

COMMUNITY POLICING

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| GREAT BARRINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE NO. 4.35 | EFFECTIVE DATE: <u>07/25/2009</u> |
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I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

1. Community policing is both a philosophy and an organizational strategy that allows the police and community residents to work closely together in new ways to solve the problems of crime, reduce fear of crime, and improve neighborhood conditions. The philosophy rests on the belief that people in the community deserve input into the police process, in exchange for their participation and support. It also rests on the belief that solutions to contemporary community problems demand freeing both people and the police to explore creative, new ways to address neighborhood concerns beyond a narrow focus on individual crime incidents.

2. Community policing organizational strategy first demands that everyone in the department, including both civilian and sworn personnel, must investigate ways to translate the philosophy into practice. This demands making the subtle but sophisticated shift so that everyone in the department understands the need to focus on solving community problems in creative, new ways that can include challenging and enlisting people in the process of policing themselves. Community policing also implies a shift within the department that grants greater autonomy to line officers, which

implies enhanced respect for their judgment as police professionals.

3. Community policing implies a new contract between the police and the citizens it serves, one that offers the hope of overcoming widespread apathy, at the same time it restrains any impulse to vigilantism. This new relationship, based on mutual trust, also suggests that the police serve as a catalyst, challenging people to accept their share of the responsibility for solving their own individual problems, as well as their share of the responsibility for the overall quality of life in the community. The shift to community policing also means a slower response time for non-emergency calls and that citizens themselves will be asked to handle more of their minor concerns, but in exchange this will free the department to work with people on developing long-term solutions for pressing community concerns.

4. Community policing adds a vital proactive element to the traditional reactive role of the police, resulting in full-spectrum police service. As the only agency of social control open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the police must maintain the ability to respond to immediate crises and crime incidents, but community policing broadens the police role so that they can make a greater impact on making changes today that hold the promise of making communities safer and more attractive places to live tomorrow.

5. Community policing stresses exploring new ways to protect and enhance the lives of those who are most vulnerable--juveniles, the elderly, minorities, the poor, the disabled, and the homeless. It both assimilates and broadens the scope of previous outreach efforts by involving the entire department in efforts to prevent and control crime in ways that encourage the police and people to work together with mutual respect and accountability.

6. Community policing promotes the judicious use of technology, but it also rests on the belief that nothing surpasses what dedicated human beings, talking and working together, can achieve. It invests trust in those who are on the front lines together on the street, relying on their combined judgment, wisdom, and expertise to fashion creative new approaches to contemporary community concerns.

7. Community policing must be a fully integrated approach that involves everyone in the department. The

community policing approach plays a crucial role internally—within the police department—by providing information and assistance about the community and its problems, and by enlisting broad-based community support for the department’s overall objectives.

8. Community policing provides decentralized, personalized police service to the community. It recognizes that the police cannot impose order on the community from outside, but that people must be encouraged to think of the police as a resource they can use in helping to solve contemporary community concerns. It is not a tactic to be applied then abandoned, but an entirely new way of thinking about the police role in society, a philosophy that also offers a coherent and cohesive organizational plan that police departments can modify to suit their specific needs.

II. POLICY

This policy will serve as an action plan relative to translating objectives, values, and principles into a community policing plan for the Great Barrington Police Department.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Community policing is a policing philosophy that stresses police-citizen partnerships in preventing and controlling crime and addressing quality of life and disorder issues. Police officers engage in strategies that are pro-active and that increase their visibility in the community.
- B. Community policing is a policing philosophy that promotes and supports organizational strategies to address the causes and reduce the fear of crime and social disorder through problem-solving tactics and police-community partnerships.
- C. Community policing focuses on crime and social disorder through the delivery of police services that includes aspects of traditional law enforcement, as well as prevention, problem-solving, community engagement, and partnerships. The community policing model balances reactive responses to calls for service with proactive problem-solving centered on the causes of crime and disorder. Community policing requires police and citizens to join

together as partners in the course of both identifying and effectively addressing these issues.

IV. PRINCIPLES

Though the longstanding principle for law enforcement, “To Protect and To Serve,” remains valid, the reality imposed on both citizens and law enforcement by our complicated society requires a different focus. Individual citizens, small businesses, and corporations must embrace their responsibility to reduce crime. Law enforcement’s responsibility is two-fold. First, law enforcement must continue to provide the services traditionally expected of us—the protection of life and property, the investigation of crimes and the apprehension of the persons committing those crimes, general assistance, and traffic safety. Second, law enforcement must spend the requisite amount of time communicating and building partnerships with all segments of the community in an effort to limit the amount of crime to the lowest possible level, to provide the necessary tools for the community to actively participate in discouraging crime, and improve the general quality of life for everyone.

Community policing is a proactive approach to crime fighting in contrast to the historical reactive response practices of law enforcement. Community policing increases the number of tools, methods, and alternatives available for law enforcement service delivery by emphasizing close partnerships and working with citizens to prevent crime and provide a safe community.

The Great Barrington Police Department embraces these principles by working on permanent solutions to community problems instead of relying on short-term interventions. The emphasis for all police department employees is achieving resolution of problems for the longest term possible. The goal of each contact is providing quality service that is achieved through empathy and a thorough understanding of the customer’s needs, the sharing of relevant information, and a shared understanding of the resolution.

The Department fully embraces the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing and has a standing department committee reviewing the Pillars and evaluating the recommendations under each, specifically pillar four “Community Policing and Crime Reduction.” A list of GBPD community policing initiatives and efforts are kept current under our websites’ Open Data Portal.

Periodically the committee releases updates to all personnel on their work.

V. PROCEDURES

The very nature of law enforcement requires officers and other police department employees to make decisions and carry out actions that do not always satisfy the customer's desires, but do achieve a satisfactory solution when applying the law and community standards. This policy does not hinder the application of the law; rather, it encourages officers and other police department members to embrace the participation of the community as partners in addressing crime and the factors that contribute to crime.

Officers and other police department members must keep in mind the following principles and practices as they fulfill their responsibilities to the community:

- A. All customers deserve professional and complete service.
- B. The Great Barrington Police Department must sell itself through our actions, communication, and decisions that we make everyday.
- C. It is the responsibility of every member of the Great Barrington Police Department to actively engage customers and the community at large.
- D. The principles of the SARA Model (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) provide a foundation for addressing community issues and may be used where appropriate.
- E. For each and every problem, there are underlying factors contributing to it. It is our responsibility to identify and analyze these factors followed by a response that best addresses the problem and the factors contributing to it.
- F. Successful problem resolution is achieved through persistence and creativity. Officers and other police department personnel are encouraged to bring multiple resources of the department and town together to address problems. Successful resolution includes a review of the outcomes, making certain the problem is resolved and either

does not require any more immediate services or does require other support services for a specified period of time.

- G. Communication is our most powerful tool. Isolation is our greatest weakness. Spend all the time required to share information, communicate ideas, improve understanding, and collaborate with our customers.
- H. We are educators and students. We can improve safety and reduce crime through the sharing of information, ideas, and time with the community. Listening to citizens teaches us about the needs and desires of the community, as well as the solutions that benefit them best.
- I. Creativity is encouraged.

VI. PROGRAMS [44.2.5]

The primary goal for every police department employee is providing high quality, community oriented service as a natural part of the way we do business. The Great Barrington Police Department has selected programs designed to reach out to the community and communicate specific messages that support our Community Oriented Policing efforts. These programs are continually evaluated for their effectiveness and are subject to elimination or change when the needs of the Great Barrington Police Department and the community would be better served.

It is the responsibility of all officers and other members of the Great Barrington Police Department to actively support these programs through their direct participation as needed. Patrol officers, investigators, clerical and command staff must contribute to these programs ensuring their success.

Some of the Great Barrington Police Department programs supporting community oriented policing are:

1. Triad Program
2. Walking Beats
3. Job Shadow Program
4. Internships

5. Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Squad Annual Easter Egg Hunt
6. Skate Park Visits
7. Senior Citizen Center Luncheons
8. School Park and Walk Program
9. Muddy Brook Elementary School Safety Day
10. Great Barrington Rotary Club Fly – In Day
11. Great Barrington Rotary Club Truck Day
12. K-9 Unit Presentation
13. Gun Lock program
14. Drug Disposal Box
15. KOPS & KIDS
16. House Checks
17. Citizen’s Police Academy
18. Read Across America Day at Muddy Brook Elementary School
19. Special Olympics
20. Comfort Dog

For a current list of initiatives, see the Open Data Portal on the department website.

ISSUING AUTHORITY:

Chief William R. Walsh Jr.:

