

**An Assessment of the Culture, Community
Relations, Use of Force, Training, Disciplinary
Practices of the Police Department**

CITY OF NEWBURGH, NEW YORK

FINAL DRAFT REPORT

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February 2013 the Matrix Consulting Group began the project to conduct an organizational effectiveness and efficiency study of the Newburgh Police Department. Introductory meetings, interviews, data collection, analysis, and review of interim deliverables occurred from February through June 2013.

The Newburgh Police Department provides a wide range of law enforcement services for 29,026 residents (U.S. Census Bureau 2011 estimate) and covering a land area of 3.8 square miles. The population of Newburgh has remained stable over the last 10 years. To provide law enforcement services in Newburgh, the Police Department is staffed with 74 sworn full time employees and 11 civilian employees for a total of 85 full time equivalent (FTE) positions. One Lieutenant is assigned to manage each of the three Divisions: Operations, Investigations and Administration.

After the initial meeting with the City Project Committee, the Matrix Consulting Group project team conducted interviews with 31 members of the Department and several other City officials, collected data relevant to this study to facilitate the analysis of all services provided by the Department, including patrol, investigations, records, training and technology.

Additionally, an anonymous employee survey was distributed to regular members of the Department and the project team received 35 responses, only a 41% response rate which is somewhat lower than typically seen in other police department studies conducted by the project team throughout the United States. The survey results served to provide a snapshot of employees' beliefs and perceptions, and also served to

supplement the project teams' understanding of the Department; a summary of the survey responses is attached as Appendix B.

Two community focus groups were also conducted in March 2013 and several other individual interview of citizens occurred which resulted in participation of nine community members; refer to Appendix C for details of their input.

This report is divided into the following chapters:

- Executive Summary
- Evaluation of Management of the Police Department
- Evaluation of Operations Division
- Evaluation of Investigations Division
- Evaluation of Administrative Division

Each chapter includes information, evaluation, analysis and appropriate recommendations for the different work units of the Department. In this analysis the project team evaluated the strengths of the organization as well as the areas where improvement may be warranted. In any organization such as the Newburgh Police Department there are many opportunities for improvement and in a study such as this one, the focus is most commonly on the areas needing improvement. In this report recommendations are only made when the project team has identified an area where a change should be made to improve function, practice or efficiency – cost efficiency, process efficiency or an improvement to the current business practice. Each recommendation is listed in the appropriate section in the body of the report and also summarized in a table later in this section.

Overall, NPD line level employees and managers alike expressed and exhibited a high level of commitment to the organization and service to the public, both in the individual interviews and in the employee survey. In any organization, the people working in the organization are the most valuable resources and their commitment and dedication to their job is the primary factor in providing high quality services to the community. The day to day dedication of all employees is a very positive factor in NPD's overall organizational performance, and is most visible when interacting and dealing with members of the public.

The table below lists all of the recommendations and/or improvement opportunities that are made in the various chapters and sections of this report.

Recommendations
Chapter 2 – Evaluation of Department Management
The Chief of Police should continue the efforts of his officers to regularly engage the community as a partner of the Department. These efforts should be documented in a report presented to the City Manager and Council as well as made public to demonstrate the positive efforts of the Police Department. Page 9
The Chief of Police should be tasked with developing a staff committee for the establishment of a formal strategic plan that includes a vision of what the NPD should be 3-5 years in the future, goals for improvement, and an action plan that defines each goal specifically, when it is to be accomplished, and who is responsible for completing the tasks. Page 10
The Chief and the command staff should be tasked with developing an integrated problem-identification process, including the use of crime analysis, that should be used to guide efforts in understanding and serving the community's needs. Page 14
The Chief should formally implement a Community Policing and Problem-Solving (COPPS) policy for the Department supported by training of personnel at all levels. Page 14
Modify the Response to Resistance form to only document a use of force incident occurred and refer to the police report for details. Page 16
Modify the Accident Investigation General Order, #O-012, Section IV, to clarify if the Accident Review Board findings and recommendations made to the Chief regarding officer involved accidents are advisory only or if they are binding on the Chief. Page 16
The Chief and the command staff must develop a system of data collection so that the response to meeting goals and objectives can be measured. Page 17
The Chief and the command staff must develop an internal and external performance reporting system based on these goals and objectives. Page 17

Recommendations
The Chief should establish a working committee to assess the personnel performance evaluation system and design, develop, and implement a system that is specific to the needs of the Department. Page 19
The Chief should be tasked with improving the personnel evaluation system which should include a methodology to prepare supervisors and managers to perform their functions successfully as well as assume the responsibilities of their supervisor when needed. Page 21
Continue to send Sergeants and Lieutenants to supervisory and management training programs but also identify other possible management training programs for executive level training of management personnel. Page 21
The Chief should direct improvements to the Internal Affairs process, including assigning a specific investigator to conduct the investigation; requiring a formal report; recorded interviews of the reporting party, witnesses and involved officers; a summary "check sheet" that clearly documents the date of each step in the investigation; copies of letters to the reporting party; and a "findings" form signed by the Chief. Page 30
The Chief and City Manager should initiate a review of applicable State law and City policy to determine exactly what information may be provided to the reporting party in an administrative investigation involving an officer. Page 30
The Chief should revise police and implement a Discipline Decision Guide that is in accordance with the State laws and City policies, to include a disciplinary matrix that lists categories and examples of types of misconduct acts within each category similar to the disciplinary matrix and the definitions of discipline levels provided above. Page 30
The Chief should formalize the process that he uses to allow input from the management team so that it optimizes his foundation for making disciplinary decisions. Page 30
Provide a summary to all employees (semi-annually or annually) regarding the number and types of complaints received and the disposition of complaint investigations, including the discipline that was imposed, subject to state law. Page 30
Eliminate the practice of "command discipline" where an employee that is suspended is allowed to take vacation hours in lieu of the hours of suspension. Page 30
The Chief and his command staff should design and implement a plan that develops leadership capabilities within the Department. Page 33
The Chief and command staff should meet off site once per year for 2-day planning session that relates directly to meeting Department goals and objectives. This meeting may need to be facilitated by a third party for the first session. Page 33
The Chief and command staff should meet off site at least once per year with all supervisors to follow up the command staff off site meeting and develop action plans relating directly to the Department goals and objectives. Page 33
The Chief and command staff should meet every two months with the supervisors so that internal communications can be maintained. Page 33
The City should provide the necessary funds to make necessary repairs to the building to eliminate water leaks, provide for proper storage of business records and remove unwanted items. Page 35
Fund one additional Records Unit position – a full time position if funding can be obtained. Page 36
Volunteers should be sought to provide staff the front counter during normal business hours. Page 36
Chapter 3 – Evaluation of the Operations Division
The Chief and management team should be tasked with developing a shift trade policy with reasonable guidelines, and that does not allow employees to work 16 hours (two 8 hour shifts). Page 45

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Recommendations
The Chief and management team should review leave usage by employees and develop a near term goal to reduce usage to 400 hours annually and a long term goal to reduce it to 350 hours or less. A companion recommendation, and directly associated with leave usage hours, is to reduce the number of "backfill" overtime hours used by the Department. Page 48
Annually review the attrition rate and if it remains near the 9% level plan to replace approximately 7 Officers per year and include sufficient resources in the budget to accomplish this need. Page 49
Set a goal to maintain a five year average attrition rate of 8% or less for police employees. Page 49
Continue to regularly review the number of community generated calls for service from the CAD data to determine the trend in community generated workload. Page 57
Evaluate the possibility of the Newburgh and the Orange County Communications Center CAD systems to track and report "call processing times". Page 57
Implement a call "Priority" system to classify the seriousness of incidents being reported to the Police Department. Page 57
Establish a reasonable "call processing time" goal for Priority 1 calls for service (e.g. 1 minute or less for 90% of the calls). Page 57
Establish a goal of responding to Priority 1 calls for service 90% of the time in fewer than 7 minutes of travel time. Page 57
Develop, implement, track and annually review Patrol plans to address crime activity and quality of life issues in Newburgh; these plans should be routinely implemented when "proactive time" is available. Page 62
Establish a City goal, depending on the level of service desired, of targeting either a 50% or 40% average "proactive time" level for Patrol services. Use this target goal as part of the information evaluated when determining the appropriate Patrol staffing level. Page 79
Annually review patrol staff workload for each four hour time block to review workload distribution and determine if some patrol staff should be redeployed to busier hours of the day; or if resources from other work units should be redeployed to Patrol. Page 79
Adopt a process to enhance delivery of patrol services during the periods when "proactive time" is available. The Patrol Lieutenant and Sergeants should coordinate the development of plans that identify specific tasks/projects that can be worked on or accomplished when "proactive time" is available during a shift. Page 79
Maintain the current staffing level of 40 Patrol Officer positions and make efforts to bring Patrol to full staffing by the end of 2014. Page 83
Review the Patrol workload for a second year (using calendar year 2013 CAD data) to determine the workload level demands and the level of Officer initiated activity; continue annual reviews of Patrol workload. Page 83
Chapter 4 – Evaluation of the Investigations Division
Maintain the number of general detectives in the Newburgh Police Department as it is adequate to handle caseloads. Page 93
Continue the practice of participating in the Safe Streets regional task forces. Page 95
Seek to change the Narcotics Unit from its weekday shift to a more flexible one which includes more night and weekend hours. Page 95
Expand the Department analytical team capability so that the Crime Analyst and Intelligence officer are working more closely together. Page 95
Provide more secure storage of the keys to the Property Rooms. Page 97
Formalize quarterly Property Room audits in policy (General Order O-027) and complete written documentation of each audit conducted. Page 97

Recommendations

Chapter 5 – Evaluation of the Administrative Division
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Evaluate the “Blotter” and case number filing system to ensure that the Records Unit can account for all reports written by the Police Department. Page 101

A more detailed explanation for each recommendation can be found in the body of the report.