

Appendix M: Questions submitted to Greene County website

Prior to holding the first meeting of the Greene County, NY Police Reform & Reinvention Committee, pages were added to the Greene County website to provide the public with updates, information, and an ability to submit questions and comments to the committee.

Below is the breakdown of Page Views and Unique Visitors by page through the final meeting of the Committee

<https://www.greenegovernment.com/greene-county-police-policy-review-committee>

PageViews: 871

UniqueVisitors: 106

<https://www.greenegovernment.com/greene-county-police-policy-review-committee/greene-county-police-policy-review-resources>

PageViews: 176

UniqueVisitors: 28

<https://www.greenegovernment.com/greene-county-police-policy-review-committee/greene-county-police-policy-review-committee-members-partners-and-support-staff>

PageViews: 564

UniqueVisitors: 88

<https://www.greenegovernment.com/greene-county-police-policy-review-committee/greene-county-police-policy-review-meeting-minutes-and-agendas>

PageViews: 162

NewUsers/UniqueVisitors: 14

<https://www.greenegovernment.com/greene-county-police-policy-review-committee/greene-county-police-policy-review-committee-news>

PageViews: 73

NewUsers/UniqueVisitors: 12

23 Questions/Comments were submitted on the website between October 5, 2020 and February 22, 2021.

DATE: 2/22/21

FROM: Christine Wade

EMAIL: wade@columbia.edu

TOWN: Hunter

MESSAGE

"I am concerned about how the police reform process is being handled. I have attended two meetings that intended to inform the community of the reform process and to gather community input. Neither of those meetings (in Catskill and Cairo) accomplished those goals and no other process was publicized. Important and complex issues such as professional training, traffic stops, data collection and community relations of police forces including complaint procedures were barely mentioned and not addressed in any substantive process. No clear process for collecting community input was communicated. I do not have confidence that the committee understood or had any expertise in police reform.

As April 1, 2021 is just around the corner I am concerned that there will be no time to review the committee report so that it can be remedied of any substance deficiencies."

DATE: 2/12/21

FROM: Bernard Rivers

EMAIL: bernard.rivers@gmail.com

TOWN: Durham

MESSAGE

"Dear members of the Greene County Police Policy Review Committee,

I spoke at a couple of your early meetings. I know your work is close to done, but in case it's not too late I wanted to make you aware (if you aren't already) of two interesting newspaper reports.

The first is at https://www.hudsonvalley360.com/news/columbiacounty/police-reform-report-in-final-stages/article_0110c265-1eb0-5192-8c9f-3840a693f251.html. This describes some creative ideas that have been reviewed by the Police Reform Committee in Columbia County.

The second is at <https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/New-York-budget-proposes-stabilization-centers-15940394.php>. This describes an idea developed by Dutchess County for a drop-in "stabilization center" that provides services for individuals in crisis, thereby reducing the county's jail population and also reducing the number of hospital visits.

I hope Greene County can emulate or enhance these ideas being pursued by Columbia and Dutchess counties.

Regards,

Bernard Rivers"

DATE: 2/10/21

FROM: Elide Bell

EMAIL: elideeva@gmail.com

TOWN: Jewett

MESSAGE

"I emailed this but have not yet received response and this is time sensitive:

I am extremely disappointed in the lack of timely notifications for those previous meetings, method of notification, as well as the extreme lack of accessibility. I highly encourage the committee to schedule a public meeting after the draft is complete so there is something concrete for the community to look at. It should be up for a genuine public discussion once there is a draft for review - not just comments, because comments are not a 2-way discussion and absolutely not a collaboration.

I would also like to request to be an observer of the meeting tonight via video conference (the public should be able to witness the committee discussion even if it is not open for public comment/discussion) These are not secret talks.

It is discouraging to be directed to the Greene County youtube page without directing me to the actual names/dates of the videos or better yet - directly providing the links to the videos that are relevant. And the expectation is to watch hours and hours of video of unorganized meetings that will not result in any information of where the committee is at as of this month? Crickets since the start of December?

After the committee met alone after those public meetings, and had an opportunity to absorb, discuss, organize the (limited) public feedback and start formulating a plan - there should 100% absolutely be another meeting at this point to discuss where everyone is at now before time and effort is put into a draft. At the very least - there is obviously an outline for the draft at this point - I would like to see whatever current outline or notes are available now in whatever form they exist in.

The previous meetings that were held were highly problematic for a number of reasons. Additionally, in no way shape or form was the general public here in Greene County aware that there would not be another meeting. Certainly public feedback was not collected or considered from our community members that are most disproportionately impacted by policing policy - I am in touch with many community members and groups in our county that have expressed much discontent with being left out of the process, and I agree as well. And the method by which some community feedback was collected such as very leading and bias digital surveys (which also aren't largely accessible) are not valid feedback or a collaboration either.

In the meeting this evening I would like the committee to discuss:

An appropriate and equitable opportunity for the community to review the draft that will result in a REAL collaborative discussion and also an immediate release of what is available so far as of today - even if it is just notes or an outline.

There should be an in-person meeting scheduled that is also available via live video conference w/call-in option and it should also be live streamed on the county facebook page.

Once the draft is released, the meeting date should also be announced at the same time - and there should be at least 5 business days notice of that meeting. There must be enough time for the community to actually read the draft, plan for how to attend the meeting, and to organize their feedback so it can be presented to the board in a cohesive manner.

Notice of the draft release and the meeting date should not just be obscurely posted on the website - use the county newsletter so that you could send a mass notification when that draft is available. It should also be posted on the social pages. Considering how many people don't have access to the internet in our county - I strongly encourage you to provide notification by bulk mailing which is easy and cost effective to do with the USPS.

I am available to discuss these matters and would like a direct response from the committee chair. I also expect to be furnished with the current notes/outline/rough plan within 48 hours.

Thank you for your time.

Warm Regards,

Elide Bell

516.589.9178”

DATE: 2/9/21

FROM: Elide Bell

EMAIL: elideeva@gmail.com

TOWN: Jewett

MESSAGE

“Which municipality covers police services for Jewett? Also, it is my understanding that this is supposed to be a collaborative process with the community to come up with these plans and I am having trouble finding out how to be involved in this process as there is not a meeting showing on the February schedule still. For past meetings, insufficient notice has been given or has been very difficult to find. Please advise.”

DATE: 1/29/21

FROM: Robin Fetterman

EMAIL: rfetterman@nyproblemgambling.org

TOWN: ALBANY COUNTY

MESSAGE

“Hello,

I am a Program Manager for the Northeast Problem Gambling Resource Center (PGRC), which is a program of the New York Council on Problem Gambling. I would like to add some information to the Executive Order #203 Police Reform community conversation regarding crime and language/stigma when it comes to interactions with those affected by a gambling addiction.

Our services cover 15 counties, including Greene County, where we provide recovery support and treatment options to those affected by a gambling addiction. Last week, we completed training with the gaming facilities in the Northeast as part of the Responsible Gambling Partnership Initiative and received some wonderful feedback and suggestions. Considering a majority of the security staff management are retired law enforcement, I'd love to share some of those thoughts with this group.

They felt treatment options for problem gambling and placing our PGRC information in the hands of law enforcement, the court system, and the DA is important. They referred to the problem gamblers in their facilities as people that have never engaged in criminal activity prior to this addiction, who now find themselves stealing vouchers and purses, causing property damage such as breaking machines and breaking light poles, domestic violence altercations, etc. They would like to encourage the police to have a conversation with the gaming facility security staff on premises when called, so they may be diverted to the PGRC for services as more appropriate for preventing recurrence of these types of crimes. With proper screening and treatment, recidivism for gambling-related crimes can be greatly reduced.

We would love the opportunity to partner with law enforcement. Services we can offer are printed and virtual materials containing information on warning signs, screening tools and where to get help locally. We conduct training for community agencies and partners in addition to directly connecting those with gambling disorder and their family members to a treatment program and offer financial assistance for this treatment. We are here to help you reduce

criminogenic problem gambling, such as forgery, embezzlement, and fraud, and gambling venue crimes that occur in and around gambling locations, such as loan sharking, money laundering, passing counterfeit currency, theft, assault, prostitution and vandalism. Additionally, of great concern to us and many partner agencies is family abuse. More specifically, victimization of family members caused by another family member's gambling involvement, (e.g., domestic violence, child neglect, suicide, and home invasion).

To conclude, we would like to raise awareness of the term "degenerate gambler" which, unfortunately, is still being commonly used. Language is important when it comes to interacting with folks with SUD and mental health diagnosis, and problem gambling is no exception. Rather than using terms such as "gambling habit" and "degenerate gambler," more appropriate terms are:

- PERSON WITH A GAMBLING DISORDER
- GAMBLING DISORDER, GAMBLING ADDICTION
- EXPERIENCING OR BEING TREATED FOR, A DIAGNOSIS/HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Thank you for your time and consideration on these points. Please let us know how we can move forward in partnership with you."

DATE: 1/26/21

FROM: Joseph Sayer

EMAIL: sayre.joseph@gmail.com

TOWN: Ashland

MESSAGE

"Over the summer my town flew the thin blue line flag all down main street. Which I feel is highly inappropriate.

We had a town meeting on the topic...

Former Greene sherrifs and current officers were present at that meeting. Some expressing explicit support for the town of Ashland flying ot on municipal property.

Does the sheriff's office fly this flag? Do they put them on their cars? Uniforms?

THANKS

Joseph"

DATE: 11/18/20

FROM: Judith Felsten

EMAIL: netslefj@gmail.com

TOWN: New Baltimore

MESSAGE

"What is the role of the partner Police Departments? The first page is written as if they are the Committee itself, but I see from the Member page that they're not.

Thank you."

DATE: 11/18/20
FROM: Laura Goodwin
EMAIL: lagoody2shoes123@gmail.com
TOWN: Catskill
MESSAGE

“The police reform and reinvention is populated solely by OTHER police officers? How can only police partners be charged with reviewing the policies and actions of the police? How does a non-law enforcement member of the community join and why were no non-law enforcement members of the community included from the beginning?”

DATE: 11/18/20
FROM: Martha Suquet
EMAIL: marthagrace@gmail.com
TOWN: COLUMBIA COUNTY
MESSAGE

“You need community members on this committee! With only police departments as members, how can there be real oversight and accountability? The citizens you serve need a seat at the table.”

DATE: 11/15/20
FROM: Jennifer Jutkofsky
EMAIL: jdjutfkofsky@gmail.com
TOWN: Catskill
MESSAGE

“Greetings, I am highly interested in volunteer or paid positions on the Greene County Police Policy Review Committee. I recently returned home to the area, after serving as a US Navy Reserve Military Police Officer and retired Civilian Law Enforcement Officer in South Carolina. Majority of my service focused on successful community engagement projects and police policy development primarily for city-center areas. My desire is to share knowledge gained and increase the safety of the law enforcement agencies keeping watch, while I enjoy my next life-chapter. Thank you all for your service! Please feel free to reach out via email jdjutfkofsky@gmail.com or phone 518-250-9217”

DATE: 11/10/20
FROM: Laura Morgan
EMAIL: lauramorgan3@gmail.com
TOWN: Catskill
MESSAGE

“Hi,
Would you please put me on the list to receive emails announcing the public meetings- date, time and location?
I understand there is a meeting tonight. I would appreciate your sending me the announcement.
Thank you,
Laura”

DATE: 10/29/20
FROM: Bernard Rivers
EMAIL: bernard.rivers@gmail.com
TOWN: Durham
MESSAGE

"Sorry, me again. Two quick procedural points.

First, what is the name of your committee? Your website sometimes refers to the "Police Policy Review Committee" (PPRC) and sometimes to the "Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative" (PRRC) – what a mouthful! I hope you will choose and consistently use the first one.

Second, the web page that shows the agenda and minutes for your meetings does not have the agenda for the October 14 or October 28 meeting, and does not have minutes for the October 14 meeting. I think it's important that the minutes (or transcript) for each meeting be posted in time for people to read them before they attend the next meeting.

Thanks.

Bernard"

DATE: 10/29/20
FROM: Bernard Rivers
EMAIL: bernard.rivers@gmail.com
TOWN: Durham
MESSAGE

"I've attended the last two meetings of the PRRC, and I spoke from the floor on each occasion.

I'm glad that the PRRC has not only enabled members of the public to hear the proceedings, but has also invited their comments.

However, I hope the PRRC will now move into a phase of frank and lively discussion between members of the Committee. To be honest, I think such discussions will be more likely if members of the public are excluded. If such exclusion is not permitted or not appropriate, I hope that the Chair will only accept comments/questions from the floor during, say, the final 20 minutes of each meeting, and will restrict each such intervention to, say, two minutes.
PS Despite my British accent, I've lived in the US for 42 years and in Greene County for 32 years.

Regards,
Bernard"

DATE: 10/25/20
FROM: Laura Morgan
EMAIL: lauramorgan3@gmail.com
TOWN: Catskill
MESSAGE

"At the October 14th meeting, the chairman of the committee encouraged us to read a 130+ page document.

Where it is possible to find this document? Could you please send me a link?

Thank you very much."

DATE: 10/23/20
FROM: Stanley Serwan
EMAIL: stan559@aol.com
TOWN: Durham
MESSAGE

“Why is Durham security guard sutton doing selective enforcement,have you seen sunside road where the handels hold their motorcycle event.The road is a disgrace.Luckily I write direct to the state.”

DATE: 10/16/20
FROM: Stanley Serwan
EMAIL: stan559@aol.com
TOWN: Durham
MESSAGE

“Groden can not be trusted,I have written to him before of certain people who were hired, NEVER A RESPONSE. As far as Kusminsky,in my opinion just one of the greene county good old boy's.”

DATE: 10/16/20
FROM: Kathy Jackson
EMAIL: kathykleinhansjackson@gmail.com
TOWN: Athens
MESSAGE

“We have very few services to help kids who are struggling to give them positive role models. Greene County is known for the lack of these services, including Big Brothers/Sisters. Addressing this issue with proactive positive engagements and relationships between at-risk youth and officers would be a huge win for everyone.”

DATE: Jean DeSimone
FROM: Bernard Rivers
EMAIL: catskilljean@yahoo.com
TOWN: Catskill
MESSAGE

“Shouldn't the committee consist of members of the community and not just police? Am I misunderstanding this?”

DATE: 10/16/20
FROM: Stanley Serwan
EMAIL: stan559@aol.com
TOWN: Durham
MESSAGE

“We are all aware how people were getting jobs in sheriffs dept,also the town of durham sutton is a joke.I am a retired NYPD officer & realized the only professionals are the NYS Troopers!Thankfully we have outside agency's to contact!”

DATE: 10/15/20
FROM: Bernard Rivers
EMAIL: bernard.rivers@gmail.com
TOWN: Durham
MESSAGE

“Dear members of the Committee,

At last night’s public hearing, one of the committee members mentioned that no formal complaints have been filed regarding the Sheriff’s department during the past seven years. That’s good to hear. But there are, out there, a multitude of organizations that have not received formal complaints yet whose employees have engaged in various forms of error or abuse. Which raises the obvious question: How can your committee find out whether employees of the Sheriff’s department have engaged in abuses or bias that you aren’t aware of?

The Sheriff’s department is almost entirely white, and the same was true of the audience at the public hearing last night. But it wasn’t true of the crowd that attended the Black Lives Matter marches in Catskill and Greenville. Is there a way that you or a trusted intermediary could reach out to the people who organized and attended those marches, and the communities they represent? If you did that, and THEY spoke in terms similar to the two rather self-serving lawyers who spoke from the floor last night, THEN and only then would I believe there’s not much that needs fixing.

Good luck with your task. It’s not an easy one.

Bernard”

DATE: 10/15/20
FROM: Thomas Kearney
EMAIL: takearney0600@gmail.com
TOWN: Greenville
MESSAGE

“I’m Capital Region Organizer for RAPP (Release Aging People in Prison) Campaign. Greene County falls into my area of advocacy even though I’m an Albany County resident.

My question is one I’ve posed to many County Sheriff’s officials: Why aren’t body cameras being used more on patrol and within the jails?”

DATE: 10/14/20
FROM: Stephen Nash-Webber
EMAIL: ifly@comcast.net
TOWN: Hunter
MESSAGE

“Will the police reform hearing be available by zoom or other remote platform?”

DATE: 10/13/20
FROM: Monica Kenny-Keff
EMAIL: monicakennyessq@aol.com
TOWN: Cairo
MESSAGE

“I would like to speak at the public hearing tomorrow. Also, Carol Morgan, Esq. would also like to speak. I am a primarily Family Court attorney and Carol Morgan is a primarily criminal defense attorney. Please place us on the agenda if necessary in order to ensure we can speak. Thank you in advance.”

4 Comments were submitted upon the release of the Greene County Police Reform & Reinvention Collaborative Committee Draft Report.

DATE: 3/2/21
FROM: Elide Bell
EMAIL: elideeva@gmail.com
TOWN: Jewett
MESSAGE

“You have a character limit in this field with no mention of it. If you go over you get an error message that doesn't explain this. How many people just think it is broken and give up on submitting comment?” (This is a misinterpretation by the person submitting the form. There is no character limit as is evidenced by the length of other submissions)

DATE: 3/3/21
FROM: Ann Rugh
EMAIL: arughpt@gmail.com
TOWN: Coxsackie
MESSAGE

“It is great that there have been no formal complaints involving racial or gender bias. The plan submitted by the committee looks thorough, and well intentioned. If we can afford body camera system it could help and protect everyone and encourage good behavior by all.

Looking at the committee, it does appear that women, black, brown and white are under represented. I would like to see a clear plan for improving the number of women involved in our police force.

Thank you all for completing such a big task during the Pandemic.

Sincerely
Ann Rugh, P.T.”

DATE: 3/4/21
FROM: Jeffery Shapiro
EMAIL: shapirojeff@msn.com
TOWN: Windham
MESSAGE

“The draft report on police reform for Greene County is very well done. I am glad to see how thorough it is. One question came to mind on page 12. I think the reference to NYS Police Troop F locations (barracks and offices) may be incomplete. There is a location in Hunter and perhaps other locations listed are in Greene county. I did an internet search for Troop F New York State Police and found the full listing of locations. Thanks in advance for any reply you make to me.”

DATE: 3/5/21
FROM: Hillary Kolos
EMAIL: hkolos@gmail.com
TOWN: Prattsville
MESSAGE

“Hello, I don't see any info on this page about how to attend (hopefully virtually) and participate in the March 10 public meeting. I would like to suggest that you share that info prominently on this page for people who visit to read the plan and include info on how to attend both in person and virtually if that's possible.

Thank you,
Hillary Kolos”

DATE: 3/8/21
FROM: Emma Acros
EMAIL: aemmachristina@yahoo.com
TOWN: Durham
MESSAGE

“Thank you for issuing this report regarding Executive Order 203. Here are my comments:

- Recommendation 1: I want to see the GCSO budget cut in half, with those funds allocated towards public health and human services that lift Greene County residents out of poverty. The pandemic has laid bare inadequate infrastructure regarding transportation for the elderly, broadband access for students and parents working from home, and expanding access to health and human services, since we do not have a hospital in this county.
- On page 9 of the report, the GCSO has published that a weapon was not fired and a person in over 50 years; therefore, I would like to see the GCSO get rid of their guns. Clearly, the last 50 years has shown that there is no need for police officers to carry any weapons, which is a great thing. So, getting rid of GCSO weapons will be a good way to build community trust and show that policing is meant to be a partnership with Greene County residents.
- Recommendation 2 & 3: The GCSO should shrink the ranks of its personnel by half, and by doing so, provide opportunities for former police officers to exit the force and secure jobs helping the community that do not involve the penalization or criminalization of our neighbors and friends.
- Recommendation 4: The remaining staff members should do trainings on the history of racism and policing in this country, as well as alternatives to policing that provide for rehabilitation, community building, and abolition without use of violence.
- Recommendation 5 & 6: By shrinking the GCSO personnel and its budget by half, the remaining funds will go organizations that operate outside of law enforcement and directly lift Greene Country residents out of poverty, thus lowering an already low crime rate in Greene County. I'd like to see a publication on the effects of providing Greene Country residents with a life of dignity and self-determination without law enforcement or the threat of criminalization.
- Recommendation 7: The GCSO should lessen its contact with the community as a whole, and rather focus its energy on pressuring the NYS police force to provide a detailed report in compliance with Executive Order 203.
- Recommendation 8: The GCSO should not receive any new funding this year. We are recovering from a pandemic and need to use our taxpayer funds to keep people healthy and out of jails. Therefore, I support the mental health trainings, but the GCSO must use the funds that they regularly would put toward surveillance, weapons, uniforms, cars, and other equipment, and invest in the wellbeing of staff and provide opportunities for staff to leave the police force.
- Recommendation 9 & 10: Page 13 reports that "it would be very time consuming to go back years and examine thousands of reports." I advocate for removing police officers from patrolling the community and our schools, and

instead putting those police officers to work going through all of the admin duties required of examining thousands of reports and noting data by race and gender. This data is extremely important, and it should be prioritized at this point in history for our records. Again, I do not support allocating more tax dollars to the department in funding for a new RMS, so I would recommend that the funds saved from sending police out into the streets should be invested in this data collection and publication project.

- Recommendation 11: No police officer is approachable with weapons and the discretion to tear a family apart by incarceration. I do not support police officers being at community events; it is a waste of taxpayer dollars and inserts the presence of white supremacy in our Greene County community. Like I've said, why are police officers going out into the streets, when there's a time-consuming data collection and publication project to attend to?

- Recommendation 12: No more SROs! This sends the wrong message to children - that the law will intervene in their ability to make mistakes and grow. I personally have had a cousin who was thrown in jail as a high schooler when he should've just had a conversation with his teacher, and so I absolutely do not support funding for SROs. This should be one of the first programs to be abolished from the GCSO, and the funding that is allocated to the SRO program should go to the school system to actually help foster student growth - whether it's through mental health counselors (rather than a police officer who took a training) or school supplies or field trips. The investment in children is far more important than the investment in SROs. Additionally, it is a waste of taxpayer dollars to have police officers attend school events and put on a talent show (page 15). Drug and alcohol abuse prevention demonstrations should come from a doctor, not from a police officer - as we know, addiction is an illness, not a crime.

- Recommendation 13: Funding should be allocated away from the GCSO to be reinvested in youth programs. The GCSO need not be involved in local organizations. "Healthy communities" do not require policing, so it's oxymoronic to insinuate otherwise.

- Recommendation 14: There is literally no reason why we criminalize drug use and possession unless the goal is to fill the Greene County jail, tear apart families, and create generational poverty. GCSO should put public pressure on the NYS government to decriminalize all drugs. Funding should be diverted from the GCSO and instead reinvested in substance abuse support, free and consensual rehabilitation, and medical facilities that focus on addiction and its social effects. For a county that doesn't have a hospital, it doesn't make sense to me that we spend taxpayer dollars on getting people tangled in the law enforcement and criminalization system when we should be spending money helping people become whole. There is no reason why GCSO should be at all involved in mental health responses and substance abuse 911 calls. Any funding that would be allocated to a LEAD program or drug court should be allocated to a substance abuse support network that operates independently of and provides community amnesty from law enforcement.

- Recommendation 15: All of the incarcerated individuals should be released from Greene County jail. We have seen from the pandemic that jails are toxic places that spread disease and kill our community members. For instance, there was an outbreak at the Coxsackie jail, where at least two incarcerated community members died. All of the funding that would've been allocated towards the jail should be invested in wraparound community services that provide affordable housing, healthcare, education, and consensual rehabilitation grounded in community growth and sustainability.

- Recommendation 16: I do not support the GCSO being involved in any mental health events. I want to see the GCSO budget cut in half with a proportional allocation of funds directed towards the growing the MCAT team and providing free, sustainable, wraparound mental health services for community members of Greene County. Even with police officers doing de-escalation trainings, that does not a mental health professional make. Greene County deserves community-oriented therapeutic approaches from professionals whose life work it is to provide mental health care.

- Recommendation 17: I do not support the GCSO being involved in any trauma, abuse, or domestic violence related incidences. I want to see the GCSO budget cut in half with a proportional allocation of funds directed towards community-oriented anti-violence groups that specialize in conflict resolution and mediation. Those funds should be diverted from GCSO and allocated towards expanding the 24/7 crisis hotline through Greene County Mental Health. A police officer is not an appropriate stand-in for a trained crisis facilitator or therapy provider.

- Recommendation 18: Again, a police officer is not an appropriate stand-in for a trained professional whose life work it is to help people recover from and prevent overdoses. I believe GCSO funds should be removed from the budget and applied towards expanding emergency medical services, free narcan and wraparound consensual rehabilitation services that do not implicate a drug-using individual into the legal system.

- Recommendation 19 & 20: I adamantly do not support the idea that “community organizations need to take responsibility for positive interactions with police agencies by partnering with the GCSO moving forward with structured community programs that include the Sheriff.” The Sheriff and GCSO should not be involved in community programs. It is a waste of taxpayer dollars to keep funding the GCSO. The GCSO budget should shrink every year, with those funds being allocated to local community programs that offer free and substantial support for our communities, especially for those who are living in poverty or who are re-entering society after incarceration. The remaining personnel in the GCSO should pressure the NYS government to divest from incarceration and policing and invest in affordable housing, healthcare, ecological preservation, and education.

- Recommendation 21: Even if there is not adequate staff coverage, any staff member who is under investigation for using violence against a community member should not be allowed to patrol.

- Recommendation 22: I’d like to see those GCSO discipline reports made public. I will be filing a FOIL, and I think that for accountability and transparency purposes, it is important that the GCSO address these discipline reports in public.

- Recommendation 23: Funds should be diverted from the GCSO budget to publicize these contact methods, since it is all part of democratizing public safety.

- Recommendation 24: Funds should be diverted from the GCSO budget and allocated to subsidize the CAC. It is not fair to rely on volunteers to investigate any abuse perpetuated by the GCSO, which is paid for by taxpayer dollars. The work of CAC would be extremely important and deserves to be compensated.

- Recommendation 25: I vehemently oppose allocating more funds to to the GCSO. We are in the middle of an economic crisis and we need to be investing in affordable housing, free and accessible healthcare, green solutions to the climate crisis, and public education; we do not need to be investing more taxpayer dollars in the GCSO. The GCSO should take a look at their budget, which is paid for by Greene County and NYS taxpayer dollars, and figure out how to make their BWC system and RMS system work given the funds they already have now, while making adjustments for a smaller budget, as we work to reallocate funds to programs outside of law enforcement, policing, and incarceration.

I would appreciate it if you could pass this feedback along to the GCPPR and use your power to advocate for these budgetary changes. In order to recover from the pandemic and economic crisis in a way that addresses racial justice and equity in the future, we should shrink the scope of policing in Greene County, close the jail, and divert funds away from incarceration and criminalization. We should reinvest those same funds in affordable housing, public education, free and accessible healthcare, and ecological preservation. That way, we will actually be lifting our community members out of poverty and keeping families together, rather than tearing them apart and perpetuating generational poverty and injustice. Looking forward to hearing more from the Greene County leadership on moving forward together without relying on police, punishment, and prisons. Peace!

Sincerely,
Emma Arcos
Cornwallville, NY 12418”