

Dexter Police Department



NYS Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative

James Eves, Mayor of the Village of Dexter
Christine E Kennedy, Chief of Police

Community Stakeholders

Patty Dziuba, Jefferson County District Attorney's Office

Scott Gray, County Chairperson Jefferson County Board of Legislators

Tim Ruetten, Director of Community Services, Jefferson County

Julie Hutchins, Jefferson County Public Defender

Philip Reed, Jefferson County Legislature

Kristine Maloney, Jefferson County Department of Probation

Tammy Kitto, Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County

Linda Dittrich, Associate Vice President School of STEM and Health Professions @ JCC

Sam Purington, Volunteer Transportation Center

Anita Seefried-Brown, Pivot Prevention and Health Services

Sally Buyea, Pastor @ Dexter Methodist Church

David Ramie, Dexter Elementary School, General Brown Central School District

Judy Kirch, B & J Bait Shop

Jennifer Thomas, Dexter Free Library

Colleen Acevedo, Frontier Housing

David Crawford, Willie's Bulldog Tavern

Justin Green, Dexter Market

Jill Bruce, Johnson Funeral Home

Rachel Longamore, resident Dexter

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Overview of Change

“The New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative” requires local police agencies to develop a plan based on community input. Per the governor’s report, “This executive order is intended to help rebuild the confidence and restore trust between police and the communities they serve by requiring localities to develop a new plan for policing in the community based on fact-finding and meaningful community input.” The Dexter Police Department (DPD) is going to identify the programming and directives that address the issues outlined in the governor’s order. The police department will do so by identifying our current policies and procedures which help achieve these missions as well as identifying new programming and directives that have been developed or are in the process of being developed. These will be described and highlighted in each section as we progress through this plan.

As we begin to address these topics/issues, it is important to know that the DPD bases all of its policies and procedures on a mission statement that is outlined in our Rules and Regulations.

Dexter Police Department Mission Statement

The Dexter Police Department is committed to serving the citizens of Dexter and Jefferson County, NY by:

- Respecting the civil rights of each citizen as set forth by the Constitution of the United States and New York State.
- Educating the public so they don’t fall victim to crime.
- Enforcing all laws and court orders, without prejudice.
- Training and enhancing the professionalism of our members so they can perform their duties to the highest degree of efficiency and effectiveness.
- Working in harmony with all facets of the federal, state, county and other municipal governments for the common goal of protecting and serving the people.

Policy and Procedure

The Dexter Police Department has in place a comprehensive and updated policy and procedure reference manual. Upon employment, all officers are issued such manual and such manual provides structure, guidance and oversight to perform their duties. This manual is reviewed and updated as needed per NYS DCJS guidelines, change in laws or policies of NYS. At any time, this manual is available for review by any and all citizens, complainants or government officials.

These policies encompass four principal goals:

1. To increase the effectiveness and efficiency of law enforcement agencies utilizing existing personnel, equipment, and facilities to the extent possible;
2. To promote increased cooperation and coordination among law enforcement agencies and other agencies that provide criminal justice services;
3. To ensure the appropriate training of law enforcement personnel;
4. To promote public confidence in law enforcement agencies.

9 Topics of Discussion and Overview

1. Use of Force

The DPD members are trained and certified by the Municipal Police Training Council (MPTC). NYS DCJS mandates 11 hours of instruction for Use of Force and Deadly Physical Force which is based on NYS Penal Law, Article 35. Many other courses including Defensive Tactics and Firearms have use of force lessons woven within the course. Our policy is based on the NYS DCJS model policy which includes a form for any use of force incident that becomes part of the case file. All cases are reviewed by the Chief of Police and Jefferson County District Attorney's Office, if needed. Per NYS DCJS Policy, a Use of Force report is submitted monthly through the EJustice Portal.

2. Crowd Management

DCJS provides 3 hours of regulated training at the Basic Police School and at times, yearly In-Service Training will address this topic. In the event Crowd Control is needed, the incident will be turned over to the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) or the New York State Police (NYSP) as our personnel and equipment is limited. DPD will assume an assisting agency duty.

3. Community Policing

DPD participates in a vast variety of community policing with citizens, schools, churches, and businesses in the village. DPD participates in parade details, open houses, school visits, foot patrols, and stakeholder meetings are to name a few. Community Policing is paramount in our patrol procedure and the public is welcome to speak to our officers on any topic.

4. Community Outreach Efforts

This is related to and part of Community Policing. DPD proudly participates in community events. We collaborate with schools, community organizations and victim's services groups to educate the public. DPD partners with Project Gun Safe to distribute free gun locks to the community. We also work closely with the local Fire Departments and Ambulance Squads. Community Outreach and Community Policing are major influences of the DPD.

5. Implicit Bias and Awareness Training

Our mission statement, policies and training address the impact of implicit bias on one's behavior. Our officers are trained to recognize the concept and act or react appropriately. Courtesy, professionalism and respect for others is linked throughout our training, policies and accountability. Cultural Diversity, Bias Related Incidents and Sexual Harassment is trained in the Basic Course for Police Officers (BCPO) which is regulated by DCJS. Ethical Awareness and Cultural Diversity topics are included in the Watertown Police Department (WPD) and JCSO In-Service curriculum. Members of the DPD will also utilize a yearly on-line training program specializing in this topic from Silver State Consulting Group LLC.

6. De-Escalation Training.

De-Escalation techniques are part of every reality-based training scenario. These scenarios are part of the yearly In-Service training offered by the WPD or JCSO. NYS defensive tactics training has recently been redesigned to include and reinforce decision making and communication skills in an effort to achieve voluntary compliance without the need of physical force. Training in crisis intervention focuses on understanding emotional crisis, mental health encounters and if possible, redirecting a person in crisis to counselors, services or agencies that can resolve such issues. Members of the DPD will utilize the De-Escalation on-line training program offered by Silver State Consulting Group LLC.

7. Restorative Justice Practices (RJP).

RJP is a response to crime that involves organizing a meeting between an offender and a victim so they share their experience of what happened, discuss who was harmed and how to create a consensus for what the offender can do to repair the harm. The Office of the District Attorney, Jefferson County Probation or the Court can assist with Restorative Justice. DPD does not have officers, staff or facilities for RJP but can assist the victim and/or offenders with contact to the Jefferson County Resolution Center or Youth Court of Jefferson County.

8. Transparent Citizen Complaint Procedures.

DPD accepts personnel complaints from the public at any time. All complaints are investigated with the complainants advised of the outcome. The Chief will investigate officer complaints with the respective Mayor informed. If the complaint is warranted and needs an outside investigation, the JCSO or NYSP and Jefferson County District Attorney's office will be forwarded the complaint. If the complaint is against the Chief of Police, the respective Mayor will investigate and include the JCSO or NYSP and Jefferson County District Attorney's Office.

9. Specific Issues Unique to our Area.

The DPD welcomes all input from community members, School Officials, Clergy, Business Owners and visitors. If any community group, resident, stakeholder or visitor have a complaint, encounter, idea or correspondence; the DPD will respond and investigate or offer assistance. The DPD will continue to reach out to the community and maintain an open-door relationship. Community input is paramount to a successful police department.

Departmental Training

It is the policy of the Dexter Police Department that all sworn officers in accordance with DCJS will receive at least twenty-one (21) hours of in-service training annually. This training will be done in part with the City of Watertown Police Department or the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, whichever is available.

Part of the twenty-one (21) hours must be devoted to the following areas:

- Firearms Training / Range / Reality Based Training
- Subject Management / Use of Force Review
- Use of Deadly Force Review
- Legal Updates
- Bloodborne Pathogen / Hepatitis Awareness Review / Radiological
- Taser Training
- Workplace Violence Prevention
- Collapsible Baton
- Oleoresin Capsicum Aerosol Training
- CPR and/or First Aid Training
- Sexual Harassment Training
- Policy and Procedure Manual updates

The Dexter Police Department will also be required to review certain policies on a yearly basis and attend online training classes offered by NYS DCJS and Silver State Consulting Group LLC as they are available.

These training sessions and policies will include the following:

- NYS DCJS Hate Crime Policy
- Dexter Police Department Duty to Intercede Policy
- Online NYC DCJS training opportunities
- Implicit Bias/Racial Profiling Training
- De-Escalation Training

The Dexter Police Department will review and train on the following on a yearly basis:

- Community and Public Input
- Mental Health and Hygiene Situations

Community and Public Input. The Dexter Police Department will utilize public input and interviews throughout the year. Collaborative partnerships between the law enforcement agency and the individuals and organizations they serve will be used to develop solutions to problems and increase trust in police.

Mental Health and Hygiene Situations. The Dexter Police Department recognizes the importance of mental health and wellness. This includes mental health for not only members of the public but members of the department as well.

Public: It is the policy of the Dexter Police Department to take appropriate action when a person appears to be mentally ill and is conducting himself / herself / their self in a manner which is likely to result in serious harm to himself / herself / their self or others. This may include taking custody of an individual to prevent harm. Officers should always use the least amount of force necessary to safely take people into custody (following all policies and procedures) when this must be done. We further recognize that mental health is not in and of itself a crime, and should not be handled in the same way. All efforts should be made to connect people in crisis with the appropriate services to avoid the need for police custodial interventions.

Department Personnel: The Dexter Police Department recognizes that Law Enforcement is one of the most stressful occupations with higher-than-average rates of alcohol abuse, divorce and other stress related issues. We promote emotional health and wellness through exercise and healthy living. The villages will also provide any officer the ability to contact Employee Assistance Programs if needed. These services are available 24/7, 365 days, to any employee in crisis.

Citizen and Internal Complaints

It is the policy of the Dexter Police Department to establish policies and procedures for accepting civilian complaints and standards that define the authority, policy and procedures for receiving, accepting, reporting, and conducting internal investigations within the Dexter Police Department as well as define the authority and responsibility delegated to departmental supervisors for the maintenance of discipline. To a large degree, the public image of this Department is determined by the professional response of The Department to allegations of misconduct by members. The Dexter Police Department shall:

1. Promptly, competently, professionally and impartially investigate all complaints relative to The Department or its members' responses to community needs.
2. Take appropriate corrective action, to include disciplinary action in all cases where an investigation substantiates a violation of law, orders, rules, regulations, policies or procedures of the Dexter Police Department. The Department encourages citizens to bring forward legitimate complaints regarding misconduct by department members. Department members shall receive complaints courteously and shall handle them efficiently. Complaints, regardless of their nature, can be received in person, by mail, by email, or by phone at any time. If another agency needs to be contacted, it will be done without delay. Other agencies to be contacted could be the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, the New York State Police and/or the Jefferson County District Attorney's Office.

Statistical Data Collection

Community Survey posted on the Village of Dexter website - 11/2/2021 – 2/2/2021

We received 7 responses to the Community Survey on Public Safety and Law Enforcement. The results are as follows:

To what extent does the Village Police Department develop relationships with community members (ex: residents, organizations, and groups)?

- Not at all 2
- A little
- Somewhat
- A lot 4
- To a great extent 1

To what extent does the Village Police Department regularly communicate with community members (ex. websites, e-mails or public meetings)?

- Not at all 2
- A little
- Somewhat 3
- A lot 2
- To a great extent

To what extent does the Village Police Department make it easy for community members to provide input (ex. comments, suggestions and concerns)?

- Not at all 2
- A little
- Somewhat 3
- A lot 2
- To a great extent

To what extent does the Village Police Department work together with community members to solve local problems?

- Not at all 1
- A little 1
- Somewhat 1
- A lot 3
- To a great extent 1

Community policing involves the Village Police Department working with the community to address the causes of crime in an effort to reduce problems themselves. Based on this definition, to what extent does the Village Police Dept. practice community policing?

- Not at all 1
- A little
- Somewhat 2
- A lot 3
- To a great extent 1

Please select the issue you think is the greatest problem within our community.

- Traffic Issues/Residential Speeding 4
- Drug Abuse 1
- Burglary (Auto)
- D.W.I. 1
- Disorderly Conduct/Public Intoxication
- School Safety 1
- Burglary (Residential)
- Domestic Violence (Adult)

To what extent do you feel safe in your community when you are outside during the day?

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat 1
- A lot 1
- To a great extent 5

To what extent do you feel safe in your community when you are alone outside during the night?

- Not at all
- A little 1
- Somewhat 1
- A lot 4
- To a great extent 1

To what extent do Village officers treat people fairly?

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat 1
- A lot 2
- To a great extent 4

To what extent do Village officers show concern for community members?

- Not at all
- A little 1
- Somewhat
- A lot 3
- To a great extent 3

To what extent are Village officers respectful?

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat 2
- A lot 1
- To a great extent 4

To what extent is the Village Police Department responsive to the concerns of community members?

- Not at all 1
- A little
- Somewhat 2
- A lot 2
- To a great extent 2

To what extent do you trust the Village Police Department?

- Not at all
- A little 1
- Somewhat 1
- A lot 1
- To a great extent 4

Over the last 12 months, to what extent have your feelings of SAFETY in the community increased, decreased or stayed the same?

- Increased safety 2
- Decreased safety 1
- Stayed the same 4

If you had contact with a Village Officer during the past 12 months, to what extent did the officer sufficiently explain their actions and procedures?

- Not at all 2
- A little
- Somewhat 2
- A lot 1
- To a great extent 1
- Blank 1

To what extent is the Village Police Department effective at proactively preventing crime?

- Not at all 1
- A little
- Somewhat 2
- A lot 4
- To a great extent

To what extent is the Village Police Department addressing the problems that really concern you?

- Not at all 1
- A little
- Somewhat 1
- A lot 3
- To a great extent 2

To what extent are you satisfied with the overall performance of the Village Police Department?

- Not at all 1
- A little
- Somewhat 1
- A lot 3
- To a great extent 2

How many times in the past 12 months have you had contact with Village Police Department for TRAFFIC ISSUES (ex: citation, warning or accident)?

- 0 times 7
- 1-2 times
- 3-4 times
- 5-6 times
- 7 or more

How many times in the past 12 months have you had contact with Village Police Department for EMERGENCY 911 Calls?

- 0 times 7
- 1-2 times
- 3-4 times
- 5-6 times
- 7 or more

To what extent are you satisfied with your interaction(s) with the Village Police Department for TRAFFIC ISSUES?

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied 1
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 3
- Satisfied 2
- Very satisfied 1

How many times in the past 12 months have you had contact with the Village Police Department for EMERGENCY 911 CALLS?

- 0 times 7
- 1-2 times
- 3-4 times
- 5-6 times
- 7 or more

How many times in the past 12 months have you had contact with the Village Police Department for NON EMERGENCY CALLS? (Ex: to report a crime or suspicious activity)?

- 0 times 6
- 1-2 times 1
- 3-4 times
- 5-6 times
- 7 or more

To what extent are you satisfied with your interaction(s) with the Village Police Department for OTHER CONTACTS or INTERACTIONS?

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 2
- Satisfied 4
- Very satisfied 1

How many years have you lived in the Village Dexter?

- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years 3
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 25-30 years
- 30-35 years 1
- 35-40 years
- Over 41 3
- Do not live in either village

What is your gender?

- Female 4
- Male 2
- Prefer not to answer 1

Are you Hispanic or Latino?

- Yes
- No 7
- Prefer not to answer

What is your race?

- White 7
- Prefer not to answer
- Black or Afr. American
- American Indian
- Asian
- Blank

What category describes your age?

- 18-29 years 1
- 30-39 years 2
- 40-49 years 1
- 50-59 years 1
- 60-69 years
- 70 + 2

Putting the Plan in Place

Planning – September 2020

Community Input November 2020 to February 2021

Drafting Plan – December 2020 to February 2021

Board Meeting with Public Hearing February 2021

Board Approval and Ratification – March 2021