

The Putnam County Sheriff's Office, in collaboration with the Putnam County Law Department, will be modifying the Press Release Policy. At present, the Sheriff's Office does not release the names of individuals who were charged with offenses under the New York State Penal Law, or other applicable laws.

This practice was enacted earlier this year after a conference with the Law Department and review of legal litigation which transpired approximately three (3) years earlier. At that time, an individual was arrested and charged, press releases were provided to the media. Consequently, the case was dismissed, and a lawsuit was initiated. Putnam County engaged in settlement discussions and subsequently resolved the matter in favor of the plaintiffs and at a cost to the taxpayers of Putnam County.

The Sheriff's Office has received numerous FOILS from local media requesting the names of individuals charged with a violation of the Penal Law, Mahopac News, Lohud, to name a few. The Sheriff's Office has responded according to the terms of the FOIL and New York State Fair Trial Free Press Guidelines and where and as appropriate, released that information. However, the Office shall not compromise ongoing investigations and/or witnesses and release information that would adversely impact cases.

At present, the Sheriff's Office is working continuously to create and establish Rules, Regulations, and Instructions in order to provide guidelines and instruction to its Members. As part of this, we are writing Policy and Procedures to address issues such as this.

Accordingly, the Putnam County Sheriff's Office, in concert with the Law Department, shall begin providing the names and ages of (an) individual(s) of persons charged with violating the Law, the charges filed and the court of jurisdiction. with attention to the rule that an accused person is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law, accused persons and civil litigants are entitled to be judged in an atmosphere free from passion, prejudice, and sensationalism, that readers, listeners, and viewers are potential jurors and no one's reputation should be injured needlessly.

Kevin McConville, Sheriff