

**CONSOLIDATING POLICE
SERVICES IN WHITESTOWN,
NEW YORK
OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

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December, 2007
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*Research to drive informed decisions.
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CONSOLIDATING POLICE SERVICES IN WHITESTOWN, NEW YORK OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Prepared for:
**Town of Whitestown and the
Villages of New York Mills, Whitesboro, Yorkville and Oriskany**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Center for Governmental Research, Inc. (CGR) was engaged to conduct a study of the Town of Whitestown and the villages of Yorkville, New York Mills, Whitesboro and Oriskany (what we will refer to as the Whitestown Group), to examine the provision of police services within these communities and suggest possible alternatives. The Town Supervisor and the four village mayors signed a letter of cooperation to participate in the study, which was funded by a grant from the Oneida District Attorney.

CGR was not commissioned to make a recommendation about whether or not the Whitestown communities *should* consolidate their police departments. However, the report concludes that the communities *could* consolidate the departments. The report attempts to present a balanced review of both the advantages that could be achieved by consolidating the departments, and potential disadvantages that need to be taken into account. Finally, the report outlines what issues should be addressed and steps that ought to be taken if leaders of the villages and the town choose to pursue consolidation.

Currently, each of these five governments operates and pays for their own separate police department. Leaders of the five governments agreed to participate in the study because, as one village mayor stated “We owe it to the taxpayers to determine if there is a better way to provide these services.” When asked what he meant by “better,” this mayor perfectly summarized the

opinions voiced to CGR by many of the community leaders and police officers we interviewed for this study – “better means either providing the same service at lower costs or better service for the same costs.”

The first major finding, based upon our interviews, is that consolidating police departments has been discussed off and on in the Group over the years, but mostly on an informal basis in response to some specific issue raised in the community. Thus, CGR has written this report to provide, for the first time, a comprehensive presentation of information that can serve as an unbiased, fact-based foundation for discussions within the five communities about how to organize their police services.

In order to understand various options for the villages and town, CGR reviewed all the police consolidations that have occurred in New York State since 1980, and researched in more detail five consolidations that we believe have common elements to issues faced by the Whitestown Group. This review identified three key points relevant to this study:

- Consolidation of the five departments in the Group will be the most complex consolidation in the state to date. The only previous consolidation that involved more than one town and one village occurred in the town of Manlius in 1985, when the three villages in the town agreed to dissolve their departments and merge them into a new town-wide police department.
- Consolidations in other communities only occurred after extensive community debate, which usually took place over several years, and often required several different studies, so that voters understood the range of options and cost and service implications.
- There were several variables that seem to be common to most successful consolidations. Some of the key factors for success included: a) sufficient opportunity within the

communities involved to understand and debate the service, cost and tax implications of the consolidation; b) support by police officers and command staff for the consolidation; and c) support and active leadership to drive the change by key elected officials.

With that as background, this report provides many findings and observations about existing police operations and options for the future. Further, the report outlines key issues that need to be addressed in discussions about consolidation, and recommends suggested next steps if the members of the Group chose to proceed down the path towards consolidation based upon this report.

CGR's key findings about the current departments are:

- There were 52 authorized sworn (professional police officer) positions spread among the five departments in 2006, consisting of 21 full-time and 31 part-time positions¹.
- Operating costs for the five departments totaled \$1,882,227 in FY 2005. After accounting for revenues derived from police activities and grants, net costs of the departments totaled \$1,612,403. Salaries and fringes represented 84.4% of total costs.
- Net police costs represented from 6.7% of the total to 20.8% of all 2005 expenditures for the different villages and the town. Net police costs represented 13.2% of with the total expenditures for all government services for the Group as a whole.

¹ Staffing figures, i.e. number and type of positions, titles and salaries change over the course of a year. The staffing presented in this report is based upon information provided to CGR in the spring and summer of 2007. While actual staffing may have changed somewhat when this report is released, anticipated changes are not expected to significantly alter the relative comparisons, cost and service implications presented in this report.

After reviewing current operations and quantifying the services that are being provided by all the departments (based on calls for service through emergency dispatch, police blotter records, mileage driven, revenue from tickets and fines and extensive interviews), CGR developed a theoretical baseline department staffing model based upon the most widely accepted staffing model². The baseline model, which CGR identifies as Option 1, represents a bare-bones staffing model that meets minimum IACP requirements. The Option 1 model could be staffed by 22 full-time sworn personnel (16 line officers and 6 command staff), 10 part-time officers and 1 civilian administrative assistant. CGR developed a cost estimate for Option 1, which concluded that a consolidated department based upon Option 1 would have a net cost approximately 14% lower than current operations.

CGR also developed a second model, Option 2, which would provide a higher level of service and staffing than the bare-bones model. There are two variations for Option 2. Option 2 A would be Option 1 plus four additional full-time officers. Option 2 A would cost approximately 3% less than current operations. Option 2 B would be Option 2 A plus an additional 5 part-time officers. Option 2 B could be provided at roughly the same cost as current operations.

It is certainly possible to develop any number of staffing options for a consolidated department, or explore different combinations of departments short of consolidating all five departments. CGR designed this report to demonstrate the logic of building alternative models and the associated issues, so that the Group may develop its own models if it chooses.

It is important to note that the two models CGR built appear to be “top heavy” in terms of command staff. This was done in

² Developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). The IACP model is a recognized around the country as standard for developing staffing models.

order to accommodate the fact that each of the four full-time departments has a full-time commander in charge of the department, and that a new single consolidated department might have to accommodate the four incumbents. If a new single department were to be built from the “ground up”, the proposed options would have fewer Deputy Chiefs and would have more sergeants. However, in order to be conservative in projecting initial costs and savings for the single consolidated department model, CGR assumed a higher level of costs based upon having two Deputy Chiefs. Ultimately, if the community gets closer to consolidating departments, it may be possible that current incumbents will make individual decisions that create the opportunity to design a more optimal and less costly command structure.

If the communities decides to proceed with consolidating the departments, some key issues to be addressed include:

- There are likely to be significant one-time transition costs to consolidate the departments. CGR recommends that the Group pursue state grants to offset costs to local taxpayers and provide an incentive to consolidate the departments. An analysis of costs in the five communities who have consolidated departments provides supportive but not conclusive evidence that police costs were lower after the consolidation, so the savings could be used to offset the one-time transition costs if grants did not cover all those costs.
- Key personnel and staffing issues need to be negotiated, such as how to select the Chief and command staff for a consolidated department.
- The report shows how services are likely to be affected by the various options. Ultimately, to reflect the mayor’s statement, the communities are going to have to weigh the relative changes in costs and service for the various options.

After providing detailed staffing, service and cost analyses, CGR summarizes the major advantages and disadvantages of a consolidated department in Section 6. Based on the models presented in the report and interviews with consolidated departments, the major advantages include:

- Increased professionalism resulting from a larger department, with the resultant improvement in police services to the community.
- Increased efficiencies in deployment of police personnel, to more closely match staffing to demand.
- Potential for reducing the cost of police services through more efficient staffing and other operational efficiencies.

Major disadvantages include:

- Perceived loss of local control over police services. This can be addressed through the inter-municipal cooperation agreements that create the consolidated department, and by effective management of the department by the Chief. However, it is clear that a town wide department would no longer serve at the pleasure solely of village leaders.
- Perceived reduction in delivery of services, in particular neighborhood road patrol and other community-policing services. This can be addressed through the inter-municipal cooperation agreements that create the consolidated department, and by effective management of the department by the Chief. To address the service delivery issues, CGR provides a way to estimate how neighborhood road patrol might be affected.
- The potential for costs to increase, especially if the communities have to pay for all or a significant portion of the one-time transition costs. However, the experience in other communities has generally been that consolidations have

reduced or at least helped stabilize costs. In addition, the state is currently supportive of providing financial assistance to communities to encourage inter-municipal consolidations.

In conclusion, if and when the Whitestown Group communities decide to proceed further down the road toward a consolidated police department, CGR recommends that the town and villages appoint a Consolidation Commission. The Commission should include a representative from each of the five municipalities and several volunteers from the community at large. The Commission would be responsible for:

- Addressing all of the consolidation issues identified in this report, including operational, staffing, cost and tax burden issues, and developing a final staffing plan that takes into account actual transition moves needed to accommodate existing staff,
- Developing a plan for consolidating the departments,
- Developing draft inter-municipal cooperation agreements between the villages and the town.

The Commission process should be open and inclusive, because one of the key objectives of that process will be to educate the communities so that citizens can make informed decisions. In the end, it will be up to the village and town boards to decide whether or not to support a consolidated department and dissolve the existing departments, subject to the permissive referendum process.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CGR would like to acknowledge that this report would not have been possible without the unselfish contribution of time and ideas made by many people in this group of villages and the town. Staff and community leaders spent several hundred hours discussing the town and village police operations with CGR and providing assistance in collecting data. We would particularly like to thank the chief elected officers who agreed to participate in this project:: Matt Shannon, Town Supervisor; Robert Maciol, Mayor of New York Mills; Bruno Petrucione, Mayor of Yorkville; Richard Pugh, Mayor of Whitesboro; and Donald Rothdeiner, Mayor of Oriskany, and to the heads of each of the police departments, who helped CGR develop a detailed understanding of their operations and the needs of police services within their communities: Don Wolanin, Chief, Town of Whitestown P.D.; Pat Collea, Officer-In-Charge, Village of Yorkville P.D.; Sean Finn, Chief, Village of Oriskany P.D.; Brad Franklin, Chief, New York Mills P.D.; and Nick Hiffa, Chief, Whitesboro P.D.

Staff Team

This report was researched and written by Charles Zettek Jr., Director of Government Management Services, who was also responsible for directing the project. Additional CGR staff who assisted with research and analysis were Erika Rosenberg, Kate McCloskey, David Landry and Hung Dang. In addition, Michael Carpenter, Founder and Principal of Police Management Services, a police management consulting company, provided invaluable assistance with interviews and in reviewing this report so that it is consistent with state-of-the art thinking about designing effective, efficient police departments.

SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND

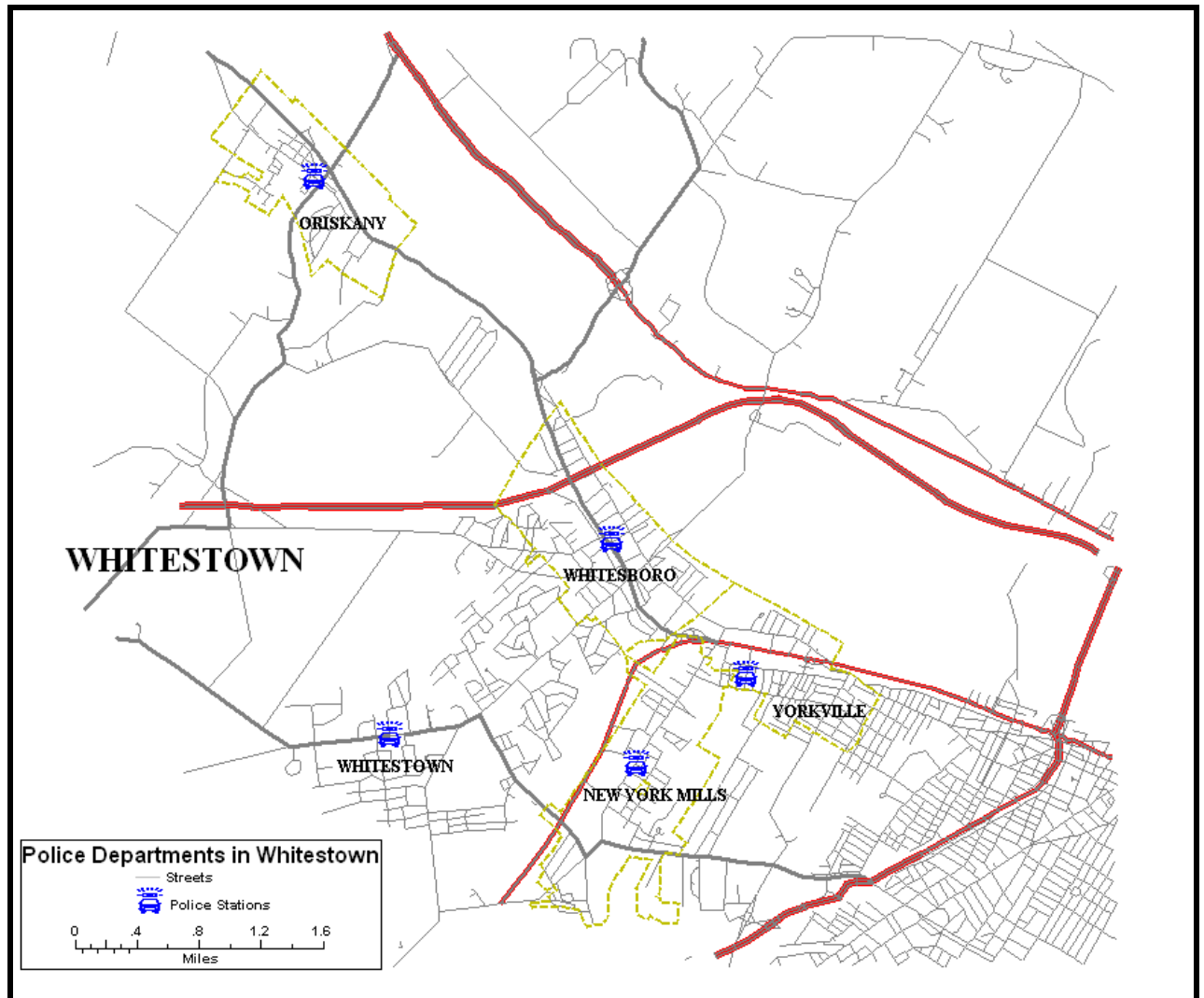
For this study, CGR interviewed over 30 individuals (several a number of times) who provided information and insights into the police departments in the town of Whitestown (which is located just west of Utica) and the villages of Yorkville, New York Mills, Whitesboro and Oriskany and options for the future. CGR also collected extensive information about the communities, the individual police departments, the services they provide and the costs of those services. This report presents what we found through this process. In this section, we provide some general information about the town and villages and their police departments, to set the context for the rest of the report.

Location of the Departments

One of the primary reasons that the five departments in the Group appear to be good candidates for consolidation is their geographic proximity to one another. As shown in MAP 1 on the next page, the four full-service police departments of the villages of Whitesboro, Yorkville and New York Mills and the town of Whitestown³ are located in separate buildings that are within a radius of just over 2 miles of each other. The fifth department included in the study, Oriskany, which is a part-time department, is located just over 3 miles from the closest village department. This is an extraordinarily high density of individual and separate police departments within a small geographic area. What the map does not include is the fact that the Oneida County Sheriff's main headquarters are also located within the town, within two miles of the Oriskany station.

³ For this map, CGR used the new location of the Whitestown police department, at 8539 Clark Mills Road

MAP 1
Location of Police Stations for Departments in the
Town of Whitestown



Basic Department Data TABLE 1-1 provides key summary data about the town and villages, the relative sizes of the police departments, and the relative size of police department expenses as a percentage of total municipal expenses.

	Whitestown ¹	Yorkville	New York Mills ²	Whitesboro	Oriskany	TOTALS
Total Population ¹	18,635	2,675	3,191	3,943	1,459	
Land Area	27.2 Sq. Miles	.7 Sq. Miles	1.1 Sq. Miles	1.1 Sq. Miles	.8 Sq. Miles	
<i>Police Staff³</i>						
Full Time	5	3	6	7		21
Part-Time	9	7	5	2	8	31
Total Muni. Expenses ⁴	\$ 5,440,901	\$ 1,796,568	\$ 1,887,400	\$ 2,267,682	\$ 810,882	\$ 12,203,433
Police Expenses (Net) ⁵	\$ 363,446	\$ 330,730	\$ 367,668	\$ 472,225	\$ 78,314	\$ 1,612,383
Police Net as % of Total	6.7%	18.4%	19.5%	20.8%	9.7%	13.2%

Sources: 2000 Census, Department Data, N.Y.State Comptroller Annual Report detailed database

1. Town of Whitestown includes the Yorkville, Whitesboro and Oriskany populations and part of N.Y. Mills, see Note 2

2. New York Mills is located in two towns - Whitestown and New Hartford. The N.Y. Mills population in Whitestown only is 1,609

3. Authorized Positions in 2006

4. For Fiscal Year 2005

5. Fiscal Year 2005 expenses minus police generated revenues

TABLE 1-2 provides more detailed information about police department expenditures, and shows the relative changes of police department expenditures over the last five years. This Table shows that, from 2001 to 2006, total police expenditures (without allocated fringe benefits as reported by the New York State Office of State Comptroller - OSC) increased 12.3%, on a non-inflation adjusted basis. Comparing 2005 (the last year for which OSC fringe benefit estimates are available) to 2001, the net total cost of the departments increased \$263,186, or 19.5%, not adjusted for inflation.

TABLE 1-2 highlights three major points. First, the table shows that there are significant individual variations in year-to-year expenditure and revenue comparisons. This demonstrates that individual jurisdictions continuously adjust their expenses as needed to reflect municipal budget pressures. Second, while total expenses have grown over time, police revenues remained essentially flat over the same time period. Third, in 2005, personnel costs, including fringes, represented 84.4% of total police department costs.

TABLE 1-2
Whitestown Group - Includes the Town and Four Villages
Police Total Expenditures and Percent Change - 2001 Through 2006

	Total Personnel Without Fringes	Total Equip & Capital	Total Supplies/Goods /Services	Total Without Allocated Fringes	Total With Allocated Fringes ¹	Police Revenues ²	NET TOTAL COST
2001	\$ 1,009,797	\$ 95,858	\$ 162,153	\$ 1,267,808	\$ 1,607,611	\$ 258,394	\$ 1,349,217
2002	\$ 947,764	\$ 102,897	\$ 159,303	\$ 1,209,964	\$ 1,541,377	\$ 273,347	\$ 1,268,030
% Change	-6.1%	7.3%	-1.8%	-4.6%	-4.1%	5.8%	-6.0%
2003	\$ 954,440	\$ 69,431	\$ 175,394	\$ 1,199,265	\$ 1,519,768	\$ 273,740	\$ 1,246,028
% Change	0.7%	-32.5%	10.1%	-0.9%	-1.4%	0.1%	-1.7%
2004	\$ 1,023,617	\$ 121,311	\$ 193,830	\$ 1,338,758	\$ 1,695,579	\$ 206,979	\$ 1,488,600
% Change	7.2%	74.7%	10.5%	11.6%	11.6%	-24.4%	19.5%
2005	\$ 1,180,653	\$ 92,555	\$ 200,428	\$ 1,473,636	\$ 1,882,227	\$ 269,824	\$ 1,612,403
% Change	15.3%	-23.7%	3.4%	3.4%	11.0%	30.4%	8.3%
2006	\$ 1,183,014	\$ 73,131	\$ 167,212	\$ 1,423,357	OSC data N.A.	OSC data N.A.	N.A.
% Change	0.2%	-21.0%	-16.6%	-3.4%	-3.9%		
% Change 2001 to 2006	17.2%	-23.7%	3.1%	12.3%	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

Source: N.Y.State Comptroller Annual Report detailed databased. Data are not adjusted for inflation.

1. As shown in N.Y. State Comptroller Annual Reports

2. From N.Y.State Comptroller Annual Report detailed database based on revenue codes 1520,1589,2610,2260,3389,4320, 4389

SECTION 2 – SERVICES PROVIDED

In order for the town and village communities, separately and together, to decide whether they want to change the organizational model for delivering police services, it is important to have a fact-based understanding of what police services are *currently* being provided, and how those services might be affected by different models.

It is impossible to accurately measure and quantify *all* activities and services provided by police officers, and, as a consequence, it is impossible to develop comprehensive set of quantifiable indicators of the benefits of a police department.

This is partly due to the fact that many benefits are *perceived* by members of the community, but perceptions often vary among people. For example, as one mayor stated, “citizens of our community see a police car drive by their street two or three times

per day, and this reinforces the perception that we have a safe community.” This one statement illustrates the challenge created when facts and perceptions are combined in creating expectations. For example, it would be possible to establish a fact about how many times a police car drives down a street, for example, by tracking where cars are by using Global Positioning System (GPS) technology. However, it is not so easy to determine what residents mean when they talk about a “safe” community. Through a citizen survey, it might be possible to determine how many times a police car needs to be seen in order for the average citizen to “feel” safe. However, in the absence of a community perception survey, (which does not currently exist for any of the communities in the Whitestown Group) a researcher does not know whether or not citizens would feel “safe” if they saw a police car drive by once a day, or three times, or “x” times per day. This is an example of the difficulty in trying to measure the police services being provided and the relationship of those services to what the community wants and is willing to pay for.

Thus, this report, like all studies of complex police services, has to be based on information that includes facts but also takes into account perceptions. In the final analysis, there is no theoretically “best” way to organize and manage police services in a community. The “best” way is community specific, that is, elected community leaders and police command professionals have to try to find the right solution that meets the needs and expectations of each community with the desire and ability to pay for police services.

Neither towns nor villages are required by state law to have police departments. There are many towns and villages in Oneida County and throughout the state that rely solely on the County Sheriff and State Police to provide routine police services in their jurisdictions. As shown in TABLE 1-2, over the last five years, the communities in the Group spent between \$1.5 million and \$1.8 million per year in total for police services, over and above what

taxpayers already pay for County Sheriff and State Police services through county and state taxes.

What police services are taxpayers and members of the communities in the town and four villages receiving for the dollars spent? The Group is currently paying for full and part-time professional police command staff and officers, along with related support costs for equipment, supplies, and services, to provide full service 24/7/365 police coverage in the town and three villages, and for day and evening shift coverage in Oriskany. The services provided by professional police staff to the communities can be grouped into three categories that are generally accepted to describe police work.

Re-active Work – Responding to Calls for Service

Police are law enforcement officers, thus, their primary responsibility within a community is to enforce laws. While some law enforcement activities are self-initiated by officers (for example, enforcing vehicle and traffic laws), much police activity is reactive, that is, officers respond to calls for service from members of the community. Calls for service can come either through a 911 or central dispatch system, or, if a department has a central telephone number, through direct calls to the department. All five departments have a department direct call line that is monitored during normal business hours, and switched over to a central dispatch system after hours. The central dispatch system for the town and villages of Yorkville, Whitesboro and Oriskany is the Oneida County Emergency Services operation (911). The central dispatch system for New York Mills is the Town of New Hartford Central Dispatch Center. Calls made to 911 from New York Mills are forwarded from Oneida County Emergency Services to the New Hartford Dispatch Center for calls that originate from that part of the village that is not in the Town of Whitestown.

Because central dispatch systems are responsible for directing rapid response to calls for service (CFS) by the appropriate public safety agency (police, fire or emergency medical service), central dispatch systems utilize sophisticated dispatch software which tracks and records public safety response activity. Thus, data exist

that can be used to identify CFS activity, i.e. type of calls, date and time of calls, etc., and who is dispatched to service those calls.

Call for Service (CFS) Activity

CGR obtained detailed CFS data for one year from Oneida County Emergency Services, and summary CFS data for New York Mills from the New Hartford Dispatch Center. TABLE 2-1 shows the number of calls for service for each department coming through and tracked by central dispatch (911). All serious calls for assistance are tracked by the 911 calls for service, as well as other calls for assistance that are made to the police department numbers that are forwarded to central dispatch after hours. CFS numbers also include incidents when police officers call in for self-initiated activities that should be logged into the system.

TABLE 2-1					
911 Calls for Service over One Year - 8/1/05 - 7/31/06					
WHITESTOWN	YORKVILLE	NY MILLS¹	WHITESBORO	ORISKANY	TOTAL
944	1,257	1,303	1,467	273	5,244

Source - Oneida County Emergency Services and New Hartford Central Dispatch Center for New York Mills

Note 1 - Inferred by CGR from 2005 data for 1/1/05 - 12/31/05

CFS numbers are the basis for determining the number of police officers that should be on duty to be able to respond to calls within expected time frames. Thus, CFS numbers are a critical source of data used to describe services needed from and provided by police officers. As such, CFS numbers are a primary indicator of demand for police services.

Calls for service can be plotted per hour, per day, or per month. Plotting CFS in these ways can show changes in demand. Effective management of police services takes into account changes in demand and adjusts resources as needed to meet these demands.

Total Police Incidents Activity

In many central or large police departments, all police calls for service, and all directed officer activities are handled by central dispatch operations and recorded in the CFS records. However, in

smaller police operations, CFS records do not necessarily capture all directed officer activities, and this is the case for all five departments in the Whitestown Group. Each department maintains a daily activity log (sometimes referred to as the blotter), which serves as the official department record of any police activities carried out by officers that should be recorded, in accordance with departmental policy. All responses to 911 CFS are included in the daily logs, however, additional activities are also recorded. These can be responses to citizen complaints, other requests for service and officer initiated actions which do not come through central dispatch. The activities recorded in the department activity logs will be referred to as police incidents.

In discussing how to measure department activities with the command staff in each department, there was complete agreement that daily logs are a more accurate indicator of call for service demand. Thus, CGR counted the daily log entries (as recorded in the blotter or in computer entries) for the different departments. CGR found that the number of department log entries ranged from 27% to 92% higher than the CFS numbers shown in TABLE 2-1. Using a weighted average to adjust for department size, CGR concluded that a more accurate measure of total police incidents responded to by the departments would be to adjust the 911 numbers shown in TABLE 2-1 upward by 70%. Using a multiplier of 1.7 to make this upward adjustment, CGR concludes that there are approximately 8,900 incidents per year responded to by police departments in the Group⁴.

Police Incidents Activity Patterns

CGR used the 911 CFS data for one year provided by Oneida County Emergency Services, adjusted upward by 25% to add in

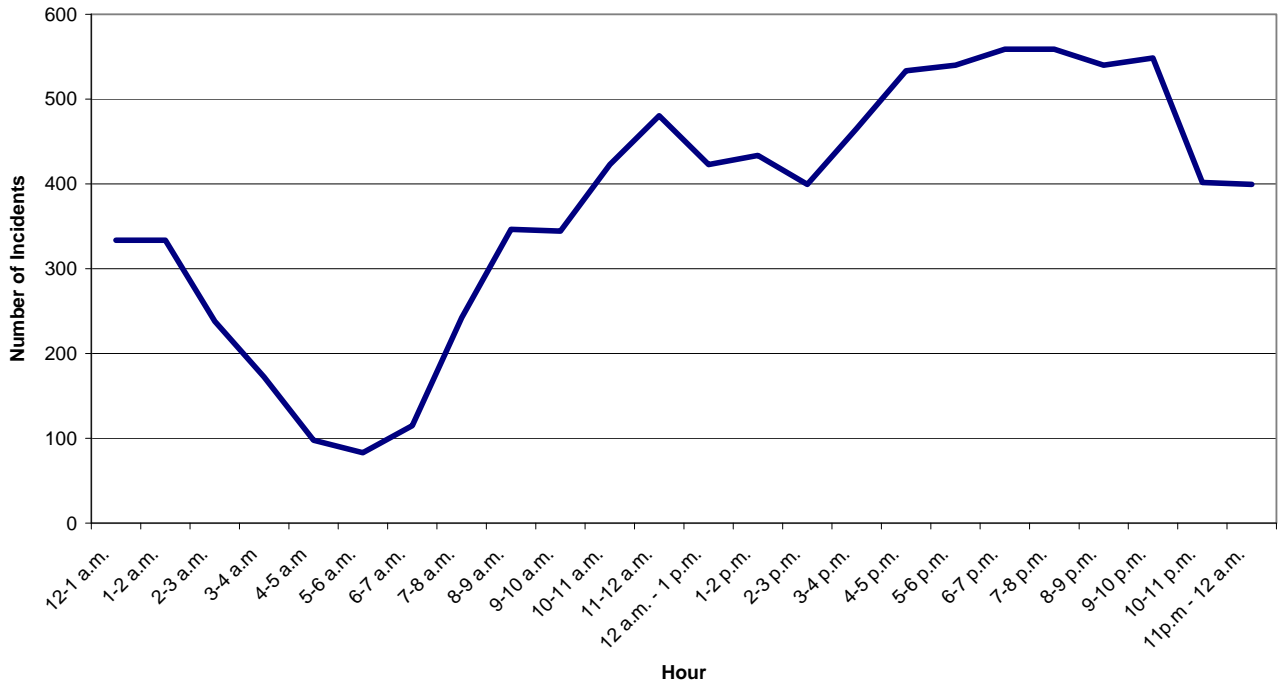
⁴ This does not include the number of incidents responded to within the town and villages by County Sheriff deputies and State Police officers. In 2005, per County Sheriff data, sheriff deputies responded to 943 calls from within the Group area. A 2001 study by the County Sheriff found that State Police calls equaled approximately 5% of total calls from the Group. Projecting this to 2005, CGR estimates that State Police responded to approximately 300 calls from within the Group area.

New York Mills activities⁵, then adjusted upward by 70% to account for total activities recorded in the department logs. This information was used to develop the following graphs, which show changes in demand per hour, per day and per month.

GRAPH 2-1 shows the incidents per hour, over the course of a day for 12 months. This graph clearly shows that demand drops off rapidly after 1 a.m. to a low in the early morning hours, then gradually increases during the day with the day peak occurring roughly between 4 p.m. and 10 p.m. At the low point of the day, between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m., there were 83 incidents over the course of the entire year, in total, for the five departments. That means, on average, there was one incident in that time period every four days, in total, for the town and four villages. At the highest point, between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m., there were 558 incidents for the entire year, or an average of 1.5 incidents per day.

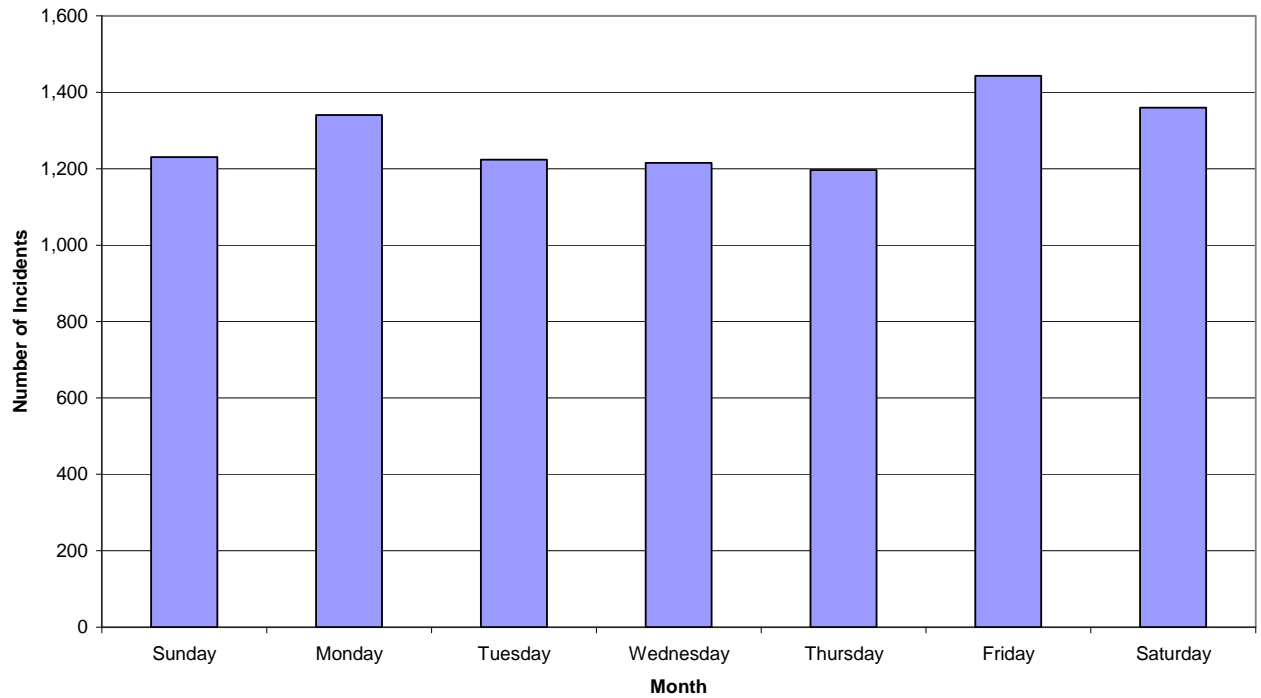
⁵ Since CFS data for New York Mills was not available from New Hartford Central Dispatch in hour and day increments, CGR also adjusted the hour, day and month figures provided by Oneida County Emergency Services upward by 25%. Although this applied a flat percentage increase for all hours and days, CGR believes this is reasonable as the activity patterns in New York Mills are likely to be similar to those in the immediately adjacent villages of Yorkville and Whitesboro.

GRAPH 2-1
INCIDENT DEMAND PER YEAR BY HOUR OF THE DAY
Whitestown Group - Includes the Town and Four Villages
Number of Incidents - 8/1/05 to 7/31/06



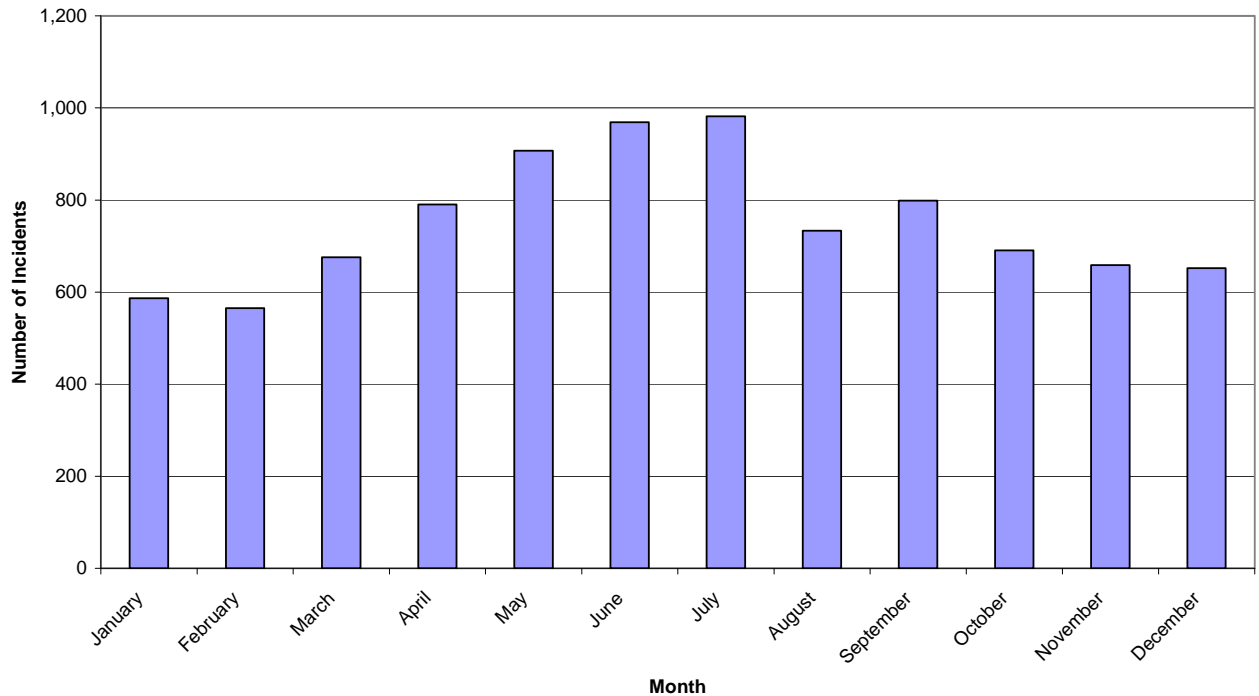
GRAPH 2-2 shows the demand for service (incidents) by days of week, over the course of a year. This graph shows that the highest day, as might be expected, was Friday, with the middle of the week having the lowest demand. 1,443 incidents occurred on Friday over the course of the year, or on average about 29 per day.

GRAPH 2-2
INCIDENT DEMAND PER YEAR BY DAY OF THE WEEK
Whitestown Group - Includes the Town and Four Villages
Police Incident Demand per Day - 8/1/05 to 7/31/06



GRAPH 2-3 shows the changes in demand for services by month over a year. The variation across the months could be expected, as the summer months see more activity within communities. However, the range of difference might be surprising, with the high in July of 962 incidents (31 per day on average) being 70% higher than the low of February (565, or 20 per day on average).

GRAPH 2-3
INCIDENT DEMAND PER MONTH
Whitestown Group - Includes the Town and Four Villages
Police Incident Demand per Month - 8/1/05 to 7/31/06



In summary, these graphs illustrate how demand for police services driven by calls for service, or incidents, fluctuates over the course of a day, day of week and month. Police department staffing resources are most efficiently used when staffing patterns are consistent with demand for service patterns.

*Type of
Incident/Intensity Data
is Missing*

The number of incidents listed above is based on a count of all incidents, per the data available. However, it is important to recognize that the tables shown above do not account for the type of incident. Thus, CGR could not plot demand based on intensity of the incidents. Intensity is another and important variable that should be factored into staffing plans. For example, domestic calls or calls to respond to fights or crimes in progress require a response from multiple officers. In a complete analysis of incidents demand, calls for service would be plotted based upon a weighting to account for intensity of demand. However, CGR was unable to obtain the type of calls for service by time of day or date. Based on other police studies, higher intensity incidents occur primarily during the evening shift, and on Friday and Saturday nights. Thus, although CGR could not plot the actual data to account for intensity, we will account for intensity when developing a proposed staffing plan.

**Pro-Active Work –
Community
Policing**

Fortunately, in most communities, police do *not* spend the majority of their time responding to calls for service. The presence of police in a community is intended to discourage and/or deter illegal or unsafe activity before it happens. Police patrol work is usually referred to as pro-active, or community policing work. Typically included within routine patrol work are activities such as traffic stops and other activities such as checking out suspicious behavior. Community policing also includes not only time spent on patrol, but also other assistance officers provide in the community. Examples are officer time spent in schools in the DARE program, providing traffic control for community events, providing police presence around schools at the start and end of the day, general premises checks, and attending community meetings.

The optimal size of a police force takes into account the amount of time officers spend on patrol doing community policing. A generally recognized target for suburban police departments is to have a balance of 30% of officer time spent on reactive work (i.e. responding to incidents), and 70% of officer time spent on patrol/community policing work. However, these ratios vary depending on a community's ability to pay for police services and the demand for services. Rural communities covered by a periodic sheriff or state police patrol car receive a low level of community policing. Highly urbanized areas, where officers are constantly reacting to calls for service, also have lower levels of community policing. In one study for a major city, CGR found that officers spent 85% of their time on reactive services and 15% on community policing. That city recognized that this ratio was out-of-balance, and has subsequently hired more officers to create more pro-active time for community policing.

Records for the five departments did not have enough detail for CGR to determine how much time is spent by officers on pro-active community policing. However, as shown in Section 3, CGR can infer that, except at those times where calls for service peak, patrol officers in every department in the Group spend substantially more time on pro-active community police work than they do re-acting to calls for service.

*Each mile is patrolled
on average 6.2 times
per day*

One measure that indicates the amount of pro-active community patrol work done by the departments is the mileage driven by police vehicles in the five departments. According to year-end totals provided by the departments, police vehicles drive approximately 335,000 miles per year, or an average of 941 miles per 24 hours, every day of the year. Assuming that some of the miles driven were undoubtedly outside of the town and village limits (since department records do not have that detail, CGR assumes 5%), that still means that an estimated 318,000 miles were driven on town and village roads.

Based on current Geographic Information System (GIS) maps, there are approximately 140 center lane miles of roads total in the

town and four villages. Dividing 318,000 miles driven by 140 miles of road means that, on average, each mile of road is driven 2,270 times per year, or on average 6.2 times per day, or once every four hours, which is about twice per shift. This provides factual evidence to support the statement that “citizens of our community see a police car drive by their street two or three times per day.” It should be noted that this is an average number – undoubtedly some heavily traveled streets will have police cars passing by many more times than once every four hours. But, it is an indication that the streets in the Group are heavily patrolled.

*Traffic tickets
generated over
\$200,000 in 2005*

Another indicator of pro-active police department activities are vehicle and traffic stops, which generate fines payable to the issuing jurisdiction. Based on a report from the State Department of Motor Vehicles, the departments in the Group issued 4,599 traffic tickets in 2004, ranging from a low of 311 tickets issued by Oriskany to a high of 3,125 issued by New York Mills. Total traffic ticket and fines revenue collected by the town and villages totaled \$201,276 in FY 2005. Thus, issuance of traffic tickets is a significant component of police work in the Group, and an important revenue generator for the town and villages.

**Administrative/
Other Work**

A third general category of police work is described as administrative or other work. Typically, command staff of police departments devote a substantial amount of time to paperwork, budget and personnel matters, including filing of reports to other governmental agencies. However, sometimes, this work is prepared by officers, which reduces the time they can be on patrol. Officers and command staff also spend time on serving warrants, doing investigations, attending court proceedings, attending training, and other police related activities. None of the departments in the Group have civilian staff assigned to them to assist with administrative work, but staff in other departments (principally the town and village Clerks) do provide assistance where possible.

SECTION 3 – STAFFING MODELS

Personnel costs represented over 84% of total police costs for the Group in 2005, as noted in Section 1. Therefore, the key for evaluating any different models for providing police services within the Group will be to address police staffing. In this Section, CGR will describe how the departments are currently staffed, including both the number of personnel and the command structure in each department, and will then evaluate options for staffing based upon currently accepted police staffing models. The cost implications for these options will be presented in Section 4.

Current Staffing

Identifying current actual staffing in each department proved to be a challenge, because different sources for this information provided different information. This is partly due to the fact that departments routinely experience turnover of personnel, and therefore a static one-time snap-shot of staff does not necessarily reflect total staffing patterns expected over the course of a year. We found, for example, that in some departments, the number of people who were on the payroll sometime during 2006 exceeded the number of authorized positions, which made sense due to employee turnover. Also, figures reported to the New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) for the DCJS Annual Report did not correspond with the number of positions reported by each department during CGR's interviews. Last, we are aware that the Town authorized an additional full-time position in its 2007 budget, which did not show up in 2006 figures.

Authorized Positions

To settle on one standard measure for comparisons, CGR will report staffing based on authorized positions as reported by each department in 2006, which are shown in TABLE 3-1.

TABLE 3-1		
Police Department Staffing		
Professional Police Officers		
Authorized Positions for 2006		
	Full-Time	Part-Time
Whitestown	5	9
Yorkville	3	7
N Y Mills	6	5
Whitesboro	7	2
Oriskany	0	8
TOTAL	21	31

Source: Department data

Notes:

1. There are no civilian positions in any departments
2. Does not include the additional full-time position in Whitestown effective 1/1/07

TABLE 3-1 highlights an important factor in how police services are provided by the five departments in the Group, which is that there are substantially more part-time officers than full-time officers. Only two of the departments have more authorized full-time positions than part-time positions.

This has some important implications. For example, use of part-time officers, paid an hourly rate on an as-scheduled basis, is typically more cost effective than full-time officers, especially if the municipality does not have to provide the same benefits as for full-time officers. However, the police profession generally considers that part-time officers should only be used to supplement full-time staff, not the other way around. Full-time career staff provide more continuity to a department, and because they are full-time employees, departments will make the investment to train and promote them.

Another important factor within this Group is that there is a significant amount of overlap in personnel between departments because of the high number of part-time positions. In reviewing actual personnel rosters for each department for 2006, CGR found

that 7 of the people who worked full-time in one department worked part-time in another of the departments in the Group, and there were 3 officers who worked part-time in two different departments in the Group. Thus, although there were 31 part-time positions in total, these were actually filled by only 21 different people. In effect, from the perspective of the Group as a whole, there were 21 different full-time people and 21 different part-time people employed at one-time or another by the various departments.

Authorized Titles

Current department staffing by title is shown in TABLE 3-2. This table illustrates two different command models used in the departments. Three departments employ full-time Chiefs. The other two departments are commanded by officers-in-charge. The three sergeants in the Group are the only other officer positions. 44 out of the total of 52 authorized positions are patrol officer titles.

TABLE 3-2						
Police Department Staffing by Title						
Professional Police Officers						
Authorized Positions for 2006						
	Full Time Chief of Police	Full Time Officer in Charge	Full Time Sergeant	Full-Time Officers	Part Time Officer in Charge	Part-Time Officers
Whitestown	1			4		9
Yorkville		1		2		7
N Y Mills	1		1	4		5
Whitesboro	1		2	4		2
Oriskany					1	7
TOTAL	3	1	3	14	1	30

Source: Department data

Summary Comments

When viewed as individual and independent departments, each department is run and organized in an efficient manner, with minimum staffing needed to meet the needs of each individual community. However, when the individual departments are viewed from the point of view of being organized as a single consolidated department, the current organization is flawed. Large professional police departments rarely have such an

imbalance of part-time to full-time staff, the command structure would be organized differently, and the department would have at least one detective and/or investigator on staff. The consolidation model presented below will address each of these points.

Theoretical Staffing Model Based on IACP Formula

An exact means for determining the optimum number of officers to be allocated to the law enforcement function has yet to be developed. Among the reasons for this is the fact that no precise method exists for determining the optimum number of staff-hours necessary for preventive patrol coverage and community policing as compared with the personnel necessary to respond to calls for service, handle investigations and conduct the administrative and other duties described in Section 2. However, in order to provide a guideline for determining minimum staffing requirements for professional police departments, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) developed a staffing formula in the 1970's which has historically been used to develop baseline staffing recommendations. The New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) follows the IACP guidelines when conducting its analyses of police departments. While there are other models for determining the appropriate size of a police force, these are not as universally accepted as the IACP model.

CGR will illustrate how the IACP formula would be used to develop a staffing model for a single consolidated police department that covered the town and the four villages in the Group. However, CGR believes that the standard formula needs to be adjusted to account for variables that are specific to the Group. Thus, later in this section, CGR will develop an alternative staffing model to better reflect what we know about the needs of the communities.

Staffing requirements in the IACP formula are calculated in three steps. The first step is to identify the number of posts required. The second step is to identify how many actual officers it takes to staff a post. Once that is done, the specific staffing requirements can be calculated.

Two variables largely determine the number of officers necessary to staff the patrol force adequately: 1) the number of calls for service for a given period of time (from which the number of patrol posts can be identified); and 2) the average length of time that each officer is available for duty on a yearly basis.

Identifying the Number of Patrol Posts

Utilizing the IACP formula, the following steps are taken:

1. The total calls for service for each tour of duty (shift) are obtained for the previous year. A call for service should not be limited to an initial complaint in the department's record system. Rather, it should include any instance in which an officer provides service, initiates activity (for example, makes a traffic stop) or spends time either following-up on an initial call or assisting another officer or agency with a call. The total calls for service should include initial calls, follow-up calls, assists, all traffic stops and multiple unit responses. Given what data are available within the Group, CGR will use Police Incidents (discussed in Section 2) as the best available indicator of calls for service within the Group.
2. The 12-month total of calls for service is multiplied by the average time required to respond to a call for service and complete the preliminary investigation. This provides the number of hours per year spent in handling calls for service. Data from central dispatch records, and most of the data recorded in the daily logs within each department do not provide length of call information. However, CGR took a sample of 141 service calls from department records over the course of a year where both the start and end of call information was provided. The average call in that sample lasted 35 minutes. CGR will use a conservative estimate (which is weighed in favor of requiring more police coverage) and assume that the average length of time spent on a call for service in the Group is 40 minutes. This is consistent with a range that CGR has found in other studies, which varies from 30 minutes to 50 minutes.

It should be noted that this “average time spent on calls” may seem high. However, a routine traffic ticket may only take a few

minutes to clear, yet some incidences take many hours to complete. The time spent on calls is further affected the increasing mandates under which police departments must operate. For example, the pro-arrest policy for responding to domestic violence complaints means that for every response, someone must be arrested. Prior to this policy becoming a standard, some domestic complaints could be resolved in several minutes by merely driving one party involved to another location. Now, a pro-arrest policy means that an officer usually spends several hours processing an arrest.

3. The hours per year in calls for service are multiplied by three. This number is a "buffer" factor to account for the time spent on preventive patrol, directed patrol, inspectional services, report writing, vehicle servicing, personal needs, etc. This step provides the total patrol hours.

The "buffer factor" or uncommitted time is essential in policing for several reasons, including providing for proactive crime-deterrent patrols, officer-initiated activities and other community policing activities. Uncommitted time is also essential for administrative functions such as report writing, vehicle servicing, meals, agency meetings, court time and training.

4. The total hours are then divided by 2,920, which is the number of hours necessary to staff one post on one 8-hour shift for one year (8 hour shift x 365 days a year = 2,920). The quotient equals the minimum number of patrol posts needed for the particular tour of duty. The minimum post hours needed are rounded up to the nearest whole number, since, for calculation purposes, this formula assumes a full time equivalent (FTE) position in order to provide continuous coverage.

*Applying the Formula
to the Group as a
Whole*

While this formula could be applied to each of the individual departments, this report is intended to evaluate the potential for consolidating the departments. Therefore, CGR will apply the model treating the departments altogether as the Group. The next step in the analysis is to apply the formula just described utilizing

twelve months of calls for service data. CGR will use the data provided in Section 2. The data were analyzed and grouped into the eight (8) hour blocks that correspond with the standard A,B and C shift assignments common throughout the Group.

TABLE 3-3 summarizes the various calculations used to develop the number of posts needed. As shown in TABLE 3-3, according to the IACP formula, to provide adequate coverage to meet current demand for service, the Group, as a whole, should have 3 officers on patrol during the day and evening shifts, and 2 officers on patrol during the night shift.

TABLE 3-3		
Whitestown Group Staffing Calculation per FORMULA		
Based on Annual Calls for Service = Police Incidents		
	Calls for Service	% of Total
Day Shift 7-3	3,092	34%
Evening 3-11	4,146	46%
Night 11-7	1,772	20%
TOTAL	9,010	
Approx Time Expended = calls x .66 hrs		
	Calls for Service	Approx Time in hours
Day Shift 7-3	3,092	2,041
Evening 3-11	4,146	2,736
Night 11-7	1,772	1,170
Projected Time Expended = Approx Time x 3		
		Proj Time in Hours
Day Shift 7-3		6,122
Evening 3-11		8,209
Night 11-7		3,509
Minimum Posts Needed - Proj Time/2920 hours		
	Min Post Needed	Rounded Up
Day Shift 7-3	2.10	3
Evening 3-11	2.81	3
Night 11-7	1.20	2

In order to staff a post every day of the year, it is necessary to adjust for the fact that each individual full-time officer is available

to work for less than the 2,920 hours required per year to man a post. While in theory an officer who works 40 hours per week times 52 weeks would be on duty 2,080 hours, in actual practice, after deducting time off for vacation, personal, sick time, holidays, and other duty time not available for patrol activities, such as for training, court time, etc., officers in most departments typically are available for actual duty for between 1,500 and 1,600 hours per year. After having reviewed a sample of payroll records, and contractual time-off provisions for departments in the group, CGR believes it is reasonable to assume that officers in the various departments in the Group work 1,500 to 1,600 hours per year, on average. Given this range, the number of actual employees required to fill these posts, rounded to the nearest whole person, would be as shown in TABLE 3-4.

TABLE 3-4			
Total Number of Patrol Officers Needed Per IACP Formula			
	Min Posts Needed	Rounded Up	Total Number of Positions Needed
Day Shift 7-3	2.10	3	6
Evening 3-11	2.81	3	6
Night 11-7	1.20	2	4
TOTAL OFFICER POSITIONS NEEDED			16

Minimum Baseline Staffing for the Whitestown Group

TABLE 3-4 shows that, per the IACP formula, a police force of 16 full-time patrol officers would be sufficient to provide a minimum baseline coverage to the town and the four villages that meets the current level of police incidents along with a standard buffer for patrol, community policing and other administrative work. The 16 officers calculation does *not* include command staff, although some departments, in order to improve efficiency, do assign command staff some patrol activity.

Full Time Staffing

Since, per TABLE 3-1, the departments in the Group had 21 full-time staff authorized in 2006 (and the additional town position increased that number to 22 positions in 2007), a single consolidated police department could conceivably be designed

around the concept of 16 full-time patrol officers, a detective/investigator, three shift supervisors and a Chief, which would total 21 full-time staff. This would still leave one position which could either be filled (to provide more coverage) or abolished (to save costs).

Part Time Staffing

According to the IACP formula calculation, baseline police coverage could be provided by a full-time staff of 21 police professionals, which matches the current number of authorized positions. However, the departments also currently employ 31 part-time officers (one being a part-time Officer-In-Charge). Some or all of these positions could be used to supplement the minimum baseline staffing. Although it may be possible to reduce the number of part-time positions, CGR assumes that a minimum of 10 part-time positions would still be retained under a consolidated department.

CGR assumes that the Chief of a new consolidated department would want to use some part-time officers to supplement the full-time staff, in three ways.

First, part-time staff could be used, as they are currently used, to provide supplemental officers on the street during high activity time periods, such as the evening shift on Friday and Saturday. The incident activity graphs shown in Section 2 can be used to identify when supplemental officers would be most useful. Part-time officers can also be used to assure continuous baseline coverage during peak vacation periods and other times.

Second, CGR believes that the IACP formula does not adequately address the fact that the town covers a very large area (27.2 square miles), which presents a coverage challenge for rapid response capabilities. Three patrol officers may be sufficient minimum base during the day shift, because they can be supplemented by the Chief or other command staff. However, during the night shift, CGR assumes that the Chief would want to have three patrol cars on duty, so that at any time, if two cars are required to respond to an incident, a third car is available to cover a second incident, or

continue with routine patrol. The third night patrol car could be covered with part-time officers.

Third, in order to meet the service expectations of the villages, which have become accustomed to a high level of community policing, part-time officers could be assigned to special duty in villages to meet those needs. For example, one mayor noted that it is critical to have a police presence around the high school when school is starting in the morning and letting out in the afternoon. It would be a perfect use of part-time officers to provide that type of extra service that meets routine, predictable needs that are temporary or seasonal in nature.

Option 1 – Bare Bones Baseline

Based on the IACP formula, a town wide consolidated police department could be created which would provide what CGR will refer to as Option 1 – Bare Bones baseline. In order to provide a minimum functional department, CGR assumes the department would have 22 full-time sworn positions, 10 part-time sworn positions, and a new civilian position – and administrative clerk. The administrative clerk would free up sworn staff for patrol work.

The position titles shown in Option 1 reflect the fact that the transition from the existing departments to a consolidated department would have to allow the transition of existing command staff into positions with pay equivalent to what they are currently receiving, per civil service law that governs police department consolidations. Therefore, CGR assumes that two of the three Police Chief titles will transition into Deputy Chief titles, although these could also become captain or lieutenant titles.

CGR acknowledges that the proposed staffing for Option 1 (and the Option 2 model which follows) is “top-heavy”, and that a better model would have fewer high level staff and more front-line supervisors (sergeants). However, we believe that it is more fiscally conservative to budget for the higher level command positions at this time, until it is clear how current incumbents will be transitioned into a consolidated department. Clearly, the higher

level command staff can be scheduled to provide around-the-clock supervisory coverage. The model, as proposed, is simply not as cost-effective as it could be if the supervisory positions were lower rank positions. A more detailed discussion of the transition issues from current staffing to staffing in a consolidated department will be presented in Section 5.

TABLE 3-5 summarizes the proposed number of positions, by title, for Option 1.

TABLE 3-5 Option 1 - Bare Bones Baseline Proposed Staffing	
Title	Proposed Number of Positions
Chief	1
Deputy Chief	2
Investigator	1
Sergeant	2
Officer	16
<i>Total F.T. Sworn</i>	<i>22</i>
Admin Asst.	1
<i>Total Civilian</i>	<i>1</i>
Total Full Time	23
Total Part-Time Sworn	10

Other Options to Consider

Although Option 1 provides staffing sufficient to meet IACP standards, several command officers CGR interviewed during this project believe that the bare-bones option would not permit a consolidated department to adequately cover demand for police, especially during high peak times such as evenings and weekends, even taking into account the fact that the County Sheriff and State Police provide first-in response and/or back-up coverage to approximately 15% of the 911 calls for service within the Group. Thus, to give the Chief of the new consolidated department more

flexibility to respond to the needs of the community, CGR suggests consideration of an Option 2 model. This would add four additional full time officers to the Option 1 model. This would permit the Chief to add two officers to the evening shift, for example, or perhaps assign them to a fourth platoon that would overlap the evening and night shifts. There are two possible variations of Option 2, both of which can be accomplished without exceeding the cost of current operations, as described in detail in Section 4. Option 2 A assumes the addition of four full-time officers to Option 1. Option 2 B would add an additional five part-time officers to Option 2 A. TABLE 3-6 shows the staffing of these two options.

TABLE 3-6		
Option 2 - Enhanced Staffing		
	Option 2 A - Proposed Number of Positions	Option 2 B - Proposed Number of
Title		
Chief	1	1
Deputy Chief	2	2
Investigator	1	1
Sergeant	2	2
Officer	20	20
<i>Total F.T. Sworn</i>	26	26
Admin Asst.	1	1
<i>Total Civilian</i>	1	1
Total Full Time	27	27
Total Part-Time Sworn	10	15

If the consolidated department were staffed under Option 2 A, and assuming the additional full-time officers were assigned to the evening shift, the number of full-time sworn staff available during each shift would be as shown on TABLE 3-7. Clearly, actual staffing decisions are going to be the prerogative of the Chief, given the needs of meeting demands within the community. However, TABLE 3-7 presents a reasonable example of how the department might be staffed. This pattern closely matches demand patterns shown in Section 2, while having enough

additional staff on duty at any given time to meet all but the most unusual peak demand requirements within the town.

	Number of F-T Officers On Duty	Number Command Staff on Duty	Total F-T Sworn Staff on Duty	Supplemental P-T Staff
Day Shift 7-3	3	1	4	3
Evening Shift 3-11	5	1	6	2
Night Shift 11-7	2	1	3	1

How Does Option 2 A Match Demand?

One potential criticism with the Option 2 A model is that it still does not provide sufficient staffing to meet potential peak demand across the various village communities in the town. In order to address this criticism, CGR analyzed hour-by-hour, day-by-day 911 data for two months selected at random in 2006 – March and June. These represent two different seasons, and thus provide a reasonable cross-section of the range of demand likely to be incurred across a year.

TABLE 3-8 shows the results of that analysis for March, 2006. The table contains the following information. First, the number of sworn officers on duty is based on the staffing for Option 2 A shown in TABLE 3-7, and assumes that part-time officers are included to supplement the full-time staff during the day and at peak hours. Second, the top row shows the number of police events that occurred during any one-hour block, using the rounding-up methodology described in Section 2 to properly adjust for the fact that 911 data does not account for all police events counted on the blotters. Third, the main body of the table shows how many times the identified number of police incidents occurred during any time period.

To read TABLE 3-8, take the top row – 12 to 1 a.m. Reading to the right, the cells show that, for 23 days of March, there were 0 incidents during that time block. On 6 days, there were 2 incidents. On 2 days, there were 4 incidents. At no time during

that month were there more than 4 incidents during that time period. This means that, assuming each officer on duty can cover one incident per hour (as noted in the IACP calculations discussion, data exist that suggest the average length of time an officer in the Group takes per incident is 40 minutes), the number of incidents never exceeds the number of officers on duty.

Following this same logic, TABLE 3-8 indicates that there were four times that month where the calculated number of incidents exceeded the number of officers scheduled to be on duty under Option 2 A. The time and date when those incidents occurred are highlighted in bold.

	Number Sworn Officers On Duty ¹	Number of Police Events Occurring per Hour ²						TOTAL Time Blocks
		0	2	4	6	9	11	
		How Many Times this Number of Police Events Occurred						
12-1 a.m.	4	23	6	2	0	0	0	31
1-2 a.m.	4	17	13	1	0	0	0	31
2-3 a.m.	4	24	7	0	0	0	0	31
3-4 a.m.	4	24	7	0	0	0	0	31
4-5 a.m.	4	30	1	0	0	0	0	31
5-6 a.m.	4	28	3	0	0	0	0	31
6-7 a.m.	4	25	5	0	1	0	0	31
7-8 a.m.	7	23	5	3	0	0	0	31
8-9 a.m.	7	25	2	1	2	0	1	31
9-10 a.m.	7	23	5	2	1	0	0	31
10-11 a.m.	7	20	9	2	0	0	0	31
11-12 a.m.	7	18	11	2	0	0	0	31
12 a.m. - 1 p.m.	7	24	4	1	1	1	0	31
1-2 p.m.	7	17	9	5	0	0	0	31
2-3 p.m.	7	22	9	0	0	0	0	31
3-4 p.m.	8	15	6	8	2	0	0	31
4-5 p.m.	8	14	10	7	0	0	0	31
5-6 p.m.	8	19	6	3	3	0	0	31
6-7 p.m.	8	21	6	3	0	1	0	31
7-8 p.m.	8	18	10	2	1	0	0	31
8-9 p.m.	8	17	9	5	0	0	0	31
9-10 p.m.	8	19	8	3	1	0	0	31
10-11 p.m.	8	25	4	1	0	1	0	31
11p.m - 12 a.m.	4	25	5	1	0	0	0	31

1. Scheduled to be on duty per Option 2 A, TABLE 3-1

2. Based on CGR projections using the rounding up methodology described in Section 2, then rounded up to whole numbers

In summary, TABLE 3-8 shows that, using actual incident data, Option 2 A staffing levels would have created an under-staffing situation in 4 one-hour time blocks out of a total of 744 time blocks (24 hours times 31 days) in March, 2006, or .5% of the time. Stated another way, in March, 2006, the Option 2 A staffing would have been sufficient to meet demand 99.5% of the time.

The same analysis for June, 2006 identified potential under-staffing in 11 one-hour time blocks, or 1.5% of the time. The June analysis indicated that 8 of the 11 times occurred between 7 p.m. and 2 a.m.. This information would be used by the department administration to ensure that extra officers were scheduled during these times if any trend were observed.

It is certainly possible that demand for more officers could increase over time if police incident trends increase. However, at this time, it is not possible to predict likely trends. CGR had hoped to do a trend analysis based on several years of data. However, historical 911 data was not available due to switch-overs in the Oneida call center software. CGR did obtain data regarding Index Crimes (more serious crimes) for the departments in the Group, from 2000 through 2006, and the number of those crimes has consistently trended down since 2000. This one fact-based indicator suggests that demand caused by police incidents may not be increasing significantly, although some respondents indicated to CGR during interviews that their impression was that demand for policing in the communities has been increasing.

Finally, to put a perspective on the size of the potential consolidated police force, Option 2 A assumes 26 full-time sworn staff and 10 part-time sworn officers. As a comparison, the Town of New Hartford, according to the DCJS Annual Report for 2006, had 18 full-time sworn staff and 7 part-time sworn officers. The New Hartford command structure has the Chief, one Lieutenant and three Sergeants. Whether or not Option 2 A or Option 2 B is sufficient for a consolidated police department in the town of Whitestown will ultimately have to be decided by the community. Other staffing models could of course be developed, along with

cost estimates, but the models proposed provide a reasonable range of alternatives which, along with corresponding cost considerations presented in Section 4, can provide a framework for discussions in the community.

SECTION 4 – COST AND TAX IMPLICATIONS

The two primary questions in any discussion about potential consolidations are: “how will consolidation effect services,” and “will consolidation save money?” This section will provide the information needed address the second of those two questions, i.e. what effect consolidating police departments could have on costs and property taxes within the Whitestown Group, under the set of assumptions spelled out below.

Background - Key Challenges and Assumptions

In order to prepare this report, CGR obtained copies of the budgets and expenditure and revenue reports from each village and the town, copies of the union agreements covering each department, and wage and salary information for the employees in each department. In addition, CGR discussed costs with town and village officials.

This report is intended to provide a starting point for understanding the cost and tax implications of consolidating police departments in the Town of Whitestown. It provides the *framework* for understanding the issues, however, this is not intended to be a detailed analysis or projection of costs and the subsequent tax impacts, because there are a number of key variables that are unknown at this time.

As presented in Section 5, the history of police consolidations across the state has shown that successful consolidations require a substantial amount of negotiation between the municipalities to work out how to equalize the pay and benefits of officers who are going to be combined into one department. These negotiations also include how to allocate the costs of any accumulated time that has to be “bought back” from officers in different departments

when they are combined (for example, buying out accumulated sick time, which ranges from a low of 48 days in one department to a high of 165 days in another department), how to account for differences in the state retirement plans to bring every officer in the single force into the same plan (for example, some officers are covered by the state 384D plan while other officers are covered by the 384E plan), and how to account for the costs required to provide equivalent health insurance benefits to the officers in the new consolidated department.

For example, one particularly difficult projection is the cost of health insurance for both current employees and retirees. In comparing the benefits in the five union contracts, CGR found that there were four different health insurance plans offered within the Group, and there were different co-pay requirements between departments for both active officers and retirees. All of these differences would have to be negotiated away, and a cost estimate made that could be boiled down to a specific dollar amount for each department.

If and when it is decided that the town and some or all of the villages would like to pursue a consolidated police department, the Consolidation Commission will need to conduct a detailed analysis of the different benefits provided to, and accumulated by each officer in each department, on a person-by-person basis, using up-to-the-minute cost estimates, to determine the actual cost impact of creating the consolidated department. This will likely require a CPA firm or other actuarial consultant to make projections of the cost for each officer based upon life expectancy and other factors such as the cost of certain benefits.

In summary, the projections that follow are based upon assumptions made by CGR using general budget and cost information for each department from information provided by the town and each village. Our projections were made for a model that assumes that the four villages and the town are combined into a single consolidated department. However, our methodology

could be applied to estimate the impact on costs and taxes if some other combination of departments occurs.

Comparing Current Costs to Costs of a Consolidated Model

TABLE 4-1 shows the actual expenditures, by major functional category, for each department, for fiscal year 2005 (the most recent complete data available). TABLE 4-1 does not quite match up to the actual budgets presented by the town and the villages, because the table includes an estimate of employee benefits for each department (estimated by the State Comptroller).

	Whitestown	Yorkville	New York Mills	Whitesboro	Oriskany	TOTALS
Personnel	\$ 287,652	\$ 194,850	\$ 265,229	\$ 375,083	\$ 57,839	\$ 1,180,653
Employee Benefits	\$ 94,066	\$ 75,766	\$ 129,930	\$ 93,379	\$ 15,450	\$ 408,591
<i>Subtotal - Total Personnel</i>	<i>\$ 381,718</i>	<i>\$ 270,616</i>	<i>\$ 395,159</i>	<i>\$ 468,462</i>	<i>\$ 73,289</i>	<i>\$ 1,589,244</i>
Equipment	\$ 11,233	\$ 13,500	\$ 32,284	\$ 35,538	\$ -	\$ 92,555
Contractual Expenses	\$ 42,670	\$ 58,074	\$ 36,187	\$ 47,092	\$ 16,405	\$ 200,428
Total Cost	\$ 435,621	\$ 342,190	\$ 463,630	\$ 551,092	\$ 89,694	\$ 1,882,227
Revenues	\$ 72,155	\$ 11,460	\$ 95,962	\$ 78,867	\$ 11,380	\$ 269,824
<i>Net Cost to Local Taxpayers</i>	<i>\$ 363,466</i>	<i>\$ 330,730</i>	<i>\$ 367,668</i>	<i>\$ 472,225</i>	<i>\$ 78,314</i>	<i>\$ 1,612,403</i>

Source: N.Y.State Comptroller Annual Report for FY 2005-2006 and detailed database. Revenues from Table 1-2

TABLE 4-1 provides the basis for estimating the change in costs that can be projected if all five departments are consolidated. Cost estimates are based on comparing actual 2005 expenses to what CGR estimates the expenses would have been in a consolidated department in 2005. This methodology permits a fixed point-in-time comparison. Otherwise, it is difficult to make a fair apples-to-apples comparison. For example, trying to project 2007 expenses from 2005 actual costs would require factoring in all salary adjustment costs, changes in benefits, and general inflation.

Comparing costs of the current (five department) model to a single consolidated department model requires projecting changes in each of the categories shown in TABLE 4-1. However, in addition, a consolidation is likely to include two types of additional costs that must be considered: transition costs and capital costs.

Staffing Cost Comparison

CGR's cost estimates for a single consolidated police department in the town are based on the staffing assumptions presented above in Section 3, i.e. that a single department would have at least 22 sworn full-time officers, 1 civilian administrative assistant, and 10 part-time officer positions. These are shown in TABLE 4-2.

CGR estimated the per title costs shown in TABLE 4-2 based upon the following assumptions. As noted above, however, actual final salaries and pay scales will be subject to negotiation in a consolidation plan.

- In 2006, the average amount paid to full-time officers based upon W-2 wage information provided was approximately \$40,400. This included base pay plus overtime worked. We assume officers in the consolidated department would continue to work overtime hours on average at the same amount as in the individual departments now. Note – this amount is not intended to be a recommended annual salary pay scale, which will need to be negotiated. Rather, it reflects a best estimate of what the salary and overtime costs would be.
- In 2006, the average amount paid to Sergeants was approximately \$44,100, which included overtime pay. We assume the same would carry into the consolidated department. Note – this amount is not intended to be a recommended annual salary pay scale, which will need to be negotiated. Rather, it reflects a best estimate of what the salary and overtime costs would be.
- For the Deputy Chief salary, CGR assumed the highest current salary rate for current Chief positions, assuming that current staff would be leveled up in a consolidation.
- For the Investigator salary, we assumed a salary roughly between the sergeant's average annual pay and the deputy chief salary.

- For the Chief's salary, we assumed it would be 10% higher than the deputy chief salary.
- For the Administrative Assistant position, we assumed the starting pay scale of an Account Clerk in the Town.
- For all sworn positions, we assumed fringe benefits (insurance, FICA, retirement) adds 35% to base costs (based on TABLE 4-1). For the civilian position, we assumed a 25% fringe benefit rate (to adjust for different benefits). Although CGR found some variations in benefits between existing departments, we assume that, after the consolidation negotiations are completed, the final agreed benefits package will result in fringe benefits that, on average, approximately equal the average of fringe benefits currently provided. This is because currently, while some departments may have more generous health benefits, others provide better benefits in other ways (higher salary, more allowances, etc.). Thus, it is very reasonable to project that future benefits will continue to add 35% to base costs.

Title	Estimated Annual Cost¹	Estimated Fringe Benefits²	Estimated Total Annual Cost
<i>Sworn</i>			
Chief	\$ 52,000	\$ 18,200	\$ 70,200
Deputy Chief	\$ 47,600	\$ 16,660	\$ 64,260
Investigator	\$ 46,000	\$ 16,100	\$ 62,100
Sergeant	\$ 44,100	\$ 15,435	\$ 59,535
Officer	\$ 40,400	\$ 14,140	\$ 54,540
<i>Civilian</i>			
Admin. Asst.	\$ 20,700	\$ 5,175	\$ 25,875

1. Based on 2006 averages as described in the text

2. 35% for sworn positions, 25% for civilian positions

In addition to full-time staff, as described in Section 3, the consolidated department would also include part-time positions. The number to be included would be a function of both department need and available funding. To calculate part-time officer costs, CGR determined the average amount paid to part-time officers in 2006 based upon available data. Part-time officers received total pay ranging from approximately \$1,800 to \$16,400, but the average amount paid was \$7,025. Assuming a 10% fringe benefit cost (to account for the employer's contribution to FICA and whatever other partial benefits are negotiated), and rounding up, CGR assumes the full cost of an average part-time officer position would be \$8,000 per year.

Based upon TABLE 4-2 and the cost of part-time positions just described, total annual costs for staffing the single consolidated department positions can be projected. TABLE 4-3 A shows the cost projection for the bare-bones staffing Option 1, which matches the staffing shown in TABLE 3-5. TABLE 4-3 B shows the cost projection for staffing for the preferred Option 2, which matches the staffing shown in TABLE 3-6.

TABLE 4-3 A			
Option 1 - Baseline Bare-Bones Staffing			
Projected Total Annual Cost of Full Time Personnel			
	Proposed Number of Positions	Per Person Estimated Cost	Total Cost Per Title
Title			
Chief	1	\$ 70,200	\$ 70,200
Deputy Chief	2	\$ 64,260	\$ 128,520
Investigator	1	\$ 62,100	\$ 62,100
Sergeant	2	\$ 59,535	\$ 119,070
Officer	16	\$ 54,540	\$ 872,640
<i>Total F.T. Sworn</i>	22		
Admin Asst.	1	\$ 25,875	\$ 25,875
<i>Total Civilian</i>	1		
Total Full Time	23		
Total Part-Time Sworn	10		\$80,000
TOTAL COST			\$1,358,405

Source: Table 4-2

TABLE 4-3 B			
Option 2 - Enhanced Staffing			
Projected Total Annual Cost of Full Time Personnel			
	Proposed Number of Positions	Per Person Estimated Cost	Total Cost Per Title
Title			
Chief	1	\$ 70,200	\$ 70,200
Deputy Chief	2	\$ 64,260	\$ 128,520
Investigator	1	\$ 62,100	\$ 62,100
Sergeant	2	\$ 59,535	\$ 119,070
Officer	20	\$ 54,540	\$ 1,090,800
<i>Total F.T. Sworn</i>	26		
Admin Asst.	1	\$ 25,875	\$ 25,875
<i>Total Civilian</i>	1		
Total Full Time	27		
Total Part-Time Sworn	10		\$ 80,000
TOTAL COST			\$ 1,576,565

Source: Table 4-2

To summarize, as shown in TABLE 4-4, CGR projects that it will be possible to staff to the level of 26 full-time and 10 part-time sworn positions, plus a civilian administrative assistant, while keeping total personnel costs at approximately the same level as current costs (Option 2). However, if the four villages and the town desired to reduce costs in order to reduce taxes, it would be possible to staff the department at the bare-bones Option 1 and save approximately \$200,000.

Comparison of Current Fully-Loaded Personnel Costs to Options 1 and 2			
	Current Cost - Table 4-1	OPTION 1 - Bare Bones Baseline	OPTION 2 - Enhanced Staffing
Total Personnel Cost	\$ 1,589,244	\$ 1,358,405	\$ 1,576,565

One additional personnel issue may need to be resolved by the Consolidation Commission. CGR assumes in the models for both Options that the number of command staff will equal six positions. Currently, there are six full-time command staff titles, however, there is also a full-time Officer –in-Charge and a part-time Officer –in-Charge in two departments within the Group. If it becomes necessary to create seven command staff titles in the consolidated department in order to accommodate existing personnel during a transition period, CGR assumes that the seventh command staff title would replace one of the officer titles shown in both Options, so that the total sworn full-time officer positions would remain as shown. If this assumption is overturned by the Commission, then cost projections would have to be adjusted accordingly.

Equipment and Contractual Expenses Cost Comparison

In 2006, the departments spent approximately \$290,000 combined in the two expense categories of supplies, equipment and contractual costs. These expenses cover the costs of police equipment, uniforms, lease and/or purchase of vehicles, radios and communications equipment, vehicle and equipment

maintenance, fuel, and other costs allocated to the department such as for cleaning and maintenance costs for the facilities, insurance costs allocated to the departments, and other miscellaneous expenses such as office supplies, copier expenses and phones. Over the five year period from 2002 through 2006, expenses in these two categories ranged, in total, from \$245,000 to \$314,000. The major cause for these variations was the timing of vehicle and radio or computer purchases and vehicle leases.

CGR projects that equipment and contractual expenses in a single consolidated department would not vary significantly from current costs for reasons described next, with one exception - vehicle costs.

The cost of supplying uniforms and equipment to officers is likely to remain about the same under a consolidated model. While there would be fewer part-time officers, under the Option 2 model, there would be more full-time officers, with higher requirements for equipment, training, etc.

The cost of radios, computers, other equipment and supplies is likely to remain about the same since the size of the department and department functions, will not be changing significantly. Contractual costs for maintaining equipment are not likely to change significantly. One ongoing operational expense currently incurred by New York Mills might change – the current annual contract (\$7,150) with the Town of New Hartford for dispatch services. Under a consolidated Town of Whitestown Police Department, New York Mills dispatch would be provided by Oneida County Emergency Services (911 dispatch center) at no charge. However, CGR assumes that some sort of inter-municipal agreement will need to be continued with New Hartford to cover cross-town coverage issues (a detail the Consolidation Commission will need to address), and we do not know enough about how this will play out to project any net cost savings at this time.

CGR assumes that a consolidated department would continue to operate field site locations at each of the locations currently housing an existing police department, although at a reduced staffing level. With the exception of the village of Whitesboro, which has a new stand-alone police facility, the other departments currently share facilities with other town or village operations. Thus, the space currently devoted to police department operations could be reduced and re-used in some other way for other town and village operations. The fixed costs for the space occupied by police operations will continue at any rate, and therefore there will be little to no net operational savings to the town or the villages from consolidating police departments.

The one area where potential savings could be achieved would be vehicle costs. Currently, the departments operate cumulatively a fleet of 25 cars, per department records. CGR assumes that a consolidated department based on the Option 2 model could reduce the fleet to approximately 21 cars⁶. Thus, 4 vehicles could be reduced from the consolidated fleet. At an average cost of \$10,000 per year per vehicle (based on lease costs plus routine maintenance), this would save \$40,000 per year, which could be used to reduce overall costs or fund five additional part-time officer positions. If the number of miles driven is reduced because there is a smaller fleet, CGR estimates an approximate fuel savings of \$1,400 per year per car eliminated⁷.

Impact on Revenues

Whether or not a consolidated department would adversely affect the amount of revenues currently collected by the five departments will depend on both the size of the new department

⁶ CGR's estimate is based upon the following: Baseline officers per shift = 3, plus one backup car per officer = 6 in total for patrol. Add 1 car available for up to two additional officers on any shift (2 total), 1 car for each command officer and the investigator (6 total), 1 car available for each part-time officer (maximum on duty at any time assumed to be 5), plus two additional back-ups for general purposes. Total = 6+2+6+5+2 = 21.

⁷ Based on the average miles driven per year in the current fleet is 12,720 miles per year, fuel costs at \$2.25 gallon and cars averaging 20 miles per gallon.

and how the department is managed by the new administration. As noted in Section 2, the major source of revenues for the departments – traffic tickets and fines, amounted to just over \$200,000 in FY 2005. Assuming the consolidated department administration continues to place the same emphasis on traffic enforcement, this revenue stream would continue.

However, under Option 1, the bare bones department, CGR assumes that the reduced manpower would limit the time officers have to conduct pro-active traffic enforcement. Thus, CGR assumes a \$50,000 per year drop in traffic tickets and fines as a reasonable estimate of the impact of the reduced number of officers. CGR assumes that under Option 2, the larger force would be able to continue a more pro-active traffic enforcement function, assuming the department administration continued that focus. Since fines are collected by the court in which the violation is adjudicated, a consolidated police force should not negatively affect the revenue streams currently received by each village and the town. However, the allocation of total fines collected should be discussed and negotiated as part of the inter-municipal cooperation agreement that forms the basis of a consolidated department, so that the villages and town agree on the equitable allocation of revenues that flow into the general fund of each municipality.

As noted in Section 6 below, it is quite likely that the total amount of revenues derived by a consolidated department will increase because of the ability of the improved department to qualify for and obtain additional grants for public safety work in the future. However, until the new department becomes operational and the department administration focuses on obtaining additional grant funding, the fiscally conservative position is to assume that additional department revenues will remain at 2006 levels.

Transition Costs

In the analysis of five other town/village police department consolidations described in Section 5, CGR found that, in each case, the municipalities faced one-time transition costs. For personnel, these are primarily due to the need to buy out

accumulated time from officers leaving the force, make one time adjustments to equalize retirement plans, levelize accumulated time banks, levelize health insurance premiums, etc. In some consolidations, significant one-time capital costs were required, to build a new or upgraded central facility and/or to purchase additional vehicles and equipment.

While it is not possible to precisely estimate the one-time transition costs associated with consolidating the five departments in the Group until the Consolidation Commission develops a detailed transition plan, CGR believes it is reasonable to project that one-time transition costs will be in the range of 15% to 25% of current total costs, which is in line with the average of the one-time transition costs in the five comparison consolidations⁸. Thus, the Group could anticipate the one-time transition cost to be in the range of \$280,000 to \$470,000. These costs will likely be needed to fund capital costs and personnel costs.

Capital Costs

The current existing facilities will not need significant upgrades. The logical central facility for a consolidated department is the Whitesboro station. The Consolidation Commission may determine that the existing building might be cramped for a full-time force of 26 officers, given the projected peak shift capacity of 5 full-time officers and command staff plus several part-time officers. Assuming that a 1,000 sq. ft. addition is made to the existing facility to create more locker space, a central roll-call room and additional work-space, at \$200/sq. ft. for new commercial construction, would require a one-time capital cost of \$200,000. The Commission may decide that additional renovations at the satellite offices might improve operations, although both

⁸ CGR estimated the one-time transition costs for the five comparison consolidations by taking the average total department costs for the year preceding and the year following the consolidation, and comparing that average to the costs during the year of the consolidation. Transition costs created a one-time blip in expenses that totaled 2%, 2%, 19%, 32% and 72%. The average of the five consolidations was 25%. However, excluding the 76% situation as an anomaly, the average one-time transition costs for the remaining four cases (2%, 2%, 19% and 32%) was 14%. This suggests a reasonable range, for planning purposes, is 15% to 25%.

Whitestown and Yorkville have upgraded their police office facilities in the last year. CGR does not believe that additional cars or major equipment purchases will be required to consolidate the force. In fact, as described previously, we believe that the number of cars could be reduced over time.

Personnel Costs

It is not possible to project the one-time personnel costs from a consolidation until the Commission completes a detailed person-by-person analysis and negotiates a unified contract for employees. However, both the Option 1 and Option 2 models assume a consolidated force that has at least the same number of full-time positions as currently exist in the five separate forces. Thus, as there would be no need to lay-off existing employees, this will reduce the need to completely buy-out current officers. The major cost will likely come from buying out accumulated time to levelize accumulated time and pension benefits for everyone in the new department. Given what can be estimated with the information currently available, CGR assumes that one-time personnel transition costs would not exceed the range of \$100,000 - \$200,000.

Summary – Annual Operations - Total Cost Comparisons

TABLE 4-5 summarizes the information provided above, and shows the current costs compared to Option 1 and Option 2 costs. This table shows that under the bare-bones Option 1, taxpayers would save just over \$226,000, or 14.1%. Under Option 2 A, where the savings by reducing the number of cars in the fleet is passed through as a tax reduction, total costs would be reduced by roughly \$58,000, which would equal a 3.6% reduction. Under Option 2 B, where an additional 4 part-time officer positions would be created (bringing the number of authorized part-time officers from 10 to 14), savings would total roughly \$18,000, or approximately 1.2%. Given the approximations inherent in the projections made throughout this section, Option 2B can be assumed to cost effectively the same as current costs.

To summarize, Option 1, which would be based on a staff of 22 full time and 10 part-time sworn personnel and 1 civilian, is estimated to save taxpayers 14% in annual operating compared to

current operations. Option 2 A, based on a staff of 26 full time and 10 part-time sworn personnel and 1 civilian, is estimated to save taxpayers 3.6 % in annual operating costs. Option 2 B, based on a staff of 26 full time and 15 part-time sworn personnel and 1 civilian, would effectively cost the same as current operations.

	Current (2005-06)	Option 1	Option 2A³	Option 2B⁴
Total Personnel (Salaries&Benefits)	\$ 1,589,244	\$ 1,358,405	\$ 1,576,565	\$ 1,616,565
Equipment	\$ 92,555	\$ 92,555	\$ 92,555	\$ 92,555
Contractual Expenses ¹	\$ 200,428	\$ 154,428	\$ 154,428	\$ 154,428
Total Cost	\$ 1,882,227	\$ 1,605,388	\$ 1,823,548	\$ 1,863,548
Revenues ²	\$ 269,824	\$ 219,824	\$ 269,824	\$ 269,824
Net Cost to Local Taxpayers	\$ 1,612,403	\$ 1,385,564	\$ 1,553,724	\$ 1,593,724
Percent Reduction from Current		14.1%	3.6%	1.2%

Source: CGR projections described in the text

1. Assumes Car and Fuel expenses savings are shown in this category
2. Assumes Ticket and Fines revenues are lower in Option 1 by \$50,000
3. Assumes Car and Fuel expenses savings are not used to hire additional part-time officers.
4. Assumes the \$40,000 Car savings are used to hire 5 additional part-time officers.

Tax Implications

Under the current five-department structure, the costs of each police department are clearly allocated to taxpayers in each village and the town. The cost of the four village police departments are included in each village budget, and borne fully by the taxpayers in each village. The cost of the town police department is included in the town outside village budget, and is born fully by the taxpayers who reside in the town but outside the villages. The cost of each department that has to be absorbed by property tax payers is different in each municipality, and the actual property tax bill in each village and the town are different, depending on the net property tax burden in each municipality and the effective tax rate in each municipality.

For purposes of this study, the important variable is the total cost of police operations, i.e. the net cost to local taxpayers as summarized in TABLE 4-5. Because the impact on the tax rate differs in each municipality due to a number of factors, this study did not attempt to address what would happen to the tax rate for taxpayers in each village and the town if a consolidated department is created. If, as projected under Options 1 and 2A the total cost of the consolidated department would be lower than current operations, those savings would be spread across all taxpayers in the town.

The cost of the consolidated department would show up as an increase in the overall town tax, but there would be a corresponding decrease in each village tax. As indicated in Section 5, the experience of other communities that have consolidated police operations is that how costs of a consolidated police department are shared is one of the key questions that has to be negotiated by the Consolidation Commission. Quite rightly, taxpayers in each jurisdiction need to feel that the costs of a consolidated department are not shifted unfairly from one community to another. Ultimately, the Inter-municipal Cooperation Agreement between all the villages and the Town will need to spell out precisely how costs will be shared. Once total costs are equitably allocated, the impact on individual tax rates can be calculated.

CGR believes that there are no insurmountable barriers to determining a fair and equitable distribution of costs for the consolidated department so that cost savings are shared by taxpayers in all five jurisdictions. However, there are four issues that the Consolidation Commission will need to examine in detail, resolve through negotiations and ultimately incorporate into the inter-municipal agreements that will create the consolidated police department.

Town Outside Village Costs

Currently, the entire cost of the town police department is carried in the Town Outside Village (TOV) General Fund (Fund B). The sales tax distribution to the town from Oneida County is, by law,

applied to TOV expenses first (Fund B), with the balance being applied to Town-wide General Fund expenses (Fund A). Currently, because TOV expenses are fully covered by sales tax distributions, TOV taxpayers do not pay any property taxes for the Town police department. Once the Town police department becomes part of a single consolidated town-wide police department, the consolidated department would become a Town-wide Fund A General Fund expense.

Creating a consolidated town-wide police department, funded from the Town-wide Fund A should not have any cost shift implications at this time, according to estimates by the town Accounting Supervisor/Treasurer. There are currently enough sales tax revenues to pay for Fund B costs and keep the property tax in Fund B at zero, and to fully pay for the costs of the current town police department (prior to consolidation). The issue of cost shifts may occur in a future budget (which can't be predicted at this time) because, after deducting sales tax revenues to cover Fund B expenses, there may not be sufficient sales tax revenue to fully cover Fund A police department expenses. This shortfall might have to be covered by a property tax. To be fair, however, it is possible that expenses for the existing town police department could also increase in the future to the point that a property tax would be needed to fund the department. Thus, this possibility could occur regardless of whether or not the departments were consolidated. This is why it will be important to control costs in the future, regardless of whether or not the departments are consolidated.

Facilities Costs

A second issue the Consolidation Commission will need to address in order to develop a fair and equitable solution is how embedded capital costs should be shared among the municipalities. In particular, the village of Whitesboro taxpayers absorbed the cost of their new police building that was built in late 2000. The village took out a bond which will not be paid until 2030, for which the village is currently paying principal and interest. Should the village police station become the central

station for the consolidated department, the Consolidation Commission should determine how to allocate those costs and reimburse the village going forward.

*New York Mills and the
Town of New Hartford*

As part of this study, CGR contacted state officials in the Department of State, the Department of Criminal Justice Services and the New York State Comptroller, and none of these sources, as well as published reports CGR reviewed, believes there has ever been a police consolidation involving a village that is part of two towns. Thus, if the police department in New York Mills becomes consolidated in the town-wide police department in the town of Whitestown, that will be a first. As such, there is no precedence as to how the village should arrange for police services in the portion of the village that is in the Town of New Hartford.

An obvious operational solution would be for the consolidated police force in Whitestown to be deputized to provide police services in the town of New Hartford, with the understanding that this applies only to that portion of New Hartford included within the borders of the village of New York Mills. However, there are clearly financial issues resulting from how the village would receive coverage in the future compared to how it is receiving services currently from both towns. In addition, the Town of New Hartford is currently providing emergency dispatch services for both the police and fire departments within the village. The Consolidation Commission will need to address these issues in detail, and develop a fair and equitable way to reimburse the Town of New Hartford for services it will continue to provide in that portion of the village that is in that town, and these arrangements will need to be included in an Intermunicipal Cooperation Agreement between the village and both towns.

*One-Time Transition
Costs*

Last, the Consolidation Commission will need to: a) determine a precise estimate of the one-time transition costs to carry out the consolidation, and b) determine a fair and equitable way to distribute those costs among the taxpayers in the various jurisdictions. Identifying the source of funds for the one-time transition costs will also be an important task for the Commission.

Three options that have been used in other consolidations have been: a) obtain a grant to pay for some or all of the costs, b) amortize the costs over a number of years by bonding for the costs, and c) paying directly for the costs through use of surplus or contingent funds are a one-time tax increase. Other communities have justified these costs as an investment because the consolidated departments have provided improved service and reduced annual operating costs over time.

SECTION 5 – LESSONS FROM OTHER POLICE CONSOLIDATIONS

In order to help the five communities in the Group gain an additional perspective the issues involved in consolidating police departments, CGR reviewed five consolidations that have occurred in New York between towns and villages with characteristics most like those found in the Group. CGR interviewed current police and civic leaders, reviewed cooperation agreements, and examined police department cost data for consolidations involving the following town/village combinations:

- Town and Village of New Hartford – consolidated 1984
- Town of Manlius and Villages of Manlius, Minoa and Fayetteville – consolidated 1985
- Town and Village of Warwick – consolidated 1992
- Town of Kirkland and Village of Clinton – consolidated 1994
- Town and Village of Lancaster – consolidated 2003

CGR's comparative analysis of police consolidations in these five different municipalities produced a number of key findings that may prove helpful in answering questions about consolidation that are of concern to leaders within the Whitestown Group. Our findings can be summarized as follows:

Consolidations Are Covered by Written Agreements

In each of these consolidations, the municipalities involved entered into formal Intermunicipal Cooperation Agreements as specified in Article 5-G of General Municipal Law. Article 5-G agreements can run for up to five years, and are renewable in five - year increments. The agreements are somewhat different for each consolidation, because they reflect the specific concerns found in each different community. The agreement is where each municipality spells out clear service delivery expectations, cost sharing agreements, and other matters such as transition issues important at the time. Village-town police departments can also be created under Article 6, Section 121-a of General Municipal Law; however, that method was not used in the five examples CGR reviewed. Our general understanding, based upon this review and our discussions with attorneys at both the New York Department of State and the Office of State Comptroller indicate that the commonly accepted and preferred method to consolidate police departments is through Article 5-G agreements.

The Agreements Can Be Flexible

Article 5-G agreements can be flexible, and accommodate any terms and conditions that need to be incorporated in order to address the concerns of any of the municipalities entering into the agreement. Typically, the agreements run for an initial five years, however; language can be included to permit one of the municipalities to opt out after a shorter time period. One municipality elected to simply inactivate its police department for a year rather than abolish it initially, in order to preserve the option of re-creating its own department if the cooperative department did not work as anticipated. That consolidated department, incidentally, clearly has worked out, since it has been in existence for over ten years.

Communities Need to Study and Discuss Consolidation

Every consolidation we reviewed occurred only after a process that took between one to three years to study and discuss within the communities who participated. In some cases, initial attempts to consolidate departments were rejected by the voters. However, in every case, community leaders indicated that if a logical, thoughtful process is followed to allow adequate citizen education

and input, members of their communities ultimately understood the benefits of consolidation and supported it.

*A Study Committee
Should be Appointed*

Typically, communities created a citizens consolidation study committee which was charged with understanding the issues and working out the details to make consolidation work. This committee also provided the details that were incorporated into the formal Article 5-G agreement. CGR will refer to this committee as a Consolidation Commission for Whitestown.

*Police Consolidations
Are Subject to
Permissive Referenda*

Consolidation of police departments is a subject of a permissive referendum, when involving the dissolution of a village police department, per CGR's conversations with attorneys from the New York Department of State and Office of State Comptroller. However, town and village boards can enter into Intermunicipal Cooperation Agreements without seeking voter approval. Thus, under the permissive referendum requirements, if the boards choose not to have a referendum and they do not receive a citizen petition to do so, they can in fact create a consolidated department. Of the five consolidations reviewed, three were completed without any voter referendum, one had a referendum in the village, and in the Manlius consolidation, only one of the three villages had a referendum. Thus, the experience to date is that more often than not, after sufficient community discussion and development of a comprehensive proposal and plan by the dissolution commission, that town and village boards make the decision to consolidate without going through a referendum.

*Police Service is
Improved*

People whom CGR interviewed regarding these five existing consolidations consistently stated that delivery of police services overall was improved by the consolidation. The primary improvements cited were: a) the larger departments enhanced the professionalism of police services provided to the communities, b) while service delivery to some of the smaller communities was a concern at first, in every case, after a few years, it was felt that the larger departments were able to meet the needs of the smaller communities, c) there were clear cost efficiencies by more efficient

utilization of staff and, in some cases, elimination of duplicate titles.

Police Services are More Cost Efficient

To measure the effects of consolidations on costs, CGR obtained annual expenditure and revenue data from the Office of State Comptroller for all the municipalities involved in four of the consolidations⁹, for the five years preceding and five years following the consolidation. Our objective was to determine whether or not costs changed after the consolidation. The five-year analysis helped to identify real changes over time rather than just year-to-year swings. In three of the four cases, average annual inflation adjusted costs after the consolidation were lower than average annual costs prior to consolidation. For example, the average costs for Manlius group increased 5.2% per year prior to consolidation, and decreased 5.1% per year following consolidation. Because police department costs are subject to many variables, CGR cautions that this type of analysis is only useful to indicate trends. But we believe that the evidence provides strong support to the underlying theory that police department consolidations can and do result in cost reductions due to efficiencies and improved management.

There are Large One-Time Costs Associated with Consolidations

CGR's review of historical cost trends revealed that, in every case, municipalities incur a one-time increase in costs right around the time of consolidation. These costs are caused by several factors, including: a) the need to buy out accumulated time from officers leaving the force; b) one-time adjustments to equalize retirement plans and levelize accumulated time banks, levelize health insurance premiums, etc.; c) in some cases, the need to build a new or upgraded central facility and/or to purchase additional vehicles and equipment.

⁹ Lancaster was not included because only two subsequent years of data are available since the consolidation happened in 2003.

*Personnel Transition
Issues Are Critical*

One of, if not the biggest, issue identified for each of the five comparison consolidations was the question of leadership within the new department. The primary question was who would become Chief, the secondary questions were how the other command staff would be handled, and the last questions were how existing officers were to transition to the new single department.

In every successful consolidation, the consolidation commission negotiated deals with incumbents to ensure that civil service laws were followed while still resulting in the best command structure and personnel for the new department. In several cases, one of the Chiefs was retiring, or agreed to retire, which eliminated that friction. However, in every case, the municipalities had to ensure that they hired the most qualified candidate for the job. The civilians who CGR interviewed stated that one of the key reasons that the consolidations were successful, and led to operating efficiencies as well as a high level of satisfaction with the new department, was due to the efforts put forth by the new Chief to ensure success.

The consolidation commission also had to develop transition plans, on a person-by-person basis, working hand-in-hand with the unions representing the different departments, to identify the staffing, wages and benefits of the new consolidated department. This is another reason why, as noted above, consolidations require a year or two to approve and implement.

*Police Officers Typically
Support Consolidations*

CGR was told by a number of respondents that, in successful consolidations, the police officers and unions favor consolidation, and are willing to support consolidations publicly. This is typically because, for many officers, consolidation results in opportunities to work in a larger department with more career opportunities, and their pay and/or benefits are increased as salaries and benefits are raised to the highest level of the consolidated departments. Support of the officers and unions is critical, and is accomplished by honest and open negotiations during the consolidation study phase. It should be noted that support for consolidation typically came from full-time career professionals. Part-time officers,

especially those who could see a reduction in hours worked, may be resistant to consolidation. The consolidation commission needs to take that into account during its process.

*Projecting the Financial
Impact Takes Expertise*

While initial studies (such as this) are critical for setting the framework for discussing the costs, benefits and service issues of consolidation, a detailed cost study needs to be undertaken by the consolidation commission to ensure all costs are properly identified, so that they can be incorporated into the final Intermunicipal Cooperation Agreement. For example, the Town and Village of Lancaster consolidation occurred only after three separate studies were completed. An initial study that showed what the general costs and benefits of the new consolidated department started the discussion rolling in the communities. A second more detailed study that examined the cost and tax implications for the consolidation. Finally, after the communities agreed conceptually to the consolidation, a CPA firm prepared a detailed study that calculated, on a person-by-person basis, what the precise costs would be, how the costs would be divided, and how revenues would be split between the town and village to equitably share future tax burdens. In Lancaster's case, Erie County provided a one-time \$700,000 grant to the village to help offset the one-time transition costs. The CPA firm took that into account when determining a fair and equitable way to allocate costs between village and town-outside village taxpayers.

*"Don't Do It to Save
Money – Do it to
Improve Police
Services"*

This quote is perhaps the best summary of why these communities decided to consolidate police departments was provided by a finance officer interviewed by CGR. As noted above, there is no clear and convincing evidence that consolidations save money, although there is substantial evidence that they make existing operations more efficient by eliminating duplication and permitting greater flexibility in staffing to meet peaks and valleys in demand. Further, if large one-time transition costs have to be incurred, it may take years for any efficiency savings to pay back the costs of those one-time costs, unless they are paid for by a grant. For these reasons, this particular finance officer has

concluded that it is not easy to predict that municipalities will in fact save costs through a consolidation. However, this person reflected the opinions that CGR heard consistently from the five communities – that consolidation did improve the overall level of service and professionalism provided by police in the new single department.

SECTION 6 –ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF CONSOLIDATION

The previous sections contain a significant amount of information regarding the benefits, cost savings, implementation challenges and service issues associated with consolidating police departments. This section will summarize the major ideas presented and the key advantages and disadvantages that should be considered by the Whitestown Group.

Potential Advantages

1. Both Option 1 and Option 2, particularly Option 2 A, shift police staffing towards more full-time sworn staff, with less use of part-time officers. Over time, this will tend to attract career officers and increase the professionalism of the department. Departments with full-time officers tend to have less turnover, and career officers build more experience on-the-job. In addition, departments are more willing to invest in additional training and other opportunities for career development. More experienced officers tend to have higher success rates in solving cases and getting successful prosecutions, according to the Oneida County District Attorney.

2. A single, larger department will offer more opportunities for career advancement for officers as well as an expansion of department capabilities. For example, a consolidated department in the Whitestown Group could justify creating an investigator position, which would greatly enhance the department's ability to be responsive to the needs of the community.

3. The consolidated department would be large enough to justify a civilian administrative assistant. This will free up command staff from routine paperwork activities that divert sworn staff from the active police work, and during normal working hours, an administrative assistant can provide a live telephone response to calls to the department.

4. Eliminating the artificial boundaries currently set by municipal borders will clearly allow for more efficient use of police officers. Currently, Town of Whitestown cars have to travel through Yorkville, Whitesboro and New York Mills to patrol small portions of the town, or to respond to calls for service in those areas, while village patrol cars do not have routine jurisdiction in those areas. This creates un-needed travel and loss of time. CGR assumes that the Chief of a consolidated department would create patrol zones within the town, and assign cars to those zones. Village boundaries within town borders would no longer be artificial barriers, thus the zone cars could drive efficient routes. In addition, command staff would be able to deploy any staff to any location within the town, thus improving response time, especially to those areas north and east of the villages. These efficiencies will not only increase response time, they will allow for a reduction in the number of cars required, which will yield direct cost savings to the department.

5. Under either of the staffing options proposed, staffing will be both more efficient and effective. Having a single consolidated large force of sworn staff will allow the Chief to better match the scheduling of officers to peaks and valleys in demand for service, so that there won't be the types of overstaffing mismatches as described in Section 3. Having a larger department with more flexible staffing options will permit the Chief to have the right combination of officers and command staff on duty to meet periods of high activity and high intensity.

6. A larger consolidated department will be more attractive towards grant funding agencies, and will create the opportunity to obtain and share resources currently not readily available to

smaller departments. For example, the District Attorney is going to provide one video taping unit to the Group, which will be located in the Whitesboro police building. The Blood Alcohol testing equipment for the Group is located in the Yorkville station. A consolidated department would provide central and consolidated management of these and other high cost, high tech equipment, such as a Total Work Station that can be used for accident reconstruction work, that would be made available to the entire force. A single department would also provide a centralized and standardized system for the collection and storage of evidence and records – a critical element in being able to improve conviction success rates and remove criminals from the streets.

In addition, CGR's analysis of revenues obtained by the five consolidated departments indicated that three of the five departments received at least twice as much revenue in special grant funding as a percentage of the total police budgets compared to current departments in the Group. Thus suggests that larger departments have the resources to go after grants, as well as being more attractive to grant providers.

7. As shown in Option 1 and Option 2 A, a consolidated department offers the potential to reduce total police costs within the Group. Even if the community elects to keep costs the same (as in Option 2 B), the consolidated department will provide a way to re-allocate resources towards more effective pro-active police activities. For example, the consolidated department would likely have the personnel resources to develop specialists that would enhance police work, and permit the department to participate in county-wide initiatives like the drug task force, which would benefit the entire town.

8. Including New York Mills in the consolidated police department would enhance officer safety and improve response time in New York Mills, because dispatch would shift from New Hartford to Oneida County 911. This would ensure that all officers in Whitestown are on the same frequency – an important consideration for emergency and back-up situations.

9. A consolidated department would have the critical mass and resources to go through the process to become an accredited New York State police department. State accreditation substantially reduces the insurance risk for departments, with resultant lower premium costs. Accredited departments are recognized for meeting the highest standards of service and professionalism.

Potential Disadvantages

1. There is the perception that consolidation will lead to loss of control of the delivery of police services and personnel decisions. This will in fact happen – the Chief of a consolidated department would not be beholden to any one mayor, supervisor or board. However, in towns and villages where consolidation has been successful, the Chief reports to town-wide Police Commission. The Inter-municipal Cooperation Agreement between the town and the villages should address service expectations in each jurisdiction, and ensure that the Police Commission members include either the Mayor or some other representative from each village as well as the town board.

2. There is the perception that a consolidation will result in loss of community policing activities and a sense of the police being active members of the local community (i.e. village). As described in Section 2, the current police departments cumulatively provide a very high level of visibility, patrolling each mile on average more than once every four hours. Realistically, under either Option 1 or Option 2 (either Option 2 A or 2 B), there will be less total officers on patrol than is currently the case. That is because departments currently utilize an inordinately large number of part-time officers for patrol activities. Less officers on patrol will mean that neighborhood streets will be patrolled less often. However, until the new department is created and the new department Chief determines how to deploy the staff, it is not possible to precisely predict what effect, if any, less patrol activity will have.

A reasonable way to project the impact of having less part-time officers in the consolidated department would be to project the impact of reducing the number of cars from 25 to 21, as proposed

in Section 5. In Section 2 of this report, CGR estimated that the current fleet of cars drives 318,000 miles per year on town and village roads, which averages out to 12,720 miles per year for 25 cars. Assume that the 4 cars removed from the fleet drove that average, which means that the fleet of 21 cars would drive 267,120 miles per year on average. Dividing miles driven by number of lane miles in the town and villages (140) divided by 365 days, results in an estimate that each mile would be patrolled, on average, 5.2 times per day. This is compared to the 6.2 times per day current patrol estimate.

CGR knows of no way to determine whether there would be any significant impact of going from having a patrol car pass by each property an average of 5.2 times per day rather than 6.2 times per day. However, common sense suggests that as long as the patrols are random (so that they cannot be predicted by potential criminals), the difference between seeing a patrol car once every 5 hours instead of once every 4 hours is not likely to have a significant effect on how patrol activity deters crime or unacceptable behavior. In short, the benefits of a consolidated police department would seem to more than offset this likely minor reduction in neighborhood patrol activity. However, this is a community decision that would need to be addressed by the Consolidation Commission.

The Consolidation Commission can also address how police resources are assigned to individual villages to meet special service requirements in each village or the town. As noted previously, one example of the way services can be customized to meet individual community needs would be to cover predictable events with dedicated part-time officers. For example, part-time officers can be routinely assigned to provide morning and afternoon coverage at schools, should a village so request.

3. There will be costs associated with meeting the legal requirements for ensuring that pay and benefits are equalized for sworn staff coming from different departments into a consolidated department. However, these costs can be offset by efficiency

gains noted in Section 4, and be effective management of department costs in future years. In fact, as discussed in Section 5, there is credible evidence to show that the costs of consolidated departments do decrease after the one-time first year costs have been absorbed.

4. There may be major disagreement in the community about who should be the Chief of a consolidated department, and how that person should be selected. This issue will need to be directly addressed by the Consolidation Commission, and there is probably no easy answer unless current potential applicants work out a satisfactory solution among themselves. Since the town-wide Police Commission (described above) would have hiring and firing authority, it would be up to Police Commission to ensure that an appropriate testing and hiring is used and the best candidate for the job is employed. It is critically important to remember that the five communities CGR studied who have had successful consolidations all agreed that the first Chief of the new department was critical in making it successful and building community support for the concept.

5. As discussed in Section 4, it is possible that total costs might go up for the consolidated department, at least in the first year due to one-time transition costs. However, strict attention to costs by the Consolidation Commission during the planning phase should ensure that the community understands and is willing to accept the costs of the new department, whether they be higher or lower than current costs, in order to achieve the benefits that will come from the consolidated department.

6. Currently, as described in Section 3, in 2006 there were 7 officers who worked full-time in one department and part-time in another department in the Group, and 3 officers who worked part-time in two different departments in the Group. Clearly, the officers who worked full-time in a consolidated department would no longer have the opportunity to work part-time in that department, and it is unclear whether or not the 3 officers who worked part-time in two different departments currently would be

able to work the equivalent hours in the consolidated department. Thus, these officers would need to find part-time work in another department outside of the new consolidated department.

7. As noted above, there are advantages to New York Mills moving from New Hartford dispatch to Oneida County Dispatch. However, a negative consequence may be that the Town of New Hartford will be financially affected by this move, and issues for providing proper coverage in the portion of New York Mills that is included in New Hartford would need to be addressed. The Consolidation Commission would need to resolve these concerns.

8. A minor operational issue is that staff in existing departments will have to adjust to a single department-wide set of policies, procedures and one common information and data system. Current variations found in the current departments would have to be eliminated.

9. A final important perception issue will need to be addressed by the Consolidation Commission – what to name the consolidated department, and how to retain the individual identity of the villages (if the Commission finds that is important). Various solutions were proposed to CGR during our interviews. No doubt these solutions will be suggested to the Commission. While these are important issues, it is useful to reflect that similar issues have arisen in every town-village police consolidation undertaken to date. This may be more difficult for the Whitestown Group because this consolidation involves five separate jurisdictions, with five separate names. However, surely the community can come up with creative and reasonable solutions to these questions that will be inclusive of the entire community as well as the individual jurisdictions.

SECTION 7 – NEXT STEPS

This report presents a factual basis for the community to use as a common starting point for deciding whether or not to move

forward with consolidating the five police departments currently operating within the town of Whitestown. Based upon the experiences of other communities who have consolidated their police departments, a logical series of next steps for the town and four villages would be as follows:

*1. Determine
community consensus*

Community leaders need to recognize that the consolidation process will likely take one to two years. The process was formally initiated when the elected leaders of the four villages and the town agreed to participate in the study that resulted in this report by CGR. The next step needs to be a process to determine whether or not there is a community consensus to move down the path of consolidation, based upon the findings in this report.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has prepared a booklet outlining a recommended planning process for consolidating police services¹⁰. The IACP has designed a two-phase planning approach. The first phase is a facilitated retreat to explore the potential of consolidation to gauge existing support for consolidation and engage leaders in building support for moving forward. Assuming the first phase results in an agreement to proceed, the second phase is a series of round tables, built around a formal study (which this report provides), to involve the public, civic leaders and police officers to discuss and resolve, in general terms, consolidation implementation issues.

The IACP process is one framework for determining the community consensus for moving forward. Other models could also be followed. The important point is that the elected leaders of the villages and town need to determine how to assess the community's reaction to the findings in this report, and determine whether or not to move forward.

¹⁰ **Consolidating Police Services, An IACP Planning Approach**, International Association of Chiefs of Police, May, 2003

2. Appoint a Consolidation Commission

If it is determined that there is a community consensus for moving forward with consolidation, the village and town leaders should appoint a Consolidation Commission. This Commission would identify and resolve all the operational, procedural, cost and personnel issues discussed throughout this report. The Commission should ensure that its process is designed to encourage public input in order to build support throughout the community for the new consolidated department. The Commission's work may take six to nine months. At the end of that time, there should be complete financial and operational plan for dissolving the existing departments and creating the new consolidated department, as well as draft of the Intermunicipal Cooperation Agreements between the villages and the town, and whatever agreements are appropriate between the Village of New York Mills, the Town of Whitestown and the Town of New Hartford. CGR recommends that the Commission have approximately 7-11 members, including an elected representative from each of the five jurisdictions and a small number of volunteers from the community-at-large. A commission larger than that is likely to become unwieldy.

3. Aggressively Seek Transition Cost Grants

CGR recommends that one of the first tasks for the Commission should be to develop a realistic estimate of the one-time transition costs associated with the consolidation. The final detailed costs need not be developed until the end of the process. However, if the Commission can quickly identify a solid estimate, one of the municipalities should take the lead and apply for grants to cover the estimated transition costs. One likely source of a grant to support consolidation costs would be New York State Shared Municipal Services Incentive (SMSI) grant program. The grant application deadline for 2008 grants is currently projected to be late October, 2007. If the Group misses that target, it may be possible to obtain other grants from New York State, since one of Governor Spitzer's top priorities is to support consolidation of local government structures where doing so benefits local communities. Any grant funding would reduce the cost to local

taxpayers of consolidating the five departments and make it more cost effective to the local community.

4. Approve Intermunicipal Cooperation Agreements and Set a Start-up Date

Once the Consolidation Commission has developed a plan that resolves the issues, and developed a proposed set of Intermunicipal Agreements, the boards of the villages and town should collectively finalize the Agreements and set a date for dissolving the village departments and creating the new town-wide department. If desired by the boards, or required in response to a petition, the public referendum on the plan needs to be held before the plan is put in place.

5. Appoint a Police Commission to Oversee the New Department

At approximately the same time that the final agreements are signed and a start-up date is identified, the town should appoint a Police Commission to oversee the creation of the new department. In particular, the Police Commission would be responsible for selecting the new Chief of Police for the consolidated department. The timing of the selection of the Police Commission, and the membership, would be as recommended by the Consolidation Commission. Per CGR's discussion with an attorney from the New York Department of State, the State Attorney General issued Opinion 97-18 which states that a Town Board may, by local law, increase the number of police commission members beyond the three specified in Town Law Section 150. Thus, it appears that the town could appoint each of the village mayors to the Police Commission, along with one to three representatives from the town at large. This would help ensure that the specific interests of the villages are represented on the Police Commission.

Conclusion

Whether or not to proceed down the path towards consolidation is a question that village and town leaders now need to resolve. That is the critical next step that will determine whether or not to appoint a Consolidation Commission. Once a Consolidation Commission is appointed, village and town leaders will have sent a strong message to the community that they are ready to move ahead and plan how to create a consolidated town-wide police department.