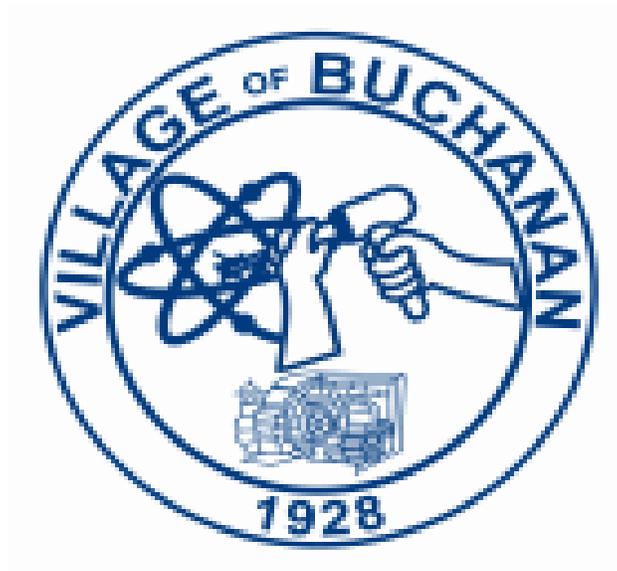


# Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan



## Committee Members

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## Table Of Contents

Description of the Village of Buchanan.....	2
Village of Buchanan Police Department.....	3
Committee's Purpose and Goals .....	4
Recommendations.....	5-9

## Description of the Village of Buchanan

The Village of Buchanan is located in the northwestern corner of Westchester County on the eastern bank of the historic Hudson River. According to the United States Census Bureau, the village has a total area of 1.7 square miles of which 1.4 are land and 0.3 is water. It is located approximately 20 miles from White Plains and is accessible via Routes 9 and 9A, and via Amtrak and Metro North railroads.

According to the 5-year estimated demographics and housing data provided by the 2019 American Community Survey the village has a total population of 2,140 of which 1,613 (75.4%) are White, 322 (15.0%) are Hispanic or Latino, 144 (6.7%) are Black or African American, 5 (0.2%) are American Indian and Alaskan, 8 (0.4%) are Asians, 13 (0.6%) are from one race alone and 35 (1.6%) are from two or more races.

The types of languages spoken at home are English (79.9%), Spanish (14.3%), other Indo- European languages (5.6%) and Asian and Pacific Islander languages (0.2%). The median household income is \$109,375 and there is a poverty rate of 6.6%. Of the 2,140 residents 33.4% have a bachelor's degree or higher, 4.4% are veterans and 12.7% have disabilities.

The children in the village enjoy thriving educational experiences at the Buchanan-Verplanck and Frank G. Lindsey Elementary schools and upon graduating move on to the Blue Mountain Middle School and then the Hendrick Hudson High School.

The Village of Buchanan is rich in history and amenities. This small populated Village in Westchester has the smallest police department in Westchester County. The police officers visit all new residents to ensure that they know most residents by name and are aware of those with special needs and special situations. In addition, the Village has a volunteer fire department and is served by Cortlandt Volunteer Ambulance in Montrose, a neighboring town. The Village of Buchanan is a place where residents and visitors feel safe and welcomed.

## Village of Buchanan's Police Department

Chief Shane Farrell heads the Village of Buchanan Police Department, a force of 6 full-time officers. The department includes the Police Chief, 1 Sergeant, 1 Detective and 3 Patrol Officers.

The Village of Buchanan Police Department is a very unique and small police department that operates 24 hours / 7 days a week. All officers, excluding the Police Chief work on a rotating schedule of 11pm-7am, 7am-3pm and 3pm-11pm, 4 days on and 2 days off. A typical day has 1 officer on Patrol during each shift. The Police Chief works Monday through Friday from 8:30am - 4:30 pm. A typical shift includes regular patrol duties of enforcing laws and calls for service as they arise and community policing efforts.

All police officers are trained in basic first aid, C.P.R. (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation), administration of A.E.D.'s (Automated Electronic Defibrillators), administration of Naloxone/Narcan, Crisis Intervention, De-escalation and Communication Training, Procedural Justice, Professional Communication and Use of Force training. The Buchanan Police Department has a typical emergency response time of 2 minutes or less.

The Village of Buchanan Police Department embraces all opportunities to participate in community activities. The Community Outreach programs include Coffee with a Cop, Toys for Tots, Child Safety Seat checks, dark house checks, visits to local schools and Summer Safety Orientations for local preschool students.

The Mission of the Buchanan Police Department is to provide a community atmosphere conducive to a citizenry that is secure in its safety of self and property and is able to pursue productive avenues of positive growth within their own community. The focus and energy of every officer is oriented to the principles of providing service and assistance, without prejudice, competently and sensitively, to everyone throughout the community regardless of ethnicity, gender, religious or social beliefs. Every officer in the department works diligently to establish communication lines fostering cooperation with all community agencies and groups, namely schools, students, parents, local government, senior citizens, merchants, youth, residents, etc., and forming partnerships whereby the entire community works together to solve problems and improve the quality of life for all.

## Committee's Purpose and Goals

The Police Reform Committee was formed to address Governor Cuomo's request requiring each local government in the State to adopt a policing reform by April 1, 2021. As a result, the panelists worked collaboratively with local government and citizens to review the policies of the Buchanan Police Department with the ultimate goal of developing a reform plan that would serve to enhance trust and respect between community members and the police department. The 4 pillars of 21st Century Policing ( Treat Individuals with dignity and respect, Give individuals a voice during law enforcement interactions, Be neutral and transparent in decision making, Convey trustworthy motives) were used as guiding principles in the development of the reform plan.

To ensure that all community members were afforded the opportunity to participate in the process of creating a reform plan, live discussions were held via Zoom. The meetings began on January 11, 2021 and were held every two weeks. During the Zoom meetings police policies were reviewed and recommendations were discussed. All members of the community were encouraged to attend the Zoom meetings and were provided with the opportunity to ask questions.

While all stakeholders agreed that the police officers of the Buchanan Police Department have conducted themselves in a professional and respectful manner when in contact with civilians, to address Executive Order No. 203, recommendations were made to enhance areas that members felt required additional attention.

## Community Engagement

When needed, the Buchanan Police Department uses police officers of neighboring jurisdictions who are native speakers in foreign languages to help translate. Although this practice will continue it is recommended that additional resources be used.

**Recommendation #1:** Increase the diversity of resources used to communicate with non-English speakers by:

- Subscribing to a language translation service that can be utilized for Spanish speakers as well as speakers of other languages.
- Reviewing existing and newly developed police department documents to determine which are vital documents and should be translated, and into which languages the documents should be translated.
- Periodically reviewing efforts of this department in providing meaningful access to limited English proficiency (LEP) individuals to police resources

**Recommendation #2:** Community Outreach and Communication.

- Make casual and consensual contacts with community members to promote positive community relationships.
- Law Enforcement should continue to work with the schools, businesses and community groups in their assigned jurisdictional areas.
- Work with community members to identify issues and solve problems related to community relations and public safety.
- Conduct periodic foot patrols to facilitate interaction with community members.
- Meet with the Buchanan Senior Citizen Club
- Work to meet new Residents and introduce the Department and resources available.
- Hold Coffee with a cop expand on informal socialization activities.

As previously mentioned, the Buchanan Police Department is comprised of only six officers. Therefore it is impossible to have a social worker or EMT who is employed by the Village of Buchanan to respond to emergency calls. The Village favors mental health professionals responding along with police officers to mental or emotional crisis situations. However, due to budgetary reasons, this has to be funded by NYS or Westchester County.

**Recommendation #3:** Expand the use of emergency resources when addressing medical and social issues.

- Create partnerships with health professionals that can support the Buchanan Police Department during medical and social issues. If Westchester County implements a Crisis Intervention Team the Buchanan Police Department should utilize their services.
- All Buchanan Police officers should continue to be provided with a comprehensive education and training to enable them to effectively interact with persons in crisis.

The use of body cameras by police officers will offer accountability and transparency to the public. However, the Village cannot financially afford to solely fund a body worn camera program. The Committee endorses the use of body cameras as a Program in conjunction with Westchester County or other regional police departments.

**Recommendation #4:** Funding permitting, require the use of body cameras.

- Buchanan Police Department should look into the use of body cameras, and associated cost, and supplies associated with them etc.
- Buchanan Police Department should look into the use of dash cameras for patrol vehicles, the cost, supplies associated with them, etc.
- Buchanan should look to utilize possible shared services with the Westchester County Department of Public safety for data storage associated with body cameras and/ or dash cameras.
- Develop policies on the requirement of the use of body and/or dash cameras as well as guidelines on their use and the release of the footage.

**Recommendation # 5:** Continue partnerships with the local school community.

- Buchanan Police Department will continue to visit the local school community and interact with the students, staff and parents to build trust and open communication
- Buchanan Police should establish a more visible presence in the schools in an effort to create trust and understanding with the school community.
- Buchanan Police should continue to be a member of the local **school emergency response team (SERT)**

**Trainings**

**Recommendation #6.** Increase training for all Buchanan Police Officers, in the areas of Procedural Justice, Professional Communication and Implicit Bias by continuing to utilize:

- Unified in-service training programs set up by Westchester County Department of Public Safety under the shared service agreement.
- New York State Department of Criminal Justice Training offered in the local area.
- Training from independent and private resources.

**Transparency**

**Recommendation #7:** The Buchanan Police Department should demonstrate greater transparency with community members by maintaining them abreast of their policies and procedures.

- To build on current efforts of transparency the Buchanan Police Department will create a webpage that includes a mission statement, information in reference to specific policies and a link where a citizen can file a complaint anonymously. In addition, the webpage should provide up to date disciplinary and publishing procedures. In addition, information will be provided in reference to up to date Use of Force Policy that will include updates and/ or new legislation pertaining to the policy and publish procedure on Buchanan website.

- The Buchanan Police Department will look into participating in any shared services that Westchester County may provide such as Office of Police Accountability (OPA).
- The Buchanan Police Department should continue to update and create Policies as needed to foster trust, fairness, and legitimacy within the community.
- The department-issued badge, or an authorized sewn-on cloth replica, must be worn and visible at all times while in uniform.
- The regulation nameplate, or an authorized sewn-on cloth nameplate, shall be worn at all times while in uniform.
- The Buchanan Police Department should supply business cards to those members whose assignments involve frequent interaction with the public. The business cards should contain identifying information including, but not limited to, the member's name, badge or other identification number and contact information (e.g., telephone number, email address). Members should provide a business card upon request.

### Technology

**Recommendation #8:** The Buchanan Police Department should look into new technology available to them especially in the area of records management.

- The Buchanan Police Department should utilize a system that will provide storage, retrieval, retention, manipulation, archiving, and viewing of information, records, documents, and files pertaining to law enforcement operations. This will enable quick data entry, immediate search and retrieval, and extensive reporting capabilities.
- The Buchanan Police Department should look to utilize any shared services with Westchester County Department of Public Safety including universal records management system to help promote transparency and uniformity.

### Officer Wellness

The mental health of law enforcement officers is extremely important. The stressful nature of their jobs makes it imperative for them to have access to mental health services. Currently, there is no employee assistance program (EAP) in the Village of Buchanan.

**Recommendation #9** : Establish an employee assistance program (EAP) for officers of the Buchanan Police Department.

- Research the Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement Project ( A.B.L.E), its components and the ability to implement it.
- Participate in available Westchester County Programs for officer wellness.
- Attend trainings that are available for officer wellness and trainings that will assist with establishing an EAP.
- Utilize the police officer hotline if Westchester County establishes one.