

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE FINANCIAL AND SERVICE  
COMPONENTS OF POLICING IN CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY**

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This report is the second installment of a continuing examination of issues associated with local and regional policing in Chautauqua County. The first was an analysis of views that elected decision-makers and police professionals have about this issue. Major findings from this phase include the following:

1. Most political and police officials who were interviewed supported some form of regional policing. Some think there can be potential cost savings, but most support this for professional policing reasons.
2. Supporters view a larger agency as better trained and equipped, with more opportunities for professional growth and better prepared to provide a wider range of services to the public.
3. Those who were opposed to a regional police concept voiced concerns over loss of local control and the ending of unique relationships to a specific community and its residents
4. Opponents argue policing would be less effective because a “stranger” police officer would not know of or pay attention to the specific demands or needs of a particular community.

In the second phase of this study, the focus is on learning about the existing costs of policing for residents of Chautauqua County in the context of the services to the public that the various police departments provide. Learning the cost of the various police departments is not difficult. The appropriate budget data is available as a public record. Learning about the range, depth, and impact on the public of police service to a specific municipality is more difficult. Among the many factors that affect levels of service are the size of the department; the number of vehicles available to respond to calls; the size

of the specific area officers are expected to patrol; the amount and type of training officers have completed; the range of special police units a department supports; the range of issues departments are expected and able to respond to; and their response times. Some indicators of service and service potential are part of the public record. Other aspects of services must be inferred or estimated from available resources and experiences.

While costs and services are different issues with different indicators, both are bound together. For example, many argue that an adequate budget is what makes an acceptable level of police service possible, and that a cut in available resources leads to a cut in service. At the same time, it is a public's perceived need for police service that is the impetus to secure resources to fund police services in the first place.

This latter point underscores a number of pertinent observations concerning the extent to which residents desire competent police service and the history of changes associated with that service in Chautauqua County over the past thirty years. First, it is assumed that all residents, whether they live in areas of population concentration or in more rural areas, both desire and merit acceptable levels of police service.

Second, given that police intervene in problems of varying types, people generally would prefer to live their lives free of official police contact. However, if residents want police to respond to an issue, they want a response now, not later. This is so whether the reason for the call is a critical emergency or something more mundane, such as a quality of life issue. In fact, most calls for police service fall into the latter category. While the police may give these requests a lower priority, the issue remains important to the one who calls.

Over the past thirty years, organized policing in Chautauqua County has undergone significant changes. While public expectations for police service remain constant, the organizations that would provide this service have not. Primarily due to financial hardship in the municipalities that supported them, there are nineteen fewer police departments today than in the decade of the 1970's. These local police agencies were smaller operations ranging in size from one or two persons to five or six. In some cases, separate agencies merged to form a larger department. For example, the village police in Celeron and Falconer merged with the Town of Ellicot police to form a single, regional organization. Officers in some departments, such as the Town of Hanover police, were absorbed into the County Sheriff's Department. Other communities disbanded their police and became dependent upon the County Sheriff and the New York State Police for their police service. Concurrent with these changes has been growth in the police function of the Sheriff's Department from thirty full-time deputies in the 1970's to eighty-four in 2001. Now, this agency is the principal police presence in all or parts of twenty-five of the twenty-seven townships in Chautauqua County. Separate police departments remain only in the villages of Silver Creek, Westfield, Fredonia and Lakewood, the towns of Busti and Ellicot, and the cities of Dunkirk and Jamestown. In addition, the towns of Dunkirk, Sheridan and Carroll employ part-time police constables to supplement police service from the County Sheriff and the State Police. What follows is an examination of the financial costs to county residents for services provided by these police entities.

## **POLICE COSTS/POLICE SERVICES 2000/2001**

Public services within municipalities and the county as a whole are funded by a variety of sources of revenue. They include federal and state grants and assistance, sales and mortgage taxes, payments in lieu of taxes, investment income, fines and other court receipts, and property taxes. Because there is no local personal income tax, the only direct tax on individual and corporate entities is the latter. For those who lease their domicile or place of business, the property tax represents an indirect cost to them.

In order to isolate the direct costs of police service to individual taxpayers it was first necessary to calculate the percent of the total general-purpose budget that was derived from the property tax. Next, the total police budget was multiplied by the percent of total budget derived from property tax to determine the amount of the police budget that was financed through the property tax. In this analysis, the total police budget for a given agency is the sum of all personnel costs including salary, benefits and social security, equipment, uniforms, training, supplies and travel expenditures for the year 2000 or 2001, depending upon the close of a community's fiscal year. This was done so that actual costs across municipalities could be compared.

Then this total was multiplied by the percent described previously, to determine the **total amount** of police expenditures financed by property taxes. Next, this result was divided by the total amount of income derived from property taxes to determine the **percent** of police costs financed by property taxes. In order to compare the same value across different localities, the tax rate per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for each municipality was standardized at the 100 percent equalization rate. The standardized tax rate was multiplied by the percent of police costs funded by property taxes in order to

calculate the portion of a local tax rate that funded police services for that year. The result of these calculations along with additional information is summarized in Table 1.

The information in this table is both comprehensive and revealing. It summarizes the extent of police presence in those communities that support separate police entities and the county as a whole. Here one is able to compare the different departments as to the number of full and part-time sworn officers and the number of vehicles that are available to transport officers to the scene of a call for assistance. The number of police per 1,000 residents is often reported as a population-based measure of police presence. It should be noted that a companion measure of police cost per capita is not reported because police budgets are not funded by individual income taxes.

As is indicated, police presence ranges from about 1.5 officers per 1,000 residents in areas served by the County Sheriff, to almost 3 officers per 1000 in the Village of Westfield. While this is a sizeable difference, the actual police per capita rate in the various localities and the county as a whole is similar to what is found in counties throughout the U.S. with similar size populations (Sourcebook 2000, p. 51).

**Table 1: Characteristics and Costs of Chautauqua County Police Departments for 2000/2001**

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Sworn Officers</i>		<i>Vehicles</i>	<i>*Police/ 1000 Residents</i>	<i>Total Police Budget</i>	<i>Total Police Budget funded By Property Tax</i>	<i>Actual Police Cost/ \$1000 Value**</i>	<i>Police Cost/ \$1000 Value "without"****</i>
	<i>FT</i>	<i>PT</i>						
Dunkirk-City	34	0	12	2.6	\$2,638,370	\$1,451,103	\$3.10	\$5.63
Fredonia	15	5	6	1.6	\$1,160,625	\$557,100	\$2.09	\$4.35
Jamestown	73	0	25	2.1	\$5,225,818	\$2,052,184	\$3.40	\$8.65
Silver Creek	4	4	4	2.1	\$350,809	\$208,731	\$2.95	\$4.95
Westfield-Vill.	6	9	4	2.9	\$420,265	\$213,662	\$2.02	\$3.97
Lakewood	9	6	6	1.5	\$670,881	\$308,894	\$2.23	\$3.50
Busti	Contract with Lakewood				\$185,000	\$38,416	\$ .27	\$1.31
Ellicott	11	5	7	1.5	\$847,982	\$354,753	\$1.00	\$2.42
Dunkirk-Town		1	1		\$18,788	\$1,389	\$ .01	\$ .19
Sheridan		1	1		\$11,460	\$2,876	\$ .02	\$ .10
Carroll		4	2		\$63,000	\$39,862	\$ .43	\$ .68
Brocton	Contract with Sheriff				\$61,096	\$32,899	\$1.07	\$1.99
Hanover	Contract with Sheriff				\$201,308	\$66,998	\$ .38	\$1.14
Pomfret	Contract with Sheriff				\$22,003	\$3,670	\$ .03	\$ .16
Ripley-Town	Contract with Sheriff				\$36,643	\$5,953	\$ .08	\$ .52
County Sheriff	84	11	51	1.5****	\$7,610,261	\$1,870,047	\$ .41 ^	\$1.64
Totals	236	46	119	1.9	\$19,504,795			

\* each part-time officer counted as one-half full-time

\*\* costs are standardized on the basis of 100% evaluation for each municipality; these are **actual** costs to property owners

\*\*\* these tax rates would have been the costs to property taxpayers "**without**" the application of other revenues to reduce rates

\*\*\*\* based upon the total population of the following townships for which the County Sheriff's Department provides police service (in whole or in part): Arkwright, Carroll, Charlotte, Chautauqua, Cherry Creek, Clymer, Dunkirk, Ellery, Ellington, French Creek, Gerry, Hanover, Harmony, Kiantone, Mina, North Harmony, Poland, Pomfret, Portland, Ripley, Sheridan, Sherman, Stockton, Villenova, and Westfield

^ assessment per \$1000 of full property value for all property owners throughout Chautauqua County to fund the law enforcement functions of the Chautauqua County Sheriff's Department

Police expenditures in the year 2000/2001 (depending upon the ending year of a community's fiscal year) are presented for all the municipalities that funded a police presence. In addition, four municipalities – the Village of Brocton and the towns of Hanover, Pomfret, and Ripley, entered into separate contracts with the County Sheriff for enhanced police coverage from that department. The costs of these contracts are included because they were funded, in part, from local property taxes collected in these municipalities. The data presented in the first five columns of this table show that during this period of time the total cost of local and county policing was \$19,509,795. This amount funded 236 full and 46 part-time sworn officers who had access to 119 vehicles so that they could respond to calls.

Information in the column headed "**Total Police Budget**" is the total amount spent within the various municipalities for service from the separate police departments, while the next column reports the amount of the former financed through the property tax. The remainder of the total police budget was funded from other revenue sources including state aid and sales tax. The column headed "**Actual Police Cost**" is the amount property owners paid for police services. To facilitate comparison across municipalities, this information is presented as a tax rate per \$1000 of assessed value that has been standardized at 100 percent valuation. Information in the last column also presents a full value tax rate. In this case the values represent the amount property owners in the various municipalities would have been charged to fund the total police costs in the absence of any other revenue sources. Comparing the information in these two columns indicates that the availability of other revenue resources significantly reduced costs to property tax payers.

An examination of the specific values in the "Actual Police Cost" column is also revealing. First, the last entry in this column is the portion of county property tax that was used to fund the law enforcement function of the County Sheriff's Department. This amount of 41 cents per 1,000 of assessed value was collected from all property owners throughout the county whether they lived in a community with a separate police presence or not. Thus this amount represents an additional cost for police service for property owners in the different municipalities with local police departments. It is a measure of the extent which property owners in these communities subsidize the police service that is provided by the Sheriff's Department to all or parts of twenty-five of the twenty-seven townships that do not fund a local police department.

Looking next at the seven municipalities with local police departments, the data indicate there are wide variations in the total expenditure for each department, but not a wide variation in the unit cost to taxpayers. There are two reasons for this. First, different localities receive varying amounts of revenue from sources other than property taxes that are used to moderate the cost of local services to individual taxpayers. However, revenue streams from other sources can be unstable from year to year. Consequently, the tax unit cost for police services can significantly increase or decrease with these changing amounts of other revenue. Second, the unit cost to taxpayers is affected by the amount of value of property in a community that is assessed. Thus a budget spread over property with a larger assessed valuation will lower the unit cost of the tax to each property owner.

This latter point suggests it is possible to achieve a certain level of service/cost effectiveness by increasing the tax base from which a public service is financed. This is

demonstrated more forcefully when comparing the different tax unit costs that are presented in the last column of this table.

In 2000, the property owners in the Village of Silver Creek financed a police department composed of four full-time and four part-time officers at a total cost of \$350,809. Among those communities with full-time police departments, this was the lowest total expenditure for this service. Nevertheless, property owners paid \$2.95 per \$1,000 of assessed value for this service. Compare this with the situation in the Village of Fredonia. There, property owners financed a larger police department composed of fifteen full and five part-time officers, but at a tax unit cost of \$2.09. Even in the two cities with police budgets that total multiple millions of dollars, the cost to taxpayers on a per unit basis is only slightly higher than these or the other communities (with one exception) with their own police departments. For example, with a modest increase of 15 cents in tax unit costs, taxpayers in Dunkirk fund a police department that is almost six times as large as that in Silver Creek. Similarly, Jamestown funded a department with seventy-three full-time officers, more than ten times that in Silver Creek, but with only an additional 45 cents of added tax.

The one exception is the tax unit cost of the Town of Ellicott Police Department. In this town, taxpayers were charged \$1.00 per tax unit to fund this department of eleven full and five part-time sworn officers. This amount is significantly less, for the size of the department, than the cost for the other police services.

Two police departments in Chautauqua County are “regional” agencies in that they were formed from the merging of once separate local departments. The Town of Ellicott Police Department is one and the other is the Lakewood-Busti Police

Department. The latter is slightly smaller than the former, but does provide service for the Village of Lakewood and the surrounding Town of Busti. Unlike in Ellicott where costs for police service are equally spread over all the property owners, property owners in the Town of Busti paid different amounts depending upon where their property is located. If other revenues were not used to reduce property tax rates, property owners in the village would have paid \$3.50 per tax unit, while those outside would have paid \$1.31. Why is there a difference? The answer lies in the fact the total budget for the Lakewood-Busti Police Department is generated and managed by the Village of Lakewood. Town residents outside the village contract with the Village for police services. In 2000 the value of this contract was \$185,000. In that year the total budget of that police department was \$670,881. Village property owners were responsible for paying \$485,881 of this total amount. At the same time, town residents outside the village were responsible for funding the \$185,000 contract payment. In sum, the total costs for this department are not spread equally over all the property that is subject to taxation in the town. The results are substantially different charges for a similar level of police service throughout this township. Had the total police budget been equally divided between village and town property owners, the tax rate for police services (not counting additional revenue sources) would have been \$2.40 for all property owners in the township, including those in the village.

The part-time police service funded by the towns of Dunkirk, Sheridan, and Carroll is used to supplement full-time policing provided by the County Sheriff's department. The cost to taxpayers for this part-time service is generally less than the cost to taxpayers in the Village of Brocton and towns of Hanover, Pomfret, and Ripley which

fund separate contracts with the Sheriff's Department. The purpose is to purchase an amount of enhanced police coverage provided by the Sheriff's Department beyond that which this department routinely provides to these and the other townships in the county. The extent of extra coverage depends on the size of the contract. The largest, with the Town of Hanover, provides 24-hour a day, seven days a week coverage in the township outside the Village of Silver Creek. While this coverage is exclusive, the deputy on duty at a given moment can respond to emergency calls elsewhere. The other municipalities contracted for additional coverage during varying times of the day, times of the week, or months of the year.

Perhaps the least economically favorable example of cost of police service occurred in the Village of Brocton. There, property owners paid \$1.07 per tax unit for police services that did not guarantee residents 24/7 coverage by even one police officer who was to remain in the village at all times. On the other hand, perhaps the best example of cost effectiveness that results from spreading charges over the largest tax base is that of the Sheriff's Department. The cost to county property owners was 41 cents per tax unit to fund the police functions of this department of eighty-four full and eleven part-time sworn deputies with access to fifty-one vehicles. The principle beneficiaries of this police service are the residents of all or part of twenty-five townships in Chautauqua County that does not provide their own local police department. It would be possible, for funding purposes, to identify these townships as part of a distinct "police district". The cost of police services that the Sheriff's Department provides to them could be placed as a separate charge on their county tax bill. This is not done, however. Consequently,

those who own property in communities with a local police department, subsidize the police service of those who own property elsewhere in the county.

For those who own property in this “police district” served by the Sheriff’s Department, the amount of this subsidy is significant. Without the subsidy, property owners in the communities with their own police departments would save the 41 cents per tax unit on their county tax bill. Those who live in the “police district” would then pay between \$1.74 and \$2.15 per tax unit for their police service. The precise amount would depend upon an interpretation of which specific costs of the Sheriff’s Department police functions would be assessed to the “police district” and which to the county as a whole.

Having examined the existing expenditures for policing, it is appropriate to ask what services this funding provides for the residents of these various municipalities. Information about this issue is presented in Tables 2 and 3. Table 2 categorizes service in terms of activities that are part of the department’s daily routine and those service capabilities that derive from one or more special units within that department. As is indicated, all eight departments perform the same routine functions of road patrol (with its crime deterrence consequences), law enforcement, traffic enforcement, and checks of vacant houses and business property.

**Table 2: Summary of Routine Services and Special Units Provided by Chautauqua County Police Agencies (2000/2001)**

Police Departments

<i>Routine Services</i>	<i>County Sheriff</i>	<i>Jamestown</i>	<i>Dunkirk</i>	<i>Fredonia</i>	<i>Silver Creek</i>	<i>Westfield</i>	<i>Ellicott</i>	<i>Lakewood</i>
Road Patrol	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Law Enforcement	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Speed Enforcement	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
House checks	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Business checks	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Crime Investigation	X	X	X	X			X	

  

<i>Special Units*</i>	<i>County Sheriff</i>	<i>Jamestown</i>	<i>Dunkirk</i>	<i>Fredonia</i>	<i>Silver Creek</i>	<i>Westfield</i>	<i>Ellicott</i>	<i>Lakewood</i>
Juvenile		X	X					
Drug Task Force	X	X	X					
Accident Reconstruction	X		X	X				
Arson Investigation	X	X	X					
Bicycle Patrol	X	X	X					
Community Policing	X	X	X					
DARE	X	X	X	X				
K-9	X		X					
Underwater Rescue	X		X					
Homicide	X	X						
Snowmobile/Marine	X							
DWI Enforcement	X	X						
Domestic Violence Unit	X	X						
Social Service Investigation	X							
Forensic Investigation	X	X						
School Resource	X	X						

\* As listed on the Agency Personnel Report for 2001 and sent to the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services and supplemented by communication with the Chief

All but three also assign at least one officer as a full-time crime investigator. The four largest departments have enhanced their service potential by assigning officers to and training them for a number of special units. These, in turn, are activated and utilized on

an as needed basis. From this data, it is clear that access to more personnel and financial resources provide opportunities to enhance police service capabilities.

**Table 3: Patrol and Response Time Characteristics of Police Agencies  
in  
Chautauqua County (2000/2001)**

<i>Police Agency</i>	<i>Daily Patrols Per Shift</i>	<i>Response Time (Chief's estimate)</i>
Dunkirk PD	3/4/4	+/- 2 minutes
Fredonia PD	1/2/2	+/- 2 minutes
Jamestown PD	9/10/9	+/- 2 minutes
Ellicott PD	3/3/2	Less than 10 minutes
Lakewood-Busti PD	4/2/3	+/- 4 minutes
Silver Creek PD	1/1/1	+/- 2 minutes
Westfield PD	2/2/2	+/- 2 minutes
County Sheriff	6/5/5	+/- 15 minutes

In addition to factors such as the amount of training and the skills of individual officers, the size of a department operating in a given territory also affects the quality and quantity of the service provided. Generally a larger department operating over a smaller territory will have more resources to provide more services. This point is illustrated by the information in Table 3. The patrols per shift refer to the number of patrol units on duty during each day, evening, and night shift. This information comes either from the police chief or from the “Agency Personnel Report” that a department filed with the New York State Division of Criminal Justice. Clearly Jamestown was the most extensively patrolled community in the county. With one exception, the other communities with local departments report at least two patrols per shift.

The sheriff's department is different. It reports multiple patrols per shift, but those patrols must cover all or parts of twenty-five townships. Their boundaries include over 90 percent of the land area in the county. Thus, the intensity of the patrol presence of each deputy is significantly diluted. In fact, it was reported that, depending upon the press of responsibility elsewhere, it was possible that no deputy would appear in a particular township during a particular shift on any given day.

One consequence of this spreading of a relatively small resource over a large territory is reflected in the time it takes for an officer to respond to a call for assistance. A number of factors can affect an officer's response time. These include traffic, weather, the distance to be traveled, the number of officers on duty, and whether an officer is in the process of responding to another call for service. For these reasons all departments must triage competing calls for assistance on the basis of precedence.

From interviews with chiefs and others, estimates were established of the typical response time, absent any other engagement that would take precedence. These estimates are reported in Table 3. Most departments have the resources, the lack of distance, and the will to respond in less than five minutes to a serious event. In the Sheriff's department, there is the will to respond quickly, but the combination of limited resources and extensive travel distances are significant impediments to doing so. The estimate is about fifteen minutes. It could be less if the patrol, by chance, is nearby. It could be much longer if the deputy has to travel twenty miles or more to respond.

Table 4 contains a list of the types of problems to which police respond in the various localities of Chautauqua County. As part of the first Phase of this study, police professionals and elected officials who were asked to describe the typical issues that

required police intervention in the service area. Table 4 lists the range of responses. While the events that were described vary as to seriousness level, for the citizen who calls, any issue is serious to him or her.

**Table 4: Summary of typical Problems Police Report They Pay Attention to for Indicated Police Departments\* (2000/2001)**

<i>Type of Problem</i>	<i>Dunkirk</i>	<i>Fredonia</i>	<i>Westfield</i>	<i>Jamestown</i>	<i>Sheriff</i>
Criminal Mischief	X	X		X	X
Minor Assaults	X	X		X	X
Noise	X	X	X	X	X
Underage Drinking		X	X		
Disorderly Conduct	X	X			X
Petty Larcenies	X	X		X	X
Traffic Controls	X	X	X	X	X
Quality of Life Issues		X	X	X	X
Harassment	X			X	X
Domestic Violence	X			X	X
Drug Sales	X	X	X	X	X
Sex Assaults	X	X		X	X
Burglaries		X		X	X
Trespass				X	X
Neighbor Disputes				X	X

\*The information in this table is summarized from interviews that were conducted as part of phase I of this study with the police chiefs from these communities.

Table 4 contains a list of the types of problems to which police respond in the various localities of Chautauqua County. As part of the first Phase of this study, police professionals and elected officials who were asked to describe the typical issues that required police intervention in the service area. Table 4 lists the range of responses. While the events that were described vary as to seriousness level, for the citizen who calls, any issue is serious to him or her.

What is most surprising in this listing is how often the same type of problem is identified as important in their area. Even Westfield, which reports fewer problems, is not atypical in what it does report. Perhaps most surprising is the similarity to these issues that are reported by the Sheriff, even though the primary service areas for the deputies are the rural townships and smaller villages in the county. However, the same types of problems that are reported as occurring in the two cities in the county also are reported as occurring in county areas. Clearly more populated areas do not have a monopoly on the types of issues for which police are expected to respond. However, the resources available to respond in the larger county are severely impacted by time and distance.

In sum, the analysis of the data suggests the presence of two critical imbalances in Chautauqua County. One of these is financial and the other is service capability. Part of the former arises from the fact that significant portions of police services that are provided to most areas of the county are funded by those who do not benefit directly from those services. Another part of this financial imbalance is seen within some of those localities that provide their own police service. In some instances, local property owners pay per unit costs that are the same or larger than those in other communities, but for distinctly smaller police departments.

The imbalance in service capability is a more difficult and more controversial issue to discuss. Certainly there is no evidence to suggest any police officer or police department does not perform their responsibilities with the highest level of integrity and to the best of their ability. However, the combination of limited numbers of officers and an expanded territory and population has a severe impact on police functions and

responsibilities. All chiefs agree that routine comprehensive patrol by police plays a significant deterrence role in the prevention of crime. When one finds fewer officers and more territory to cover, one finds less comprehensive patrols. This is most apparent with the Sheriff's Department that attempts to patrol all the roadways of twenty-five townships in Chautauqua County.

On the other hand, it is possible some communities are over-served by their police. This is controversial because it suggests some communities have a wealth of service that perhaps could be shared elsewhere. Those opposed to this thinking suggest that reducing police presence will instigate a rise in crime and loss of service to the public. Beyond local impressions, there is little data to support such an argument. In fact, one might expect there would be a negative relationship between the number of police and the amount of crime that occurs in a given community; that is more police result in less crime. Comparing communities across the state and comparing states across the country reveals there is no relationship either between the number of police or the amount spent on policing and the levels of crime in a particular place. What can be argued is this: whether one lives within the boundaries of a community with a police department or outside those boundaries, the potential need for police service that is delivered in a comprehensive and timely manner remains the same. The remainder of this report will describe possible new models of police organizations that hold the promise of addressing these imbalances.

### **MODELING NEW POLICE ORGANIZATIONS**

Each of the following descriptions of possible new police organizations, with one exception, are developed from the merging of existing agencies and expanding the

territorial range of their legal jurisdiction. Five different models are described. In fact, it is possible to create many other configurations.

Each of these model agencies is presented as “what...if” phenomena: What would the new department have consisted of and what would it have cost property tax payers if the police personnel and the expenditures that existed in 2000/2001 had been combined? This method does not address serious issues such as different negotiated contracts and different rights that are embodied in state law. However, it is possible to overcome some of these issues by “grand-fathering” existing rights. In spite of these issues this analytical method is used because of the opportunity to use known data, rather than to speculate about what is not known.

**Table 5: Model I-Tax Rate Consequences of Merging the Dunkirk and Fredonia Police Departments to Serve The City, Village and Towns of Dunkirk and Pomfret**

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Local Tax Rate (Current)*</i>	<i>Tax Rate with Merger</i>	<i>Saving (-) Or Addition (+)</i>
Dunkirk-City	\$15.48	\$13.70	-\$1.70
Fredonia	\$ 7.24	\$ 6.84	-\$ .40
Dunkirk-Town	\$ .31	\$ 4.07	+\$3.76
Pomfret	\$ .66	\$ 5.78	+\$5.12

\* based on 100% valuation

The new department would be comprised of 52.5 full-time equivalent officers, assisted by 9 full-time equivalent civilians and with access to 19 vehicles to respond to calls.

Note: If the full cost for police service that is provided to Town residents by the Sheriff's Department were charged only to them, their County property tax would have increased between \$1.74 and \$2.15 for the level of police service in effect at that time.

The first of these possible new organizations is presented as Model I in Table 5. It combines police personnel from Dunkirk, Fredonia and the towns of Dunkirk and

Pomfret into one organization to serve all the people residing there. It also combines their separate police budgets and allocates its financing proportionately to the property owners in each of these localities, based on the percent of each locality's property assessment to the total value of all four assessments. Also, for this analysis two part-time officers were assumed to be equivalent to one full-time, especially in terms of his or her patrol functions. Finally, the local tax rate for each area was recalculated in light of the merged police budgets in order to show who would experience tax savings or gains. The information in Table 5 shows that a department of fifty-two officers, with access to nineteen vehicles, would have been created to serve those residents. It also suggests there would be varying per unit tax savings in the city of Dunkirk and Fredonia and sizeable tax increases of almost \$4.00 and over \$5.00 in the towns of Dunkirk and Pomfret. To place these additions in perspective, recall that the unsubsidized cost of policing from the Sheriff's department results in a hike in the county tax rate of between \$1.74 and \$2.15. From this perspective, the tax increase for the town residents that results from the merger is less than the gains indicated. As important as these potential financial increases are for the town residents is the increase in police service that would be available to them. If this merger were to occur then they would have access to a department with fifty-two officers rather than having to share an eighty-four person Sheriff's department with twenty-three other townships throughout the county.

A second possible combined police agency is presented as Model II in Table 6. Described as the "Lakeshore Police Department", it would be created from merging all existing police resources and budgets in northern Chautauqua County. This new agency would be financed by and serve all the localities and townships bordering Lake Erie plus

the Towns of Arkwright, Pomfret and Villenova. The result is a larger department composed of seventy-four officers with access to twenty-seven vehicles. Drawing revenue to finance this department from 13 different localities results in net tax savings to each community that now has a police department and a net increase to those places

**Table 6: Model II- Tax Rate Consequences of Creating a Lakeshore Police Department By Merging All Police Personnel from the Northern Rim of Chautauqua County To Serve Dunkirk City and the Towns of Arkwright, Dunkirk, Hanover, Pomfret, Portland, Ripley, Sheridan, Villenova, and Westfield**

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Local Tax Rate (Current)*</i>	<i>Tax Rate with Merger</i>	<i>Saving (-) Or Addition (+)</i>
Dunkirk-City	\$15.48	\$12.51	- \$2.97
Fredonia	\$ 7.24	\$ 5.65	- \$1.59
Dunkirk-Town	\$ .31	\$ 2.87	+ \$2.56
Pomfret	\$ .66	\$ 4.59	+ \$4.59
Sheridan	\$ .65	\$ 3.32	+ \$2.67
Hanover	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.01	+ \$ .01
Sliver Creek	\$12.71	\$11.38	- \$1.33
Arkwright	\$ .78	\$ 3.54	+ \$2.76
Villenova	\$ 3.53	\$ 6.29	+ \$2.76
Portland	\$ 1.66	\$ 3.95	+ \$2.85
Westfield-Village	\$ 9.14	\$ 7.91	- \$1.23
Westfield-Town	\$ 2.45	\$ 9.93	+ \$4.48
Ripley	\$ 1.90	\$ 4.04	+ \$2.56

\* based upon 100% valuation

The new department would be comprised of 74.5 full-time equivalent officers, assisted by 14 full-time equivalent civilians and with access to 27 vehicles to respond to calls.

Note: If the full cost for police service that is provided to Town residents by the Sheriff's Department were charged only to them, their County property tax would have increased between \$1.74 and \$2.15 for the level of police service in effect at that time.

without a department. However, when compared to Model I, the increase is smaller, and in some cases, it is even less than the potential increase associated with unsubsidized

Sheriff's department costs. Once again, this illustrates the cost effectiveness possibilities that derive from spreading a budget over a larger base.

A third possible model is presented as Model III in Table 7. Referred to as the "Southeast Chautauqua Police Department" it is formed by merging police from Jamestown, Ellicott, Lakewood and Carroll and would serve all those residing in the city

**Table 7: Model III-Tax Rate Consequences of Creating a Southeast Chautauqua Police Department by Merging Police Personnel from Jamestown, Ellicott, And Lakewood-Busti and Serving these Areas plus the Towns of Carroll, Kiantone, and Poland**

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Local Tax Rate (Current)*</i>	<i>Tax Rate with Merger</i>	<i>Saving (-) Or Addition (+)</i>
Jamestown	\$14.49	\$10.76	- \$3.73
Ellicott	\$ 3.06	\$ 5.42	+\$2.36
Lakewood	\$ 6.87	\$ 6.76	- \$ .11
Busti	\$ 2.02	\$ 3.75	+\$1.73
Carroll	\$ 2.30	\$ 6.40	+\$4.10
Poland	\$ .38	\$ 5.55	+\$5.17
Kiantone	\$ .96	\$ 5.12	+\$4.16

\* based on 100% valuation

The new department would be comprised of 100.5 full-time equivalent officers, assisted by 21 full-time equivalent civilians and with access to 40 vehicles to respond to calls.

Note: If the full cost for police service that is provided to Town residents by the Sheriff's Department were charged only to them, their County property tax would have increased between \$1.74 and \$2.15 for the level of police service in effect at that time.

and villages and towns of Ellicott, Busti, Carroll, Poland and Kiantone. It would consist of 100 officers with access to 70 vehicles. In terms of the financing of this department, property owners in Jamestown and the village of Lakewood would have realized some

tax savings and those living in the townships would have experienced tax increases. With this Model residents of the town of Busti would pay for their police service more in proportion to the benefit they now receive. Residents of the towns of Carroll, Poland and Kiantone would have much larger tax liabilities, but also they would have had access to a much larger police department that they would not have had to share with 22 other townships. Unfortunately residents of the town of Ellicott would also have a tax increase. This is ironic given that this town police department is the model of a regional agency that best illustrates the possible value of regional police department's cost effectiveness: that is providing more potential service for less cost. In this instance, town residents would have to decide whether the benefit of access to a much larger police department is greater than the added tax costs.

A possible model organization that would serve the police needs of people residing in the 13 townships in the center and southwest regions of Chautauqua County is presented as Model IV in Table 8. This model relies upon the police functions of the county Sheriff's department to serve what is described as the "Central Chautauqua County Police District." In this model, the police functions of the Sheriff's department now would be devoted to about one half the townships it now covers. As a consequence, those residing in these areas would see increased police presence and reduced response times to calls for assistance. They would also realize an increase in their (and theirs alone) county tax bill of between \$3.35 and \$4.07, depending upon which specific items in the Sheriff's budget would pertain to policing in this district.

**Table 8: Model IV-Tax Rate Consequences of Creating a Central Chautauqua County Police District in which the Sheriff's Department Serves the Indicated Townships**

<i>Municipality (Towns)</i>	<i>County Tax Rate (Current)</i>	<i>County Tax Rate Increase for Police District</i>
Charlotte	\$8.145	\$3.35--\$4.07
Chautauqua	\$8.145	\$3.35--\$4.07
Cherry Creek	\$8.145	\$3.35--\$4.07
Clymer	\$8.145	\$3.35--\$4.07
Ellery	\$8.145	\$3.35--\$4.07
Ellington	\$8.145	\$3.35--\$4.07
French Creek	\$8.145	\$3.35--\$4.07
Gerry	\$8.145	\$3.35--\$4.07
Harmony	\$8.145	\$3.35--\$4.07
Mina	\$8.145	\$3.35--\$4.07
North Harmony	\$8.145	\$3.35--\$4.07
Sherman	\$8.145	\$3.35--\$4.07
Stockton	\$8.145	\$3.35--\$4.07

The county tax increase would be needed for these townships to finance the portion of the Sheriff's Department that provides police service exclusive to those living in these townships. The amount is calculated to be between \$3.35 and \$4.07 depending upon the identification of the specific items in the Sheriff's budget that would pertain to the police resources that provides this service. This service would include a department of 89.5 full time equivalent deputies, 52 full time equivalent civilians, and 51 vehicles to respond to calls.

One last possible model is presented in Table 9. Model V combined all existing police resources into one "County Police Department" either as an expanded Sheriff's department or as a separate police department. Such a department would be financed by county taxes, and, in the years examined, would have resulted in a county tax increase of \$2.59 for all property owners. Some residents, particularly those in the two cities, would see a net savings in their tax liability as their local (city, village) tax rate would decrease more than the county tax rate would increase. No property owner would have experienced a tax increase larger than \$2.59.

**Table 9: Model V-Tax Rate Consequences of Creating a County Police Department by Merging all Police Personnel into a Single Department**

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Savings on Local Tax Rate</i>	<i>Increase in County Tax Rate</i>	<i>Net Saving (-) Or Addition (+)</i>
Dunkirk-City	\$5.63	\$2.59	-\$3.04
Fredonia	\$4.35	\$2.59	-\$1.76
Lakewood	\$3.50	\$2.59	-\$ .91
Jamestown	\$8.65	\$2.59	-\$6.06
Westfield-Village	\$3.97	\$2.59	-\$1.38
Silver Creek	\$4.95	\$2.59	-\$2.36
Ellicott	\$2.42	\$2.59	+\$ .17
Busti	\$1.31	\$2.59	+\$1.28
Hanover	\$1.14	\$2.59	+\$1.45
Ripley	\$ .52	\$2.59	+\$2.07
Dunkirk-Town	\$ .19	\$2.59	+\$2.40
Brocton	\$1.99	\$2.59	+\$ .60
Pomfret	\$ .16	\$2.59	+\$2.53
Sheridan	\$ .10	\$2.59	+\$2.49
Carroll	\$ .68	\$2.59	+\$1.91
Other 19 Townships	---	\$2.59	+\$2.59

The new department would be comprised of 259 full-time equivalent officers, assisted by 87 full-time equivalent civilians and with access to 119 vehicles to respond to calls.

Note: If the full cost for police service that is provided to Town residents by the Sheriff's Department were charged only to them, their County property tax would have increased between \$1.74 and \$2.15 for the level of police service in effect at that time.

The revenue that was collected would have provided a department of 259 full-time equivalent officers, assisted by 87 full-time equivalent civilian staff, and with access to 119 vehicles to respond to calls. Ideally, its officers would be deployed in an equitable manner consistent with public needs throughout the county. Further, the size of this department would allow for the creation of more services and special units to better serve all the residents of Chautauqua County. As importantly, a larger department would

benefit officers themselves. They would have more opportunity for advanced training, for different work experiences, and for advancement in rank.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is important to note that the cost and size estimates of these merged police agencies were made absent any consideration about the possible added costs or savings inherent in each model. One source of additional cost may derive from the inability to “grand-father” existing contracted salary and benefits. In such a case, it could be expected that personnel costs would be “leveled” upward to insure that all officers with the same rank and experience would receive the same economic benefit. Building or renovating physical spaces to serve as public safety centers to house the new departments is another area of possible added cost. However, such expenditures for at least three existing police departments are now being discussed.

Areas of possible savings are also available. For example, merged departments no longer require funding for as many police “chiefs”. It is also possible that, even for enhanced levels of service, it would not be necessary to employ as many officers in the various merged departments. While this appears odd, it has a basis in professional opinion.

Police professionals were asked the following: Do you think a department of seventy officers that is ten times as large as a department of seven officers, would provide ten times as much service potential or more? In each case, the response was there would be more than ten times as much service with the larger department.

Additional savings could also result from the integration, with existing police agencies, of the police functions of the New York State Police. They have not been

discussed earlier because their service is not financed locally. However, they do have a complement of forty-three officers who are stationed in barracks located in Fredonia and Jamestown and at a station in Sherman. According to the Zone Commander a minimum of five cars are on patrol and available for dispatch in Chautauqua County throughout each day. At the present time they are dispatched as a result of a call to the office of the State Police and not through the county dispatch system. This is not the case elsewhere, however. It was reported that the State Police have written agreements with County Sheriff's in other counties to send the "closest car" to calls for assistance regardless of the agency that will respond. This suggests police service to the public, especially response times, can be enhanced through a coordinated police dispatch of all police including State Police to all areas of possible need.

In conclusion, as this is written, the number of police officers who are funded locally is growing smaller. As a result of financial induced reductions last year and this year, the Jamestown Police Department has decreased in size to sixty officers. In addition, their daily patrols per shift have also decreased from 9/10/9 to 4/5/4. Also, the Sheriff's department indicated two deputy (Sergeants) positions would be left unfilled over the next budget year. The situation in the Sheriff's Department is even more serious as the expiration of a grant that funded the domestic violence program has resulted in the loss of two other officers. These reductions have not resulted from proactive planning to provide better police service. These losses are the result of attrition that is forced as a reaction to financial exigency and the inability to continue funding positions when grants expire.

Hopefully, the research reported here could be an impetus for local and county level decision-makers to engage in serious and thoughtful discussion about this necessary public service. By doing so, they have an opportunity to take proactive steps to create more balanced police service for all the residents of the county.

One final note: the creation of regional police departments is becoming more common throughout the United States. One pertinent example is the experience of Charlotte County in Florida. As of the 2000 census, its population size was the same as that in Chautauqua County. However, it only has one municipality – the city of Punta Gorda with 14,000 residents. The remaining population lives on “unincorporated” county land. The Charlotte County Sheriff's Department provides the police service for those living outside the city. In 2000/2001, this department consisted of 233 full time officers, assisted by 124 civilian staff, with access to 280 vehicles, 4 patrol boats, and 4 aircraft, and with nine K-9 dogs. The law enforcement budget for this agency was \$20,330,949. It was funded in part by local property taxes. These police costs were not charged to residents of Punta Gorda, which funds its own police department. In 2000/2001 the property owners in Charlotte County, outside of Punta Gorda, paid 92 cents per \$1000 of their assessed property value for their police service.

Note:

Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 2000. US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Washington, DC: USGPO, 2001