



Police Services Study

City of Beacon

Town of Fishkill

Village of Fishkill

HUDSON VALLEY
PATTERN *for* PROGRESS

Presentation – Oct. 30, 2017

Report Preparation

- Pattern was selected to conduct research on the potential for the City of Beacon, Town of Fishkill, and Village of Fishkill to consolidate their police departments and/or possibly find efficiencies through shared services
- Following research, we concluded that it was not recommended that the City of Beacon be part of a three-way consolidation. We did, however, recommend that the Town of Fishkill and Village of Fishkill Police Departments should be consolidated.

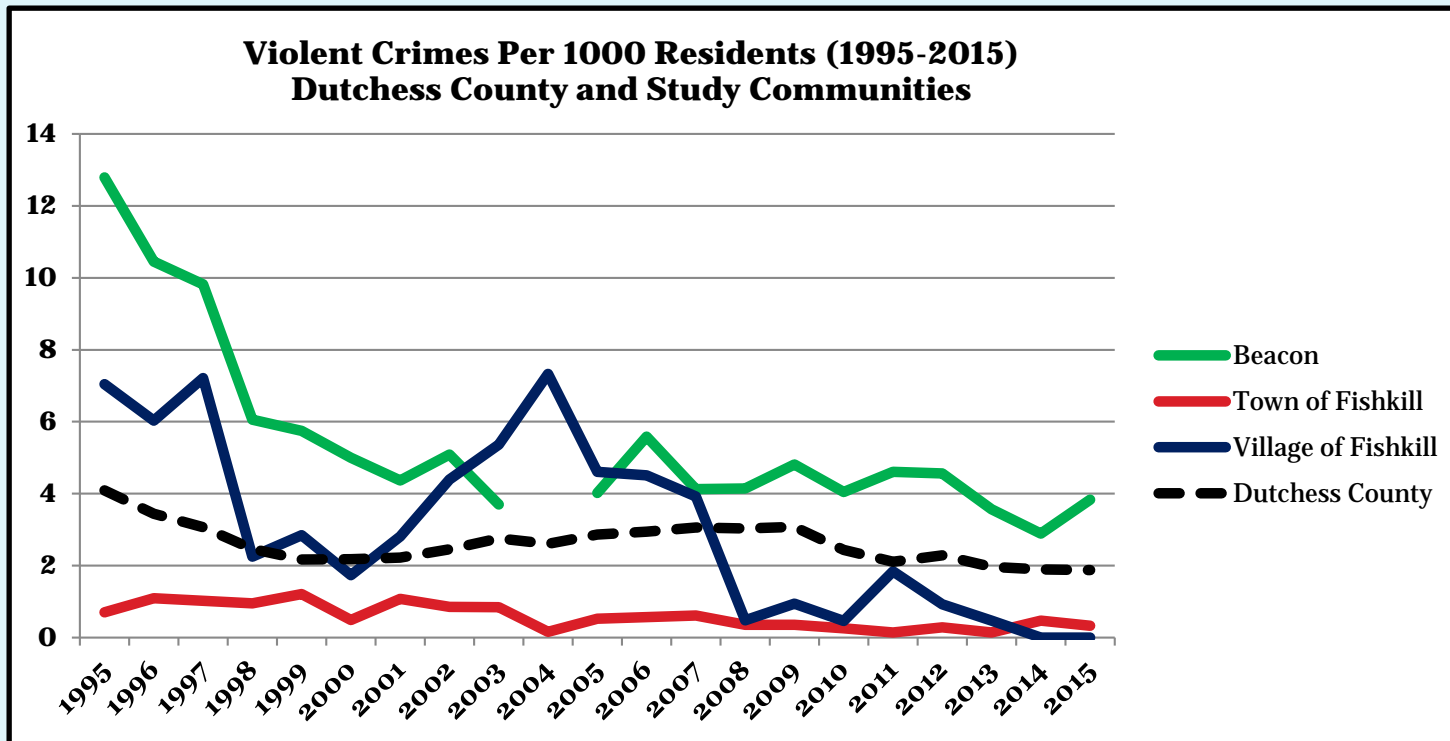
Methodology

- Wide range of research and investigation
- Interviews with elected officials and police chiefs of each of the study communities on multiple occasions
- Survey of every elected official in the three communities was also conducted
- Extensive documents on the operations and budget of the police departments reviewed
- Thorough review of other studies of police consolidation and shared services among Police Departments throughout New York State.

Crime Statistics and Financial Data

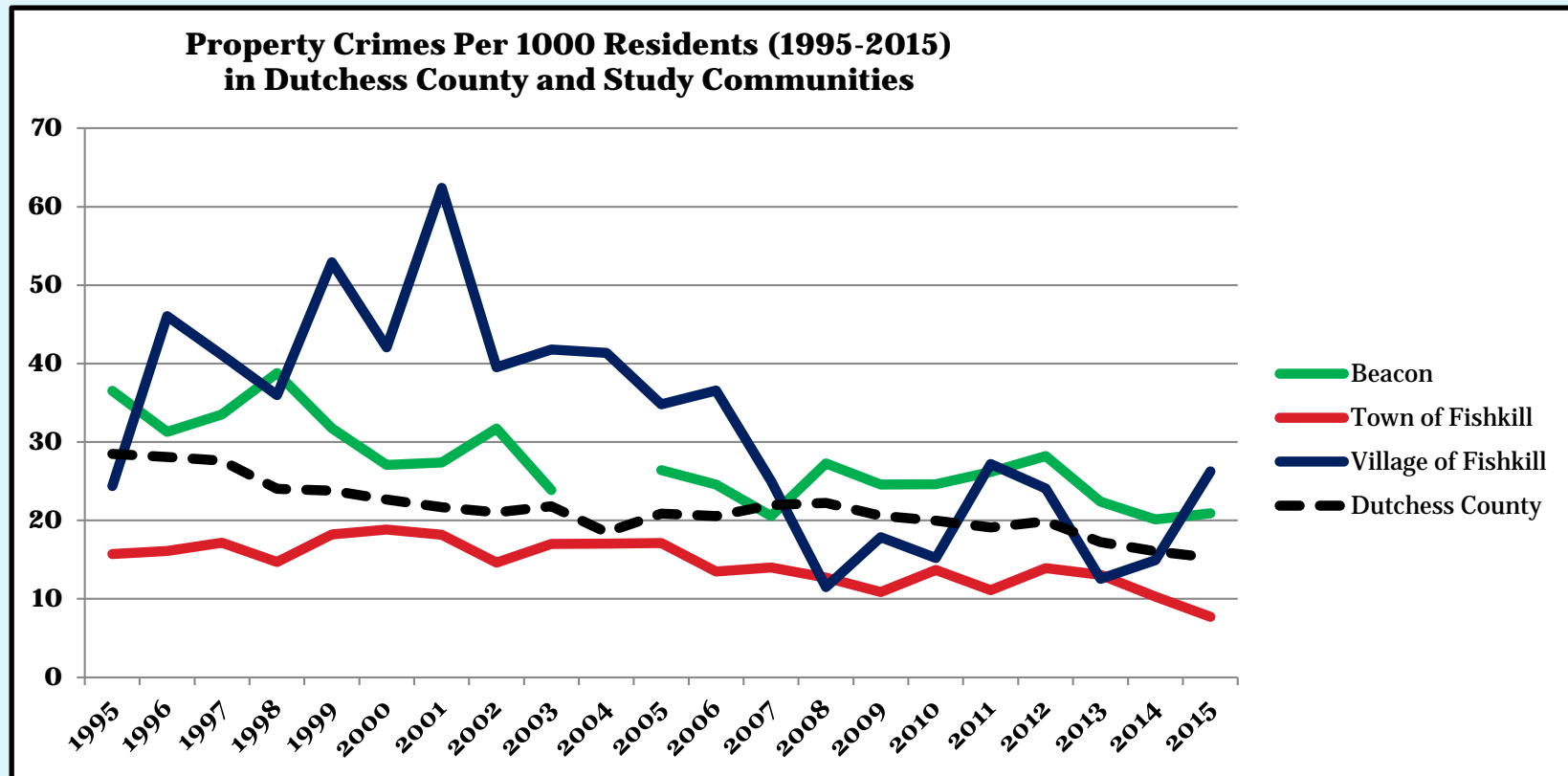


Declining Violent Crime Rate



- Sharp decline in violent crime between 1995 and 2003
- Further steady decline since 2006
- Violent crime rate is at only 1/3 the level it was 20 years ago

Declining Property Crime Rate



- Steady decline from 1995 through 2015. Property crime rate is about half of what it was in 1995

Per Capita Policing Costs: Beacon and Study Communities

Municipality	Average Police Exp. (2014-2015)	Population (2015)	Per Capita Police Cost
Village of Fishkill	\$583,822	2,001	\$292
City of Beacon	\$4,079,380	14,375	\$284
Town of Fishkill	\$1,694,693	21,504	\$79

Source: New York State Comptroller

Includes only direct police expenditures as reported to NY State Comptroller. Indirect expenditures for health benefits and insurance costs are not included.

Per Capita Policing Costs:

Beacon and Statewide Comparables (Cities and Villages with populations +/- 20% of Beacon's population)

County	City/Village	Average Police Exp. (2014-2015)	Pop. (2015)	Per Capita Police Cost	Rank (out of 17 statewide)
Nassau	Village of Floral Park	\$6,831,400	16,093	\$424	1
Westchester	City of Rye	\$6,217,581	15,944	\$390	2
Westchester	Village of Scarsdale	\$6,405,188	17,621	\$363	3
Chautauqua	City of Dunkirk	\$3,526,785	12,308	\$287	4
Dutchess	City of Beacon	\$4,079,380	14,375	\$284	5
Ontario	City of Geneva	\$3,262,164	13,157	\$248	6
Erie	City of Tonawanda	\$3,203,142	15,000	\$214	7
Erie	Village of Depew	\$3,195,587	15,227	\$210	8
Broome	Village of Endicott	\$2,707,582	13,143	\$206	9
Albany	City of Cohoes	\$3,250,460	16,281	\$200	10
Broome	Village of Johnson City	\$2,887,969	14,903	\$194	11
Fulton	City of Gloversville	\$2,839,158	15,293	\$186	12
Cattaraugus	City of Olean	\$2,561,192	14,099	\$182	13
Warren	City of Glens Falls	\$2,570,273	14,496	\$177	14
Erie	Village of Kenmore	\$2,649,866	15,271	\$174	15

Source: New York State Comptroller

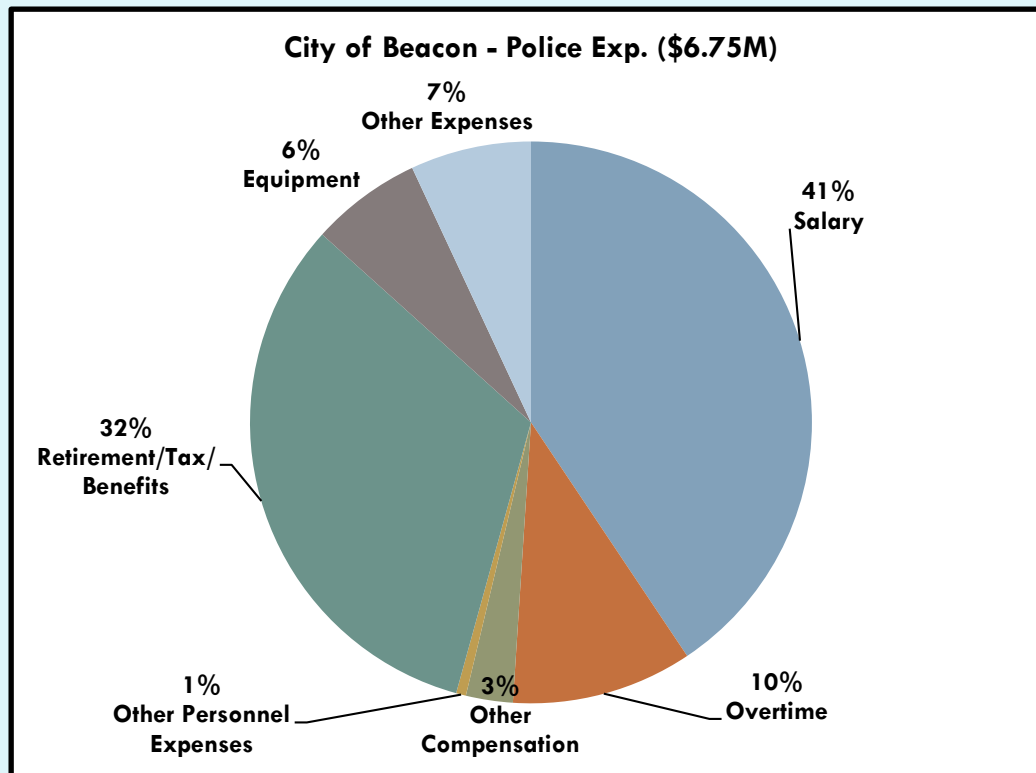
Expenditures on Police as a Percent of Municipal Budget

	Total 2016 Budgeted Expenditures	2016 Police Budgeted Expenditures	Police Exp. % of Total
Beacon	\$19,062,655	\$6,747,349	35.4%
Fishkill (Town)	\$11,527,450	\$2,345,812	20.3%
Fishkill (Village)	\$2,273,594	\$765,208	33.7%

Source: Adopted Municipal Budgets

- 35.4% of Beacon's 2016 budget went to expenditures for law enforcement, the highest percent of any of the study communities. This percentage is comparable to other communities.
- Totals include expenses for personnel benefits and liability insurance

Police Expenditures by category



- 87% of budget is personnel-related costs including 55% for employee compensation (salary, overtime, sick leave) and 32% for the cost of benefits, pensions, and payroll taxes
- Totals suggest that no significant reduction in police budget is likely without reduction in staffing (not currently recommended)

City/Town/Village Police Merger Not Recommended



Why not combine the three departments?

1. None of the 62 cities in New York State currently has a local (as opposed to a county-wide) police department that serves both a city and a town. No examples of any such joint city-town departments operating in the past could be found. Appears this type of consolidation has never been accomplished anywhere in NY.

2. Challenges of combining a department of full time officers with two departments of part time officers.

If the new department went with:

- full time officers the town and village would pay much more.
- part time officers, job security of BPD officers could be jeopardized.
- a mix of full and part time officers, would create a deeply segmented police force of "haves and have nots," make scheduling of shifts extraordinarily difficult, and frustrate attempts to create a unified entity that could take advantage of economies of scale.

Why not combine the three departments?

3. The calls for service received in Beacon differ from those in the town and village and demand for service is higher. City received 42% more calls for service than the Town, even though the town's population is larger.
4. Scheduling a consolidated police department would be another significant logistical hurdle. Currently the BPD uses a patrol schedule of three 8-hour shifts. In contrast, both the VFPD and TFPD use a patrol schedule of four 6-hour shifts. Difference in scheduling would raise significant collective bargaining issues.
5. After only recently emerging from federal oversight, this did not seem like the ideal time to consider a dramatic restructuring of the Beacon PD. Better to build on the successes already accomplished and improve service delivery to existing community.
6. Denser population and more urban environment suggest a different approach to policing is needed compared to what would work in the town and village.

Recommendations for Shared Services and Other Efficiencies



Hold Quarterly Meetings of Police Chiefs and Police Commissioner

- **Formalizes communication and information sharing**
- **Provides a setting to coordinate the implementation of shared services**
- **Provides a setting to identify additional shared service opportunities**
- **Fosters a culture of cooperation and open communication**

Improve Record Keeping for Equipment Inventory and Maintenance

- **Tracking the condition and age of equipment can signal a need for repair or replacement**
- **A detailed inventory of equipment may highlight a previously unknown area of deficiency and inform future spending decisions and capital planning**
- **Accurate records may reveal opportunities for inter-departmental cooperative purchasing or sharing equipment**

Establish a pilot “Reserve Officer” Program

- Innovative reserve officer program was implemented in the Town of Saugerties by Police Chief Joe Sinagra
- Hire police academy graduates for no cost and assign them to field work with full-time officers
- Mutually beneficial arrangement provides junior officers with experience in the field and provides the police department additional officers free of charge
- The program received buy-in from both the union and the full-time officers in Saugerties
- Beacon should explore the feasibility of implementing a similar program. Chief Sinagra has offered to speak to City about details

Use Part-Time Officers

- **Using only part-time officers is NOT recommended in Beacon**
- **Supplementing full-time officers with part-time officers would reduce the cost of benefits, pensions, and overtime**
- **Part-time officers could cover planned or unexpected spikes in demand for police services, reducing overtime costs**
- **Many part-time officers in the Town and Village of Fishkill are fully-trained officers that have retired from a full time position**
- **Existing full time officers would not be impacted**

Evaluate Staffing Levels of Patrol Shifts

- Accounting for pension, health benefit, social security tax, and other costs, one hour of police officer work in Beacon costs an estimated \$84
- The cost of one officer filling an 8-hour shift for every day of the year costs an estimated \$245,280 annually
- Considerations such as supervisory needs and the types of crime committed during the midnight shift may account for the perceived over-staffing identified by the analysis

Coordinate Joint Traffic Enforcement

- Traffic enforcement is the most common call for service (CFS) in all three municipalities.
- 27% of all CFS in Beacon were for traffic enforcement in 2014-2015
- Coordinated traffic enforcement between all three communities could reduce officer time spent responding to traffic enforcement CFS
- Cameras designed to capture speeding and red light violations could reduce officer time spent enforcing traffic laws while providing an additional source of revenue

Create a Shared Civilian Opioid Coordinator

“The Heroin epidemic is running rampant throughout the county.”

-2016 Beacon Police department Annual Report

- Shared civilian opioid coordinator would serve all three municipalities
- The opioid coordinator would provide counseling and connect opioid users with treatment facilities
- Opioid users are more likely to seek help from a civilian
- Compliments the work of the Dutchess County Drug Taskforce

Explore Options to Relocate City Hall

- **Current building that is used for both city hall and the police department headquarters was initially intended solely for the police department and justice court**
- **Space is limited for all city employees located in the building**
- **The City of Beacon should explore the feasibility of renting or building a new city hall**
- **Pursue grant funding opportunities if they arise**

Recommendations for the Town and Village of Fishkill



Merge Village and Town Police Departments

- Since 1990 at least four other villages in the Hudson Valley have dissolved their police departments with great success. Very few villages in the region as small as Fishkill still maintain their own departments.
- The Village's per capita cost of policing is among the highest in New York State for a community of its size, ranking 8th out of 52 comparable communities. The VFPD, which serves only 2,000 residents, employs 24 law enforcement officers whose direct salary alone (not accounting for other personnel costs) accounts for approximately \$400,000 per year (out of a total village budget of just \$2.2 million). Village taxpayers would likely save money if the costs of policing the village were more equitably shared with the entire Town of Fishkill.
- The part-time nature of the TFPD and VFPD and the fact that both departments operate on four 6-hour shifts (unlike Beacon which operates three 8-hour shifts) would make a merger easier to accomplish relative to one with the City.
- The Town's Police Headquarters is located just 1 mile from the existing Village Police Headquarters, so response times to incidents in the village would not be significantly different than the current baseline.
- Estimate that the Town would have to hire 4 to 5 additional part time officers at a total annual cost of around \$152,000 in order to provide service to village. Could hire more if Village chooses to pay town.

Other Recommendations

(If a merger does not occur)

- **Move the Village Police Department into the Town Police Department Headquarters.** In this shared building arrangement, the VFPD and the TFPD could share the costs of occupying and maintaining the building (e.g. utilities, office equipment, etc.). Current VFPD building could be repurposed for another municipal use or turned into a ratable. With more than four times as much square footage in the TFPD building, there is likely enough space for both police departments.
- **Get rid of the night shift in the village and coordinate with town to provide service.** At present, the village does not operate a night shift on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday night. Eliminating night shift on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday would save over \$60,000 per year for village.
- **Let the Village PD use holding cells at the Town Police HQ as needed.**
- **Standardize purchase of weaponry and ammunition between the two departments.** Departments use the same caliber of ammunition currently, but not the same type of guns.

Police Services Study

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