

## **Support the Public Accountability Committee and Have Your Say on Putnam Police Reform February 17**

On June 12, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued an Executive Order requiring a “Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative” for all police jurisdictions in New York state. The stated purpose of the Order is to “address racial bias and disproportionate policing in communities of color”, recognizing that there has been a “long and painful history in New York State of discrimination and mistreatment of black and African-American citizens.” In response, Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell created a lead panel of legislators, county employees and police officers in early August, and later formed 9 subgroups from a pool of applicants.

These subgroups only included 2 groups focused on people of color. The groups were invited to form in November with a January deadline for proposals.

The limited timeframe provided to formulate recommendations did not allow for a complete review. The resulting **Draft Police Policy Comprehensive Review** released by the County (available at <https://www.putnamcountyny.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Putnam-County-Police-Policy-Comprehensive-Review.pdf>) contains contradicting recommendations and needs more clarity on implementation. The Draft Police Policy Comprehensive Review includes a **Stakeholder Addendum** explaining our views on page 31.

In an acknowledgement of this, the County recently met with the People of Color Subcommittee and offered to allow a permanent, **community-appointed** Public Accountability Committee composed primarily of people of color to provide ongoing input on policing throughout Putnam County. This committee should be provided access to materials reviewed by the Protective Services and other relevant Committees of the Legislature and the Sheriff’s Department and invited into the decision-making process on substantive issues of policing in order to foster the mandated collaboration with the community.

**On February 17, 2021**, Putnam County will hold the first public meeting of the Police Policy Review Panel in which the broader community will be invited to comment. We ask that Putnam residents, and specifically people of color, attend

and urge the County to follow through on their plan to work with this Public Accountability Committee. It is important that residents of color have proper representation in this process and that there is a mechanism for ongoing stakeholder participation and revision.

We are encouraged by the County's commitment to establish this Public Accountability Committee and urge the public to voice their support for it on February 17. Comments may also be submitted via email to: [PoliceReviewPanel@putnamcountyny.gov](mailto:PoliceReviewPanel@putnamcountyny.gov).

Scott Rhodes (Brewster), Jenie Fu (Putnam Valley), Ron Reid (Patterson),  
Joelle DePaola (Brewster) - **People of Color Subcommittee**  
Sean Conway (Philipstown), Eileen McDermott (Brewster) - **LGBTQIA+ Subcommittee**  
Lou Riolo (Brewster) - **Education Subcommittee**