

# **Mt. Lebanon Police Mission Review**

Mission Review Committee:

Commissioner Matt Kluck  
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Mission Statement as Charged by the Commission on December 20, 2011:

*"To deepen the Commission and community's understanding of how the police department works, how it is organized, and how it achieves its results to keep Mt. Lebanon residents safe. The committee will also discuss how policing is changing, what are new challenges for the department, and what we are likely to see in the coming years, with the idea that the mission of the police department must be designed to meet those demands."*

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## Methodology

The Mission Review Committee met six times. One of these meetings (held May 24, 2012) was devoted to a discussion with a focus group.

These meetings served two purposes:

- To obtain information via discussion and surveys
- To review information and draw conclusions

In the course of receiving information, the Committee interviewed or surveyed the following:

- Police Officers
- Residents
- Municipal Board Members (e.g., Community Relations, Traffic Board)
- School Board/School Staff
- Municipal Staff
- District Magistrate
- Other Police Agencies from Neighboring Communities
- Director of SHACOG
- Other Criminal Justice System Stakeholders (e.g., D.A's Office, Defense attorneys, U.S. Attorney's Office, Members of the Judiciary)
- Social Services/Community Health Agencies (St. Clair Hospital, Devonshire, Asbury Heights, Outreach)
- Emergency Responders (MLFD, MRTSA)

## **A Brief History and Overview of MLPD**

MLPD Mission Statement:

***"It is the mission of the Mt. Lebanon Police Department to enhance public safety and promote the prevention of crime through innovative and proactive problem-solving techniques that foster collaboration with our employees and the community. Our focus is to deliver respectful, professional and dependable police services."***

By most accounts, the Mt. Lebanon Police Department (MLPD) was established between 1920 and 1924. As the municipality grew so did its police department and its complement of personnel once peaked at 47 sworn officers. In 2012, the Mt. Lebanon Police Department is now made up of 44 sworn officers and 81 full and part-time civilian employees, providing comprehensive police and safety services to a densely populated first ring suburban community with a population of 33,000. On a daily basis, three thriving business districts, a 329 bed acute care hospital and numerous other health care providers create a bustling environment that attracts shoppers, patients and visitors to Mt. Lebanon, in numbers well above our permanent community in residence. Eight elementary schools, three middle schools, three high schools and numerous day care facilities are located in Mt. Lebanon. The excellent reputation of our area schools continues to draw new families to the community. The officers and employees of the MLPD appreciate what we have here in Mt. Lebanon, and remain dedicated to protecting our citizens and preserving public safety. To ensure the judicious exercise of discretion in the public's interest, and to determine the best course of action among often competing interests, the MLPD recruits, hires, trains and supervises the most capable officers and employees it can.

### **Selection/Hiring Process**

The majority of our police officers come to the agency with varying levels of experience with other police departments, though MLPD is one of few area departments that do not require Act 120 certification as a police officer before they can be hired. We believe that quality candidates can be certified and trained after hiring, and we do not wish to eliminate excellent candidates who simply have not yet completed Act 120 certification. The MLPD does require all prospective police officer applicants to hold a Bachelor's degree or higher before they are hired. With the exception of various federal law enforcement agencies, no other Allegheny County police department has a similar requirement, nor do very few agencies across the Commonwealth.

For the last few years, the department has been conducting entry level testing in conjunction with other municipalities in the South Hills Area Council of Governments (SHACOG). In August 2011, for example, approximately 180 applicants participated in physical and written testing administered by SHACOG. Those passing the physical testing and scoring above 80% on the written test were invited to participate in oral interviews with a three person panel made up of a law enforcement executive (Deputy Chief or Chief); a Mt. Lebanon resident who has exhibited a high level of interest in community affairs; and a person with significant experience in Human Resources and/or Personnel issues. The make-up of the panel, to include representatives of the community outside the department, reflects our respect for and commitment to collaboration with those we serve.

Before any offer of employment is extended, each candidate will undergo an exhaustive background investigation to determine suitability for police employment. Unlike many other police departments, we use experienced detectives from our own department to conduct these background investigations. The MLPD believes that quality personnel are the keystone of a professional police organization, and the time and effort to vet potential employees, the agency's most precious resource, pays dividends for decades in the future.

Educational incentives in the form of tuition reimbursement are offered to all employees of the MLPD. At this moment, 11 of MLPD's 44 officers hold Master's degrees in a variety of law enforcement or public administration-related fields.

## **Training**

New technologies, new court decisions, new police equipment, new statutes, and new criminal activities are just some of the reasons why training for Mt. Lebanon's police officers doesn't end once they have gained initial certification. Mandatory in-service training must occur every year to maintain certification, including legal updates, firearms qualifications, first aid, CPR and other subjects mandated by the state's Municipal Police Education and Training Commission (MPOETC). MLPD's commitment to training goes far beyond these minimum requirements, however; each officer attends at least ten additional days of in-service training on a variety of law enforcement topics selected by department administrators, in consultation with our employees. Beyond those training sessions attended by all officers, individual officers are selected to attend out-service training on a myriad of subjects, the details of which are outside the scope of this report. Many of these out-service opportunities are of the "train the trainer" variety, and attendees bring back expertise to train all officers in areas like defensive tactics, TASER, various firearms' courses, baton, and crisis intervention. As a result of the department's ongoing commitment to superior training above and beyond that received by the majority of police agencies, the MLPD maintains its reputation for excellence and quality personnel. In addition, the value of training opportunities for MLPD officers as a recruiting tool for police recruits and veteran officers from other agencies cannot be overestimated, and is often remarked upon when candidates are asked about the origins of their interest in MLPD employment.

## **Supervision**

The benefits of training are twofold. Officers can increase or refresh their knowledge, skills and abilities, and by doing so become better able to protect themselves and the community. Beyond that, training protects the municipality and our taxpayers from the consequences of liability in the form of "failure to train" allegations in civil actions against Mt. Lebanon, when accusations arise of misconduct or malfeasance in the course of their duties. Similarly, MLPD's attention to leadership development pays off by providing selected personnel with a higher level of police supervisory skills to guide subordinates faced with complex decisions, in situations where competing interests do not often lend themselves to easily discernible "black and white" solutions.

The current practice of the MLPD is to anticipate supervisory positions vacancies. Ideally, before officers are promoted into these positions, they will have attended

supervisory training course, to include Penn State University's POSIT (Police Supervisory In-service Training), POLEX (Police Executive Development) or similar training. Knowledgeable supervisors are the backbone of a police agency, and ensure department policies are adhered to, even at 3 a.m. They ensure officers are accountable for their actions, and guide their consistent decision making to reflect the goals and objectives of the agency.

Since supervisors serve to bridge the gap between agency values and the actions of our officers on the street, it is critical that they are available outside "regular" business hours. Unlike many area police agencies, the MLPD schedules knowledgeable supervisors on every shift. While these Watch Commanders must perform many ancillary administrative tasks in the course of their duties, they are primarily problem solvers whose presence guarantees consistent professionalism, 24 hours a day.

### **Structure of MLPD**

The MLPD is divided into two Divisions (please refer to the organizational chart). The Operations Division is overseen by a Deputy Chief of Police, and the Support Services Division (overseen by a Deputy Chief of Police in the past) is currently supervised by a Lieutenant. The Operations Division is in turn split between Field Services (AKA Patrol) and Special Services, which is composed of Traffic Services, Investigative Services, Crime Prevention, Parking Enforcement and the Crossing Guard Unit. The core of the Mt. Lebanon Police Department is our Patrol Unit, made up of 32 uniformed police officers who provide 24 hour, seven day-a-week service. Crimes in progress, initial investigations, traffic crashes, domestic disputes and suspicious persons are just a few of the categories of calls that our patrol officers respond to in the course of their shifts. A Watch Commander holding the rank of Lieutenant supervises each shift. Each shift is staffed at all times by a minimum of 4 patrol officers (in addition to the Watch Commander), though some shifts may see more than four working at one time. Under the current provisions of the labor contract, it takes 6 police officers to schedule one patrol officer 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. To field the minimum of 5 officers per shift, including the Watch Commander, the department needs at least 30 patrol officers.

As noted above, the Special Services Section is made up of five specialized units supervised by a MLPD Lieutenant. Two of those units, Parking and Crossing Guards, are composed of civilian full and part-time employees. The other three units provide specialized police services above and beyond those provided by most other regional departments. This allows the MLPD to maintain a greater level of specialized services and expertise that other departments must often seek from larger agencies (e.g., the Allegheny County Police). By incorporating these specialized services in-house, not only do we enable our officers to develop well-rounded comprehensive police skills while serving in these units, we also ensure the quality and availability of the specialized services our citizens receive.

The Investigative Services Unit (ISU) is staffed by three detectives (in addition to the Lieutenant supervising the Special Services Section) and conducts follow-up investigations of serious crimes that occur in the community. Though all three of the detectives are generalists and can and do conduct any type of investigation, each detective focuses on their particular area of expertise: narcotics, juvenile crimes, and property crimes/burglaries. The ISU Supervisor reviews all crimes for "solvability" – if solvability factors indicate additional investigation may prove fruitful, the case is assigned to one of

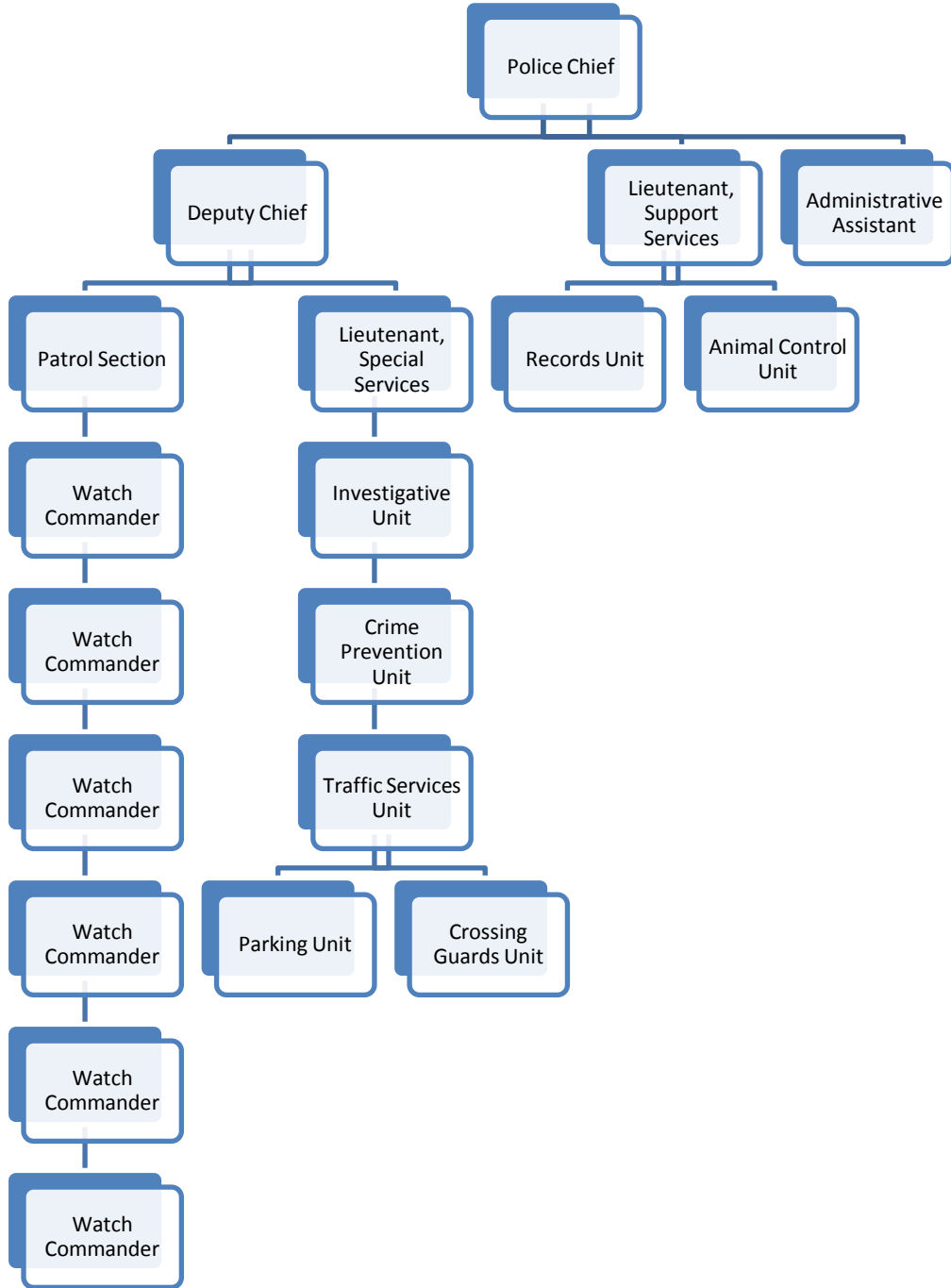
the detectives, and the detective is responsible for locating and interviewing victims, witnesses and suspects; processing crime scenes for physical evidence; arresting offenders; and preparing cases for prosecution. At times, if a case requires a particular set of specialized expertise or investigative resources beyond the capabilities of the MLPD, the ISU will coordinate with other county, state or federal law enforcement agencies to bring these assets to bear in Mt. Lebanon.

The Traffic Services Unit (TSU) consists of two police officers who focus on traffic enforcement crash investigation, driver education, commercial vehicle and DUI enforcement. Though all MLPD patrol officers are expected to conduct aggressive traffic enforcement activities, TSU officers are able to concentrate on these issues as they generally are not called upon to respond to general calls for service. They can dedicate their time to traffic safety issues without being called away to domestic disputes, burglar alarms, or preliminary investigations. In the past two years, we have attempted to decrease TSU officers' involvement in administrative matters to allow them more time to conduct enforcement activities and to proactively analyze traffic survey data, seeking potential problem locations and acting upon them before traffic complaints are brought to our attention. The TSU officers still do spend significant amounts of time responding to citizens (and Commissioners') traffic complaints and administering traffic safety grants, programs and answering requests for traffic safety information.

The Crime Prevention Unit (CPU) is made up of two officers whose primary focus is community outreach and safety education. These two officers prepare and conduct school safety programs, senior citizen education programs, the Citizens' Police Academy and various other community events. They represent the most visible links between the police department and the community, and play a critical role in our mission by teaching people to adopt safe practices in their daily lives to avoid being victimized by crime.

MLPD's second major component, the Support Services Division, includes the Animal Control Unit, which is administered by the MLPD but provides animal control services to eight member communities throughout the South Hills, and the Records Unit. The Records Unit is responsible for processing police reports, payments of any fees, applications for permits and the overnight parking list. In addition to oversight of these two units, Support Services is responsible for department information technology, fleet and facilities management, media relations, payroll and attendance, equipment inventory and acquisition, department budget preparation and emergency management liaison.

# Mt. Lebanon Police Department Organization Chart





## Regional Leadership

The MLPD is regarded by peer agencies as a leader in municipal law enforcement. Other police departments routinely contact the MLPD for assistance with policy development, training initiatives and advice regarding equipment acquisition. Examples of MLPD's leadership role include:

- Serves as grant administrator for the Mt. Lebanon Area DUI Sobriety Task Force, overseeing checkpoints and roving patrols for ten South Hills communities.
- The SHACOG Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) is the progeny of the former MLPD Special Response Team (SRT). The 32 members of the CIRT, drawn from many of the 18 SHACOG municipalities are led by two MLPD officers who serve as team commanders. CIRT responds to critical incidents throughout the South Hills and is also called upon to assist other regional tactical teams.
- In the technology arena, the MLPD hosts a server that supports Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) traffic for 60 agencies in six counties. Though some of the same services are provided by Allegheny and surrounding counties free of charge, many agencies continue to pay a fee to Mt. Lebanon because of our reputation for dependable technology support.
- The MLPD also took the lead and coordinated a grant application for ten Allegheny County police agencies, which will soon be able to participate in an information sharing project.

MLPD's leadership role plays a critical part in cementing interagency relationships throughout Southwest Pennsylvania and beyond. MLPD personnel have developed a reputation for "playing well with others" and being willing to assist other agencies when requested; this reputation pays dividends when we seek assistance from other agencies in return, in the form of information, criminal intelligence or personnel.

## MLPD's Future

If the Mt. Lebanon Police Department is to remain a law enforcement leader, it must continually look down the road and anticipate changes in technology, demographic trends, and the economy. Below are some of the global and national developments that may have local consequences in the future:

1. Internet Crime -Technology will not only affect the way police do business, but it will also affect how criminals ply their trade. The internet and the vast amount of information now easily available is a boon to investigators, but it has also been a goldmine for sexual predators, stalkers and those would perpetrate criminal scams and frauds of all varieties. Obviously, what used to be the purview of specialized computer crimes investigators is now a set of skills that all police officers must possess, and so training needs will accelerate in this area. Because the internet knows no geographic boundaries, however, investigations and prosecution of offenders will remain problematical. In response, police may have to take a more preventive posture and increase our efforts to educate our citizens to the perils of the internet. To best

serve our schoolchildren and our senior population, future crime prevention efforts should concentrate on awareness building within these vulnerable groups.

2. Aging Population - Throughout the world, health care is improving and people are living longer. On the bright side, older people are less likely to commit violent crimes. They are more likely to have accumulated wealth, however, and thus are more prone to be targeted for victimization by financial criminals. Again, this will call for additional training of police officers in financial crimes, and proactive efforts to educate our elderly population of the risks. Obviously, Mt. Lebanon has a substantial percentage of elderly residents, and a relatively affluent population. As a result, we may be likely to see the effects of this trend sooner than many other municipalities.

3. Civil Disorder - Political divisions both at home and abroad appear to be creating increasing levels of incivility and hostility. Offshoots of the recent Occupy Wall Street groups may grow larger in response to economic turmoil, and in the short term, upcoming national elections may spur protests at the offices of local political officials. The Pittsburgh G-20 event in 2009 highlighted the need for cooperative training and exercises among regional police agencies, as civil disorder may quickly overwhelm the resources of typical small Allegheny County departments. Although the MLPD upgraded training and policies in regard to civil disorder in the run-up to the G-20, equipment upgrades are still needed.

4. Economic Conditions - a declining economy could affect rates of home ownership in Mt. Lebanon. A higher percentage of rentals in our community will likely equate to changing demographics. Fewer residents with ties to the community may mean less willingness to cooperate with police (e.g., reporting crimes, cooperating with police investigations). Similarly, an economic decline in surrounding communities could result in increasing crime rates overlapping into Mt. Lebanon.

5. Consolidation of services - Because of the threats posed by decline in surrounding communities, we have a stake in the quality of police services provided there. As municipalities struggle to meet their individual demands for services, they may be forced to consider mergers/consolidations. Whether or not Mt. Lebanon chooses to participate in these cooperative efforts will be a political decision. Local residents may justifiably question whether such cooperative arrangements will show real financial benefits to this community. What cannot be overlooked, however, is the potential impact of declining property values in some surrounding municipalities on our own. Leaders may have to decide if long term cost-savings and other advantages of consolidation are worth some short-term discomfort.

6. Police contracts and retention of quality personnel - If fiscal crises do not abate, police personnel costs will undoubtedly be a focus of cost cutting recommendations. Unless police salaries keep pace with peer agencies, recruiting retention issues will increase. The use of part-time officers, civilianization of positions, and use of civilian volunteers to offset any proposed reductions in force may be considered, but municipal officials must take into consideration the effect of such initiatives on the quality of MLPD services.

7. Terrorism/Homeland Security/Militarization of policing- Terrorism remains a threat to the homeland. If terrorists begin to actively target and attack so-called "soft-targets" in the United States (for example, a Beslan-type attack on an American school), the face of American policing will radically change. We will likely see the militarization of policing on the local level, and proponents of "Broken Windows" or community policing will be silenced. Given such a nightmarish scenario, U.S. citizens may be more willing to sacrifice civil liberties in exchange for security enhancements.

8. Changing demographics- As immigration increases, both legal and illegal, the ethnic and racial makeup of Mt. Lebanon's population will change. Obvious issues such as increased language and/or cultural awareness training will become more of a priority for our officers, and greater efforts may have to be made to positively reach out to communities whose cultures(s) do not encourage contact with the police. Greater diversity in Mt. Lebanon may also create challenges for law enforcement as we are asked to mediate cultural differences in the community.

9. Traffic congestion - our community purports to be a "safe walking community." Current volumes of vehicular traffic in the community challenge this concept, as many commuters (both home grown and transient) do not share the love for the inconvenience associated with schoolchildren crossing busy arterials during rush hour traffic. To add to the chaos, many of our own residents fail to comply with school and municipal policies designed to find a balance between the competing interests of commuters, merchants, parents of school-age children and residents. If traffic congestion continues to increase, as the rate of growth of communities to the south of Pittsburgh suggests it will, we may eventually be forced to recognize that we cannot easily accommodate all these various interests.

10. Research-based policing- in the last few years, we have witnessed interesting innovations in technology that have created excitement about new methods of deploying police personnel, particularly in police records management systems and predictive policing. Empirical data has replaced tradition and inertia to drive staffing and deployment decisions, and the most progressive agencies have combined real incident data with research as to "what works" in crime prevention. Unfortunately, on a local level, the fiscal decision to move dispatching operations to the county 911 center has erected real obstacles to MLPD's ability to capture accurate, timely incident data. These obstacles, combined with the fragmented nature of municipal policing in Allegheny County (i.e., more than 130 local agencies), make it unlikely we will see the fruits of these innovative technologies in the near term.

### **Categories Researched**

- Departmental Strengths
- Current Departmental Challenges
- MLPD's Future: Anticipated Changes and Challenges as a Result of Technology, Demographic Trends, Crime Trends, and Economics
- Hiring and Retention
- Officer Training
- Economic Overview
- Community Relations

## Conclusions

The 2012 Mission Review of the Mt. Lebanon Police Department (MLPD) was undertaken to promote a better understanding of the Police Department's mission, organization, strengths and weaknesses, and to identify challenges faced by the MLPD now and in the future. Following a series of meetings to discuss the police department's mission and operations, the Mission Review Committee surveyed residents of Mt. Lebanon to determine the community's opinion of police services in the community. An additional survey was conducted among MLPD employees. On May 24, 2012, a focus group meeting was held among external stakeholders, including representatives from various criminal justice, social service and community health agencies, other emergency responders, school staff, municipal board members and residents.

Generally speaking, the 2012 Mission review revealed high levels of community satisfaction toward its police department. The review also suggested that Mt. Lebanon police officers take pride in their department and in their service to this community. Among external stakeholders, the MLPD is held in high regard for its responsiveness, its professionalism, the quality of its personnel and its commitment to service-oriented policing. Focus Group attendees were hard-pressed to identify significant weaknesses or threats to the MLPD. Both internal and external stakeholders cited the culture of professionalism in the MLPD and its role in maintaining traditional high standards of service and professionalism.

Several stakeholders recognized that future economic pressures could potentially impair the department's commitment to training and its ability to continue to provide preventive and educational programs. Others noted that the department's emphasis on hiring quality personnel and providing superior training and equipment to those personnel, especially in the technology arena, sets the MLPD apart from many other police agencies. Focus group attendees cautioned against the temptation to reduce or eliminate funding in these critical areas. Several group members expressed concern over and stressed the need for training and preparedness to counter drug-related crimes. Based on feedback garnered via the community survey and the focus group meeting, it appears the department could make a more concerted effort to educate our citizens as to the day to day practices and procedures of the department. If the reasons behind certain tactics or procedures used in the day to day operations of the department are better understood by Mt. Lebanon residents, this improved understanding might offset misinterpretations of police actions, and thus promote better police/community relations.

The Mt. Lebanon Commission is grateful to all those who assisted in the course of this Mission review by providing candid feedback, constructive criticism and recommendations to improve the operations of the Mt. Lebanon Police Department. We are particularly appreciative to those Mt. Lebanon residents who took the time to answer the public survey. Your participation was and will continue to be essential to ensure that all our municipal services are responsive to the needs of the community.

## SUMMARY OF CITIZEN RESPONSES to the MLPD Mission Review Public Survey

Since one of the cornerstones of the MLPD mission is community collaboration, the Mission Review Committee believed it was imperative during the course of this review to determine the character of the current relationship between the Mt. Lebanon community and its Police Department. In particular, the Committee wanted to know the community's opinion as to what the police department's priorities should be, and whether or not the police department was meeting community expectations. The Mission Review Committee decided that a community survey would be instrumental in answering these questions. The Committee also believed that such a survey might provide a window into how the community felt the department might improve its operations.

On April 9, 2012, 1000 letters were mailed out to randomly selected residents of Mt. Lebanon. These residents were given two options to access the survey instrument and respond: either on-line via a link provided in the letter, or by mailing in a paper copy of the survey that accompanied the letter. A self-addressed stamped envelope was included with the paper survey. The majority of respondents chose to return the survey via mail. Respondents were asked to return the surveys no later than April 27, 2012. All survey responses were anonymous.

On-line survey responses were captured on the "Survey Monkey" website. Paper surveys required manual entry of survey responses. Upon receipt of mailed-in surveys, municipal staff manually entered responses on Survey Monkey; however, since some paper respondents failed to answer every question as required in the survey directions, the system would not permit staff to enter data beyond the omitted answer(s). To resolve the problem, when staff encountered a survey response that omitted an answer to a particular question, they were directed to enter N/A for any answers that provided this answer option, or to enter "NO ANSWER" in the text block for answers requiring a written answer. Some questions (for example, question # 6) however, would not permit an N/A entry; as a result, these surveys could not be entered manually.

Of the 1000 surveys mailed, 172 respondents fully completed the survey by the closing date of April 27<sup>th</sup>. 62 respondents submitted partial responses that precluded manual entry, but the results of their partial responses are included in this summary (but not in Appendix B, the Survey Monkey MLPD Community Survey Summary). 19 surveys were returned to the municipality with "no forwarding address." A number of additional surveys were returned by mail weeks after the survey closing date: these surveys were destroyed and the response data was not captured nor retained.

The following pages provide a summary of citizen survey responses.

**Question # 1 - Have you or a member of your household had any interaction with the Mt. Lebanon Police Department in the last three years?**

Yes = 59.9 %

No = 40.1 %

232 answers (2 skipped the question)

**Questions # 2 - If you answered YES, please indicate the nature of your contact:**

Victim of a crime = 4.9%

Witnessed crime = 2.5 %

Arrested = 0%

Involved in traffic crash = 6.2 %

Stopped for traffic violation = 13.2 %

Requested information from police = 4.5 %

Called police for assistance = 21.8 %

Public event = 6.2 %

Not Applicable = 33.7 %

Other = 9.9 %

31 did not answer; some provided more than one answer

**Question # 3 – Based on your interaction with the Mt. Lebanon Police Department (MLPD), please rate the MLPD in the following categories:**

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A	rating average*
Service	112	40	15	6	8	34	4.36
Courtesy	109	42	14	7	12	32	4.28
Respect	105	42	17	7	12	34	4.24
Followup	63	27	10	5	12	91	4.03
Response Time	94	36	14	2	1	66	4.50
Results	80	34	11	9	9	69	4.20

**Question # 4 - Please indicate to what degree you feel safe in Mt. Lebanon:**

**Extremely safe = 43.4 %**

**Very safe = 47.8%**

**Moderately safe = 7 %**

**Slightly safe = .01%**

**Not at all safe = .01%**

**Question # 5 - Do you believe Mt. Lebanon Police Employees treat people fairly?**

**Extremely Fair = 29.2%**

**Very fair = 48.6%**

**Moderately fair = 14.6%**

**Slightly Fair = 2.8%**

**Not at all fair = 4.7%**

**Question # 6 – In respect to other police departments with whom you have had interaction, is the Mt. Lebanon Police Department:**

**Excellent = 45.0%**

**Very Good = 39.2 %**

**Good = 10 %**

**Fair = 3.1 %**

**Poor = 2.6%**

**Other =**

**Question # 7 – What is the biggest police-related problem in your neighborhood?**

Traffic Congestion = 12 %

Traffic violations = 37%

Crime = 4.6%

Juvenile issues = 7.4 %

OTHER = 38.9%

**NOTE - \* of 84 respondents who indicated “OTHER”, 30 cited traffic issues in their comments on the biggest neighborhood problem. Combined with those respondents who indicated either traffic congestion or traffic violations as the most significant problem, a total of almost 63% of the respondents identified traffic-related issues as their “biggest problem.”**

**Question # 8 – If you have a problem with an employee of the MLPD, how confident are you that you can contact the department and be treated fairly?**

Extremely confident = 25.2 %

Very Confident = 35 %

Moderately confident = 25.7 %

Slightly confident = 8.3%

Not at all confident = 4.4%

**Question # 9 – Do you believe the MLPD is interested in solving community problems as well as enforcing the law?**

Extremely interested = 32 %

Very interested = 41.9%

Moderately interested = 17.7%

Slightly interested = 6.5%

Not at all interested = 1.9%

**Question # 10 – If anything, what would you change about the MLPD?**

**(Please see Appendix B for citizen comments submitted in response to this question).**



## SUMMARY OF RESPONSES to the Mission Review Internal Survey of MLPD Officers

The Mission Review Committee wanted to gain an understanding of what MLPD officers thought should be the department's priorities, what they believed to be the community's perception of their police department, their levels of job/career satisfaction, their opinion of police administration, and whether or not they received the support necessary to perform their duties. An anonymous survey was conducted of sworn MLPD police officers to help the committee make these determinations.

Officers were provided adequate time on-duty to complete the surveys on-line via the Survey Monkey site. In an effort to encourage candor from the respondents, no identifiers were required from the officers. 38 officers responded to the survey and their responses are summarized in the following pages.

QUESTION # 1 – Within the next three years, the primary focus of the Mt. Lebanon Police Department should be:

The majority of responses included references to continuing the MLPD tradition of responsive service, proactive enforcement of traffic laws, and working to build stronger relationships with the community. Many of the officers noted the need to continue to emphasize hiring quality personnel, training, and maintaining modern equipment and technology. Specific recommendations included devoting more resources to drug investigations, gaining department accreditation, and relieving Watch Commanders of certain collateral duties to allow them more hands-on involvement in patrol work.

QUESTION # 2 – The community's perception of the Mt. Lebanon Police Department is:

Almost all respondents indicated that they believe the majority of the community supports and values its police department, and appreciates the quality of our personnel and the work they do. Most officers realized that there will always be a minority of residents who dislike police officers, often based on personal encounters with officers when their own actions bring them to the attention of law enforcement. To paraphrase one officer, some residents believe we should take enforcement action against non-residents, but residents should be "exempt" from such enforcement. In spite of these exceptions, the responses indicate that officers realize the community supports them and maintains a positive image of the department.

QUESTION # 3 – In the course of your work as a Mt. Lebanon Police officer, do you receive adequate skilled supervision?

100% of the respondents stated that yes, they do receive skilled supervision. Generally speaking, officers believe that MLPD supervisors are prepared in advance for supervisory positions, are available to officers for guidance when needed, and, in the opinions of officers who have served with other police departments, are a cut above supervisors in other agencies.

QUESTION # 4 – Are you provided with adequate resources (e.g., training, equipment) to perform your duties as a Mt. Lebanon Police Officer?

95.2 % of responses stated: “Yes.” Respondents emphasized various out-service training opportunities, implementation of a new standardized “Core training” program, and continuing the practice of monthly in-service training as evidence of the department’s superior commitment to training. Officers also agreed that the department equips its officers well and makes timely repairs or replaces equipment when needed. One point of concern in regard to equipment was cited: inadequate radio signal in certain areas of the municipality.

QUESTION # 5 – As a Mt. Lebanon Police Officer, are you afforded adequate opportunities for promotion and/or specialization?

85.7 % of respondents answered “Yes.” Most respondents felt that adequate opportunities for specialization exist, and some officers pointed out that this department affords more specialized unit opportunities than most in the area. Respondents felt there was not as much opportunity for promotion, but many officers cited their realization that the size of the department limited these opportunities. Several officers felt that more weight should be given to “career achievement” in the promotion process, rather than promotion test performance.

QUESTION # 6 – In the course of your employment as a Mt. Lebanon Police Officer, are you treated fairly by Police Administration?

100% of respondents answered “Yes.” Respondents indicated that they are treated fairly and respectfully by Police Administration. Police Administration recognizes that the success or failure of the agency rests upon its personnel, and mutual respect is shown between the officers and administrators. Officers stated that the department’s professional leadership will not allow “politics” to interfere with their ability to perform their duties without fear or favor.

QUESTION # 7 – True or False: the Mt. Lebanon Police Department demands honesty and ethical behavior from its police officers.

100% of the officers responding indicated “YES.” Respondents generally believe that the MLPD culture, from selection to training to formal department discipline if needed, emphasizes high standards for honesty and integrity. Peer pressure and the example of Department leaders sent the message that the MLPD will not tolerate lapses in these areas.

QUESTION # 8 – Do you look forward to coming to work every day?

90.5% of the respondents answered “Yes.” Most of the officers cited their love for police work in general and their pride in the MLPD in particular. Many cited their excellent co-workers as the reason they enjoy coming to work. Some of the reasons cited for why they do NOT like to come to work included the difficulties of shift changes, of trying to balance family life with a 24 hour rotating schedule (e.g., trouble sleeping during the day while the rest of the world goes about its “normal” activities).

QUESTION # 9 – True or False: Serving as a Mt. Lebanon Police Officer has enabled me to meet my career expectations.

90.5% of respondents agreed with the statement. Most officers expressed gratitude for the opportunities available here with the MLPD that are not available with other regional police departments (e.g., specialized units). Officers who stated that they had not yet achieved their career goals indicated that they expected to have the opportunity to do so in the future.

QUESTION # 10 – Is there anything else you would like to add in regard to the Mt. Lebanon Police Department?

Given the open-ended nature of this question, we cannot easily summarize the responses. Many of the officers reiterated their pride in being part of the MLPD, and reiterated their belief that the MLPD is the finest police agency in the region, owing primarily to the quality of its personnel. One recurring point of concern in the answers was that the police department did not have the full support of the municipal administration, and that the PD is sometimes looked upon as a “necessary evil.” Other officers believe that community leaders do not always appreciate how highly regarded the MLPD is in the eyes of the broader law enforcement community. In general, the responses to question # 10 again illustrated the pride that MLPD officers have in serving the Mt. Lebanon community.