Back the Blue incident and I am, I want to voice my concern that there is fear and fear is driving a polarization in the community that may not be particularly well-founded. Some of it is very within it and some of it is based on things that are not well founded. Let me start with my own personal feedback on that motorcade, and that is to say that when I see a thin blue line American flag I recognize that as a response to the black lives matter movement. I recognize that as having come from a blue lives response to a demand that black lives have full value and as a response to that and a negation to that, I find it offensive. I really do. And I have attempted to interrogate, or I'm sorry, interrogate is a strong word, but engage in conversation and draw out from people who would display that, their motivations and I think that it comes from a very strong fear that I don't believe is truly material. I honestly I believe that there is a strong belief that according to that philosophy or movement that the police are under attack. And I haven't seen strong evidence of that. I have seen injury rates and fatality rates in the police department that appear normal. What does not appear normal is fatality rates of citizens at the hands of the police. We don't do well on that level, in that regard and so I just wanted to voice that concern that perhaps, and it isn't that their fear is not material, in a community of Ashland, there was an 'incident' I'll call it and a letter written..." A lady from the audience stated: "It was a town hall meeting, not an incident." Mr. Nash-Webber continued: "Well, there was the incident that started it was a posting on public property of that symbol. The Town Supervisor..." Mr. Groden then stated: "I'm going to reign you in here because that is not this focus here, that is..." Mr. Nash-Webber replied: "I want to get back to the focus here, I'm sorry. I am concerned with that fear of police being under attack, that the culture will develop a defensiveness and a fear and that that can cloud and bend emotions that would create that outburst. We see these incidents on full scale and a lot of them escalate when as we're told the officers involved feel threatened and that threat is very flexible sometimes in a public perception. So I guess I wanted to put it out there that not only should we have de-escalation training and we need bias training I think also, we need to look at making sure our police forces feel a sense of security and are not holding fears of being targeted. That's I guess my last thought. Thank you."

Mr. Groden stated: "I'm going to step in here. We are getting close to the two hour mark here this evening. I'm not necessarily trying to shut it down. I would ask though if you have not read the Governor's outline, I know it's a hundred and thirty something pages, please read

the outline to understand the guidelines or the focus of what the Governor is asking this Committee to look at. At our Organizational meeting, part of my presentation to this Committee was the process of how we address the interaction of law enforcement with the community when the, many of the baseline issues are substance abuse or mental health and therefore how does law enforcement handle those 911 calls? In the guidelines, one of the suggestions is to have the dispatch operations make the decision to not send law enforcement on a distress call, if they feel that law enforcement isn't the right agency to address whatever is being called in. I've got to tell you, from my years of experience with dispatch operations, that is the last thing that we need to do. A dispatcher is not a clinician. A dispatcher in a 30 second phone call cannot discern what an underlying issue is. His or her job is to dispatch emergency personnel to a situation, who then have the responsibility to diffuse and then direct where the proper assistance of help should come to. I'm very, one of the things that has been stopping me was that notion that a dispatcher is going to make a life and death decision and send a social worker to a domestic dispute when that is not the right time for a social worker to answer that call. The situation has to be diffused first and then counseling, and then whatever other underlying issues need to be addressed. My concern is to how the, not only myself as the Chair here, but I don't know how this committee, because they are in the field if you will, on a daily basis, I don't, I've been in public administration for too many years, I don't understand why we have a substance abuse problem. I don't. We have them and it is the underlying issue of criminology many times. How does this committee address the underlying issues of poverty. Can we find out as to how that is to be addressed from a law enforcement standpoint. Deputies are not going to solve those social issues, but the underlying issues are what's causing the 911 call to be placed in the first place. So if you have not read the 133 pages, please read them. Understand the genesis of what the Governor's thought process here and the examples that are listed there as to how police reacted to certain situations, every one of those situations transpired in a very urban center. A city with a million people or something like that. That's not to suggest that the underlying issues don't transcend rural America. We have our poverty. We have our racism. We have those same issues, but the example given tonight in Rochester and what have you, this Department, I know it's always amazes me when I see these scenes on TV and you see the police department has its shield and the helmets and the elbow pads and, I'm like, you're only going to see that in a metropolitan area. We don't have that type of outfit. We're not an urban center but we do have some of the same underlying issues, so please read the report. Now, I'll turn it back to you. Anybody else got any questions to the committee? Okay, sir." The next speaker stated: "Alright. Hello, my name is Jacob Becvar. I live in Catskill. I'm a homeowner. This isn't really a question more of a suggestion for future meetings. We're in the middle of a pandemic and the two people here who represent law enforcement on this side of the table here are not wearing masks. Kind of doesn't make much sense to me. That's about it folks. Thank you."

Next a lady came up and stated: "Hello everyone. I'm Laura Morgan and I appreciate very much an opportunity to learn from this Committee and I have some questions as well. I moved here from the mid-west where recently we have had this example in Michigan of people who want to kidnap the Governor and start a civil war and they're from an extreme

right wing militia group and they were in the country-side and this concerns me very much because I want to know what we are doing to be sure that these types of right-wing militias are not forming here and also I have heard that in some forces around the country, that there has been some entry into the police of white supremacists and other people affiliated with them, so this concerns me very much. I mean I've had wonderful experiences with the police here but I'm an older woman of European descent with a slight British accent and I'm just the opposite of the kind of person who gets into trouble with the police. So I'm not really asking on my behalf. I'm concerned about young kids who don't look like me and who are of the other sex, because it's mostly men who have been hurt by the police, so I think is absolutely wonderful what you all are doing. I think we should consider that self-examination is not a sign of accusation or weakness. It's a sign of our healthfulness and strength as a community that we can look at the way we're working and do better. And to that end, I hope we will look elsewhere around America but also abroad and see what other countries are doing with dramatically less violence, less racism and see if we can learn from them. I've heard myself that when Police in Japan were selected, they were intentionally subjected to dreadful insults of all kinds and if they lost their composure, they were not hired. And I think it's interesting to understand. Just as I learned from my wonderful neighbors here in Catskill, we can learn from other countries who do things in a little different way. And I think people have made superb comments here. We're not concerned about all the things the police are doing well, and I am pleased to learn more about them tonight. We're concerned about preventing bad things that might happen in the future. And people being hurt grievously as we have observed that they've been hurt in Minneapolis and in Rochester and elsewhere when they're just driving around or running along a nice suburban street down in Georgia you know a young man was shot, not by the police, by other people. But they're were feelings that are growing in some segments of our community and we want to make sure that they don't grow here. So I would like myself to know more about the training, the selection of training of police officers to make certain we don't have this white supremacy ideology which I find abhorrent and against every principal of civilized and religious thinking. I want to be sure that's the case and I've been disappointed in Catskill when I go into government office and the Police Station to find very few people of color. I know that government jobs and jobs at the post office and the police force are great tickets to a middle-class life so this concerns me so I would like this committee to present information to us about how the hiring is done. How we can be assured that we don't have white supremacy and prejudice among members of our police force. And also how we can be a more peaceful community along with spending all this money on the jail, and spending money also on mediation and arbitration to solve problems more amicably. And with that, I'll wish you all a good night. Thank you very much."

Mr. Groden then stated: "I will address, just for the background for you. The process of recruitment. We have what's called a Civil Service system in the county, actually the State and the majority of government employment begins with a Civil Service test and if you pass that test, that's the domino if you will that goes through the hiring practice. We the Sheriff and I and the Undersheriff have discussed the fact of how, how can we increase our recruitment activity? Is it the Job Fair? Is it Career Night at the Community college or

whatever, but at the end of the day, even though outreach can try to entice people into public employment, the first notch everyone has to follow though, they have to be able to take that Civil Service test, and not only pass the Civil Service Test, but then you are ranked, from the highest score to the lowest score and depending upon the number of people who took that test and the number of vacancies that are available, then allows us to begin the interview process. So I agree, we need to have more diversity in the workforce, but that first domino cannot be by-passed. So how do you, I don't know what the answer is to that, but I don't want you to walk away thinking that there's an undertow here trying to prevent the recruitment. You have to be able to take that test, and that's really, probably 90 to 95 per cent of municipal employment commences with taking a test. And you have to pass that test first. Doesn't mean you can't try to recruit, but it does mean after that, you have to be able to pass that test. Alright, so we are now at the two hour mark. I'm going to come back to my Committee and I don't know if anybody has any round-up thoughts at this point, but we do need to go forward at the Organizational meeting you did talk and reserve two weeks from tonight which I believe is the 28th, as your next session to meet and we talked about changing the venue, moving out of Catskill so that our geography is fair to the other residents. I will also say that we've had calls from people who are concerned about social distancing and can we Zoom these meetings. Technologically it would be very difficult to zoom this meeting but we hope to be able to try to get some interaction and if nothing else, maybe tape it and see if it can be broadcast on U-tube and that kind of thing for those people who can't get to us. So I'm just going to turn it over, I'm just going to go left and right." These Committee members had the following comments:

Pastor Snowden stated: "I would just encourage as it was said earlier by the county administrator that you make sure that you read the documents, because the documents will actually help formulate the kinds of questions and suggestions that are what our purpose is and the better you can be prepared, the better we can get right to the meat of every suggestion and question. That would be just an encouragement just so that our next time together that you would have a real clear understanding of what the Governor is asking of us because we're on this Committee, my understanding is that we're looking for the actual feedback around surrounding what the Governor has purposed us and we want to do it and do it with clarity and with all the exactness that we possibly can, so that we do I invite you and value your thoughts and opinions but we would really want that if you could be prepared so that we have a lot to sit down and talk about, muddle through and come out with some really good stuff that will impress the masses so, but thank you for everyone that shared something. Thank you."

Mr. Groden then stated: "I would point out, before I go down the line, part of the book and part of what's online in addition to the Governor's outline is the "Operational Policies and Procedures", how the Sheriff's Department operates, how they, 'use of force', so read those. There's also a section on training. It's not 100% on all training but it's meant to give you some indication of some of the training that they do go through and its got training that happens once in the academy, continue on with 40 annual hours a year that every deputy has to go through. Some of them are refresher trainings or as things change in the field, we will assign a deputy to become train the Trainer if you know what that expression means and then

they come back and conduct the training exercise. Lastly, there are statistics in here. We just arbitrarily picked the last three years of the activities from the Sheriff's Department. This is just raw data. Just numbers, but it will give you arrest records and that type of stuff and you'll be able to see some of what concerns me is the levels of substance abuse issues. It's just, how do you address that? To this day I don't know how to address it. I'm gonna have MCAT help me out I guess." Katie Oldakowski stated: "I've got you Shaun." (laughter). Rabbi Zak then stated: "So I just wanted to say what a wonderful opportunity it is to have the Sheriff and Undersheriff here who could answer so many of our questions and teach us all more about what they do. I also very much appreciate that we have so many officers here from the police department and I'm just wondering if any of our officers want to share anything. We so appreciate your presence and you're here I know protecting us as you always do when you show up. You've been very quiet and we're here in public, I just want to make sure if any of you have something to share or respond to someone, or something that's been asked or comment on, you have that opportunity." There was no reply.

Rev. Turpin then stated: "I'd like to thank all of you for coming out. It was very important. Tonight it seemed like it was a meeting within a meeting and most of the dialogue was sent to our Sheriff and Undersheriff where we wanted to hear from you. We wanted to hear the complaints that you have, without hearing the complaining, that is directed to us. It is hard for us to reform something without hearing your side, so hopefully going forward that after this first hearing, you know people's guards will come down a little bit, you can speak. It's an open forum and we needed to hear how you felt if something that might have happened to you, something that might have happened to your grandchild or your uncle or your niece, so that we can look at it, chase it down and maybe find a bad apple that were talking about. We're not here, this meeting was not to come and put away or throw mud on our police officers and our Sheriff's Department. That's the last thing that we're here for. They are to protect and to serve. But we need you, this Committee, this committee is like we're a gun, you're the bullet. And if we have no bullets, we're not going to be able to put something on the Governor's office, the Governor's desk and say 'this is what you need to look at for our area.' Thank you."

Mr. Friedman stated: "I also want to say thank you to all of you for coming. Your feedback, your various perspectives are really important for us when we're making considerations for recommendations. We also felt your frustration about not having the inclusion in this process of all of the towns in what we are working on. One of the things we have requested of Shaun to see if we can arrange a meeting where this Committee meets with the heads of the other PDs to get their perspective of where they're going to be coming from in this process, so that is something that we have requested, and I think that we'll get to that point in one of our future meetings. We certainly share some of your frustrations and we're certainly going to be taking everything that we've heard here tonight and hopefully you will go on the website and give us more feedback if you will feel more comfortable doing that in a more private setting through e-mail without having a public airing if that makes you uncomfortable. The one thing I do want to say which makes our job difficult is that if you look at the statistics that we've been presented and my conversations with the Sheriff and them going back through their records, they've had no complaints against the Sheriff's Officers going back, Pete you'll

correct me if I'm wrong, seven (7) years since the last complaint. So that makes our job difficult. We don't know, you can't fix the problem if you don't know what the problem is. The last thing I'll say is we had a very interesting discussion about possibly seeing if there was an opportunity for more community policing and what we mean by that is more outreach by the deputies in just visiting in the communities in a non-law enforcement setting, even when they're on the job. But just going into settings where they can socialize with people so that, it was brought up several times here tonight, about making sure that the deputies aren't considered their enemy. So those conversations are ongoing but without I will absolutely backup what the Reverend just said, without you giving us some guidance on what your concerns are, it will make our job more difficult, so please keep the dialog coming our way. I'm sorry we've been so long."

District Attorney Stanzione stated: "Thank you Shaun. I too would like to thank everybody for being here. As Chief Law Enforcement Officer of Greene County, I need to know that our officers can effectively and safely perform their duties and that they can do so in a manner that's acceptable to the members of the community. The community should feel like the police officers are there for you. I mean, that's their job to serve and to protect our communities. And we know that our community has that bond with our police officers and so my question is: do we have problems that inhibit this bond between the communities and the police officers and if so, we need to hear that from you. If there are issues, if there are problems, state what the problems are because once we hear what these problems are if any exist, then we can start work to fix these problems. And that's the whole purpose, or part of the purpose of this organization. So hopefully you'll come forward with any issues, any problems that you care to discuss, and bring that to our attention so that we can hopefully address them. Thank you."

Public Defender Angelo Scaturro stated: "Just briefly, I want to thank everyone for joining us with our Committee here. I know it's getting late. We do welcome all the feedback that's being provided, and we look for more. I think the more information we have, the better informed the Committee is to make decisions. It's my understanding though that the local police agencies, whether it is an agency or a town or a village, they should be doing this committee themselves, so while our focus is on the Sheriff's Department there are other committee members or other committees being formed to deal with the Town and the Village police agencies, so there should be other oversight on those, on that. So, but I do want to thank you."

Mr. Groden then stated: "Alright ladies and gentlemen. I would ask you then to watch our website, contribute to it, ask a question, throw a question in. And again, that information was gleaned by Warren's office. That question will then be put up so that the community can read it in its entirety. We will list every question put to us. We will also be developing our own questions to make sure they get a good raw base of exposure of issues. This committee will again meet on the 28th, what I'm going to have to do is, we're going to move. So I'm going to, I have to secure a venue. At this time, I think it's going to be the 911 Emergency Operations Center in Cairo, what's called the basement training center. It's not as big as this but if we have the same number of people tonight as we would do on the 28th, we could probably just about get everybody in and still have a safe, a safe outline. And unless anybody

else has a, sorry?" Mr. Groden was asked about the time of the meeting on the 28th and he replied: "I would do it again at 6:00 o'clock. I want to make sure with my Committee but I'm going to say that it would again be at 6:00 o'clock, probably the same time frame, from six to eightish type time frame. Watch the website. I'll confirm the venue location and if we can put an Agenda out in advance, I'll try to get that to you as I speak to the members themselves and then thereafter we'll do, again, my goal or my thought is two meetings October, two meetings November, two meetings December and then eventually we'll have to focus on the issues that we want to put in the draft report and then kick that draft report around a little bit, then I need to have it out in January. That's not that far away. I'm already getting Christmas catalogs in the mail. That's how fast it's coming. And my Board works on a cycle, every month they have a committee meetings, then a full Board meeting. So I have to make sure that any final report gets to them in time in March in order for me to get it into the Governor's hands by April 1st. Again, please read the Governor's outline. I think if you go through the outline and some of the things that he feels that needs to be addressed, then we can talk about it. We either have instances that fall under that category, or maybe we don't, but that's the guideline. That's what he wants us to review. It's all on-line. The minutes from tonight eventually will be online. The minutes of the first meeting will be on-line. I don't like the word 'transparency' but I can't be any more clearer than that. Everything we do will be for full public viewing, public comment, even in the negative, bring it on at this point. Let's peel the onion back and little bit and see what we see. I'm not sure it's all that bad, but that does not mean there isn't room for improvement and with that, I wish you good night. Thank you very much." This meeting closed at 8:26 p.m.