

LAW ENFORCEMENT SURVEY COMMITTEE REPORT

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Introduction

In March 2000 at town meeting, Norwich voters approved an article for the Selectboard to appoint a committee to study the future of Norwich police services. This committee convened on May 11, 2000 and included the following members: Christopher Ashley, Susan Blum, Lisa Cadow, Neil Fulton, Charles Hodgdon, Katie Kitchel, Anne Silberfarb.

This report is a summary of our findings and recommendations. Because of the sensitive nature of the charge, the findings are summarized without attributing most remarks to specific people. The committee wishes to thank all the law enforcement professionals and community members who took the time to speak with the committee.

I. Mission Statement

To investigate what Norwich police services should be in the future, to identify policing options that meet these needs, and to present a recommendation to the Selectboard. We will accomplish this by:

- Compiling a history of police services
- Evaluating the IACP (International Association of Chiefs of Police) report
- Eliciting community input
- Examining future options for police services.

II. Description of Process and Steps Taken

The committee met weekly from May 11 until September 18th and reviewed numerous records, contract documents, examples of other town police contracts, training documents, and articles on policing in an effort to better understand the history and options available to the Norwich Police Department. A wide cross section of people, listed below, contributed to the committee's understanding of the past and aided us in assessing the future needs for Norwich policing. Visits to various police departments were undertaken to familiarize committee members with the workings of a police department as well as to understand differences in style and tactics. In addition, to elicit community input, committee members interviewed and surveyed townspeople. The following lists detail the meetings of the committee (which were open to the public) and the individuals and panels interviewed by the law Enforcement Survey Committee. Our efforts to provide information for the town and the list of police departments visited are also included.

MEETINGS:

May 11th, 2000 Organizational meeting

May 24th, 2000 Brain storm committee activities

May 31st, 2000 Randall Dilling interview; agree upon Mission statement for Norwich Happenings.

June 7th, 2000 Plan panels

June 14th, 2000 Panel: Robert Sand, State's Attorney; Pam Weigel, Victim's Advocate; Caye Carrier, Director of WISE.

June 21st, 2000 Interview of Current Norwich Police Personnel: Anita Beloin, Administrative Secretary and Robert Brittner, Police Officer.

June 28th, 2000 Panel of Past and Part time Norwich Police Officers: Andrew Havens, Alan Patterson, and David Singer. Interview with Dean Marthers, current Norwich Police Officer.

July 5th, 2000 Interview of Past and Present Norwich Police Chiefs: Armando Casucci, Joseph Estey and Bill Luczynski.

July 12th, 2000 Panel of Community Members: Susan Finer, Principal of the Richmond Middle School; Jack Fraser, Norwich Fire Chief; Geoff Fretwell, Principal of the Marion Cross School; Nick Giaccone, Chief of Police of Hanover. Written statement submitted by Norwich Officer David C. Leighton.

July 19th, 2000 Discussion of Norwich Happenings article and insert.

August 2nd, 2000 Discussion of structure for LESC recommendation report.

August 8th, 2000 Panel of community members: Wendy Starr and Tamar Kitzmiller.

August 16th, 2000 Interview of a community member: Linda Ladd.

PUBLIC NOTICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT SURVEY COMMITTEE:

June 2000 Norwich Happenings,

Summer 2000 Norwich Times,

August 2000 Norwich Happenings article and survey.

VISITATIONS OF POLICE DEPARTMENTS:

July 6th, 2000 1 PM, Thetford, VT, with Chief Jim Krakowiecki.

July 11th, 2000 9 AM, Norwich Police Department with Chief Joseph Estey, Officer Dean Marthers and Anita Beloin, Administrative Assistant.

July 17 th , 2000	1 PM, Hartford Police Department with Chief Joseph Estey.
July 18 th , 2000	2 PM Woodstock Police Department with Chief Byron Kelly.
July 20 th , 2000	9AM Windsor Police Department with Chief Byron Demond.
	1 PM, Hardwick Police Department with Chief Eben Merrill.

III. What the Committee Has Learned

The committee agrees on the following findings:

1. Following the retirement of long time Norwich Police Chief, Bill Luczynski, the town did a national search for a permanent chief lasting approximately six months. Gary Watson was hired in 1992 and his tenure lasted until 1997. After he left, the Town again conducted a nationwide search. Chief Armando Casucci was hired in 1997 and served until the fall of 1999. After his resignation, the town Selectboard opted to contract for ten hours of supervision a week with Hartford Chief Joe Estey for the interim period.
2. Currently, the Norwich Police Department consists of three full time patrolmen and an administrative secretary who also handles some dispatch duties. The department has three part-time special officers available but for various reasons these officers are not frequently used.
3. The Norwich Police Department ideally provides coverage for 120 hours per week. However, with just three officers, this coverage cannot always be given, and there is no capacity for back up. The secretary is not an officer, and works days during the week. Dispatch services are normally provided by Hartford Public Safety Dispatch. The Hartford Police Department currently provides coverage outside the 120 hours and also provides back up.
4. The Norwich Police Department is presently leaderless and does not operate as a team. Leadership and training have been irregular and variable for a long time. Officers generally operate alone or with back up from another department. Supervision has been inconsistent. Norwich Patrolmen report that their morale is very low.
5. The Norwich Selectboard's oversight of the Norwich Police Department has proven to be problematic. The Patrol officers and secretary report to the Police Chief and the Chief reports to the Selectboard. Historically, confusion has existed regarding roles and responsibilities of the patrolmen, the Chief, the Selectboard and the selectboard liaison to the Norwich Police Department. This confusion continues today. Everybody's expectations are out of kilter.
6. The Norwich Police Department is not equipped to handle major crimes, and there is a lack of training within the force. Major crimes committed in Norwich are currently investigated by the State. Police.

7. Because the more recent Chiefs have come from outside the state, they have not been familiar with Vermont Law. It has been difficult for them to make the transition to Norwich, Vermont.
8. Most people state that policing is most effective when there is a strong connection between the police department and the community. This connection is often perceived as lacking in Norwich. Currently in Norwich, the Police department emphasizes enforcement; conversely, many citizens see proactive problem solving as their criminal justice focus. They feel that Norwich needs community based policing with the officers in schools, on foot, or on bicycles interacting with the teens and residents. Improving relations between teens and police needs to be a priority.
9. The majority of Norwich residents responding to this committee stated that Norwich should retain its independent police force.
10. Norwich has a shaky relationship with WISE. It was reported that cases involving domestic violence are not taken seriously in Norwich. As an example, Norwich received a grant for security systems to benefit victims of domestic abuse. Once the grant was received, Norwich neglected to keep WISE informed regarding the implementation of the grant. One victim who needed the equipment had trouble getting it, yet one of the systems was installed in the Norwich Town Clerk's office. The police lack leadership and training in the area of domestic violence.
11. Current patrolmen are committed to Norwich and have some respect in the community. The town provides a reasonable level of resources and the officers are paid somewhat above the area norms.
12. The Chief is key for a successful Norwich Police department. Many reported that conducting a successful search has been difficult in the past. In order to hire a new chief, a search could take at least six months. Since the resignation of the last chief of police in the fall of 1999, the selectboard has made no attempt to search for a chief of police. Members of previous police search committees and others expressed doubt that Norwich could fill the position. It is noted that the current police situation increases the difficulty of finding a chief.
13. A successful chief will need to be able to set policies and procedures, effectively evaluate officers, provide training, and communicate with officers, the community, and the selectboard. Further, a chief needs to be part of a team working alongside officers, and perform patrol duty. Chief Estey believes that a chief is not needed in Norwich for full time administrative duties.
14. Under Vermont law and the local police union's collective bargaining agreement, an officer can only be dismissed following lengthy and complex due process procedures.

15. If Norwich contracted with Hartford for police services, 120 hours of patrol in Norwich would be provided. This is the same level of service that the Norwich Police Department currently provides. Under the proposed contract, all personnel decisions would be made in Hartford. The current Norwich officers would become part of the Hartford Police Department and the officers patrolling Norwich would be assigned from the pool of 15 Hartford officers.

16. There are video and sound recording devices that can be installed in police cruisers to document police activities. Windsor, Hardwick, Woodstock, and Hartford Police currently use this technology. They find that this technology is useful; it provides for accountability, supervision, officer training, evidence in court, and accurate documentation of events. Norwich currently lacks this technology.

IV. Data from Sample Police Departments and the Norwich Police Department

Hardwick:

- Coverage area: Hardwick and Greensboro
- Hours of Service: 24/7
- Staff: 5 full-time officers and 5 part-time officers.
- Dispatch: The town provides its own dispatch Monday through Friday (8am-4pm) and the State Police supplements
- Budget: \$352,000
- Town Population: +/- 4500
- Chief reports to: Town Manager

Woodstock:

- Coverage area: Village of Woodstock
- Hours of Service: 24/7
- Staff: 5 full-time officers and 5 part-time officers
- Dispatch: (Included in above budget) \$56,000 paid to town of Woodstock
- Budget: \$437,000
- Miscellaneous: Included in budget is \$30,000 for parking meter equipment, repair, and personnel. (This is an expense that Norwich does not have.)
- Town Population: +/- 1,200 (residents); +/- 5000 (with tourists)
- Chief reports to: Town Manager

Thetford:

- Coverage area: Thetford

- Hours of Service: 14 to 16 hours per day/five days a week; on call 5 hours per day/6 days a week
- Staff: 1 full time Chief, and 3 part time officers
- Dispatch: Hanover @ \$10,700
- Budget: \$78,000 plus \$25,250 for the chief's salary that is paid from a federal grant
- Town Population: 2,900
- Chief reports to: Selectboard

Hartford:

- Coverage area: WRJ, Quechee, Wilder, Hartford Village, West Hartford
- Hours of Service: 24/7
- Staff: 22 full-time officers, 4 part-time officers
- Dispatch: 24/7 (also provides dispatch services to Norwich and several other towns)
- Budget: \$1,476,000
- Town Population: 10,000 +/- (residents); 15,000 +/- (with tourists)
- Chief reports to: Town Manager

Windsor:

- Coverage area: Windsor
- Hours of Service: 24/7
- Staff: Chief, 6 full time officers and 4 part-time officers
- Dispatch: 24/7 with five full time employees @ \$163,889
- Budget: \$277,541
- Town Population: 3,500
- Chief reports to: Town Manager

Norwich:

- Coverage Area: Town of Norwich
- Hours of Service: theoretically 120 per week
- Staff: 3 full time patrolmen (4 with a chief)
- Dispatch: Provided by secretary/dispatcher when available during the week. Otherwise calls are dispatched to Hartford. All 911 calls are automatically dispatched to Hartford
- Budget: \$326,812 (includes current Hartford contract \$13,752)
- Population: 3,200
- Chief Reports to: Selectboard

V. Response to IACP Report

1. Members of the committee agree with the IACP Report's summary of the current status of the Norwich Police Department and the recommendations on page 3 which

provide that “daily leadership and supervision is essential for accountability and efficiency.” Further, “the town should fill its current police chief vacancy or combine, consolidate, or contract for services from another police agency.” The town should take immediate steps to meet this recommendation.

2. The IACP Report’s recommends for staffing (page 5) that “current authorized staffing is appropriate and adequate for the Norwich Police Department.” The report noted that three part-time police officers are needed to supplement the force, but this committee cautions that the part time officers are rarely used and this has created less patrol hours than indicated. Members find that full utilization of the three part-time officers and a patrol sergeant are needed to provide adequate coverage.
3. Members agree with IACP Report’s conclusions and final statements on pages 23 & 25. These statements provide that “the Norwich Police Department is operating without the benefit of immediate and constant supervision and leadership. Accordingly, the potential exists for improper action, or lack of proper action, by the police department and its officers.” Moreover, the report concludes that “due to unsuccessful leadership during the past number of years, the police department and its officers are suffering from a serious lack of guidance, direction, and motivation.”
4. The committee notes that the IACP never fully explored how difficult it would be for Norwich to find an effective chief.
5. The committee also notes that Chief Estey will be the president of the IACP and because this is an IACP report, some could perceive a bias.
6. Members agree that a thorough review of the budget should be done as per the recommendations (page 3, 4, and 5) on the Norwich Police Department budget. This should include a review of the salaries of the chief and officers in view of the high cost of living in Norwich and the need for increased capital expense allocations in the budget for the station, cruisers, and other expenditures.

VI. Options for the Future of Norwich Police Department

The committee considered three options for the Norwich Department. The committee did not consider the current police situation to be a viable option. Implementation timeframe, local control, and cost of each option were the most important factors this committee used in analyzing these options

A. MAINTAIN LEVEL SERVICES WITH NORWICH RETAINING ITS OWN DEPARTMENT AND CHIEF

1. Details:

Hire a chief and maintain the current level of staff of three full time officers and three part-time officers and an administrative secretary.

2. Benefits

- Local control and accountability
- Familiarity with community
- Chief present in the community
- Continuity
- Level funding

3. Drawbacks

- Length of time required for police chief search
- Difficulty in finding an effective chief
- Lack of back up for patrol officers
- Officers frequently work in isolation
- Due to small staff, no specialized officers (eg. Detective or youth officer)
- Less than 24 hour coverage
- Lack of up-to-date technology in cruisers

B. INCREASE SERVICES WITH NORWICH RETAINING ITS OWN DEPARTMENT AND CHIEF

1. Details:

Hire a chief and increase the size and depth of staff, for example hiring a patrol sergeant. Upgrade the police technology to include video and sound equipment in each cruiser. Increase the salary of the chief to attract quality candidates and provide for adequate support for the higher standard of living required for the chief to live in Norwich. The Town must re-evaluate the roles and the responsibilities of the Selectboard in managing the Police Department. The Town must re-evaluate the roles, the responsibilities, and the expectations for the chief and officers. In addition, the town must have in place a system to consistently evaluate the performances of the police department employees.

2. Benefits

- Local control and accountability
- Familiarity with community
- Chief present in the community
- Continuity
- Increased depth of coverage
- Increased possibility of finding and retaining quality chief
- Updated technology in cruisers

3. Drawbacks

- Length of time required for proper police chief search
- Difficulty in finding an effective chief
- Due to small size, no specialized officers (e.g. Detective or youth officer)
- Limited back up for patrol officers
- Increased costs to taxpayers

C. **CONTRACTING FOR POLICE SERVICES WITH THE HARTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT**

1. Details:

Contracted services would provide the same number of patrol hours, with Hartford providing supervision and leadership and back up support. The contract would be for 18 months with an 18-month withdrawal period. The contract needs to include a quarterly evaluation procedure to gauge Norwich citizen satisfaction with the contract and to provide feedback to the Hartford Police Department. Since the contract is a new arrangement, the Town needs to continue to study the comparative costs and various options for a re-structured Norwich Police Department and the contract with the Hartford Police Department. In this way, at the end of the initial contract period, the arrangement with Hartford can be evaluated in terms of cost analysis and citizen satisfaction. If the evaluation process demonstrates that the Town is not satisfied with contracted services with Hartford, the Town will be ready to re-constitute a Norwich department within the time provided in the withdrawal period.

2. Benefits:

- Command and support structure in place
- Back up for patrol officers
- Specialized officers
- Updated technology
- May be more cost effective depending on proposed contract terms

3. Drawbacks

- Loss of local control
- Decentralized police station
- Loss of familiarity with officers
- Uncertainty of the service with need to renegotiate the contract periodically
- Requires voters of both communities to approve contract
- Length of time before implementation due to need for voter approval and State's approval.

VII. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

PART ONE: MAJORITY RECOMMENDATION

Respectfully submitted by:

Christopher Ashley, Susan Blum, Lisa Cadow, and Katie Kitchel

If the Town is willing to increase its funding of the Norwich Police Department, then the majority committee members recommend that the Town keeps its police force and implement Option B in part VI above.

If the Town is not willing to make this investment in its police force, then the majority committee members recommend that the town of Norwich adopt Option C to contract police services with the Hartford Police Department. This committee's major concern about contracting with Hartford is that Norwich will lose the local touches that are so important to the community, and safeguards will need to be included to maintain community policing and to provide for an evaluation of the contracted police services' impact on Norwich. Such safeguards would include, but not be limited to, the answers to the following questions:

- 1) How will Hartford Police Department insure that the officers patrolling Norwich are familiar with the town and can recognize and be recognized by the townspeople?
- 2) How will the Hartford Police Department Chief make himself available to the citizens of Norwich for purposes of feedback, questions, concerns, and building community relationships?
- 3) How will the concerns, needs, and wishes of the Norwich community be included in policy-making and policing decisions?

It is noted that in order for townspeople to make the most informed decision, it is necessary to present the community with a comparative analysis of how much Option B: INCREASE SERVICES WITH NORWICH RETAINING ITS OWN DEPARTMENT AND CHIEF, and Option C: CONTRACTING FOR POLICE SERVICES WITH THE HARTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT, would cost.

PART TWO: MINORITY RECOMMENDATION

Respectfully submitted by:

Charles Hodgdon and Anne Silberfarb

As much as the minority committee members would like to keep the police department in Norwich, the minority committee members recommend Option C: CONTRACTING FOR POLICE SERVICES WITH THE HARTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT, with its strong evaluation and cost analysis process during the initial 18 month contract period. The reason the minority members have chosen this option primarily hinges on the issue of timing. Contracting services from the Hartford Police Department offers the possibility of providing the supervision that the IACP Report finds is needed more quickly than Option B: INCREASE SERVICES WITH NORWICH RETAINING ITS OWN DEPARTMENT AND CHIEF.

The IACP Report has found there are serious internal problems within the Norwich Police Department, as has the entire LESC. Contracted services with Hartford, the minority members think, more surely offers the possibility of resolving the problems in a timely fashion. Having served on police hiring committees, the minority members think it will take at least 6 months to a year to hire a new police chief; whereas, the contract with the Hartford Police Department might be possible to implement in 3 months. In addition, based upon past experience, it questionable whether such a small department can attract a chief of the quality our town needs and expects.

Contracting with the Hartford Police Department gives the Town the opportunity to access the services of a highly regarded police department at level funding. If services provided by the Hartford Police Department prove unsatisfactory, the Town can then proceed to implement the more expensive option of increased services through a re-structured Norwich Police Department.

Please note:

Although Neil Fulton is listed as a member of the LESC, he did not participate in the majority or minority recommendations because of his role as a member of the Selectboard.

The members of the Law Enforcement Survey Committee respectfully submit this report to the town of Norwich.

Christopher Ashley

Susan Blum

Lisa Cadow

Charles Hodgdon

Katie Kitchel

Anne Silberfarb

APPENDIX

Included:

Notes about the Surveys

Listening Project Questions

Listening Project Results

Written Survey Results

Notes about the Surveys

The LESC conducted two informal, information-gathering surveys in an effort to better understand the opinions of the citizens of Norwich. What follows is a brief description of each survey, and the results of these two surveys.

The first survey is entitled “Norwich Listening Project.” For this survey, committee members met one-on-one with town members and asked a pre-determined set of questions. The same questions were asked of all townspeople interviewed. A copy of the questions has been included in the appendix of this report, as well as a summary of the various responses from townspeople.

The second survey is a traditional written survey. This survey was mailed to all residents of Norwich in last month’s edition of “The Norwich Happenings.” The results of this survey are also included in the appendix of this report.

Please note that these surveys are NOT statistically accurate, and, thus, the data we received was not treated as a statistical representation. Instead, the surveys were used to provide community members with alternate forums in which to express their opinions. Additionally, these surveys assisted the members of the LESC in expanding their understanding of the diversity of opinions present within the community.

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**Norwich Listening Project
Law Enforcement Survey Committee
Summer 2000
Survey for Interviews**

Date: _____

Interviewer #1: Name _____
 Telephone _____

Interviewer #2: Name _____
 Telephone _____

Person Interviewed:

Sex: ___ Female ___ Male

Approximate Age: ___ youth (under 20) ___ young adult (20-35)
 ___ middle age adult (35-65) ___ older adult (over 65)

Residency in Norwich: ___ 0-5 years ___ 5-10 years
 ___ 10-30 years ___ more than 30 years

Distance from town center: _____

Introduction:

Hello, my name is _____ and this is _____. We are members of the Law Enforcement Survey Committee. The LESC has been working over the last two months to gather information about the current policing situation in Norwich, to examine options for future services, and to listen to the experiences and views of the community. Based on an analysis of the information that the LESC gathers, the committee will make a recommendation to the Selectboard about what the police services in Norwich should be in the future.

One of the ways that we are hoping to elicit community input is through conducting personal interviews. If you are open to it, we'd like to interview you and get your opinions and views about the policing needs in Norwich, your past experience with the Norwich police, and what you would like the future of policing in Norwich to be.

We'd like to ask you some questions, and we're going to write down some of what you have to say. You won't be quoted in any publication, and your name won't be written on this survey. However your ideas, as well as the ideas of many other members of the town, will be presented to the LESC in this format and will be used to give us a better understanding of what is important to the people of Norwich at this time.

Our experience has been that these interviews usually take between 30 and 45 minutes. Do you have any questions before we get started?

Survey Questions:

1. What do you feel are the most important services that a community police force should provide?
2. Do you feel that you are currently receiving those services? _____
Why or why not?
3. Have you had any direct contact with the Norwich police? _____
If yes, please comment on any experience you would like the LESC to consider.
4. What do you see as the strengths of the Norwich Police?
5. Do you have any suggestions about how the Norwich Police could improve?
6. Are you aware that an idea has been suggested to hire a new Chief of Police for Norwich? _____
What are your thoughts about this arrangement?
7. If the town of Norwich were to hire a new Chief of Police, what qualities do you feel are important for the hiring committee to keep in mind?
8. Are you aware that an idea has been suggested to contract policing services with Hartford PD? _____
What are your thoughts about this arrangement?
9. If the town of Norwich were to contract policing services with Hartford what criteria would you want the contracting committee to keep in mind?
10. How would you like policing in Norwich to look in 5 years?
11. How was this experience of being interviewed for you?
12. Do you know anyone else who you think would like to be interviewed?

Results of Citizen Interviews/Listening Project

August 29, 2000

22 citizens were randomly selected and interviewed by members of the LESC.

Katie – 8 interviews

Anne – 5 interviews

Lisa – 4 interviews

Susan – 2 interviews

Chipper – 4 interviews

Total interviews: 23

Demographics of people interviewed:

Sex:	Men	15	
	Women	8	

Age:	Youth (under 20)	0	
	Young Adult (20-35)	1	
	Middle Adult (35-65)	19	
	Older adult (over 65)	3	

Length of time residing in Norwich:

0-5 years	4		
5-10 years	5	Part-time	2
10-30 years	10		
30+ years	2		

Distance reside from center of town:

Center	7	
1/2-2 miles	6	
3-5 miles	1	
Over 5 miles	9	
(Works in town or owns business in town	4)	

Sample quotes in response to each question:

1. What do you feel are the most important services that a community police force should provide?

Professional conduct:

- “Provide courteous service for townspeople and visitors”
- “Positive image within the community—walking the streets, saying hello at post office, being personally known”
- “Possess an attitude that conveys that police force cares about the town”

Relationship with town:

- “Work with the town toward a safe and friendly environment”
- “Be friendly to town”
- “Have police as part of fabric of community—have them around”
- “Integrated into the community—make people feel good”
- “Community input should be considered in forming a department that is open to community and police relations”
- “Should know the community”
- “Community policing—not just enforcement presence, but partners who give friendly reminders. For instance, flash blue lights to slow down instead of ticketing.”

Safety, security, and protection:

- “Provide a sense of security and protection”
- “Safety and protection”
- “Protection against crime”
- “Observing for security”
- “Provide security and be involved positively in the community”
- “Sense of security—specifically want youth to know that police are watching and preventing break-ins”
- “Capability of dealing with serious crime which means having trained, competent staff and access to technology”
- “Patrol officers 24 hours a day”

Law enforcement:

- “Provide law enforcement during the early morning hours between 2am-6am”
- “Focus on checking homes; driving by to make sure things are o.k.”
- “Watching for trouble-makers”
- “Responsive to citizen complaints”
- “Knowledge in dealing with domestic issues”
- “Knowledge of the community, the neighborhoods, and the potential offenders”

Non-enforcement services:

- “Public service when required such as accidents and rescues
- “Not education, training, or outreach”
- “Non-enforcement presence as important as enforcement presence”

“Be a resource for organizations or groups in the community who call on them to make things possible”

Emergency situations:

- “Help in emergencies of any kind”
- “Response to emergency situations in case of theft, burglary”
- “Respond within minutes”
- “Rapid response to emergencies”
- “Quick response to dangerous or life-threatening situations”

Traffic enforcement:

- “An active and visible presence in the community such as being around, making traffic stops”
- “Not as much need for traffic law enforcement”
- “Speed limit enforcement”
- “Speed control in heavily trafficked areas”
- “Traffic safety”

School/Youth involvement:

- “Visible at school and providing support for school safety issues”
- “Crossing guard duties”
- “Go into schools, get acquainted with kids and make kids comfortable with law enforcement”
- “Safety for children”
- “Provide an example to kids of a good cop”
- “Ability to work with youth offenders”
- “A gentle handle with teenage indisgressions”

1. *Do you feel that you are currently receiving those services?*

Positive feedback:

- “I see them around”
- “When I needed police services, it was fine”
- “The time I called, they came quickly”
- “I feel safe”
- “Fairly good law enforcement given limited man power”
- “Just having them so close and seeing them drive by every once in a while gives me a sense of security”
- “I don’t see them very much, but I’m assuming they are providing these services”
- “They are visible.”

Constructive feedback:

- “Concerned about speeding in-town and children’s safety”
- “Seems like there’s not much of these services going on—police appear to be in a holding pattern”

“Don’t feel current police force, especially one person, is friendly therefore I don’t want to ask them for help. More approachable cops are needed.”

“Don’t see coverage outside of town center very much.”

“Police force has a negative image because of the conflict between the Selectboard and the police department. Police chief turnover is a result of chiefs not being supported by the Selectboard.”

“The traffic in town seems very fast—I wonder about NPD ability to keep control over traffic”

“My impression is that the NPD is not highly competent”

2. *Have you had any contact with the Norwich police? If yes, please comment on any experience you would like the LESC to consider.*

17 people interviewed have had direct contact

Positive feedback:

“When my house was broken into the police in Norwich were thorough, professional, and helpful”

“An officer called to inquire if a dog that was lost belonged to me.”

“The police responded well and were very thoughtful with follow-up.”

“When I was in a car accident, they were wonderful in my moment of need.”

“I like the open-door policy of the former chiefs. The chiefs seemed accessible.”

“I have always had positive contact with the officers and former police chiefs.”

“I have had positive experience with officers. Several times I have been pulled over for minor violations, and have been offered reminders rather than being ticketed. This makes me feel that the police are partnering with the citizens of Norwich to make a safer community rather than bullying or punishing the citizens.”

“My house was broken into. Although the case was never solved, my dealings with the police were positive.”

Constructive feedback:

“Would have liked more communication from the police. My concerns were not fully addressed.”

“An officer harassed me when I was walking my dog and when I was parking at Huntley as well.”

“NPD vigorously pursued prosecution of a minor, inadvertent traffic violation when a warning would have been more than sufficient. The violation was overturned in court—what a waste of time.”

“My business was broken into. I never heard any follow-up. The police found our cash box, but didn’t return it until we asked them for it. When the cash box was returned, it was filthy and covered with fingerprinting stuff. I still don’t know what is happening with the investigation. I wanted the Valley News to write an article about the break-in, but I was told that the Selectboard encouraged that nothing be reported to the paper.”

“The hours of patrol should be altered so that it is not common knowledge that there is no patrol coverage between 2am and 7am. I believe that a break-in of my

business could have been prevented if it was not common knowledge that there are no patrols during this segment of time.”

Feedback about HPD:

“When my business was broken into the HPD responded after being contacted by a neighbor. I was impressed with the HPD response. It took about 1/2 hour for Officer Leighton to arrive from NPD.

3. *How do you view the Norwich Police?*

“I have not had much contact with them, but I assume they are doing the work.”

“I don’t feel Norwich needs much policing because I assume that there is not much physical crime. The role of NPD is more focused on traffic enforcement, theft, etc.”

“Friendly, moderately effective, not necessarily a model or ideal.”

“Staff is disgruntled, disillusioned.”

“Police feel the Selectboard is out to get them”

“They don’t seem to be a presence—I don’t see them much.”

“They are not terribly competent.”

“They seem to be in a holding pattern.”

“They seem relatively innocuous and moderately incompetent.”

“I mostly see them as speed limit enforcers. It keeps the speed down, and it is important for young drivers to know they are out there.”

“I’m satisfied with them, I just wish they wouldn’t be so ‘lurky.’ I feel watched.”

“Fine”

“Positively”

“They are there when I need them.”

“There isn’t enough unity amongst the three officers we have.”

“Fat”

“I never see them—except for speeding traps and at the cross walk.”

“On a scale of 1-10, I would rate them as a 5.”

“It seems that some cops lack efficiency and are not working as hard as they should.”

“My image is that in the distant past, they were very involved in speed control in Norwich. More recently, I don’t see them at all.”

“They are a nice bunch of fellows who are better crossing guards than police”

4. *Do you have any suggestions for the future of the Norwich PD?*

“Norwich faces a dilemma: it needs strong, active and well-connected leadership, but it is hard to find someone to run a very small police force.”

“Stop burning out police chiefs.”

“Norwich ought to have its own police department.”

“Good idea to join with WRJ rather than hire a new chief.”

“Would like to see town have police who are identified as Norwich police, but I would not object to Hartford supervision.”

“We should keep our own department.”

“Would like to see a local department with a finite number of officers, where the officers get to know the community.”

“Cops should serve as crossing guards and should increase their participation in MCS activities so kids can know cops by name and as friends.”

“Would like to see NPD involved in the community, friendly, willing to help, efficient and effective.”

“I would like NPD to be Norwich based, but meeting the needs of the community.”

“Want approachable, friendly and nice officers.”

“Would like officers to serve as crossing guards and get to know the kids.”

“I want our own police force because a Norwich-based PD will be more a part of the Norwich community (like town government), the response time will be faster, and the officers won't be strangers.”

“I would like to see 24 hour coverage.”

“Look at the demographics of the town—the police force should be aligned with the population of Norwich.”

“Local presence is important because of response time, the officers will know the people and habits of the town better, and it will maintain a feel of ‘small town service’”

5. *What are your thoughts about hiring a Chief of Police for Norwich?*

Miscellaneous comments:

“It depends upon the individual candidate, Norwich needs to find the right person who is willing to work for the money offered.

“Escapes me why it has been so hard to keep a police chief. We should answer this question first.”

“I don't know the circumstances of why the former chiefs haven't worked out.”

“I like having the police around, but I don't have enough information.”

“The turnover problems and complaints are related to Selectboard style of management and oversight.”

“Hire a chief only if it can be done so that we have a professional, well run department.”

“I don't have a real understanding of the needs of Norwich.”

“A small force is not necessarily flexible especially when staff is sick. Thus the ability to respond can be difficult, but the staff does get to know the town.”

“Losing another chief would mean ‘three strikes’ and we should do something different.”

“The selectboard has not been able to provide the support needed to keep a police chief. A town manager might provide better communication with a new police chief and the department.”

Supportive comments:

“I'm in favor of it. Makes sense to have a chief for the force who is providing supervision and focusing specifically on Norwich.”

“I would like to see a local police presence, rather than contracting with an outside town.”

“I would like Norwich to hire a police chief but with more success than the previous chiefs.”

“It’s a good idea.”

“This is better because it provides a community feeling.”

“Hire a Norwich police chief.”

“I like having our own force. Hartford isn’t our town.”

“It’s a good idea because it’s more intimate when you know who your police are. Complaints and suggestions can be heard.”

Critical comments:

“I don’t believe every town should have own police personnel, it makes more sense to regionalize from the perspective of staff, technology and equipment. I would like to see a ‘Dresden Police Force.’”

“I do not want the town to do this.”

“Does a town of our size really need a full time chief? Norwich can not fund a comprehensive police force.”

6. *If the town of Norwich were to hire a Chief of Police, what qualities do you feel are important for the hiring committee to keep in mind?*

“Hands-on chief.”

“Willing to work shifts”

“Sociable”

“Honest”

“Reasonable”

“Intelligent”

“Good mediation skills”

“College degree in criminal justice—not a Masters.”

“Keeps up on police techniques”

“Ability to work with different kinds of people.”

“Physically fit”

“Willing to live in Norwich”

“Someone who can take control of the department and manage it effectively.”

“Leader”

“Someone who can get the best out of the staff”

“Sensitive to community needs.”

“Good people skills”

“Willing to work with officers”

“Someone who can supervise officers and implement changes”

“Administrative competence”

“Has an awareness of what kind of people live in Norwich”

“Someone who would get along with the people in Norwich.”

“Someone who understands the dynamics of Norwich and will not make the job bigger than it is.”

- “She should try hard to get to know the people in town and to understand the unique style of the town.”
- “Visible to the public.”
- “Hire a chief who has a strong sense of self and will not be intimidated by working with individuals who have been here a long time.”
- “Needs a level of education and sophistication to have respect of Norwich community. This may be outside the range Norwich offers.”
- “Has a rural background and is familiar with small towns”
- “Has awareness of how small towns work”
- “Someone who wants to live in a rural area and run a rural police force rather than someone who just wants to retire here.”
- “Two types of chiefs: a young guy moving up to establish his career or an older guy who is downsizing. Both could work as long as the Selectboard is very clear about expectations.”
- “Willingness to join community and has an understanding of community life.”
- “Someone in 40’s or 50’s who has no political ambitions and is retired or looking to retire.”
- “Look for a chief who comes from a larger town who has been an officer and who has 5-10 years to go before retirement and who is interested in being chief in a small town setting.”
- “Find someone who has been involved in a larger, more structured police force. Look in Rutland or other larger New England towns”

7. *What are your thoughts about contracting with HPD?*

- “HPD is a good force. The staff seems nice and pleasant.”
- “Makes sense because HPD has good facilities and is capable of monitoring speeding.”
- “I would imagine that the HPD officers are familiar with this area.”
- “Hartford chief is pretty capable guy.”
- “Positive experience with HPD when someone broke into my business. Good response time”
- “HPD may seem more professional to teens.”
- “We should try it.”
- “The regional concept has merit. Why buy a half of a police force when we can rent full force for the same money?”
- “I think it’s a good idea. I often listen on a scanner and HPD is often ready to give backup but is prevented because of town lines—contracting with HPD would remove this problem of “waiting on the line.””
- “The arrangement is fiscally better for the town.”
- “We would gain good staff with more expertise.”
- “Chief Estey is good. I think it would be a good arrangement.”
- “If it’s good enough for Quechee, it’s good enough for us.”
- “Problem with HPD is that the officers need to have a relationship with Norwich.”
- “Police need to know a community, including the roads, the people, the history. HPD officers will not have visual recognition of members of the community.”

“I don’t like it. I feel there is a strong consensus in the community to keep the NPD.”

“I didn’t like the working of the town vote/line item.”

“When governed from afar, the HPD will not be in touch with Norwich concerns and issues.”

“Bad idea. HPD is outside the community and is not Norwich community based.”

“Would they be too distant?”

“I’d like to stay separate from HPD.”

“I don’t like it.”

“Although HPD is next door, I would prefer to have Norwich police in town. It gives me a better sense of security.”

“Originally I thought this arrangement would be good because of economics, but because HPD will be rotating, they won’t know us.”

“I would rather have a Norwich department, but as an interim arrangement I would go along with a maximum of a 3 year contract with HPD.”

“No problem with this on an interim basis. However, we need a long term solution. We could use a short-term contract with HPD to develop a better structure for NPD.”

“It would be okay for an interim arrangement until we are able to restructure the police department as a town department.”

“I don’t know enough about it.”

“How much does it cost?”

“It is not a good idea, but all issues need to be taken into consideration. If it solves our problem in a way we can’t otherwise, I’d consider it.”

“Need to educate the people about this issue”

8. *If the town of Norwich were to contract policing services with Hartford, what criteria would you want the contracting committee to keep in mind?*

“I would want to explain to the HPD chief that Norwich wants a police force that knows the town very well and I would want him to explain how he intends to make that happen.”

“I would want the officers on duty to get to know the people and where things are located.”

“I would want assurance that officers would be here when needed.”

“I would not want 25 guys rotating through Norwich. Instead select a set subset of officers who are assigned to Norwich.”

“I would want the same officers to respond to Norwich .”

“Specific officers assigned to Norwich”

“Permanently station officers in Norwich”

“Fiscally responsible”

“Involvement of police in school.”

“Sensitivity to domestic violence.”

“HPD would need to be responsive to Norwich. At least as good our police department with timely accessibility.”

“The contract should provide very professional officers who relate well to people.”

“The contract should have defined mechanisms by which Norwich would evaluate how it is working.”

“Could the officers in Norwich use a Norwich cruiser?”

“HPD chief should attend town meetings”

“HPD should do stuff that involves the town (schools, etc.)”

“Arrange a concrete link to bond HPD with Norwich. Suggest: meeting each month”

“Insure a certain amount of time that officers spend in Norwich.”

“Make sure of open communication about Norwich’s needs and if they are being met.”

“Crossing guard presence.”

“Would like officers to walk the streets, be accessible, recognizable, available to meet people.”

“Insure good response time”

“Could be set up in a way that works better for town than current system.”

“Clarity about the length of the contract”

“Is HPD covering too many towns? We Norwich become just another town? Prevent this from happening.”

“During the contract period a committee should be formed to build public involvement in the re-building of a NPD.”

“Would expect same level or greater level of services as we currently get: control speeding, enforce traffic laws, promptly investigate crimes, check on houses when residents are vacationing.”

“Should not provide crossing guard services”

“Expect the same services that HPD gives to Hartford.”

“Do not increase the spending.”

9. *How would you like policing in Norwich to look in 5 years?*

“Receive prompt, efficient service”

“A plan has been established to look at growth of the town; policing needs might change over town.”

“Keep services in line with increasing demands.”

“Diplomatically skilled personnel”

“Safety and kids come first.”

“It should be a well-run, well-respected force of individuals who care about their own professionalism and, whether local or contracted, they should be accountable to the town of Norwich.”

“Responsible and highly trained”

“Better than they are now. No laziness”

“Stability”

“Not a disciplinary force, not punitive but able to maintain a smooth community. Moderate, peace makers in town.”

“Would want any force to represent what we think NORWICH will look like and would be able to respond to change.”

“A force of several full time officers who are constantly in Norwich and ready to respond. The force is aligned and in-touch with the Norwich population and effectively communicate with the citizens.”

“Not radically different from now. Responds to the increase in population and changes in the town”

“Litter laws enforced more vigorously with trash cans located in the downtown area.”

“Police moved into better facilities specifically constructed for police needs on Main St. but not part of Town Hall.”

“Norwich has own police force. PD station is downtown. Police work as crossing guards. Officers are approachable and involved with the community and developing community programs.”

“Norwich based police department that is professional and able to deal with teens, speeding, and domestic issues professional and gently.”

“Community based with efficient and effective chief and officers.”

“Same as now”

“Local, local chief, friendly and well-trained”

“It would be nice to have a non-controversial police department and police chief who can get along with citizens, the town and each other.”

“A NPD with a strong chief who can provide the necessary leadership that meets the identified needs of the community.”

“A police chief, a small force, and a responsible Town Manager.”

“A viable, unified, adequately manned police department committed to working with the community.”

“I don't mind if the police cars say Hartford”