



# **Black River / Evans Mills Police Department**

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Black River/Evans Mills Police Department  
NYS Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative

Francis Dishaw, Mayor of the Village of Black River  
Robert Boucher, Mayor of the Village of Evans Mills  
Steven C Wood, Chief of Police

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# Community Stakeholders

Patty Dziuba, Jefferson County District Attorney's Office

Scott Gray, County Chairperson Jefferson County Board of Legislators

Jeffrey Smith, Pastor of First Baptist Church of Watertown

Tim Ruetten, Director of Community Services, Jefferson County

Julie Hutchins, Jefferson County Public Defender

Philip Reed, Jefferson County Legislature

Kristine Maloney, Jefferson County Department of Probation

Tammy Kitto, Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County

Linda Dittrich, Associate Vice President, School of STEM and Health Professions at Jefferson Community College

Sam Purington, Volunteer Transportation Center

Anita Seefried-Brown, Pivot Prevention and Health Services

Jared Plantz, Black River Elementary School, Carthage Central School District

Sha Cady, Dean of Students at Evans Mills Primary School, Indian River Central School District

John Coulliette, Pastor of First Baptist Church of Black River

Gregory Smith, Evans Mills Board Member and owner of Can Am Enterprises

Johnna Vargas, owner/operator The John Hoover Inn

David Leonard, Partner at Git R Done Automotive

Jill Bruce, Bruce Funeral Home Black River

Marylin Hanson, retired Village Clerk/resident Evans Mills

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# Table of Contents

Overview of Change

Policy and Procedure

Overview and Discussion of 9 Topics

- Use of Force

- Crowd Management

- Community Policing

- Implicit Bias and Awareness Training

- De-escalation Training

- Restorative Justice Practices

- Community Outreach Efforts

- Transparent Citizen Complaint Procedures

- Identifying/Addressing Community Specific Issues

Departmental Training and Additional Topics of Review

- Departmental Training

  - Yearly In-Service Training to include minimum of 21 hours (topics to follow)

  - NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) Hate Crime Policy

  - Duty to Intercede Policy

  - Online DCJS Training as available

  - Implicit Bias/Racial Profiling Training (part of 9-point discussion)

  - De-Escalation Training (part of 9-point discussion)

- Body Cam Policy and Use

- Continuous Public Input and Interviews (part of 9-point discussion)

- Mental Health and Hygiene Situations

- Citizen and Internal Complaints (part of 9-point discussion)

- Statistical Data Collection

  - Online Survey 10/15/20 – 12/18/20

Putting the Plan in Place

- Planning

- Community Input

- Drafting Plan

- Board Presentation with Public Hearing

- Board Approval and Ratification

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## Overview of Change

“The New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative” requires local police agencies to develop a plan based on community input. Per the governor’s report, “This executive order is intended to help rebuild the confidence and restore trust between police and the communities they serve by requiring localities to develop a new plan for policing in the community based on fact-finding and meaningful community input.” The Black River/Evans Mills Police Department (BREMPD) is going to identify the programming and directives that address the issues outlined in the governor’s order. The police department will do so by identifying our current policies and procedures which help achieve these missions as well as identifying new programming and directives that have been developed or are in the process of being developed. These will be described and highlighted in each section as we progress through this plan.

As the police department begins to address these topics and issues, it is important to know that the BREMPD bases all of its policies and procedures on a mission statement that is outlined in our Rules and Regulations, updated 9/01/2020.

### **Black River Evans Mills Police Department Mission Statement**

The Black River/Evans Mills Police Department is committed to serving the citizens of Black River, Evans Mills and Jefferson County, NY by:

Respecting the civil rights of each citizen as set forth by the Constitution of the United States and New York State.

Educating the public so they don’t fall victim to crime.

Enforcing all laws and court orders, without prejudice.

Training and enhancing the professionalism of our members so they can perform their duties to the highest degree of efficiency and effectiveness.

Working in harmony with all facets of the federal, state, county and other municipal governments for the common goal of protecting and serving the people.

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## Policy and Procedure

The BREMPD has in place a comprehensive and updated policy and procedure reference manual. Upon employment, all officers are issued this manual, which provides structure, guidance and oversight to perform their duties. This manual is reviewed and updated as needed per NYS DCJS (New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services) guidelines, change in laws or policies of NYS. At any time, this manual is available for review by any and all citizens, complainants, or government officials.

These policies and procedures encompass four principal goals:

1. To increase the effectiveness and efficiency of law enforcement agencies utilizing existing personnel, equipment, and facilities to the extent possible;
2. To promote increased cooperation and coordination among law enforcement agencies and other agencies that provide criminal justice services;
3. To ensure the appropriate training of law enforcement personnel;
4. To promote public confidence in law enforcement agencies.

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## Overview and Discussion of 9 Topics

### 1. TOPIC 1: Use of Force

The BREMPD members are trained and certified by the Municipal Police Training Council (MPTC). NYS DCJS mandates 11 hours of instruction for Use of Force and Deadly Physical Force which is based on NYS Penal Law, Article 35. Many other courses including Defensive Tactics and Firearms have use of force lessons woven within the course. Our policy is based on the NYS DCJS model policy which includes a form for any use of force incident that becomes part of the case file. All cases are reviewed by the Chief of Police and Jefferson County District Attorney's Office, if needed. Per NYS DCJS Policy, a Use of Force report is submitted monthly through the EJustice Portal.

### 2. TOPIC 2: Crowd Management

DCJS provides 3 hours of regulated training at the Basic Police School and at times, yearly In-Service Training will address this topic. In the event Crowd Control is needed, the incident will be turned over to the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) or the New York State Police (NYSP) as our personnel and equipment is limited. BREMPD will assume an assisting agency duty.

### 3. TOPIC 3: Community Policing

BREMPD is very actively involved with citizens, schools, churches, businesses and community members within both villages. BREMPD participates in numerous examples of community policing enforcement, i.e. Shop with a Cop, Parade Details, School Visits, Helmet Program, foot patrols, and Stakeholder meetings to name a few. Community Policing is paramount in our patrol procedure and the public is welcome to speak to our officers on any issue.

### 4. TOPIC 4: Community Outreach Efforts

This is related to and part of Community Policing. BREMPD proudly participates in community events and contacts. Members participate in local 5k Running Events, work closely with the local Fire Departments and Ambulance Squads, assist with events at the local libraries and have attended and assisted with Ft Drum Community Events. The department uses the social media platform, Facebook, to connect with our residents. Community Outreach and Community Policing are major influences of the BREMPD.

~~5. TOPIC 5: Implicit Bias and Awareness Training~~

Our mission statement, policies and training address the impact of implicit bias on one's behavior. Our officers are trained to recognize the concept and act or react appropriately. Courtesy, professionalism and respect for others is linked throughout our training, policies and accountability. Cultural Diversity, Bias Related Incidents and Sexual Harassment is trained in the Basic Course for Police Officers (BCPO) which is regulated by DCJS. Ethical Awareness and Cultural Diversity topics are included in the Watertown Police Department (WPD) and JCSO In-Service curriculum. Members of the BREMPD will also utilize a yearly on-line training program specializing in this topic from Silver State Consulting Group LLC.

6. TOPIC 6: De-Escalation Training

De-Escalation techniques are part of every reality-based training scenario. These scenarios are part of the yearly In-Service training offered by the WPD or JCSO. NYS Defensive Tactics Training has recently been redesigned to include and reinforce decision making and communication skills in an effort to achieve voluntary compliance without the need of physical force. Training in crisis intervention focuses on understanding emotional crisis, mental health encounters and if possible, redirecting a person in crisis to counselors, services or agencies that can resolve such issues. Members of the BREMPD will utilize the De-Escalation on-line training program offered by Silver State Consulting Group LLC.

7. TOPIC 7: Restorative Justice Practices (RJP)

RJP is a response to crime that involves organizing a meeting between an offender and a victim so they share their experience of what happened, discuss who was harmed and how to create a consensus for what the offender can do to repair the harm. The Office of the District Attorney, Jefferson County Probation or the Court can assist with Restorative Justice. BREMPD does not have officers, staff or facilities for RJP but can assist the victim and/or offenders with contact to the Jefferson County Resolution Center or Youth Court of Jefferson County.

8. TOPIC 8: Transparent Citizen Complaint Procedures

BREMPD accepts personnel complaints from the public at any time. All complaints are investigated with the complainants advised of the outcome. The Chief will investigate officer complaints with the respective Mayor informed. If the complaint is warranted and needs an outside investigation, the JCSO or NYSP and Jefferson County District Attorney's office, BREMPD will forward the complaint. If the complaint is against the Chief of Police, the respective Mayor will investigate and include the JCSO or NYSP and Jefferson County District Attorney's Office.

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9. TOPIC 9: Specific Issues Unique to our Area

The BREMPD welcomes all input from community members, School Officials, Clergy, Business Owners and visitors. If any community group, resident, stakeholder or visitor has a complaint, encounter, idea or correspondence; the BREMPD will respond and investigate or offer assistance. The BREMPD will continue to reach out to the community and maintain an open-door relationship. Community input is paramount to a successful police department.



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## Departmental Training and Additional Topics of Review

It is the policy of the BREMPD that all sworn officers in accordance with DCJS will receive at least twenty-one (21) hours of in-service training annually. This training will be done in part with the City of Watertown Police Department or the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, whichever is available.

Part of the twenty-one (21) hours must be devoted to the following areas:

- Firearms Training / Range / Reality Based Training
- Subject Management / Use of Force Review
- Use of Deadly Force Review
- Legal Updates
- Bloodborne Pathogen / Hepatitis Awareness Review / Radiological
- Taser Training
- Workplace Violence Prevention
- Collapsible Baton
- Oleoresin Capsicum Aerosol Training
- CPR and/or First Aid Training
- Sexual Harassment Training
- Policy and Procedure Manual updates

The BREMPD will also be required to review certain policies on a yearly basis and attend online training classes offered by NYS DCJS and Silver State Consulting Group LLC as they are available. These training sessions and policies will include the following:

- NYS DCJS Hate Crime Policy
- Black River/Evans Mills Police Department Duty to Intercede Policy
- Online NYC DCJS training opportunities
- Implicit Bias/Racial Profiling Training
- De-Escalation Training

Body Cam Policy and Use. The BREMPD has in place a Body Worn Camera (BWC) Policy. The purpose of the policy is to serve as a guideline on recording, storing, retaining, releasing and maintaining data from a BWC. The policy was developed by NYS DCJS and adopted by the BREMPD. The policy is reviewed yearly and updated as needed.

The BREMPD will review and train on the following on a yearly basis:

- Community and Public Input
- Mental Health and Hygiene Situations

Community and Public Input. The BREMPD will utilize public input and interviews throughout the year. Collaborative partnerships between the law enforcement agency and the individuals and organizations they serve will be used to develop solutions to problems and increase trust in police.

~~Mental Health and Hygiene Situations. The BREMPD recognizes the importance of mental health and wellness. This includes mental health for not only members of the public but members of the department as well.~~

Public: It is the policy of the BREMPD to take appropriate action when a person appears to be mentally ill and is conducting himself / herself / their self in a manner which is likely to result in serious harm to himself / herself / their self or others. This may include taking custody of an individual to prevent harm. Officers should always use the least amount of force necessary to safely take people into custody (following all policies and procedures) when this must be done. We further recognize that mental health is not in and of itself a crime, and should not be handled in the same way. All efforts should be made to connect people in crisis with the appropriate services to avoid the need for police custodial interventions.

Department Personnel: The BREMPD recognizes that Law Enforcement is one of the most stressful occupations with higher-than-average rates of alcohol abuse, divorce and other stress related issues. We promote emotional health and wellness through exercise and healthy living. The villages will also provide any officer the ability to contact Employee Assistance Programs if needed. These services are available 24/7, 365 days, to any employee in crisis.

Citizen and Internal Complaints. It is the policy of the BREMPD to establish policies and procedures for accepting civilian complaints and standards that define the authority, policy and procedures for receiving, accepting, reporting, and conducting internal investigations within the BREMPD, as well as, define the authority and responsibility delegated to departmental supervisors for the maintenance of discipline. To a large degree, the public image of this Department is determined by the professional response of The Department to allegations of misconduct by members. The BREMPD shall:

1. Promptly, competently, professionally and impartially investigate all complaints relative to The Department or its members' responses to community needs.
2. Take appropriate corrective action, to include disciplinary action in all cases where an investigation substantiates a violation of law, orders, rules, regulations, policies or procedures of the BREMPD. The Department encourages citizens to bring forward legitimate complaints regarding misconduct by department members. Department members shall receive complaints courteously and shall handle them efficiently. Complaints, regardless of their nature, can be received in person, by mail, by email, or by phone at any time. If another agency needs to be contacted, it will be done without delay. Other agencies to be contacted could be the JCSO, the NYSJ and/or the Jefferson County District Attorney's Office.

## Statistical Data Collection

### Community Survey on Public Safety and Law Enforcement

Web based survey on blackriverny.org and villageofevansmills.com 10/15/20 – 12/18/20

72 responses (see note at end of data responses)

1. To what extent does your law enforcement agency develop relationships with community members (e.g., residents, organizations, and groups)
  - Positive answer 58
  - Negative answer 14
  - Prefer not to answer 0
2. To what extent does your law enforcement agency regularly communicate with community members (e.g., websites, e-mails, or public meetings)?
  - Positive answer 56
  - Negative answer 14
  - Prefer not to answer 2
3. To what extent does your law enforcement agency make it easy for community members to provide input (e.g., comments, suggestions, and concerns)?
  - Positive answer 54
  - Negative answer 17
  - Prefer not to answer 1
4. Community policing involves officers in your law enforcement agency working with the community to address the causes of crime in an effort to reduce the problems themselves through a wide range of activities. Based on this definition, to what extent do you think your law enforcement agency practices community policing?
  - Positive answer 58
  - Negative answer 12
  - Prefer not to answer 2
5. What is the issue you think is the greatest problem within the community?

● Traffic Issues/Residential Speeding	38
● Drug Abuse	7
● Burglary (Auto)	7
● D.W.I.	6
● Disorderly Conduct/Public Intox.	5
● No answer	5
● Burglary (Residential)	3
● Domestic Violence (Adult)	1
6. To what extent do you feel safe in your community when you are outside alone during the day?
  - Feel safe 71
  - Do not feel safe 1
7. To what extent do you feel safe in your community when you are outside alone at night?
  - Feel Safe 67
  - Do not feel safe 3
  - Prefer not to answer 2

- ~~8. To what extent do officers in your law enforcement agency treat people fairly?~~
- Positive answer 67
  - Negative answer 2
  - Prefer not to answer 3
9. To what extent do officers in your law enforcement agency show concern for community members?
- Positive answer 62
  - Negative answer 7
  - Prefer not to answer 3
10. To what extent are officers in your law enforcement agency respectful?
- Positive answer 68
  - Negative answer 1
  - Prefer not to answer 3
11. To what extent is your law enforcement agency responsive to the concerns of community members?
- Positive answer 61
  - Negative answer 9
  - Prefer not to answer 2
12. To what extent do you trust your law enforcement agency?
- Positive answer 65
  - Negative answer 5
  - Prefer not to answer 2
13. Over the last 12 months, to what extent have your feelings of safety in your community increased, decreased, or stayed the same?
- Increased safety 12
  - Decreased safety 11
  - Stayed the same 48
  - Prefer not to answer 1
14. If you had contact with an officer in your law enforcement agency during the past 12 months, to what extent did the officer sufficiently explain his or her actions and procedures?
- Positive answer 29
  - Negative answer 9
  - Prefer not to answer 3
  - Not applicable 31
15. To what extent is your law enforcement agency effective at proactively preventing crime?
- Positive answer 57
  - Negative answer 10
  - Prefer not to answer 5
16. To what extent is your law enforcement agency addressing the problems that really concern you?
- Positive answer 53
  - Negative answer 13
  - Prefer not to answer 6

~~17. To what extent are you satisfied with the overall performance of your law enforcement agency?~~

- Positive answer 61
- Negative answer 11
- Prefer not to answer 0

18. How many times in the past 12 months have you had contact with your law enforcement agency for traffic issues (e.g., citation, warning, or vehicle crash)?

- 0 times 59
- 1-2 times 9
- 3-4 times 0
- 5-6 times 2
- 7 or more 2

19. To what extent are you satisfied with your interaction(s) with your law enforcement agency for traffic issues?

- Satisfied 34
- Dissatisfied 3
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 22
- No answer 13

20. How many times in the past 12 months have you had contact with your law enforcement agency for 911 emergency calls?

- 0 times 57
- 1-2 times 10
- 3-4 times 1
- 7 or more 4

21. How many times in the past 12 months have you had contact with your law enforcement agency for non-emergency calls (e.g., to report a crime or suspicious activity)?

- 0 times 48
- 1-2 times 20
- 3-4 times 1
- 7 or more 3

22. To what extent are you satisfied with your interaction(s) with your law enforcement agency for non-emergency calls?

- Satisfied 42
- Dissatisfied 6
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 12
- No answer 12

23. How many years have you lived in your community?

- 1-5 years 10
- 6-10 years 7
- 11-15 years 5
- 16-20 years 6
- 21-25 years 4
- 25-30 years 8
- 30-35 years 5
- 35-40 years 5
- Over 41 17
- Do not live in either village 5

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24. What is your gender?		
● Female		31
● Male		33
● Prefer not to answer		8
25. Are you Hispanic or Latino?		
● Yes		0
● No		58
● Prefer not to answer		14
26. What is your race?		
● White		51
● Prefer not to answer		17
● Black or Afr. American		1
● American Indian		1
● Asian		1
● Blank		1
27. What is your age group?		
● Blank		1
● Prefer not to answer		7
● 18-29 years		2
● 30-39 years		6
● 40-49 years		16
● 50-59 years		18
● 60-69 years		14
● 70 +		8

Note:

11 surveys were noted to be all or near all negative or dissatisfied by the police department. These 11 surveys noted 0 interactions for 911, non-emergency or traffic violations with many answers blank.

5 of the 11 were generated from the same IP address on two different days. 2 surveys done within 20 minutes of each other. 3 surveys done within 10 minutes of each other.

The results were kept in the statistics shown above for transparency.

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## Putting the Plan in Place

Planning – September 2020

Community Input October 2020 to December 2020, Public Hearing February 2021

Drafting Plan – December 2020 to January 2021

Board Presentation – February 2021

Board Approval and Ratification – March 2021