

## COPAKE POLICE DEPARTMENT

January 21, 2010

**PARTICIPANT: Robert Lopez**

Mr. Lopez is the Officer in Charge of the Copake Police Department. There are currently 8 part time officers; on an average there are 10 to 15. Mr. Lopez is a 20 year veteran of the department. The mission of the Department is to protect life and property, to enforce laws and to prevent and deter crime. In addition to their regular duties, they also assist with Copake Community Day, funerals, TH athletic games, and other large community events.

The officers receive their training at the Police Academy followed by on the job training. The Department requires 21 hours in service training per year. There is significant turnover in the Department due to low pay and lack of status. (For instance, Chatham has both full and part-time officers, and the full-time officers get 1/3 less than the officers in the Sheriff's Department.

The data regarding the number of incidents is set forth below. Mr. Lopez observed the changes in the community over his time with the Department. He reflected on the fact that with the closing of the Copake Inn, there is much less activity around the clock. Drugs continues to be a problem, and Route 22 is a transit route.

The Department needs a budget which will allow them to replace aging equipment. They have five cars, and the lifespan of a police vehicle is about five years. They do try to get assistance from grants. Last year (2009) the budget was cut to \$90,000. This year (2010) it is \$102,000. In the next 20 years the budget might go as high as \$140,000.

Although there are state, county and park police agencies, the value of the Copake Police Department is that they can offer services which the other agencies cannot. For one thing, they know the town, and when something happens they know where to look and who to talk to. Additionally, the county and state police are covering huge zones, e.g. from Ancram to New Lebanon. A Copake officer can respond more immediately to a problem. Mr. Lopez also observed that for special functions the Copake police charge less per hour than their state and county colleagues.

In Columbia County there are five other municipalities with their own department (Germantown, Stockport, Philmont, Greenport and the City of Hudson.)

The data supplied by the Department is set forth below:

## Copake Police Department Yearly Activity Summary

	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Total Incidents*	310	391	405	663	507	429
Total Arrests**	37	53	28	120	112	120
Criminal	28	32	20	68	73	71
Vehicle & Traffic** *	9	21	8	52	39	49
Tickets issued	539	527	405	1225	1472	1502

Notes from R. Lopez-

\*Total "incidents" includes not only the number of times an officer responds on a complaint, but also includes such non-complaint tasks e.g. *fingerprinting (for people who are applying for an adoption, liquor licenses, pistol permits, etc.)*

\*\*Criminal Arrests include violations, misdemeanors and felonies. These include violations of the New York State Penal Law ,the Alcohol Beverage Control Law, Town law, Environmental and Conservation Law, and Health laws. Most of the data however are Penal, and Town laws.

\*\*\**Vehicle & Traffic includes DWI, and Aggravated Unlicensed Operation. Unlicensed Operation is not counted in this category.*

Does "tickets" refer to V+T tickets? And if one motorist is issued three tickets, does that count for three -- or just one?

*Correct, yes we would count it as three, Actual numbers.*