

6.12.2020

Q: Why do we maintain our own police force in a small town like Pine Plains?

A: There are many good reasons:

- 1) The Town Board feels that community policing by people who live in the community is just better for a small town. A good relationship between the police and their constituents is vital to the security and well-being of the town. *3 of 5 of our police not only live here but went to school here and have children in the schools here. All have a vested interest in the community.*
- 2) A town force is under the jurisdiction of the Town Board. An ethical Town Board therefore has a lot of power over how town police conduct themselves, and can influence that.
- 3) Having police in town makes sense for the kinds of crimes we have. Waiting for a sheriff/trooper to arrive can be fatal.
- 4) It saves the Town a great deal of money.

Q: Wouldn't it save the Town money to just hire the Sheriff?

A:

- 1) Sheriff's duties are actually different than those of State Troopers and town police.
- 2) The Sheriff is located in Rhinebeck, 22 minutes from Pine Plains. This sub-station is unmanned most of the time.
- 3) State Troopers have an office in Pine Plains but are often not near town.
- 4) Hiring the sheriff would cost approximately \$100/hour. (See attached 2019 cost analysis below). The Town of Millerton spends approximately \$200,000 on coverage without their own department. Our budget for police is under \$80,000/year, plus insurance and car maintenance.

Q: Do we need that much policing? What kinds of crimes do we have in Pine Plains?

A:

- 1) DWI and DUI are critical issues in Pine Plains, as is domestic abuse. Robbery is rare but it does occur. Opioid use and drug overdose is a problem here and in every small town. Last year, town police were first on the scene of a number of overdoses and were able to save lives through the administration of Narcan.
- 2) Sometimes just the presence of a police car in town has an enormous effect on whether a crime will be committed.
- 3) Police are always available for work like stopping traffic for parades, policing events, etc. This work is done on salary as opposed to overtime, which saves the town a lot of money.
- 4) Town police handle cases that State Police and the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office often discount as "civil"—but town police strive to bring both parties together to resolve issues.