



# Hellertown Police Department

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## Review and Assessment

Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association

April 2024

A review of the Department administration and operations, considering staffing, environment, budget concerns, policies and procedures



## Hellertown Police Department Review and Assessment

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PROJECT ASSESSORS' NOTE:

This document contains information obtained from the subject agency, its employees, or stakeholder organizations, and professional publications. Conclusions and opinions expressed by assessors are identified appropriately and are supported by documentary evidence, and statements of persons interviewed.

The report was provided in draft form to the client for review prior to finalizing the document deliverable. The process of client review of the draft report is a standard procedure of the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association to ensure accuracy in the assessors' findings.



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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The review and assessment of the Hellertown Police Department provides analysis of the efficiency, effectiveness, and comprehensiveness of the planning, policies, procedures, resources, and oversight of the Department. Through this process, various methods of collecting information provided a profile of the Department, its operations and administration.

The Borough Council acknowledges there is currently friction between Council and members of the Collective Bargaining Unit concerning the selection of the Interim Chief. The Interim Chief was named following the unanticipated separation of the former Chief following allegations of criminal conduct.

It is evident the Department has suffered from a lack of leadership for a period of years as the former Chief was essentially hands-off, creating a leadership vacuum. To their credit, two senior Officers informally stepped up to perform duties that kept the Department functioning at the street level. Regrettably, leadership and the range of executive-level responsibilities were not being addressed.

Lack of experience in the administrative position and lack of supervisory and leadership training has produced a deleterious effect on the performance of the Interim Chief's duties. While the Chief of Police is responsible for all the expected administrative duties of a Chief Executive, he is also required to assume extensive supervisory duties for an overextended span of control that constrains his ability to focus on executive level tasks. There is an immediate need for capable leadership with the knowledge, skills and abilities to lead the Department.

Staffing represents a significant concern for the Department. Staffing is handicapped by a lack of depth in the numbers of officers, requiring excessive use of overtime and compensatory time to ensure desired coverage. The use of overtime has taken a toll on officers personally, as well as on the Department budget. Staffing shortages also create conditions that reduce or eliminate professional growth of the officers through out-service training opportunities, performance evaluations, and supervisory and mentoring support.

The Department Directives System was identified as an area of concern. The review found the Policy Manual had not been updated on a regular basis for more than 20 years and did not include numerous recommended and statutorily required directives. Numerous existing directives were identified as deficient in content. The assessment process determined the existing Manual was without value and unsuitable for being updated. As professional grade policies and procedures provide the foundation for a professional agency, the replacement of the Policy Manual will require extensive effort to support the goal of professional policing in Hellertown. The report identifies resources for model policies and accreditation standards that are available for no cost to the Borough.

Of particular concern are the limited supervisory resources. Ideally, addition of four supervisor positions is recommended to address day to day activities that can be properly completed at that level and to provide additional resources to respond to calls for service. This staffing frees the Chief to be more efficient and effective in addressing administrative and reduced supervisory tasks. Also recommended is one additional full time patrol officer. Additional staffing to this suggested level will



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impact the Department budget; however, some offset is expected by the reduction of overtime costs. The suggested addition of the supervisors and the single patrol officer is aspirational and can be implemented over time. The report provides suggestions for interim temporary adjustments in the text.

While assessors have been advised there were plans to relocate the Police Headquarters sometime in the future, those plans have been placed on hold. Consensus within Council is the Police will remain in the current, inadequate facility for the foreseeable future. Numerous studies are referenced in the report documenting the potential negative effects of a working environment on the workforce.

The pervasive issues in the Hellertown Police Department are the result of several, long standing interrelated defects. The deficiencies include, but are not limited to, organizational oversight, structural components, supervision, policies and procedures, budgetary expenditures, and scheduling. These deficiencies have contributed to a perception by many officers that lack of engagement by the Borough Council and the Mayor in addressing the issues reflects a lack of concern for members' welfare.

The Mayor and Borough Council are facing some difficult decisions, all of which will have fiscal effect on the Borough. The options include reducing services, contracting supplemental public safety resources from another municipality, relying on State Police for services, or investing in their Department to achieve professional grade, quality service in the Borough. These options are further discussed in the report. The Borough must consider the options and determine how the Department will be resourced and structured going forward.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Mayor and Borough Manager of Hellertown, Northampton County, representing the intentions of the Borough Council, contracted the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association to conduct an organizational assessment of the Borough Police Department and make recommendations for an upgrade of the Department operations and administration.

The initiative followed the separation and subsequent charging of the Police Chief by County Prosecutors with 18 criminal charges, 16 of which are felonies. The alleged offenses were related to the Chief's position in the Department. Following the termination of the former Chief, an acting Interim Chief was appointed from within the Department. Mayor Heintzelman and members of Council have expressed their desire to restore harmony and achieve a high level of professionalism to the Department.

This report does not address the alleged misconduct by the former Chief, but rather the operational and administrative aspects of the Department which may require modification of staffing, policies, procedures, and facilities to ensure the agency meets quality standards that have been established for law enforcement. The assessment reviewed leadership qualifications, Department facilities, equipment, staffing and organizational structure in addition to the Department operating policies and procedures.



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The Department policies and procedures are described in the Department's Policy and Procedure Manual. In this report, the Policy and Procedure Manual is also referred to as the Directive System, Policy Manual, and Manual interchangeably. Because policy and procedures are vitally important to operations, the assessment included department-specific directives, as well as comparison of the Department's Policy Manual with current law enforcement best practice standards.

The review of the policy manual reveals the notation "Revised 3/99." Although assessors observed numerous margin notes and scratch-outs in the manual, only a few more recent policy documents were found: "Patrol Rifles" in 2010; "Spike Strips, Taser, and Protective Vests" in 2011; and "Light Duty" in 2014. The assessment process determined the existing Manual was without value and unsuitable for updating. Steps should be taken to produce a completely new Manual which complies with current standards for best practice.

The Assessment Methodology section of the report describes the manner in which various components of the Police Department's operational and administrative processes have been reviewed.

The report discusses the major underlying problems identified by the review and assessment. There are numerous minor concerns that are not discussed in the report. Those concerns will most certainly be addressed as a normal function of supervision and management once appropriate leadership is in place. Conclusions, opinions and recommendations expressed by the assessors are supported by documentary evidence and statements of persons interviewed.

## **ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

### **Data Collection**

The approach to the assessment included the development of data collection instruments to capture and compile data related to the Department's operations, policies, training, and administrative procedures. The tool supports comparison of the Department's documentation with best practices for policing in Pennsylvania. The documentation is an important first step in establishing an accurate assessment of the current state of policy and procedures.

Interview and survey instruments were developed to record stakeholder input regarding the Department culture, workforce perceptions, attitudes and expectations. Assessors obtained the Department Policies and Procedures Manual, revised 3/99, for review and comparison with accepted best practices in the law enforcement profession.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement was reviewed. Additional requested documents such as General Orders and Memorandums relating to operations and activities not addressed in the Policy Manual were not found by the assessors.

Professional journals and publications providing timely insights to modern policing were researched and are cited in the report.



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### *Interviews*

Interviews were conducted with Mayor David Heintzelman, Borough Manager Cathy Hartranft, Council President Thomas Rieger, Councilman Andrew Hughes, Patricia Tallerico, Police Administrative Assistant, all full time sworn members of the Department and several part time officers. Also interviewed were Tina Krasnansky, Finance Manager/Treasurer, District Magistrate Alan Mege, Chief Thomas Barndt, Lower Saucon Township Police, District Attorney Stephen Baratta and Jeffrey Stewart, Borough Labor Attorney. When feasible, interviews were done in person. Alternatively, additional interviews were conducted via video calls using the ZOOM platform for virtual meetings.

### *Employee Survey*

An online survey was conducted to provide additional opportunity for input from Department personnel represented by the Collective Bargaining Unit and the Police Administrative Assistant. The web based survey was conducted online and accessed by a link that was emailed to personnel. Responses were anonymous, with all responses going directly to the assessors in Harrisburg. The survey consisted of 10 questions relating to perceived trust, initiative, expectations, leadership, and job satisfaction in the Department.

### *Document Review*

Department policies and procedures were reviewed for comparison with accepted best practices in the law enforcement profession. The review was not limited to comparison with Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation standards (PLEAC), but rather extended to additional law enforcement responsibilities and practices not addressed by PLEAC.

During the review process, where appropriate or relevant, the assessors evaluated the quality of the documents or the procedures described for efficiency, effectiveness, and compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements.

Additional document review included budget data and a literature review of professional journals and publications to establish a firm basis for recommendations offered at the conclusion of the report.

### *Observation*

The data collection efforts included observations made while onsite with the Police Department. Areas observed included the Borough Offices entrance/lobby area, Administrative Office, Interim Chief's Office, Detective's Office, Temporary Evidence Storage area, Squad Room, Prisoner Holding Area, Processing Area, and Patrol Vehicles. For security reasons, the evidence room was not opened for viewing.



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### DESCRIPTION OF THE HELLERTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

#### Overview

The Hellertown Police Department is established pursuant to State statute and by Borough Code Act of February 1, 1966 (1965 P.L.1656, No. 581 as amended). The authority of officers derives from these laws and is conferred by the Police Commission issued to individual officers by legally recognized authorities of the Borough.

Commissioned personnel are sworn to enforce the ordinances of the Borough, State and Federal law, to protect the public peace and safety within the Borough, and to abide by the Code of Professional Conduct and Responsibility for Peace Officers (Chapter 1.00 Department Policy Manual – Law Enforcement Role and Authority).

Current staffing includes nine full time sworn officers, including the Interim Chief position, and four part time officers. The Department is currently led by Interim Chief Dominick Fragano. The Interim Chief was named by the Mayor following the separation of the prior Chief. One civilian employee, an Administrative Assistant, is assigned to the Department. Until recently, one member held the rank of Corporal. Recent discord between Union members and the Administration related to the selection of the Interim Chief motivated the Corporal to voluntarily revert to his previous rank as police officer.

The number of Department members may fluctuate with retirements, hiring, disability status, and several other variables, such as military leave, Family Medical Leave, and injured on duty. With limited positions, opportunity for advancement is dependent on debilitating injury, retirement, or death of a ranking incumbent.

Full time sworn members of the Department are represented by a collective bargaining unit, the Hellertown Regular Police Force, an unincorporated association organized and existing under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, of the Borough, County of Northampton, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, referred to as “Police.” (Articles of Agreement between Hellertown Regular Police Force and the Borough of Hellertown, January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2025). The current contract between the Borough and the Collective Bargaining Unit is for the period January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2025.

Sworn members of the Department are certified Police Officers by the Municipal Police Officers Training and Education Commission pursuant to Act 120 of the Pennsylvania legislature.

The Hellertown Police Department is a full service law enforcement agency, providing public safety services to the Hellertown community of approximately 6,100 residents seven days a week. The jurisdiction is approximately 1.6 square miles. Patrol officers work 12 hour shifts, 0500-1700 hours and 1700 -0500 hours. Normal coverage is two officers per shift. When necessary, members fill in the shifts using overtime and/or compensatory time.

As a full service agency, the Department investigates all crimes occurring in their jurisdiction and provides traffic enforcement, accident investigation, and community policing services. One sworn





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member is assigned as the Department detective. The detective conducts follow up investigations of criminal conduct and responds in real time to serious calls for service related to criminal activity. Forensic investigative support is provided by the Pennsylvania State Police.

The organizational structure of the Department is nontraditional in the fact that the Interim Chief supervises all the remaining members of the Department, including the Administrative Assistant. Most law enforcement agencies of this size are structured with at least one additional level, providing a supervisory position[s] in addition to the Chief. Additional supervisory positions can enable the Chief to focus more on administrative responsibilities.

### Department Vision and Mission Statements

The Department Vision statement is contained in the Policy Manual. A vision statement can be a highly effective tool to keep an organization on track, and unite the organization's team toward a shared purpose. It can also have a positive impact on the organization's well-being. In fact, employees who find their organization's vision meaningful show engagement levels of 68%, a considerable 52% higher than employees who don't (Brex <https://www.brex.com/journal/vision-statement>, 2020). The Hellertown Police Vision statement follows:

A society free from crime and disorder remains an unachieved ideal. Nevertheless, consistent with the values of a free society, we will strive to achieve as closely as possible that ideal. We will provide friendly service of superior quality and value that best meets the needs and expectations of our community. We will achieve that purpose through an organization and work environment which attracts the finest people, fully develop and challenges individual talents, encourages free and spirited collaboration to drive the organization ahead and maintains the police departments [sic] historic principles of integrity and commitment to do the right thing.

The above Vision statement does not meet the criteria for an effective Vision. A Vision statement must be meaningful. It must be inspiring and motivating. A vision statement shouldn't be overly detailed. It should be concise. The Vision should be discussed in the workplace and reinforced often to ensure it remains top of mind. As Jack Welch, former Chairman and CEO of General Electric, said: "Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion."

Rather than articulating the specifics of the organization, the vision statement should describe how the organization seeks to impact and improve the world around it. It's the single, unified goal that drives the agency (Asana, <https://asana.com/resources/vision-statement>, downloaded 22 January 2024). A Vision statement also defines the organization's purpose, focusing on its goals and aspirations. These statements are designed to be uplifting and inspiring. Stated simply, the "vision" is that of the leadership for the future of the Department, and the "mission" is the way in which they plan to achieve the vision.



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An example of a Vision Statement could be:

*Our vision is to provide exceptional public safety, create an excellent work environment, and develop an outstanding team.*

Similarly, the current Department Mission Statement is a four paragraph, rambling narrative rather than a short, clear and powerful statement defining purpose and primary objectives of the Department (Mission Statements and Vision Statements, mind tools.com , downloaded 22 January 2024).

An example of a Mission Statement could be:

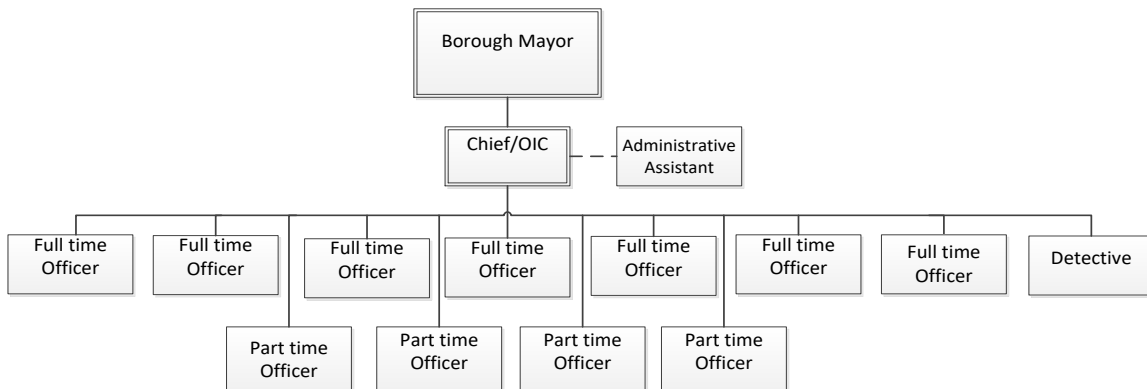
*We will accomplish our mission by enforcing the law with impartiality and courtesy, while fostering a feeling of safety and security. Our police officers will provide quality police services to all persons within the Borough of Hellertown without consideration of race, creed, color, condition or sexual orientation.*

### Staffing /Span of Control/Supervision

Chain of Command relates to the organizational structure of the Department and the process of oversight and supervision throughout the layers of the agency. The chain reflects the reporting relationships of the members, i.e. who reports to whom. The reporting relationships represent the Span of Control and the ratio of subordinate officers to a supervisor.

In the Hellertown Police Department, the structure is relatively flat with two layers (See Table of Organization below). The Span of Control is eight full time sworn officers, four part time officers, and one civilian administrative assistant, all under the supervision of the Interim Chief of Police. In practice, the span of control is 13 persons under the Chief's supervision. The anticipated promotion of a current member will slightly mitigate this concern. Staff is deployed seven days, 24 hours daily, performing a variety of activities, further challenging supervisor/subordinate relationships.

Table of Organization  
Hellertown Police Department





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Typically, a police department has a hierarchical structure (chain of command), with clear lines of authority and responsibility. Effective police organizations also have:

- Strong leadership
- Proper training
- Community engagement
- Accountability mechanisms (discipline system and performance evaluation system)
- Collaboration with other police agencies and stakeholder organizations

The current complement is insufficient to staff 24 hours of coverage, seven days a week, without extensive use of overtime and compensatory time. Determining patrol staffing allocation and deployment requirements is a complex process requiring consideration of an extensive series of factors and robust, current data (Wilson, 2013). Professional guidelines and departmental policies must be explicitly considered and deliberately applied.

In considering the future of the Department, the Borough must make decisions regarding hours of coverage, obligated vs. non-obligated hours for officers, and specialized services (such as Motor Carrier Safety Inspections or Criminal Investigations). Reduction of services could potentially extend to complete termination of Department services. An additional potential solution would be to reduce the hours of coverage, for example, from 24 hours/day to 12 hours/day, and seek coverage for the remaining hours either from State Police, or by contracting services from another municipal agency in the immediate area.

It is not uncommon for municipalities to outsource coverage and/or specific functions when the municipality cannot support the services and/or functions. State Police are statutorily mandated to provide services when a municipality is unable to support public safety services; however, it is important to acknowledge the State Police have limited resources and cannot dedicate resources to Hellertown. State Police would incorporate the Borough into an existing State Police patrol zone, providing mostly reactionary responses. In addition, State Police do not enforce local ordinances.

Municipalities also sometimes outsource police services by contracting with another municipality. Limitations in the level of service that can be provided by another municipality are usually similar to the limitations associated with State Police. Cost and services must be negotiated with the providing municipality.

It is common for an outsourcing community to be dissatisfied with longer response time and non-dedicated public safety services within the community. Virtually all Police Departments and the State Police are stretched to provide services, and the likelihood of identifying an outsourced provider who can dedicate coverage in the Borough is slim.



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Contracts between municipalities for police services can vary widely depending on the specific needs and circumstances of each municipality. Typical terms that might be negotiated could include:

- Duration of contract.
- Detailed description of the police services provided by the serving municipality to the receiving municipality.
- Specific hours and days during which police services will be provided.
- Number of police officers to be provided.
- Expectations regarding response times to calls for service.
- Liability and indemnification issues.
- Termination and dispute resolution clause.
- Insurance requirements.

In addition to personnel costs (salaries, benefits, overtime, etc.) there may be negotiations regarding contractual administrative and overhead costs typically charged as an overhead factor, including:

- Costs related to providing and maintaining police vehicles, uniforms, firearms, and other necessary gear.
- Expenses for ongoing professional development for police Insurance and liability personnel.
- Insurance and liability coverage.
- Supervision and management.
- Expenses related to the acquisition and maintenance of technology and software systems used for law enforcement purposes.

There are multiple benefits justifying the effort required to conduct a defensible staffing plan, such as:

- Determining the number of officers and supervisors required to respond to calls for service in a timely manner.
- Determining the number of officers needed to conduct prevention and proactive policing activities.
- Allowing sufficient time for officers to meet all administrative requirements, including report writing, training, court, vacations and personal needs.
- Developing schedules for assigning resources most productively and equitably.
- Examining the use of overtime.

The staff shortage directly impacts the Department overtime budget, as well as negatively affects officers. Without additional officers added to the complement, excessive overtime is contributing to



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lower morale and lower task proficiency. It is incontrovertible, without additional officers added to the complement, no manipulation of the schedule can eliminate the extreme over- budget spending (exceeding 525% of the Compensatory time budget) the Borough experienced in 2023. Of the \$150,713 over this line item budget, former Chief Shupp was personally responsible for \$35,500 in comp time charges, representing slightly more than 100% of the 2023 budget himself. Adjusting for Shupp's costs, the overage was reduced to 425.4% over budget. Personnel related line item overages for the years 2021 through 2023 are listed on page 18 of this report.

Alternative to these overtime and comp time overages requires hiring additional officers. An example of a potential solution is the addition of four first line supervisors and one full time officer. These supervisory positions, one each for the four squads required to staff the roster, can provide realistic oversight of the officers and respond to calls for service. (See chart below.) The supervisors can perform important administrative tasking that has heretofore been neglected, such as performance evaluations, ensuring accountability, and mentoring junior officers. The variety of calls for service, the level of seriousness, the need for guidance or simply for backup, are some of the justification for adequate supervision.

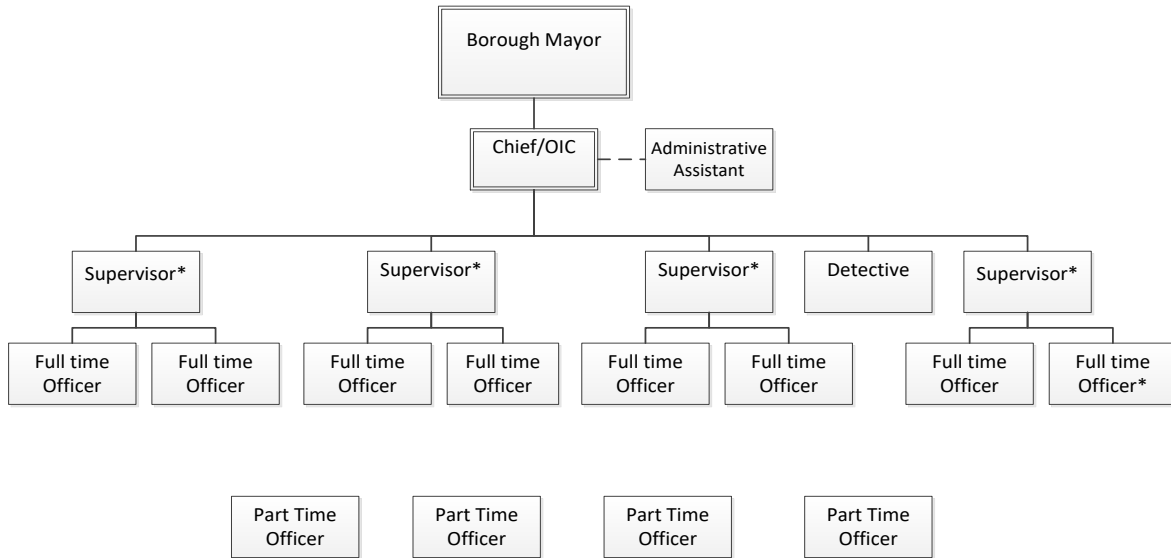
The additional positions suggested represent an aspirational staffing level. Realistically, it would be extremely difficult to staff up to this level in a short time. The suggestion is made as a long term objective. In the interim, day shift supervision could be provided by the Chief. Day shift could call upon the detective to provide a second officer as a backup or to fill in for an officer who is unavailable for patrol duty due to sick days, training days, court time, and numerous other obligations. Use of the detective in this way compromises the investigative function and should be done judiciously.

In another example, a supervisor could work a modified schedule that would overlap the day shift and the night shift, such as noon to midnight, and be on-call if needed after midnight. These examples are not optimal, but doable in the short term. In addressing staffing and deployment issues, the assessors recommend giving the new Chief the discretion to evaluate and select the staffing model based on his first hand observations and experience.

It is anticipated there will be a supervisor promoted to replace a supervisor who voluntarily chose to revert to the officer rank. While the promotion is a positive action, it will result in one fewer patrol officers. Hiring an additional officer position should be considered to backfill the resulting vacancy.



Table of Organization, Proposed  
Hellertown Police Department



\*Proposed Additional Staff

In an effective police department, supervision plays a crucial role in ensuring accountability, professionalism, and adherence to department policies and procedures. Key aspects of police supervision:

- **Clear Expectations:** Supervisors should establish clear expectations for officers regarding job responsibilities, performance standards, and professional conduct. This includes communicating departmental policies, procedures, and expectations effectively.
- **Training and Development:** Supervisors should provide ongoing training, guidance, and mentorship to officers to enhance their skills, knowledge, and professionalism. This involves regular performance evaluations, constructive feedback, and opportunities for career development.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Supervisors should regularly monitor officers' performance, conduct, and adherence to department policies and procedures. This is accomplished through conducting field observations, reviewing reports, and addressing any issues or concerns promptly.



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- **Support and Guidance:** Supervisors should offer support and guidance to officers, particularly in challenging or high-stress situations. This includes providing assistance, resources, and backup as needed to ensure officer safety and effectiveness.
- **Accountability:** Supervisors should hold officers accountable for their actions and decisions, including addressing misconduct, disciplinary issues, and performance deficiencies. This may involve conducting investigations, imposing corrective actions and enforcing disciplinary measures when necessary.
- **Communication:** Supervisors should maintain open and transparent communication with officers, fostering a culture of trust, collaboration, and mutual respect. This includes addressing concerns, soliciting feedback, and keeping officers informed about department developments and initiatives.
- **Leadership by Example:** Supervisors should lead by example, demonstrating professionalism, integrity, and ethical behavior in their own conduct. This sets a positive tone and serves as a model for officers to emulate.
- **Community Engagement:** Supervisors should actively engage with the community to build trust, address concerns, and foster positive relationships. This includes participating in community meetings, events, and outreach efforts to enhance public safety and collaboration.

### **Police Officer Scheduling and Personnel Resources**

The Hellertown Borough police officers currently work 12 hour shifts (0500 to 1700 /1700 to 0500), three days on duty followed by three days off duty. Two officers are scheduled for each shift. A review of the schedule for the week of January 28, 2024 indicates four shifts required one full time officer on compensated time. Three shifts required a part time officer to fill the two officers per shift level. A review of future weekly schedules indicates a need for a part time officer or a full time officer on compensated time on several days to maintain the two officers per shift level.

We note in 2023 Hellertown Police requested assistance from Lower Saucon Township Police 33 times. Although not all of these requests for assistance were for violent incidents, violence against officers has become a common occurrence in our Country.

It has been suggested to assessors perhaps the Department could deploy only one officer per shift to mitigate overtime costs and perceived staff shortages. The suggestion justified the reduction referencing crime rates in Hellertown.

Looking at crime rates and population data is not predictive of the potential for violent incidents. They occur randomly anywhere and at any time. A single officer response is not safe for domestic calls for service, mental health crises, and active shooter incidents. Backups must be readily available without delay.



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Single officer shifts cannot respond to multiple calls for service simultaneously. Additionally, a single officer patrol shift may negatively affect public perception of public safety and reduced deterrence of crime.

Scheduling employee working hours can be challenging for 24/7 coverage. There are several alternative scheduling methods for 24/7, 12 hour shifts. However, with the current number of officers all variations would require overtime, comp time by full time officers, or part time officers to maintain the two officers per shift level.

There are numerous reasons why sufficient officers may not be available to work a shift. Vacation, personal days, court time, sick leave, funeral leave, training, and military leave all impact on the schedule. Although the Collective Bargaining Agreement limits the number of members who may be on leave simultaneously, assessors have been advised there are occasions when a patrol officer is working some or all of a shift alone. This occurs because a second officer is unavailable for one of the numerous reasons mentioned.

The determination regarding the scheduling method should be made by the new Chief. Also noted, the Collective Bargaining Agreement currently dictates the existing scheduling model. Any change in the model will require agreement with the Collective Bargaining Unit.

The current staffing includes one Interim Chief, one Detective, seven patrol officers, and four part time patrol officers. The Collective Bargaining Agreement stipulates the rules for a 12-hour based shift schedule, defined in detail by a six-day work/rest cycle. Although it seems there is little room for flexibility in the scheduling model, other 12-hour work plans can provide the required coverage while protecting the workforce's well-being with greater efficiency. As in the current pattern, adequate staffing is necessary to be effective. Any modification in the scheduling model must be accomplished through a modification of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

One scheduling model example, the Pitman Schedule, also called the 2-3-2 schedule, is a shift management system that ensures consistent staffing levels 24 hours, 7 days a week. The Pitman Schedule provides four teams working 12 hours per shift. The schedule works with fixed and rotating shifts. In the fixed schedule, two teams work a fixed two-week day-shift schedule, and two teams work fixed night shifts.





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See the example below.

Teams one (day shift) and two (night shift) work the following shift pattern:

- Work two days
- Two days off
- Work three days
- Two days off
- Work two days
- Three days off

Teams three (day shift) and four (night shift) work the following shift pattern:

- Two days off
- Work two days
- Three days off
- Work two days
- Two days off
- Work three days

### Police Department Budget

In Police Departments, a common budget challenge is personnel costs. This is the case in Hellertown; however, in Hellertown, as discussed previously, the personnel costs are exacerbated by the continuous use of overtime or compensatory time to provide the required staffing level. In this assessment, budget analysis is limited to the impact of excessive personnel costs.

As described above, numerous scheduling methods exist for 24/7, 12-hour shifts. Unfortunately, with the current number of officers all variations require overtime, comp time by full time officers, or part time officers to maintain the two officer per shift level. There are several budget line items that are affected by the staffing level and the requirement to fill shifts with full time officers or part time officers.

Over the last three years, the police department has exceeded the approved budget allocation in four personnel related line items, with the exception of part time officer line items in 2023. The following table shows the amount budgeted, amount expended, the amount over budget, and the percentage budget spent for personnel costs for the years 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Reviewing the table, it is evident the growth of over budget personnel costs is steadily increasing. As the expenditures have increased significantly, the budget for the relevant line items has not. This uncontrolled growth is not acceptable.



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**Personnel Related Budget Data 2021-2023**

<b>2021</b>				
	<u>Budgeted Amt/Aprvd</u>	<u>Amount Spent</u>	<u>\$ Amount + Budget</u>	<u>% Budget Spent</u>
Overtime & Holidays	\$22,416	\$73,357	(\$50,941)	327.25%
Part time (PT) Officers	\$85,377	\$86,307	(\$1,010)	101.18%
PT Overtime & Holidays	\$16,201	\$27,493	(\$11,292)	169.70%
Compensory time	\$31,066	\$97,131	(\$66,073)	312.70%
<b>2022</b>				
Overtime & Holidays	\$24,000	\$29,152	(\$5,153)	121.47%
Part time (PT) Officers	\$88,000	\$118,519	(\$30,519)	134.68%
PT Overtime & Holidays	\$14,500	\$49,828	(\$35,328)	343.64%
Compensory time	\$32,000	\$108,884	(\$76,884)	340.26%
<b>2023</b>				
Overtime & Holidays	\$24,000	\$53,781	(\$29,780)	224.09%
Part time (PT) Officers**	\$99,264	\$62,279	\$36,985	62.74%
PT Overtime and Holiday**	\$22,569	\$6,936	\$15,633	30.73%
Compensory time	\$35,406	\$186,119	(\$150,713)	525.67%

\*\*Actual expenditure was less than budgeted in these two line items

**Performance Evaluation**

The current Policy and Procedures Manual requires that each employee shall be evaluated by their immediate supervisor annually (page 91). Through assessor interviews, it was determined that most police officers have never received a performance evaluation.

Overall, the absence of a performance evaluation system in a police department can undermine effectiveness, accountability, and public trust. The negative consequences of not having or not using a performance evaluation system include:

- Lack of Accountability: Without a performance evaluation system, there is no formal mechanism for holding officers accountable for their actions and adherence to department



## *Hellertown Police Department Review and Assessment*

policies and procedures. This can create a culture where officers feel they can act with impunity, leading to misconduct and abuses of power.

- **Limited Opportunities for Improvement:** Performance evaluations provide valuable feedback to officers on their strengths and areas for improvement. Without this feedback, officers may not have clear guidance on how to enhance their skills and performance, which can hinder professional development and effectiveness on the job.
- **Missed Opportunities for Recognition and Reward:** Performance evaluations also provide an opportunity to recognize and reward officers for exceptional performance and contributions to public safety. Without a formal evaluations system in place, officers may not receive the recognition they deserve for their hard work and dedication.

### **Department Policies and Procedures**

Department policies and procedures are contained in the Hellertown Police Policy & Procedure Manual, "... issued with the authority of the Chief of Police ... established to assist personnel in carrying out their duties and responsibilities."

The cover page of the Manual indicates "revised: 03/99." The Manual contains 241 numbered pages followed by several additional policies and other documents added in 2010, 2011, and 2014. The pages of the added material are not numbered. A hand written notation "8/2/16" on the Manual Contents page suggests numerous intended revisions, indicated by margin notes and line-outs throughout the document. Although assessors observed numerous margin notes and scratch-outs in the manual, only a few more recent policy documents were found: "Patrol Rifles" in 2010; "Spike Strips, Taser, and Protective Vests" in 2011; and "Light Duty" in 2014.

The Manual is not up-to-date and does not reflect best practices in law enforcement. Through interviews of current officers, it was determined that they are well aware that the Manual is outdated, and it is not used as a source of guidance.

Best practices, standards, legislation, case law, technology, and leadership philosophy in any profession constantly evolve over time. It is unreasonable to think a law enforcement organization can be operated in 2024 based on standards and policies that were created years in the past. It is a function of leadership to be looking forward, recognizing changing conditions and needs, and ensuring the organization proactively prepares to address change.

In numerous areas, the existing Policy Manual is effectively disconnected from reality. Numerous sections relate to activities not practiced by Hellertown Police Department. Examples include Organized Crime investigations, Correctional Facilities, Clandestine Laboratories, Communications Center, Teletype, and Helicopter. These numerous chapters and sections in the Manual that are not applicable to the Department suggest the Manual was obtained as a template from an outside source,



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but not modified to address Hellertown's specific requirements. Also, there are numerous statutory requirements that are not addressed in the Manual.

Policies and procedures are designed to ensure transparency, accountability, and protection of citizen rights.

- Policies and procedures must be developed in line with laws and best practices in law enforcement (Accreditation).
- Regular updates and training for officers are required to ensure compliance and proficiency in executing Department policies and procedures.
- Mechanisms must be in place for review, evaluation, and improvement of policies and procedures based on feedback, changing circumstances, and evolving community needs.

The Hellertown Police Department can face liability for maintaining outdated policies and procedures, especially if those policies and procedures result in harm or violations of individuals' rights. If outdated policies lead to situations where individuals' rights are violated, such as through unlawful searches or excessive use of force, the Department may face civil lawsuits. Plaintiffs could argue that the Department's failure to update policies contributed to the violation of their rights. In extreme cases, where outdated policies lead to egregious misconduct or negligence resulting in harm or death, there might be criminal liability for individual officers or supervisors. Maintaining outdated policies can damage a department's reputation and erode public trust. This can have long-term consequences for the Department's effectiveness and community relations.

To mitigate these risks, the Hellertown Police Department must regularly review and update their policies and procedures to reflect changes in laws, court rulings, community expectations, and best practices in policing. This process should involve input from legal advisors, community stakeholders, and experts in relevant fields to ensure that the policies and procedures are effective, lawful and responsive to the needs of the community.

The state of the current Policy Manual is outdated and noncompliant with numerous statutory requirements and program standards. Accountability of members cannot be achieved without current, timely directives that have been written and are readily available to personnel. Members must be made aware, trained and compliant with Department policies and procedures. It is the opinion of the assessors the Hellertown Policy Manual is deficient to the degree that it should be completely superseded and replaced by contemporary policies consistent with best practices.

Extensive resources are available to the Department for the development of policies from the International Chiefs of Police, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement, Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association, the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission, and the Pennsylvania Police Accreditation Coalition. Model policies and accreditation standards can be accessed online at no cost through the sources listed below:



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### IACP Policy Center

Go to [www.theiacp.org/policycenter](http://www.theiacp.org/policycenter); Select Policy Center Topics

### Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police

Go to [www.pachiefs.org](http://www.pachiefs.org); Pennsylvania Accreditation Standards Manual;

➡ Select Accreditation ➡ Select Standards Manual (top bar)

**Pennsylvania Police Accreditation Coalition:** The Coalition, [papac.org](http://papac.org), is a network for member agencies to encourage communication and cooperation, provide mutual support, share member agency directives/regulations, resources and information, and foster the growth of accreditation in the Commonwealth through marketing and training activities, and the organizing, staffing and leading of "initial" on-site assessments.

### **Police Headquarters Facility**

While the municipality offices are located in a modern facility that was added onto an old, stone house, Police offices are on the ground floor of the house in the older part of the building. The Police facility is overcrowded and worn. It is in need of cosmetic upgrades. There is a lack of storage. Equipment and supplies are dispersed throughout the station on shelves and on the floor.

Visitors to the Police station enter through the Borough Building Lobby in the newer part of the building. In the lobby, there is a tempered glass window staffed by a civilian greeter who is a Borough employee. When a visitor requests to see an officer during regular business hours, the greeter will call an officer to the lobby.

For authorized persons, there is an entry to the Police administrative assistant's office from the lobby that is controlled by a combination lock. Also in the lobby are an elevator and stairs to the second floor. These provide passage to the Borough Council meeting room, a caucus room, and the Borough Manager's office. There is a second stairway going directly down to the Police station on the ground floor. There is unsecured access to the station using this stair.

There is direct, nonpublic access to the station from outside on the south side of the building. Officers escort persons in and out of the building using this entrance. This entrance requires climbing steps to a porch outside the building. To comply with the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act, persons unable to use the steps can be brought into the building through the Borough Building Lobby.

There is a call box in front of Borough Hall which connects a caller to the County 911 Center during off hours. Officers are dispatched to the Station to meet with the caller.

Video cameras with recording capability are located throughout the station; however, assessors were advised cameras in the area of the Evidence Room are not operative.



## *Hellertown Police Department Review and Assessment*

There is one employee locker room in the station for both men and women. Access to the room is directly off the main hall. There are no showers or rest room facilities in the Locker Room.

There is one rest room accessible to personnel and visitors in the station. The room is functional, but poorly suited for a professional office.

### *Evidence and Property Room*

The Evidence and Property Room is located in a storage area just off a hallway leading from the squad room to the rear of the building. Assessors did not enter the Evidence and Property Room for reasons related to evidence security.

Possession and storage of all evidence and property coming into the possession of a law enforcement agency must be controlled, documented and secure. A defined policy with defined procedures will ensure the integrity of the evidence/property functions of the Department. A written directive requiring evidence and recovered property to be stored within designated and secure areas and/or facilities that are under the direct control of the agency. Only authorized persons may have access to the room where evidence and property is stored.

Inspections, inventories, and audits of the Evidence and Property Room are necessary for a secure and reliable system for the evidence and property functions of the Department.

### *Temporary Evidence Storage*

Temporary Evidence Storage consists of two bins accessed from the hallway leading to the rear of the station. Only one of the bins can be locked, as the other bin is missing the locking mechanism. The bin can be opened from the front by the officer depositing the evidence, and from the rear by the Evidence Custodian. The rear bin door opens into the Evidence Room. The bin which is missing the locking mechanism should not be used to deposit evidence.

There are two refrigerators for biological evidence and a safe for storing money, drugs, jewelry, and weapons secured with a hasp and padlock in the same hall. Two officers have keys to the lockers, refrigerators, and the Evidence Room, also accessed from the hall. Assessors were told there is also a separate safe in the former Chief's office where seized cash was to be stored; however, the office has been locked and is not accessible to the assessors.

An alternate method of storage requires a policy/procedure to ensure the documented, secure storage of items when the Evidence and Property Room is closed or unavailable.

Just past the temporary storage area is a holding cell, opposite a door to the outside through which officers escort persons into the building. Once entering the Police Headquarters, officers place the visitor in the interview room or the holding cell. Prisoners are processed in an area within the main hall. There is a gun safe where officers can secure their weapons while working with arrestees. There are cameras that can be monitored from the squad room. Although there are cameras in the area, there are blind spots created by the cell front wall that prevent observation in parts of the cell.



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### *Squad/Report Room*

The room is set up with work stations, equipped with computers. There are stations to accommodate two officers. The room appeared slightly disorganized and cluttered with uniform clothing and various pieces of equipment. Floor tile is completely worn through under the chairs. Otherwise, the Squad Room is unremarkable.

### **Workplace Environment and Its Impact on Organizational Performance**

The workplace environment may impact employee morale, productivity and engagement, both positively and negatively. New programs addressing lifestyle changes, work/life balance, health and fitness, previously not considered key benefits, are now primary considerations of potential employees, and common practices among the most admired organizations (Chandrasekhar, 2011).

Physical aspects at the workplace are one of leading influencers of the employee's performance. A poor arrangement of office space wastes time and energy by failing to provide the means for effective work habits. Furniture and furnishing are ranked as the second leading physical aspect (Chandrasekhar, 2011).

Creating a better and higher performing workplace requires an awareness of how workplace impacts behavior and how behavior itself drives workplace performance. In the relationship between work, the workplace, and the tools of work, workplace becomes an integral part of work itself (Chandrasekhar, 2011).

Management must take an active role in not only defining the physical environment of the workplace and making it conducive for workers, but also alter the management style to suit the employees. This refers to changing aspects like ethics, behavior, commitment, professionalism, drive and interpersonal relations in employees for the better (Chandrasekhar, 2011).

### **Equipment**

Members indicate they are generally satisfied with their equipment. The fleet includes six vehicles: four marked cars, one unmarked car, and a truck used for MCSAP enforcement. One of the marked vehicles appears to be in relatively poorer condition. Officers indicate the vehicles have been upgraded within the last year. Patrol Vehicles are equipped with mobile computers which are capable of querying driver and vehicle data from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and calls for service data from the 911 Center.

Calls for service are dispatched from the Northampton County 911 Center using computer aided dispatch technology directly to the mobile computers in the cars. All vehicles are equipped with emergency lighting and sirens. All the observed vehicles were clean and appeared well maintained. The marked vehicles were tastefully designed and professional in appearance.



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The issued side arms are Glock 22 Gen 4. Tasers are the Taser 7 model. Training for the new Tasers was completed in the Fall 2023. Officers also carry long guns on patrol, Windham Weaponry, AR15. The rifles are secured in the patrol cars and can be released electrically in the vehicle or with a key. Normally, the long guns are locked in patrol cars. When cars are serviced, or otherwise not in the Department's immediate control, they are stored on station in two gun safes in the squad room.

### **Technology**

The Department has implemented a broad range of available technology, enabling the members to perform the necessary public safety services effectively and efficiently. Through various criminal justice networks the officers are able to access extensive data bases supporting the law enforcement mission, such as the CLEAN system, JNET, NCIC, and others.

The efficiency of the agency is greatly enhanced through automated systems for receiving calls for services at the County 911 Center, transmitting calls for service via Computer Aided Dispatch to mobile computers in patrol vehicles, with wireless connectivity between the 911 Center and police vehicles and between police vehicles and the police station. Subsequent reporting and preserving calls for service data are accomplished through these automated systems and maintained in the Department's automated record management system.

The Department has implemented the use of Body Worn Cameras (BWCs) by the members of the Department. The premise is BWCs will help capture a record of police-involved incidents and provide increased transparency and legitimacy. Other perceived benefits of implementing BWCs include: improved behavior for both police officers and citizens; expedited resolution of complaints and lawsuits; improved evidence for arrest and prosecution; to document statements, observations, behaviors, and opportunities for police training (White, 2014).

The Interim Chief advised the assessors the Department intends to procure mobile Video Recorders in the patrol cars. The Borough Manager indicates there is an approved grant for the purchase. A second grant is anticipated to also be approved to complete the project.

### **Community Engagement**

Building positive relationships with the community is a critical aspect of policing, and these relationships can exist only if police have earned the trust of the people they serve. Police rely on these community partnerships to help them address crime and disorder issues.

The Interim Chief indicates he is very proactive with the community and has attended all community functions since becoming Officer in Charge in October 2023. He was very engaged with the community as a Patrolman. It is Interim Chief Fragano's belief that being active in the community is important in keeping a good rapport with the public. Mayor Heintzelman agreed with Chief Fragano's description of his personal engagement with the community.

Noteworthy is an additional comment by the Interim Chief. When asked about community support for the Department, Fragano responded "I believe the community is very supportive of the Police Department. If you speak with individuals of the community, most will tell you the biggest





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complaint is only a few officers will acknowledge them if they wave, and some officers are not very friendly.”

During member interviews, two additional officers expressed their commitment to community engagement. The online survey conducted as part of the assessment suggests it is a minority of officers who routinely associate with the community in a proactive manner.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Throughout this project, PCPA assessors have reviewed policies and practices within the Hellertown Police Department from the perspective of known best practices and standards, relevant published articles, and regulatory guidelines and statutes. Where applicable, assessors reviewed literature from respected sources which offer insights and desirable or recommended approaches to the task of administering a law enforcement agency.

The following sections represent summary/overview data from the literature review in support of conclusions and recommendations being made by the PCPA project team.

#### **President’s Commission on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing**

On December 18, 2014, President Barack Obama issued an Executive Order appointing an 11-member task force on 21st century policing to respond to a number of serious incidents involving law enforcement agencies.

The mission of the Executive Order was clear: The task force would, consistent with applicable law, identify best practices and make recommendations to the President on how policing practices can promote effective crime reduction while building public trust. In 90 days, the task force facilitated seven hearings with 140 witnesses and reviewed volumes of written testimony submitted online by additional witnesses and the general public (COPS Office, 2015).

The testimony and hearings conducted by the Commission were organized around the following six pillars:

1. Building Trust and Legitimacy
2. Policy and Oversight
3. Technology and Social Media
4. Community Policing and Crime Reduction
5. Training and Education
6. Officer Wellness and Safety and the communities they serve and protect.

The findings and recommendations of the task force were published in May 2015 and provide a road map for modern law enforcement, as well as for local government and communities. Task Force recommendations for law enforcement implementation of the six pillars are:

1. Review and update policies, training, and data collection on use of force, and engage community members and police labor unions in the process.



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2. Increase transparency of data, policies, and procedures.
3. Call on the Police Officer Standardized Training Commission (POST) to implement all levels of training. In Pennsylvania, POST is the Municipal Police Officer Education and Training Commission.
4. Examine hiring practices and ways to involve the community in recruiting.
5. Ensure officers have access to the tools they need to keep them safe.

### *Community Policing*

Because Community Policing was identified as a priority by Mayor Heintzelman, the literature review included a comprehensive report by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing (2014).

The report represents study, analysis, and recommendations from distinguished law enforcement professionals within the United States and serves as a standard for current Community Policing components. Excerpts from the DOJ report (COPS Office, 2015) are provided as a basis for illustrating the environmental, leadership, and process driven change that might be considered for the Hellertown Police Department. The Implementation Guide for implementation of the Task Force recommendations can be found at: <http://noblenational.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/President-Barack-Obama-Task-Force-on-21st-Century-Policing-Implementation-Guide.pdf>

Key Program Components:

1. **Community Partnerships**

Collaborative partnerships between the law enforcement agency and the individuals and organizations they serve to develop solutions to problems and increase trust in police. Suggested partnerships include, but are not limited to other government agencies, community groups and service providers, private businesses, and media.

2. **Organizational Transformation**

Organizational Transformation requires the alignment of organizational management, structure, personnel, and information systems to support community partnerships and proactive problem solving. It encourages the application of modern management practices to increase efficiency and effectiveness. The role of the Chief is key in accomplishing the organizational transformation. Under the community policing model, police management infuses community policing ideals throughout the agency by *making a number of critical changes in climate and culture, leadership, formal labor relations, decentralized decision making and accountability, strategic planning, policing and procedures, organizational evaluations, and increased transparency.* (Emphasis added.)

*If community policing is going to be effective, police unions and similar forms of organized labor must be a part of the process and function as partners in the adoption of the Community Policing philosophy.* (Emphasis added.) Including labor groups in agency



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changes can ensure support for the changes that are imperative to Community Policing implementation.

Community Policing calls for decentralization in both command structure and decision making. When an officer is able to create solutions to problems and take risks, he or she ultimately feels accountable for those solutions and assumes a greater responsibility for the well-being of the community. Decentralized decision making involves flattening the hierarchy of the agency, increasing tolerance for risk taking in problem-solving efforts, and allowing officers discretion in handling calls.

### **3. Problem Solving**

Problem solving is the process of engaging in the proactive and systematic examination of identified problems to develop and evaluate effective responses. Community Policing encourages agencies to proactively develop solutions to the immediate underlying conditions contributing to public safety problems. Problem solving must be infused into all police operations and guide decision-making efforts.

## **Leadership Styles**

Leadership is multifaceted and goes far beyond a title or a role. It involves setting an example and modeling service and ethical policing; it means facing challenges head on and finding solutions; and it means constantly striving to provide the best possible quality of life for both the community and police officers (Maupin, 2018).

Much has been written regarding two styles of leadership, Transactional and Transformational, routinely found in police departments.

### ***Transactional Leadership***

Transactional Leadership is an autocratic leadership style in which the objectives and goals are predefined and the leader uses reward and punishment to motivate employees. It focuses on improving the current situation of the organization by framing the steps and controlling the organizational activities. This style is reactive. In this Transactional leadership style, the leader uses authority and responsibility as power (Surbhi, 2015).

### ***Transformational Leadership***

The Transformational style of leader uses influencing power and enthusiasm to motivate followers to work for the benefit of the organization. Here, the leader seeks the requirement for a change in the existing organization culture, gives a vision to subordinates, incorporates mission and implements the change with the dedication of followers. This style focuses on planning and execution.

In Transformational Leadership, the leader acts as a role model and as a motivator who offers vision, excitement, encouragement, morale and satisfaction to the followers. The leader inspires people to increase their abilities and capabilities, build up self-confidence and promotes innovation in the whole organization. This style is proactive, and best suited for a turbulent environment (Surbhi, 2015).



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The Hellertown Police Department needs Transformational Leadership. Regrettably, currently there is no positive motivation or sharing of vision. The style is reactive. Operations are day to day with little focus on planning and execution. Currently, morale is low.

### **Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement**

Because the Mayor identified resolution of ongoing discord between the Department administration and the rank and file as a primary goal for the project, PCPA assessors conducted research related to the relationships between leadership and employees.

A research report by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) (2017) “Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement” revealed the largest percentage of respondents to a national study indicated respectful treatment of all employees at all levels was a very important contributor to their job satisfaction (65% of respondents).

In the PCPA survey of Hellertown Police members, virtually all respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed there is respectful treatment of all Department members at all levels, and virtually all respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed there is trust between all levels of the Department. More data derived from the assessment survey is presented in a later section of this report.

The SHRM report (2017) observes “Workplace environments that demonstrate fairness and allow employees to freely discuss opposing views and ask questions are most likely to thrive as a result of this influence.”

## **ADDITIONAL FINDINGS**

### **Leadership**

Subordinates have expectations for their leaders. In the Department the former Chief was absent a large percentage of the time. In his absence two senior members of the Department took on informal leadership roles; however, since the appointment of an Interim Chief, the two officers have been reluctant to take on any leadership or administrative responsibilities.

While there is a sense of camaraderie inherent in the police profession, leaders and commanders cannot be one of the gang. There must be a separation between the leader and the rank and file. There is a lack of confidence in the Interim Chief and his ability to perform the duties of an effective Chief. Although many of the members have expressed the Chief’s likeability as a colleague and peer, throughout the project’s interview process, members have spoken about the Chief’s lack of leadership skills. The disparity between members’ expectations and the reality of the current leadership must be resolved.

The need for leadership in the daily business of the Police Department cannot be overstated or neglected. Earning trust and respect is crucial. “What you want are people who are inspired, who are committed, and who are motivated. It’s your job to instill confidence in them” (Joss, 2009).



## *Hellertown Police Department Review and Assessment*

An effective leader must interact with his officers. He must share his professional philosophy and ensure his expectations for police services and the members of the Department are known and understood. He must be visible and engaged with his subordinates. The leader must routinely emphasize the importance of the Department vision. Virtually all persons interviewed in the review indicated the former Chief was absent and unengaged, leaving a leadership vacuum. Although the Interim Chief is consistently present and endeavoring to show engagement, his lack of experience and leadership skills have adversely affected his effectiveness as a leader.

Assessors learned the Collective Bargaining Unit held a unanimous No Confidence vote concerning the Interim Chief of Police, Dominic Fragano, on January 16, 2024. The Bargaining Unit announced the vote at a public Borough Council meeting on February 2, 2024. Following the announcement, the Council went into executive session to discuss the issue. Following the executive session, the Mayor read a statement indicating his full confidence in the Interim Chief; that PCPA was conducting an assessment of the Department, and his intention to follow the recommendations of the PCPA report.

The Mayor's message expresses a commitment to two opposing outcomes and raises a question regarding his expectations for the assessment conclusions. Subsequently, the assessors have learned the Collective Bargaining Unit intends to hold a No Confidence vote concerning the Mayor. These actions suggest an evolving adversarial scenario that strains the already stressed environment.

PCPA assessors contend the Interim Chief's ability to effectively direct the Police is irrevocably damaged and conditions will continue to worsen without a change in leadership. The Borough has initiated a search for a new Chief of Police and has engaged the PCPA to assist with the hiring process.

### *Chain of Command*

Not surprisingly, members' adherence to the chain of command within the Department is lax. The chain of command is the direct line of authority from the Chief to the lowest working level. Each level of command or authority is responsible to the next highest level. A subordinate bypassing their immediate supervisor to a higher authority or another supervisor is not following the chain of command. The reverse is also true.

There may be times when a supervisor is not available, and officers will need to consult an alternate supervisor or a higher authority. In such a case, officers must inform their supervisor as soon as possible. The concept of Unity of Command dictates that each officer reports to or is only responsible to a single superior officer directly above their own position. The principle is important as it forms the basis of incident management. It establishes clear responsibilities and channels of communications across the organizational hierarchy.

In the current organization there is no chain of command. One person is responsible to supervise 13 people and to perform various administrative responsibilities. Directives are issued via email, and there is limited communications between the Interim Chief and the rank and file.



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### *Quality of Supervision*

With the current span of control, absent any first line supervisors, there is minimal supervisory oversight. The Interim Chief does not observe officers' work, does not conduct performance evaluations, does not ensure accountability, and does not mentor newer members.

Members informed assessors they rely on each other for guidance. Two senior officers are often sought for advice regarding proper procedure. It was clearly stated by most members interviewed and in the survey, there is little confidence the Interim Chief is competent to direct their performance of their duties.

### **INTERVIEWS**

Assessors interviewed sworn members of the Department. Twelve of the 23 interviews conducted were rank and file members of the Department. To encourage candid discussions with Hellertown Police members, assessors offered confidentiality to the extent that no specific comments would be attributed to specific members, with the exception of the Interim Chief.

Interviews with the Hellertown Mayor, Borough Manager, Finance Manager, several members of Council, the Director of Public Works, Interim Chief, local District Magistrate, Chief of Lower Saucon Police, Borough Labor Attorney and the Northampton County District Attorney are reported here with attribution, based on contemporaneous notes.

During the interviews, two distinct themes were identified. Police Officers described an environment where they have to work without competent leadership. They cited serious scheduling issues and short staffing. Officers indicated the poor condition of the Police Station reflected a lack of respect for the officers. Officers were unhappy with the previous Chief, but he was allowed to remain in place despite his routine absence from work and lack of initiative. Officers felt they were better off with the two officers who stepped up in the previous Chief's absence.

The appointment of the Interim Chief was viewed by Union members as a slap in the face. They feel the Mayor is more interested in optics than actually supporting the needs of the Department. Officers stated the Mayor told them he did not trust them. (Mayor Heintzelman confirmed a similar statement to assessors.)

Members of Council and the Mayor indicate there is a power struggle between themselves and the Police. There is a belief the officers are resisting oversight because they had not been held accountable for their performance or behaviors for years under the previous Chief. There is a perception police are not willing to work together with Council. The Borough will not back down or acquiesce to the demands of the Union.

Comments shared in the survey process provide ample insights to the perceived issues in the Department.



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### **SURVEY RESULTS**

It is desirable to have as many employees as possible responding to an employee survey. Employee surveys are designed to gauge employees' feelings as a whole, meaning the more employees that respond, the more accurate feedback received. Average employee survey response rates range from 25%-60%.

Scores between 50% and 60% are acceptable and are considered industry standard for web-based surveys. Anything below 50% is poor. Response rates below 30% should ring alarm bells as it simply indicates a complete lack of engagement and trust in the organization's internal feedback processes.

Internal surveys for employees have much higher response rates than external surveys for customers. These are used to measure the level of engagement and satisfaction among employees. The primary purpose of such surveys is to assess how connected, motivated, and committed employees are to their work and the overall goals of the organization. Employee engagement is a crucial factor in determining organizational success, as committed employees tend to be more productive, creative, and loyal (Survey Planet, 2024).

In the Hellertown Police survey, 12 of the 14 employees who were sent invitations to the survey responded, for a response rate of 86%. Key points are presented below. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

- 67% Respondents indicated compensation and benefits are reasonably fair.
- 0% Respondents indicated there was respectful treatment of all members of the Department at all levels.
- 0% Respondents indicated there was trust between officers and management.
- 83% Respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement "I am satisfied with the job-related training the Department offers."
- 66% Respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement "The Department is committed to my professional development."
- 75 % Respondents indicated their level of satisfaction with their job was affected by "working conditions, such as shift, environment, equipment, etc."
- 67% Respondents indicated their level of satisfaction with their job was affected by "feeling valued, trusted, and respected."
- 42% Respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I believe Department members participate in Community Activities and practice Community Policing on a regular basis."
- 25% Respondents indicate they are familiar with the Department's Vision and Mission statements.
- 8% Respondents indicated their belief the Department leadership/Borough Administration treats members fairly and equitably.



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- 16.7% Respondents indicated their belief Department leadership/Borough Administration clearly describe their expectations for job performance.
- 50 % Respondents indicate they agree or strongly agree employees proactively identify future challenges and opportunities for improvement.





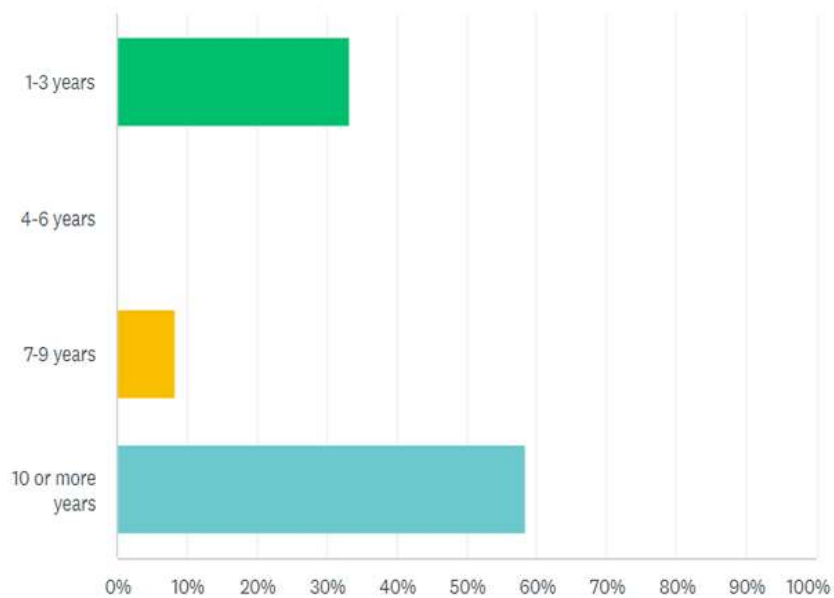
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Survey prepared by Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association

Q1

### My seniority on the job:

Answered: 10 Skipped :0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ 1-3 years	33.33% 4
▼ 4-6 years	0.00% 0
▼ 7-9 years	8.33% 1
▼ 10 or more years	58.33% 7

Total Respondents: 12

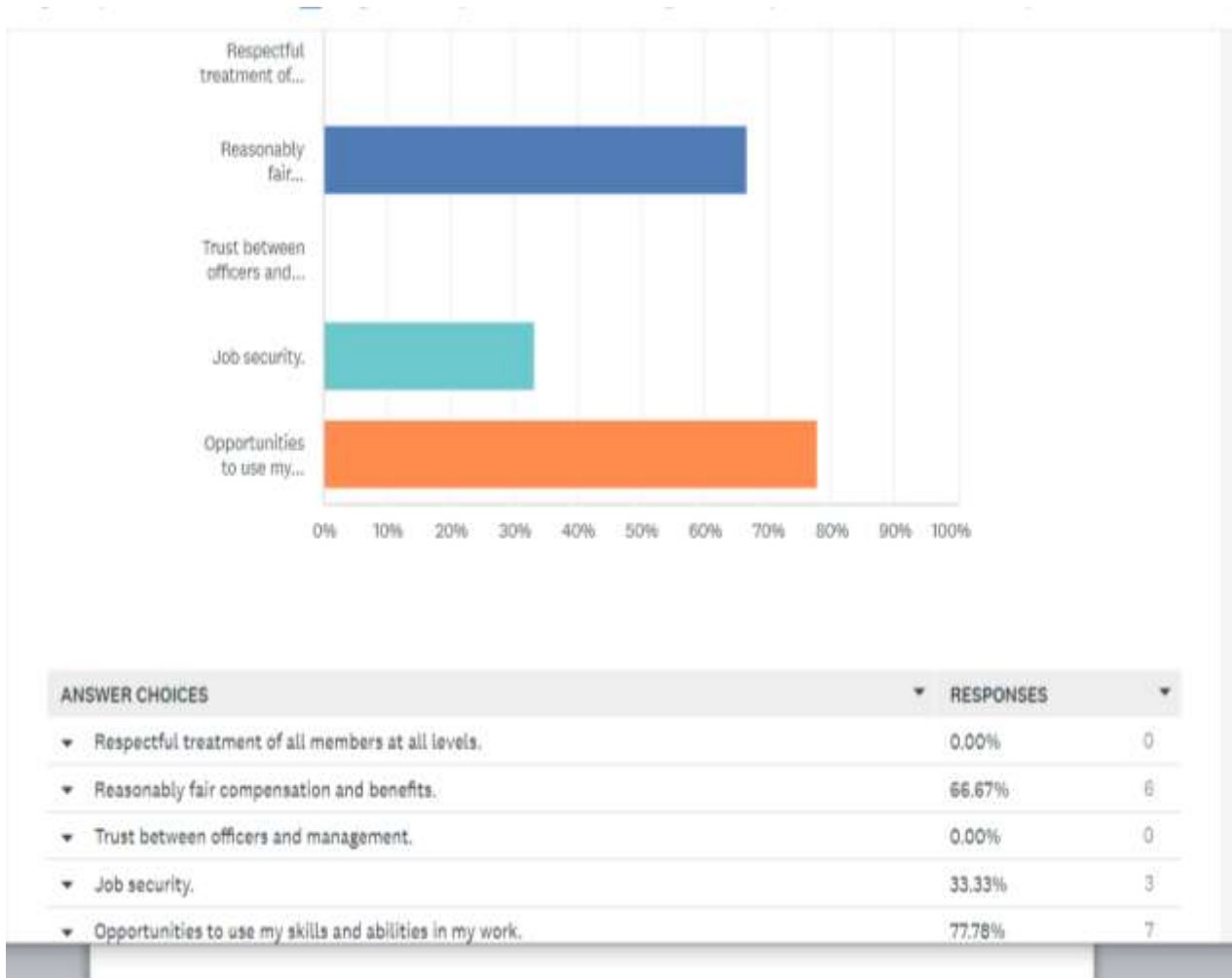
[Comments \(2\)](#)



Hellertown Police Department Review and Assessment

Q2

In the Hellertown Police Department, I believe there is  
(Please mark all of the following statements that apply.)

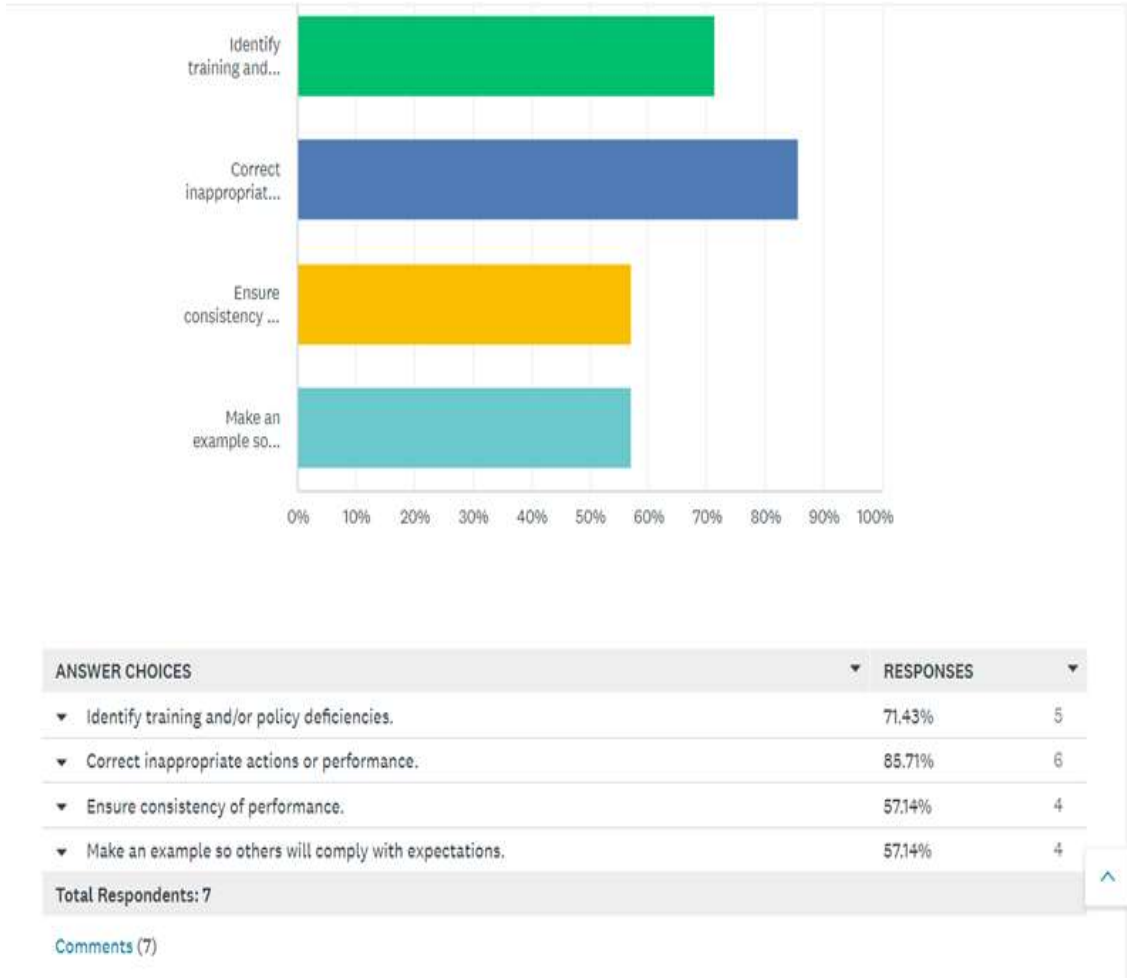




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Q3

In my Department, the purpose of accountability and discipline is to (Please mark all that apply.)

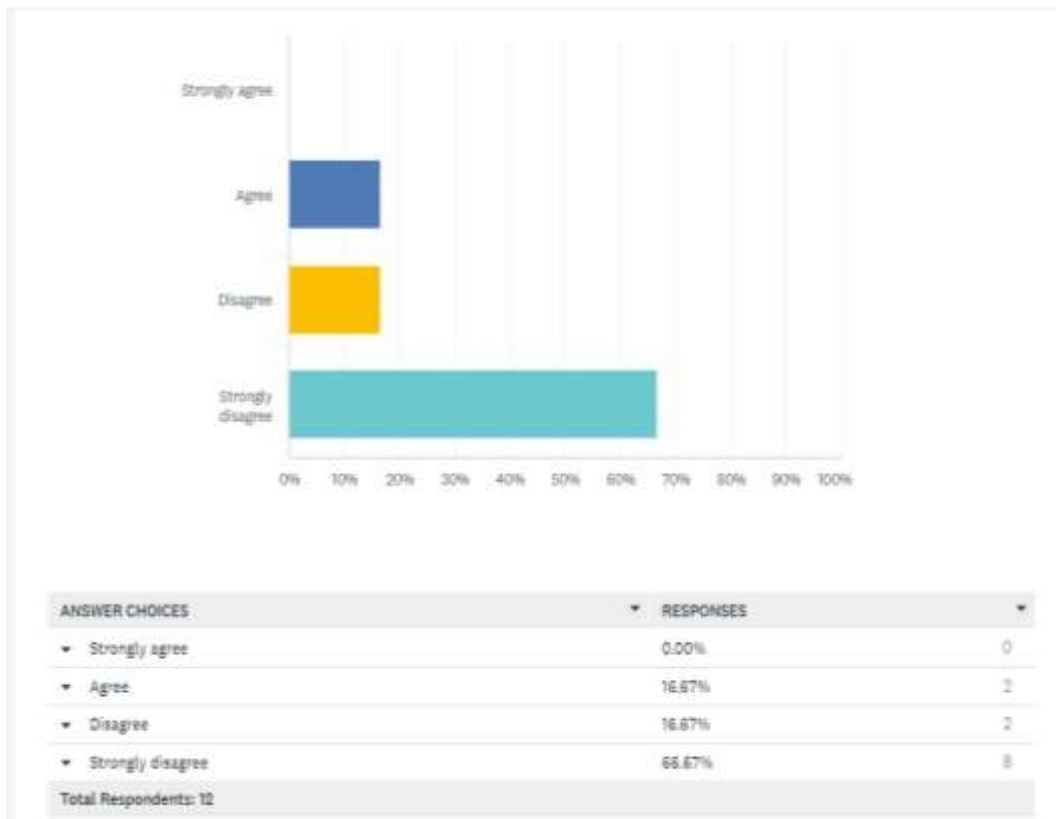




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Q4

I am satisfied with the job-related training the Department offers.

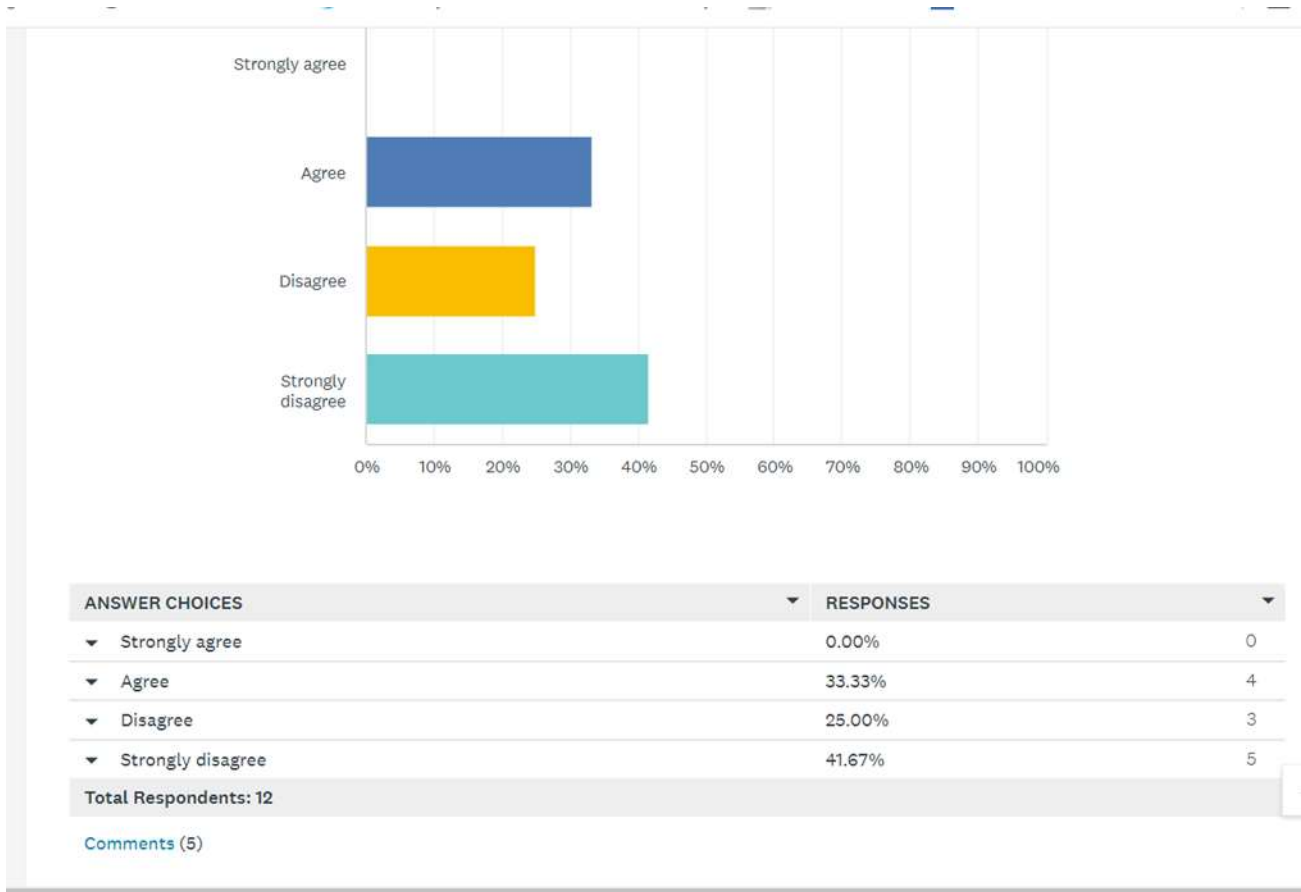




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Q5

The Department is committed to my professional development.

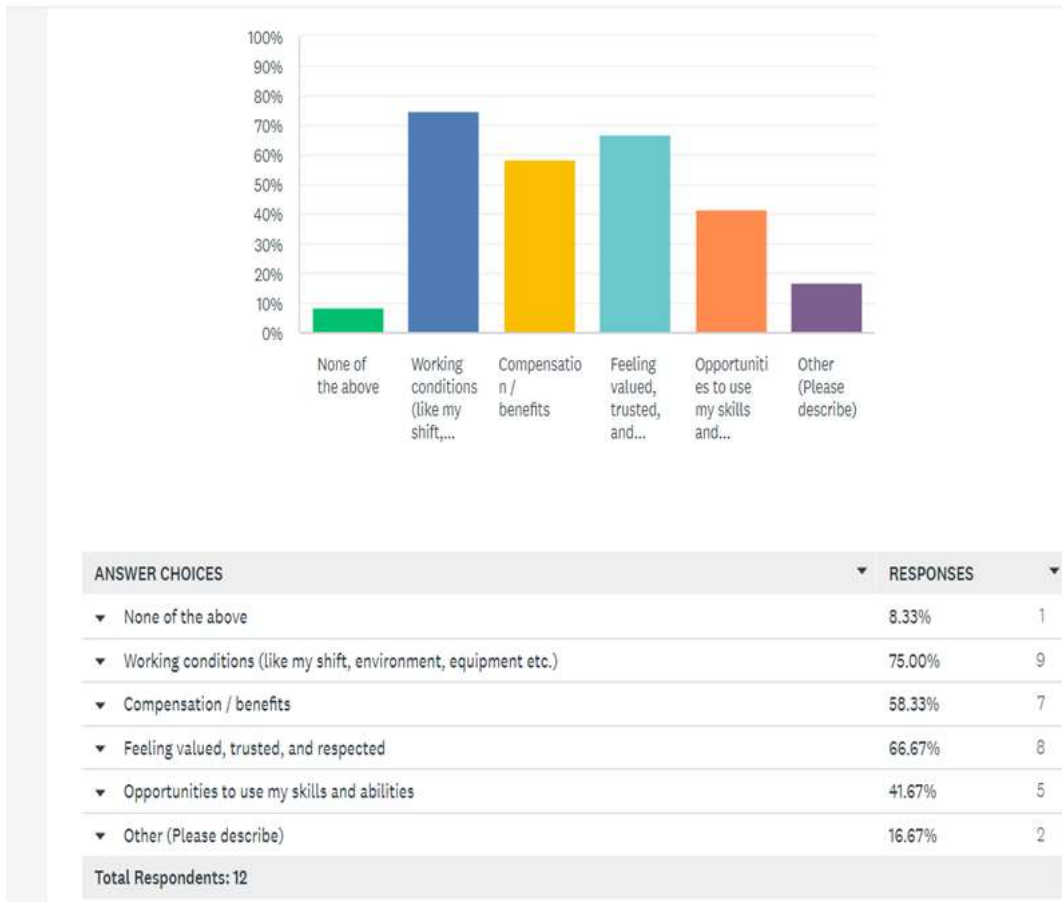




Hellertown Police Department Review and Assessment

Q6

My level of satisfaction with my job is most affected by:

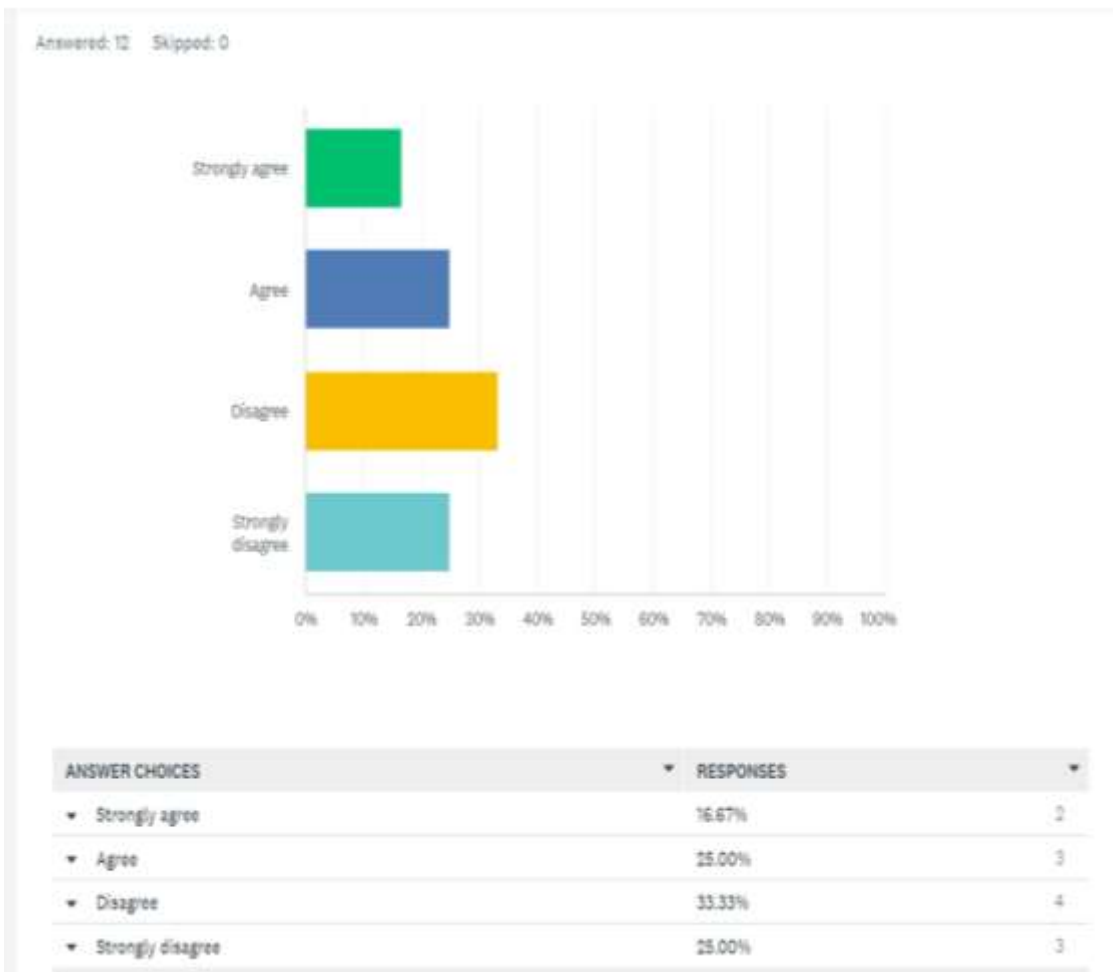




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Q7

I believe Department members participate in Community Activities and practice Community Policing on a regular basis.

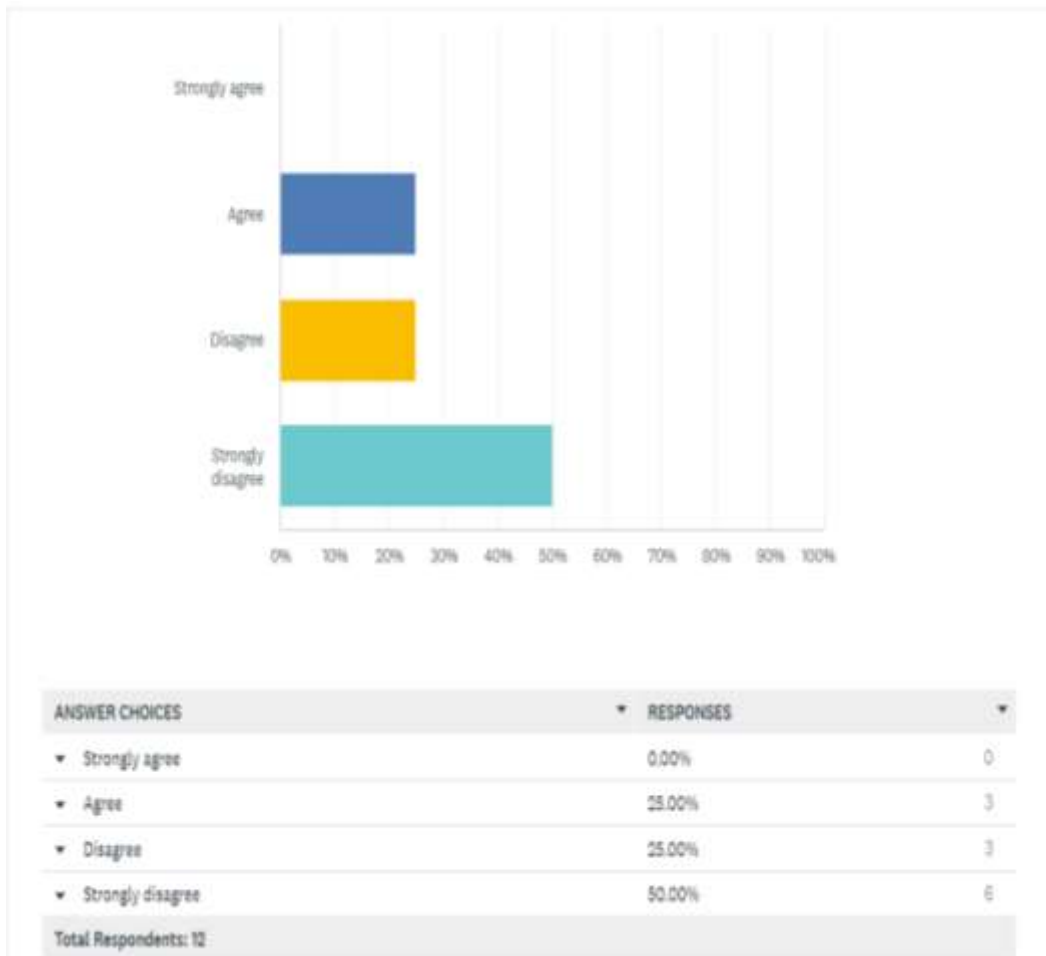




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Q8

I am familiar with the Department's Vision and Mission Statements



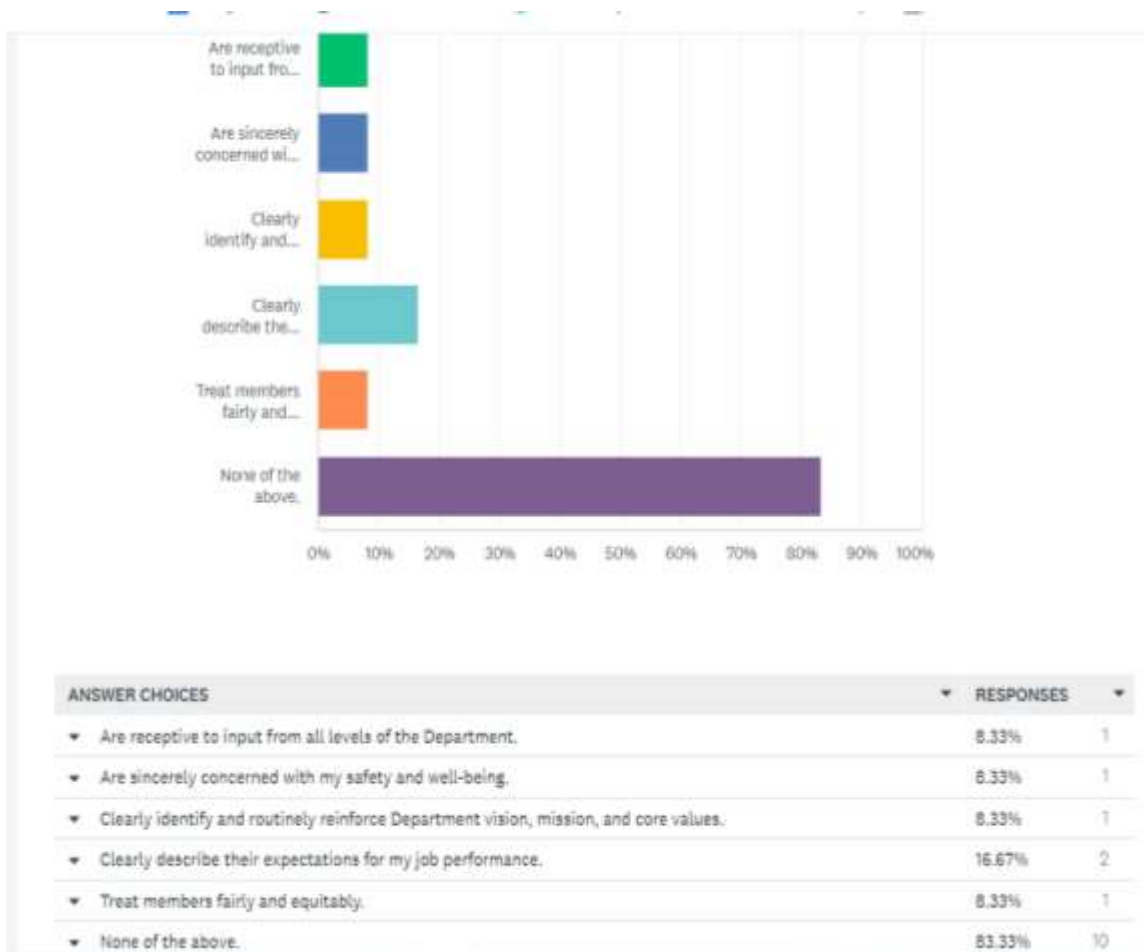




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Q9

I believe Department leadership/Borough Administration: (Please mark all that apply.)

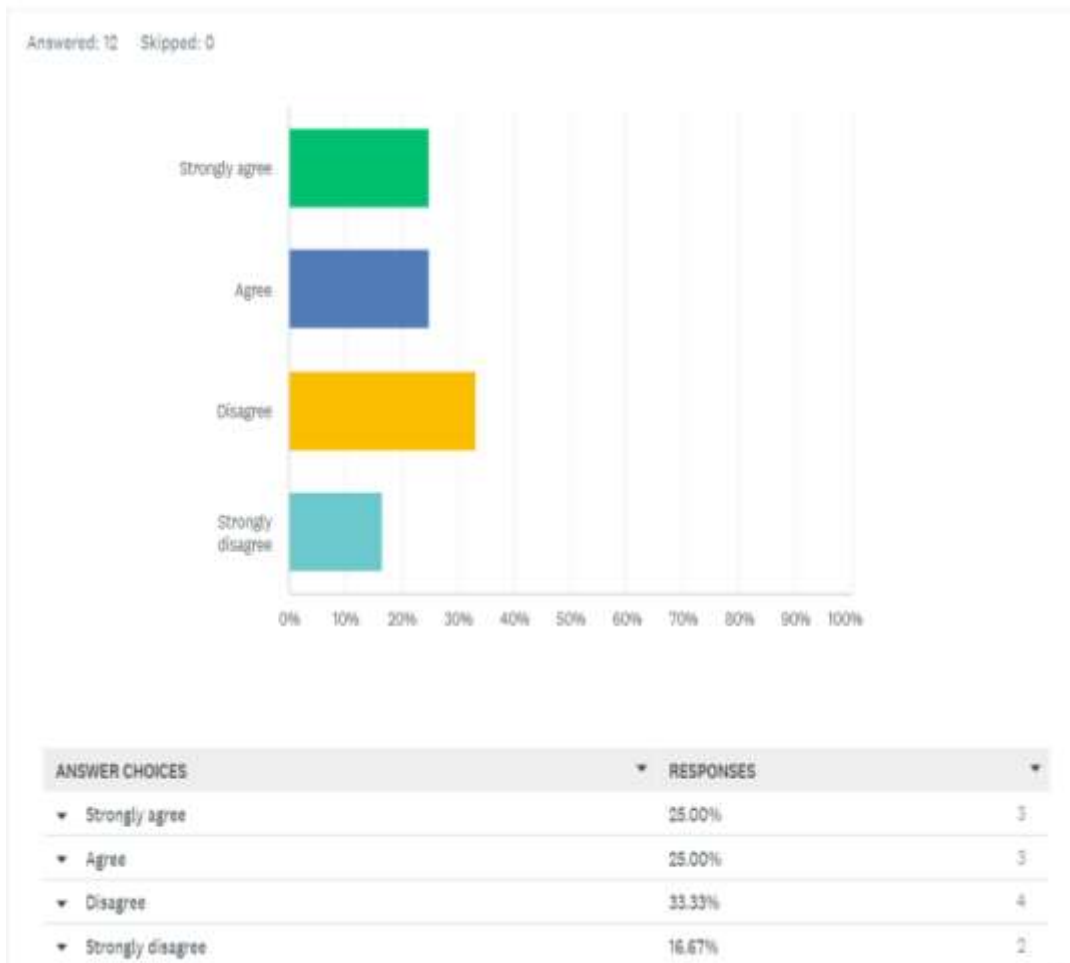




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Q10

Employees proactively identify challenges and opportunities for improvements.





## *Hellertown Police Department Review and Assessment*

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Council must determine a course of action for the Department going forward. Options for consideration range from increasing the number of officers and funding future growth to reduction of services, outsourcing services, and elimination of the Police Department.
2. Immediate development of requisite skills, knowledge, and abilities (SKAs) for a Chief of Police position; post for applicants to the Chief position; pursue a hiring process anchored to SKAs.
3. Establish a minimum of one additional supervisory position, for a total of two supervisory positions, providing enhanced first line supervision and administrative tasking. Backfill officer positions vacated by promotions. Hire one additional full time Patrol Officer to achieve full time staffing for night shift.
4. Establish a clear, comprehensive directive system compliant with Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (PLEAC) standards, which includes a current and routinely maintained on line Policy Manual and a system for codified temporary directives.
5. Establish a clear chain of command with a manageable span of control; ensure compliance.
6. Create a proper Vision statement and Mission statement and talk about them.
7. Initiate facility upgrades to comply with PLEAC standards.
8. Pursue accreditation through PLEAC.



## Hellertown Police Department Review and Assessment

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