

PROSECUTOR'S TASK FORCE ON REGIONALIZED POLICING



FINAL REPORT

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SECTION I.

A. INTRODUCTION

This Final Report is the cumulative effort of an exceedingly diverse group of individuals who were tasked with the mission of evaluating the model of a single policing agency for municipalities in Somerset County. Could such an organization be developed? Will such an initiative provide a cost savings to the overburdened taxpayer? If feasible from a financial perspective, can such an agency qualitatively be more efficient and responsive to the needs of the citizens of Somerset County? These were the primary issues that the Prosecutor's Task Force on Regionalized Police set out to address.

Generally following the format of a traditional research document, the parts of this report include:

SECTION I

- A. Introduction: acquaints the reader with the research topic.
- B. Hypothesis: identifies the main issue to be investigated. In this case the hypothesis is "The consolidation of police services into a single agency in Somerset County will yield a significant savings and a more efficient police agency."
- C. Background and Research: provides the reader with the historical framework of the topic to place same into a proper context.
- D. Review of Existing Conditions
- E. Prosecutor's Analysis

SECTION II

Subsections A-G are considered the "Results." This section includes the actual work produced by the each of the seven subcommittees to include any and all attachments relative to their inquiry.

This document has designed in a format believed to be the most appropriate method of addressing the problem at hand. It is the stated hope of the entire Task Force that the citizen stakeholders and elected officials, who will serve as the ultimate decision makers, will be better equipped to make an informed decision as to whether such a regional initiative is best suited for their respective communities.

SECTION I

B. HYPOTHESIS

“The consolidation of police services into a single agency in Somerset County will yield a significant savings and a more efficient police agency.”

SECTION I

C. BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH

On February 17, 2011 the Prosecutor's Task Force on Regionalized Policing was officially established at a meeting convened and presided over by Somerset County Prosecutor Geoffrey D. Soriano, the Task Force Chairman. Since that initial meeting the Task Force's six original subcommittees met diligently to evaluate their assigned charges which included the development of, among other things, a governance system representative of participating municipalities, a strategy for the expansion and standardization of communication and records management, an organizational structure for a countywide police force, an integrated and uniform standardization of operations model, a plan for reconfiguring "host facilities" to house personnel and equipment, and a methodology to allow for the complete and uniform integration of labor contracts. The task has been substantial and perhaps better characterized as gargantuan. A little over one year after first convening, the Task Force's mission is complete. Its Final Report is herewith delivered to the Board of Chosen Freeholders for ultimate consideration by the twenty one municipalities which comprise Somerset County.

Before addressing the substance of the final report, it is appropriate to review and memorialize the steps which predated the creation of the Task Force. This brief retrospection will serve to remind the reader of and memorialize the very dynamic and vital steps that brought the Task Force together.

During the county freeholder board election campaign in 2006, citizens voiced their collective concern that the historically high level of quality of living in Somerset County was being adversely altered by an emerging property tax crisis. The criticisms included contentions that there was an overabundance of duplicate services throughout the county. In 2007, the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the Somerset County Municipal Managers' Association initiated an effort to identify and examine specific areas that presented opportunities for the delivery of improved municipal services at a reduced cost to taxpayers. A regionalized police department was one of the twelve areas of opportunity which were identified.

Following a summit hosted by Somerset County in May of 2007, a plan of action to initiate an examination of regionalizing policing services was formulated. Municipal Managers met with their

governing bodies to advise of the initiative. The County Prosecutor was briefed, and his input relative to a future course was sought. The Prosecutor then met with police chiefs from local departments throughout the county to inform them of the impending investigation. The Freeholder Board authorized necessary funding for the procurement of consultants to assist with the venture, and, thereafter, the Freeholders and the Prosecutor worked jointly to design a Request for Proposal and, thereafter, screen, select, and retain a consultant. Thomas Banker, a consultant in management, finance, systems, and development with extensive experience in the public sector, was chosen.

From that point, the examination of regionalized policing has advanced through 3 separate phases. Phase 1 consisted of a rudimentary feasibility analysis in which Mr. Banker, among other things, undertook to (1) determine the total cost of law enforcement in Somerset County and (2) identify regionalized law enforcement agencies with demographic profiles similar to that of Somerset County. A comparison was then performed. The Phase 1 analysis, which was completed in 2008, revealed a potential for significant savings. It was determined, at that point, to move the regionalized policing investigation forward.

During Phase 2 Mr. Banker conducted a very detailed audit of the organizational structure of each of the 19 police departments in Somerset County. He then aggregated the operational cost of all 19 departments (it should be noted that two Somerset County police departments are without a police department and receive some form of coverage from the New Jersey State Police). Using figures current to 2010, Mr. Banker estimated that the aggregate cost for law enforcement by the 19 local departments was \$104.1 million. It was during Phase 2 that Mr. Banker developed a regional policing prototype. Once again, comparisons were made taking into account essential operational and financial elements of the current method of policing and the Banker prototype model. This is an important distinction because “efficiency” was a significant issue to be addressed in this initiative.

Phase 2 culminated in a presentation to a relatively large group of individuals which included the County Prosecutor, elected officials, municipal managers, supervisory police officers and other law enforcement professionals. That presentation occurred on December 9, 2010, and it featured Mr. Banker explaining his model for countywide police services in Somerset County. Utilizing his model, Mr. Banker hypothesized that a savings of \$17.8 million could be achieved (this size saving would be realized only once the budget of a county-wide force was “stabilized”, and it did not include savings from reduced facility, equipment and overhead requirements).

Some key points in the Banker Model included:

- Three (3) Police Regions or Precincts
- One (1) agency head (Chief) and three (3) Deputy Chiefs
- A supervisor to officer ratio of 1 to 4 plus
- A reduction in the number of sworn officers from 627 to 541
- An emphasis on “civilization” (sworn officers not performing civilian jobs)

During the December 9th presentation, it was announced that the investigation into a county-wide police force would next proceed into a third phase during which the Prosecutor’s Task Force on Regionalized Policing would be formed and assigned the duty of examining Mr. Banker’s model in detail and determining whether that model or a variation thereof could effectively and efficiently deliver policing servicing on a countywide basis. Prosecutor Soriano would serve as Chairman and Dr. Richard Celeste would serve as Vice-Chairman.

By the middle of December, 2010, a committee was formed to assist with the construction of the Task Force, precisely identify its overall mission, and outline respective charges and guidance for each of its subcommittees. This committee was named the Specialized Work Action Team (SWAT).

In addition to the Task Force Chairman and Vice-Chairman, SWAT members included then-Freeholder (now Assemblyman) Jack Ciattarelli, County Administrator Michael Amorosa, Sheriff Frank Provenzano, Chief William Stahl (ret.), former County Counsel Thomas Miller, and Mr. Banker. The composed Mission Statement espoused that the Task Force’s duty should be “[t]o provide a valuable and essential service to our municipalities, by researching the feasibility of improved operational and financial performance in law enforcement to be shared and delivered on a regional basis. In doing so, empower policymakers to make an informed decision specific to their policing agency.”

Based upon the recommendation from Mr. Banker, the Task Force would be broken down into six subcommittees which included:

1. Governance Structure and Municipal Contracts
2. Expansion/Standardization of Communications & Records Management

3. Organizational Structure, Crime Analysis, Scheduling & Deployment
4. Standardization of Operating Procedures
5. Reconfiguration of Host Facilities
6. Integration of Labor Contracts

In late January of 2011, Police Benevolent Association (PBA) and Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) representatives were invited to attend a meeting with Mr. Banker. It was important to SWAT that the Task Force's duties be undertaken with transparency and inclusion, particularly toward the rank and file police officers who would be the largest group of employees directly impacted by any proposed consolidation. The union representatives' private audience with Mr. Banker, indeed, consisted of a spirited discussion, and it was clear to the SWAT members present that, first, the union representatives had much to offer to the feasibility analysis and, second, their participation in the analysis was critically necessary.

By early February, the Task Force membership was assembled. Each Mayor of the 21 municipalities in Somerset County selected two individuals to serve on the Task Force. 12 positions were reserved for and ultimately filled by representatives from the police unions which were chosen by the unions, themselves. Finally, there were 15 at-large selections made by the Chairman and Vice Chairman with the "advice and consent" of the SWAT Team. These at-large selections consisted of individuals who possessed some specific expertise that could be offered to the investigatory effort.

With the Task Force membership fully constituted and subcommittee assignments made, the February 17, 2011, initial meeting mentioned at the outset hereof was attended by nearly every Task Force member and all members of SWAT. Those present were told, by various speakers, that the Task Force was now prepared, through its subcommittees, to investigate the feasibility, viability, and practicality of a countywide police force. In doing so, Mr. Banker's model would be utilized as the starting point from which the subcommittees would embark on an effort to test the Banker Model's hypotheses and conclusions and offer variations or alternatives to same. Task Force members were instructed that their function was not merely to give rubber stamp approval to the Banker Model. In fact, subcommittee members were specifically advised that it was possible to conclude that regionalization was not feasible; however, comprehensive reasons underlying any such conclusion were expected.

In addition, important themes from Phase 1 were reiterated for purposes of reinforcement at the Task Force launch event. Those themes included:

- A recognition that each municipality would, itself, decide whether or not to join any regional agency
- An acknowledgement that all 19 police departments were providing great service
- A commitment that the county would not become involved in any power play such as who will pick the leadership
- An assurance that there would be no layoffs to accomplish any reduction in force
- An emphasis that Inclusion and transparency are the key guiding elements in the process

Each subcommittee was given a specific charge in an effort to determine (i) whether a county-wide police force would be capable of being implemented; (ii) whether a countywide police force would be capable of continued functioning; and (iii) whether a countywide police force would be capable of achieving and sustaining financial savings. In addition and equally as important, each subcommittee was responsible for exploring enhanced operational possibilities which could lead to greater efficiencies in law enforcement.

There was one other very critical instruction given to the subcommittees. Each was told to assume that all 21 municipalities in Somerset County would join the regionalized policing initiative. While perhaps presumptive and overly optimistic, the members of SWAT were of the firm belief that asking members of the Task Force to consider the effect of a decision not to join by one or many municipalities would over complicate an already highly complicated undertaking.

Shirt sleeves were effectively rolled up, and the chairmen of the subcommittees were implored to assemble their groups and get down to business at once. As the subcommittees met and the analyses got underway, it became abundantly clear that the task at hand was, indeed, gargantuan. An initial deadline of July 1, 2011, for the completion of subcommittee reports proved to be overly optimistic, and an extension to the end of the year was necessitated.

As the study ensued, progress was not always the case. There were times when certain subcommittees believed that they had made final decisions on essential components of a countywide

force—most notably and for example, the number of police precincts into which the county would be divided—when, in fact, further dialogue resulted in changes. In addition, there were instances in which subcommittees were asked to suspend their work pending pivotal decisions by other subcommittees. On occasion, two or three subcommittees met together to address some overlapping concerns. In all, tremendous hours were logged by Task Force members exploring the pros and cons of a consolidated law enforcement effort.

As the subcommittees approached the home stretch, it was abundantly clear that because of their assigned tasks none of the six focused on the financial savings that regionalization could offer—no doubt an essential factor driving any decision to join a consolidated effort and, indeed, the principal factor in moving the investigation from Phase 2 to Phase 3. In the middle of November, 2011, SWAT decided that a 7th subcommittee would be formed to address the budgetary aspects of the model which the six original subcommittees were crafting.

The membership of Subcommittee No. 7 consisted predominantly of municipal administrators and veteran police chiefs. Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli was simply a natural fit to chair the new team. His accounting background and intimate knowledge of the initiative since its inception were viewed as key ingredients for the effective leadership of this newly formed team. In addition, Robert Swisher, a partner with the accounting firm of Suplee, Clooney & Company, was enlisted for his expertise to guide the group through the crunching of numbers. Equally as important to understanding the finances of a countywide police force and the savings which could result is the forecasting of what impact the current 2 percent cap on local tax increases will have on any given municipal police department. The proverbial refrain of “doing more with less” can only sustain for so long as doing everything with nothing is, obviously, unrealistic.

The subcommittee reports included herein are the very reports composed by the subcommittees altered only for grammatical correction or stylistic consistency. The Task Force Chairman and Vice-Chairman were of the opinion that the voices of the subcommittees were to be heard absent editorial modification. The subcommittee members, after all, consisted of a representative cross-section of those either most knowledgeable of or most affected by the far-reaching change in law enforcement service delivery proposed. Their ideas, concerns, proposals, and conclusions should be available for consideration without adulteration from those who are charged with guiding the Task Force.

Kudos and a loud thank you go out to each and every member of the Task Force. The tireless work of many has resulted in a product—this Final Report--which the municipal leaders and citizens of Somerset County can utilize to determine whether to join a regionalized police department.

SECTION I

D. REVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

A vital part of this Final Report is a Review of Existing Conditions (REC), which for purposes herein, is defined as the current state of affairs regarding the law enforcement community in Somerset County. Such a review should seek to detect certain trends or patterns which might be considered departures from previous years' accepted practices.

At or near the top of any such list are the layoffs of sworn personnel which have taken place in several communities over the last few years. In fact, according to the New Jersey Uniform Crime Report, between 2009 and 2010, the aggregate number of sworn police officers in Somerset County dropped from 630 to 587. This is a new occurrence in Somerset County. Combine these layoffs with the failure or inability to fill vacant positions resulting from natural attrition and the result could very well be diminished and over-burdened workforces. Today's ever-repeated mantra of "doing more with less" is a legitimate and logical response to fiscal restraint. At some point, however, safety, efficiency and quality of service will be gravely compromised by continued reductions. This occurrence is just one of the reasons why the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders decided to analyze the potential qualitative benefits and economics of scale which could be provided by a regional policing agency.

In addition to a loss of sworn personnel, a reduction in clerical and support staff members (civilian employees) has occurred in some local departments. In a seemingly ironic twist, in certain municipalities efforts to retain as many sworn officers as possible have resulted in diminished civilian employee staff which, in turn, has resulted in sworn officers performing those task that are traditionally performed by civilian employees. The notion of an officer with a gun and a badge performing purely administrative or clerical task runs contrary to any models of efficient and effective deployment of personnel.

The diminishing personnel levels at local agencies have had adverse effects beyond municipal boundaries. With frequency these days, local departments are finding it exceedingly difficult to assign personnel to the countywide Organized Crime and Narcotics Task Force

(OCNTF) and other countywide initiatives which, in many instances, are mandated by Attorney General Directives. In fact, a request for the deferral of a given department's obligation to assign an officer to the OCNTF has evolved to be a relatively common occurrence. The rotation schedule now in place calls for three municipalities to assign one officer full-time to the OCNTF for six months in duration. With this cycle, municipal participation amounts, essentially, to once every four years. Such a schedule can hardly be characterized as overly demanding. However, being able to assign a police officer to a countywide task force without unduly impacting localized enforcement responsibilities or further stress overtime budgets has, for many departments, proven unmanageable. At assignment time, the all-too-often declaration from local agencies is that, while they wish they could help, they simply cannot.

A comparable development is markedly apparent for local officer participation as instructors or students at the Somerset County Police Academy and the other training programs. Less municipal manpower has nearly disabled police departments from sending to these educational components of law enforcement qualified police instructors as well as less experienced officers who could certainly benefit from the offered training.

Along similar lines, community policing—a dynamic concept in law enforcement which rose to prominence in New Jersey approximately two decades ago is being slowly and methodically dismantled by fiscal constraints. When traditional policing efforts failed to reduce crime rates, law enforcement looked to a “community partnership” to prevent crime. Foot patrols, Juvenile Officers, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) and Gang Resistance Education And Training (G.R.E.A.T) programs, and School Resource Officers (SRO's) were all a part of that push. Some of the initiatives were, in fact, mandated by the directives included in the Statewide Narcotics Action Plan which was issued in 1988, revised in 1993 and continues in place today. Recently, in what appears to be a grave step backwards, some local police departments have been forced, due to layoff and budget cuts, to terminate D.A.R.E. and G.R.E.A.T. programs. SRO's are being pulled out of high schools with greater frequency. With reduced budgets and the loss of manpower, local police departments are slowly gravitating

back to reactive law enforcement (i.e., patrol response to calls for service) and away from community policing (i.e., proactive community policing aimed at preventing calls for service).

The operational constraints and layoffs which have been experienced of late not only take a toll on the local departments, but they can have devastating effects on the well-being of the men and women who serve our citizens as sworn officers. Recent studies have focused on anxiety and loss of morale which result from layoffs and reduced salary increases. The extent which job security issues affect our local officers in Somerset County has not been identified by this report. Clearly, however, constant concern about the future of one's career or the quality of the environment in which one works can generate stress. In light of the specific job requirements of police officers and the potentially treacherous situations they are apt to encounter, it would seem that those who can control the environment should strive to expedite a move away from insecurity to a reasonable sense of security.

Police officers are not the root cause of the economic problems that plague New Jersey and so many other places these days. Significant reductions in personnel (i.e., less police officers) is not the panacea for an ailing economy. The mission of this report has always been to determine whether consolidation can provide for a cost savings to citizens and result in operational enhancements.

While the noted trends in this Review of Existing Conditions certainly do not affect each and every local police department, these are some objective instances wherein the model of comprehensive and effective policing has been undermined when the pencil which inscribes the municipal budget is sharpened. While the focus of this countywide task force has been to study an organizational alternative to local policing, there should be no doubt a localized analysis running concurrently. Each of the 19 local municipalities with police departments should endeavor to acquire a firm understanding on whether, in light of existing financial conditions, it can continue the status quo and, if so, for how long. Without such an understanding, the decision to forego membership in a regionalized policing agency would be based upon incomplete information and, therefore, would appear to be flawed.

SECTION I

E. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS SUMMARY AND COMMENTARY

SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 1, GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND MUNICIPAL CONTRACTS

Subcommittee No. 1, Governance Structure and Municipal Contracts, has essentially been asked whether it is possible to develop a legally recognized governance structure for a countywide police force. This group, led by Montgomery Township Administrator Donato Nieman, embraced the formation of a “joint meeting” pursuant to the Uniformed Shared Services and Consolidation Act (N.J.S.A. 40A:65-1, et seq.), and its response—in a very matter-of-fact fashion—is in the affirmative.

Various shared services models were researched and considered, and, ultimately the joint meeting form of governance was deemed most advantageous. Joint meetings can facilitate a consolidation effort on a size and scale envisioned through a countywide force, and they offer flexibility to fashion a governing authority that would be fair to and representative of its constituent members.

In an effort to model a framework for future use, Subcommittee No. 1 has provided insight into many of the provisions that a joint meeting would necessarily address. Among other things, a rational formula for initial funding by member municipalities has been proposed. Specifically, the subcommittee has recommended that initial funding would consist of each member municipality contributing an amount equivalent to the average of its three prior year police department budgets. For a minimum period of three years after start-up, the subcommittee proposes that a two (2%) percent cap be placed on increases in the annual budget so as to insure predictability of cost to joint meeting members.

Representative management with an executive board was found to be best suited to direct the overall operations of the joint meeting. It has been concluded that employee legacy costs should best be left the responsibility of the original employing municipality.

At the outset of its investigation, subcommittee members gave thought to drafting a model joint contract complete with terms and conditions required by the governing statutory scheme. As work ensued, members concluded that an actual contract was unnecessary and, in fact, could be counter-productive. Municipal officials considering the merits of joining a joint meeting might very well object to “pre-decided” components of a model contract. Ultimately, the prevailing sentiment was that the vital particulars of a formal agreement should be left for decision by the actual participants.

As a bottom line, legislation is currently in place to promote and facilitate the joint operation of police services by municipal entities. The Governance and Municipal Contracts Subcommittee has confidently recommended that the Uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act (in particular, the Joint Meeting Sub Article) can and should be utilized to accomplish the formation of a countywide police department. The task of effectively forming a joint meeting is not without challenge. Issues and collateral considerations relating to the duration of the joint contract (i.e., the length of the consolidated relationship), the withdrawal of constituent members, and the inclusion of municipalities that desire to join after the initial start-up are, no doubt, weighty matters. Bold leadership, the likes of which has positioned Somerset County amongst New Jersey’s best locations to reside and do business, will be necessary to bring participating municipalities together and effect consensus as to critical terms and conditions of a joint meeting contract.

SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 2EXPANSION/STANDARDIZATION OF COMMUNICATION AND POLICE RECORDS
MANAGEMENT

Director of County Department of Public Health & Safety William Stahl served as the chairman of Subcommittee No. 2, Expansion/Standardization of Communication and Police Records Management. Director Stahl, a former Warren Township police chief, has overseen the expansion of the County Communications Center during the course of the last two years.

The dire need to pare down municipal budgets, the Federal Communications Commission's standards requiring narrow band-width frequencies for radio systems by 2013, and the Freeholder Board's chosen pricing model have all precipitated a robust interest in shared police dispatch services amongst municipalities throughout the county. The County Communications Center has served to accommodate that interest—all at no expense to those municipalities receiving dispatch services by it.

Among other duties, County Communications currently provides full-service dispatch to seven of the county's 19 local police departments. Two municipal departments are scheduled to migrate to county dispatch, and a number of others are in discussions to do so.

Each of the other Task Force subcommittees has examined its respective subject matter with a focus on whether it could be accomplished. The inquiry of Subcommittee No. 2 was significantly different. Expansion was already underway, and it was being funded through the county budget. The investigation was not whether expansion could occur or whether the costs could be calculated but, rather, what should be the methodology to facilitate and expedite said expansion.

In its report, the Expansion/Standardization of Communications and Police Records Management Subcommittee has addressed the technological and personnel needs to enable police dispatch throughout the county and fully integrate a management system for police

records. In addition, necessary physical alterations to the Communications Center are identified. Budgetary figures are offered for all components, and a total budget for equipment, personnel, and renovations has been projected at \$8,113,693.00.

Subcommittee No. 2 addressed the subject of communications from a highly technical perspective and with a very no-nonsense approach. Make no doubt; however, the value of a quality communication system to support any consolidation initiative cannot be understated. Leadership in the proposed new agency must be aware of the critical nature of the communication process, a process that is often underrated and underappreciated.

Indeed, proper communication is at the heart of policing. This is the case whether a single officer is speaking with a distraught citizen or an entire communications center is dealing with a widespread emergency. The process is straight-forward. A message is formulated, transmitted and received. Yet this simple method is truly the lifeline for citizens and officers alike.

In addition to proper technology, the human resource component of this process requires focused consideration. Tele-communicators are encumbered with an awesome amount of responsibility. A failure in the handling of a single call can have dire consequences. Leadership in this initiative should make it a high priority to attract and develop skilled tele-communicators. As with sworn personnel, quality training and the documentation thereof will go a long way towards achieving that goal.

It would appear certain that the consolidation of communications through the County Communications Center is inevitable. A unified records management system should logically proceed in unison. Operational enhancements like the utilization of global positioning systems to dispatch patrol units for the most efficient responses to calls for service, regardless of precinct boundaries, are certainly worthy of pursuit.

While Subcommittee No. 2 has laid out a competent plan for the expansion and standardization of communication and records management, the fact of the matter is that it is likely to occur whether or not regionalization of policing does.

SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 3, ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, CRIME ANALYSIS, SCHEDULING AND
DEPLOYMENT

Subcommittee No. 3, Organizational Structure, Crime Analysis, Scheduling and Deployment, undertook the weighty task of building the organizational model for the proposed countywide police department. Under the leadership of Hillsborough Township Police Chief Paul A. Kaminsky, Subcommittee No. 3 was given specific instruction to design an organization that was “full service” in nature (i.e., ideally sized and structured) utilizing the extensive experience and vast knowledge of the many police executives who comprised the bulk of its membership.

After undertaking a detailed crime analysis of each of the 21 municipalities, Subcommittee No. 3 determined that Somerset County would be best served by a five precinct plan rather than the three precinct model proposed by Consultant Thomas Banker. Identified advantages of the five precincts include, among others, quicker response times, greater patrol visibility, better potential for reuse of existing facilities, and more efficient utilization of police personnel. From an enhanced operational perspective, it has been pointed out that police response to a call for service originating in any given precinct could come in the form of a patrol unit assigned to an adjoining precinct. By way of example, a call for service from the southeastern portion of Precinct 1 could—if tactically expedient—be made by a patrol located in the northwestern section of Precinct 2.

Having established the geographic boundaries of the five precincts, Subcommittee No. 3 next examined widely used and generally accepted police patrol staffing models to develop precise staffing levels and tables of organization for each of the five precincts as well as for the Administrative Office of the Chief. In total, the proposed county force includes 606 sworn officers and 62 civilian employees. These numbers, too, represent a significant departure from those included by Mr. Banker in his model (namely, 541 sworn and 36 civilian). In fact, it should be pointed out that, as of March 19, 2012, the aggregate number of sworn officers throughout

the local departments in Somerset County totaled 592.¹ At present, there are 112 civilian employees. Thus, the “full-service” force proposed by Subcommittee No. 3 necessitates the hiring of 14 more police officers and the reduction of 60 civilian employees.

The composition of the sworn personnel proposed, however, is dramatically different than that which currently exists when looking at aggregate numbers in our 19 local departments. The model proposed by Subcommittee 3 calls for a reduction of 43 superior officers and sergeants and an increase of 55 in non-ranking officers. In addition to improving supervisory ratios, the staffing model provides a potential for significantly increased patrol function availability. Subcommittee No. 3 recognized that the staffing models relied upon and the formulas employed are based upon certain assumptions. While all calculations provided proved to be valid as to mathematical computations, any staffing determination will, ultimately, need to be responsive to changing crime trends and demographics. Accordingly, Subcommittee No. 3 acknowledged that the calculations relative to patrol officers represent a “gauge” for start-up.

After examining the advantages and disadvantages of several scheduling models, Subcommittee No. 3 settled upon the proposed implementation of a Pitman Schedule, a 12-hour schedule commonly used in law enforcement, for the Patrol and Traffic Divisions. So as to provide adequate coverage around-the-clock, four squads with rotating shifts have been designed. Members of the precinct detective bureaus would work 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Finally, utilizing population density and crime rate data, Subcommittee No. 3 identified suggested patrol zone coverage for all five precincts. Detailed sector maps and patrol zone descriptions are also included as a recommendation as the subcommittee offers its recognition that minimum number of officers per shift as well as patrol zones must be fixed by the Chief and precinct commanders of the countywide department.

¹ The total number of sworn police officers in Somerset County is, in fact, a very dynamic number with retirements, new hires, and layoffs occurring continuously. Recent calculations have placed the sworn personnel number at either 592 or 594. Subcommittee reports have utilized either of these figures; however, the statistical significance is immaterial for the purposes of this study.

The organizational model offered by Subcommittee No. 3 is the result of a very thorough and extremely detailed analysis aimed at (i) acquiring an acute understanding of the present challenges which must be met by a countywide police force and (ii) developing a structure that will successfully meet those challenges. The conditions which have served to form the basis of the proposed model are clearly dynamic; they will no doubt change with time. Moving forward, leadership of a regionalized department will, indeed, need to reanalyze those conditions in order to meet future challenges.

SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 4, STANDARDIZATION OF OPERATING PROCEDURES

Subcommittee No. 4, Standardization of Operating Procedures, was led by William Parenti, the Chief of Police of the Borough of North Plainfield and the President of the Somerset County Association of Chiefs of Police. The subcommittee's mission was to determine if a single set of Standard Operating Procedures could replace the 19 different operating procedure models currently in existence at local police departments throughout the county. In a very straightforward fashion, Subcommittee No. 4 answered the question in the affirmative and has recommended that standardized procedures meet guidelines specified by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA).²

Simply stated, Standard Operating Procedures are put into place to assist organizations and their employees with the attainment of defined organizational goals. For a policing organization, standardized procedures represent a system by which a department can be effectively controlled and directed on a day-to-day basis. The idiom "standard operating procedures" is the collective reference to the policies, procedures, orders, rules and regulations that are promulgated and adopted by the department and then disseminated to all members of the department who are responsible for the adherence to same.

As Subcommittee No. 4 points out, the need to act decisively and consistently in an honest and businesslike manner is of paramount importance in law enforcement. Professionalism amongst law enforcement officers is integral to cultivating and retaining the confidence of the citizens which the officers serve and protect. Standardization of policies and procedures for all sworn officers throughout the entirety of a proposed countywide policing force is clearly necessary.

Each of the 19 local police departments have "particularized situations" which stem from geographic conditions or specific recurring circumstances. This certainly cannot be ignored. Subcommittee No. 4 recommends that, in addition to a standardized set of rules and

² With its report, Subcommittee No. 4 provided a complete set of CALEA guidelines as well as the General Orders and Rules and Regulations which are in place in a number of local agencies which have received accreditation. While useful to the subcommittee's analysis, those documents have not been included in this Final Report.

regulations, each precinct in the regional department should have an addendum which articulates unique operational tasks.

While CALEA issues model guidelines for the most essential areas of operation, it is estimated that the regional police department will require between 400 and 500 Standard Operating Procedures—the bulk of which pertain to routine tasks. The compilation of a Policy and Procedures Manual has been described by Subcommittee No. 4 as a “monumental undertaking”. Accordingly, with regard to implementation, it is recommended that the Chief of the regional force and the Policy Project Coordinator (suggested to be a Deputy Chief) be appointed at least one year prior to the force’s startup date. It is suggested that a consulting firm be retained to assist with the endeavor. The one year time frame, it is estimated, is necessary to compile the Policies and Procedures Manual—the actual compilation of standardized procedures. Once the Manual has been finalized, an additional 18 to 24 months would be necessary to obtain accreditation.

Officer adherence to standardized operating procedures is imperative for many reasons, perhaps the most significant of which involves required compliance with the standards of care established by a myriad of statutory law, court decisions, and mandated directives. Those standards are dynamic, and, these days, change frequently. For this reason, Subcommittee No. 4 has addressed the need for proper training of officers (both initial and continued), compliance inspections to assure adherence to the standards, and a review and revision of the policies and procedures to keep pace with change. Through these essential steps, actions and acts of omission can be within guidelines and exposure to civil liability can, thereby, be minimized.

From the formation of the policy committee right on through to the required annual review of the Policy and Procedures Manual, Subcommittee No. 4 has mapped out a clear and concise route to be followed to standardize operating procedures. While standard operation is, perhaps, not the most stimulating component of law enforcement, it is clear that standardization is vital to the success of a police department—particularly one as large as one proposed through this regionalization initiative.

SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 5, RECONFIGURATION OF HOST FACILITIES

Subcommittee No. 5, Reconfiguration of Host Facilities, was tasked with the development of a model to analyze and recommend the reconfiguration of “Host Facilities”, that is facilities to house a proposed countywide police force.

The subcommittee, which was chaired by Bedminster Township Mayor Robert Holtaway, began by recognizing that existing police facilities throughout the county could not be relied upon to facilitate the three precinct model designed by Consultant Thomas Banker. Simply put, no single existing police facility could be utilized to house a precinct operation, the size of which is called for under the Banker model. That recognition led Subcommittee No. 5 to examine the pros and cons of constructing all new facilities versus utilizing existing police facilities to house the main precinct headquarters with satellite offices to house components throughout the precincts.

Subcommittee No. 5 compiled a detailed inventory of existing police facilities of each of the 19 municipal departments in Somerset County. Using this inventory, a master spreadsheet was generated, and subcommittee members were able to compare the facilities using criteria such as (1) the existence of canine facilities, shooting ranges, and a local Office of Emergency Management; (2) the number of holding cells, men’s and women’s lockers, parking spaces, and interview rooms; and (3) the accessibility of the facility during peak hours or times of flooding, to name just a few. With a methodically developed firm understanding of existing police space, countywide, the subcommittee then moved forward with the design of its model.

Using the staffing levels and functional components supplied by Subcommittee No. 3, Organizational Structure, Crime Analysis, Scheduling and Deployment, Subcommittee No. 5 calculated the square footage requirements for the “people space” and the “function space” of each precinct and for the Office of the Chief. Ultimately, it was determined that the countywide force designed by Subcommittee No. 3 required a total of 123,980 square feet. The

inventory master spreadsheet aforementioned revealed that there existed a total of 147,123 square feet of police facility space throughout the county.

After completion of the necessary square footage calculations, individual members of Subcommittee No. 5 were assigned to undertake comprehensive inspections of existing facilities on a precinct-by-precinct basis for Precincts 1 through 4. As for Precinct No. 5, the subcommittee felt confident that the existing Franklin Township facility could accommodate the precinct operations which are proposed to consist of Franklin and South Bound Brook Borough. The Office of the Chief, it was determined, would require the construction of a new facility. For Precincts 1 through 4, these facility inspections assisted with the identification—in each precinct—of existing reusable space and existing space which would be useable after completing renovations as well as new space which would result from the construction of new facilities.

Written reports were compiled setting forth integral findings from the Precinct 1 through 4 facility inspections. In addition, the facility summary reports include recommendations as to useable space, renovations, and construction necessary for precinct operations (said reports are included with the full subcommittee report in Section II of this Final Report). For the most part, the subcommittee has recommended a combination of the reuse of more than one existing facility in each of the precincts and the construction of new facilities. This configuration model results in a split of policing functions throughout various facilities in Precincts 1 through 4. Finally, utilizing the host configuration model, the members of Subcommittee No. 5 outlined “Worst Case”, “Best Case”, and “Expected Case” scenarios for the total annual cost of “regionalized” police space with bottom lines for each calculated at \$7,023,796 (worst), \$4,778,860 (best), and \$5,007,682 (expected).

As with the other subcommittees, the final report of Subcommittee No. 5 has raised issues that likely will serve as the subject of a great deal of debate moving forward as municipalities consider the regionalized policing model. For example, an integral component of the subcommittee’s total annual cost formula is the amount of “rent” to be paid by the county force to the participating municipalities for the use of police space. Rent is included in the cost

formula whether the municipal space is used by the regional department or not. Although expressly acknowledging the rent component which Subcommittee No. 5 has proposed, Subcommittee No. 7, Finance, chose to exclude it from its financial analysis for reasons expressed in its report. Another rather apparent “internal conflict” amongst the members of Subcommittee No. 5 pertains to the splitting of precinct operations (e.g., patrol, traffic safety, and detective bureaus) at separate locations. While some members firmly believe that intelligence sharing, management, and supervision would best be served through a single headquarters, others placed greater importance on the potential for increased police presence throughout the entire precinct, the opportunity to service “walk-in” citizens, and the cost effectiveness of reusing existing municipally owned buildings. Deliberation on these topics and others seems inevitable, and a resolution of the issues is clearly necessary.

SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 6, INTEGRATION OF LABOR CONTRACTS

The members of Subcommittee No. 6, Integration of Labor Contracts, were led by William H. Horton, Mayor of Peapack and Gladstone Borough. From the start, this subcommittee's task was a tremendously heavy lift. Designing a strategy for the comprehensive integration of labor contracts for approximately 600 supervisory and rank and file police officers presents unwieldy challenges. Compounding the difficulties are a myriad of controlling legal requirements and the essential need to avoid disincentives which would either (i) drive away the experienced professionals who have loyally and efficaciously served local agencies or (ii) result in a morass of litigation. Through its exceptionally broad and in-depth investigation and analysis, Subcommittee No. 6 has fashioned a recommended course of action which strives to promote fairness for the existing workforce and, at the same time, afford the proposed regionalized department the opportunity to reduce salary and benefits costs for new police hires.

From the outset of the county's regional policing investigation, there has been an avowed commitment that any designed reduction in force would occur only through attrition. Thus, unlike police consolidation initiatives being proposed in other parts of New Jersey, police officers in Somerset County will not face layoffs. Furthermore, the Uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act (N.J.S.A. 40:A65-1, et seq.) requires the recognition and preservation of seniority, tenure and pension rights of each and every full-time officer employed by the constituent municipalities of a regionalize department.

With these factors being the integral components of the collective bargaining landscape in which Team 6 had to work, the mission of designing the framework of an agreement that would illicit support from labor and pose financial attraction to the prospective members of the regional body was, understandably, challenging. By proposing a two-tiered organization, Subcommittee No. 6 has struck a balance which has wonderful appeal.

Existing police officers will be offered continued employment with the regionalized department as Division Two employees. The very real prospect of continued layoffs would be avoided. Moreover, the existing officers would lose no rights or benefits under their collective bargaining agreements until termination or retirement, and they would take advantage of across-the-board wage increases given to Division One employees. From an employee perspective, existing officers would, essentially, be placed in a position of compensation status quo—no worse, no better.

From the regionalized employer's standpoint, the cost of labor to the regionalized entity is, by and large, identified at the very outset. New police hires would be brought into the regionalized department as Division One employees with a collective bargaining agreement which would presumably include a base salary and benefits level in line with the existing economic climate. After the "original generation" of police officers (i.e., Division Two) passes through the regionalized department, a single division would exist.

The concept of a two division organization certainly is not perfect. However, negotiated agreements rarely achieve the distinction of being completely acceptable to either side. As the tables annexed to Team 6's report reveal, compensation (i.e., salary and benefit) levels for law enforcement officers throughout the entire county are very disparate. Asking two officers to perform the same responsibilities for different pay certainly has the potential, to say the very least, of taxing the spirit and morale. However, compensation differences are not as acute when broken down by proposed precincts (see Tables 2 – 6). Perhaps assigning the first generation of countywide officers to precincts which include their originating municipality will mitigate the potential for complications. Subcommittee No. 6 has identified a problem relating to the promotion of Division Two employees as criteria for promotion vary widely from contract to contract. This, too, is clearly another area of concern which must certainly be addressed. Dissuading qualified candidates from seeking promotions should be avoided, if at all possible.

To accomplish the regionalization of police services in Somerset County, sacrifices will most certainly need to be made. The harsh realities of continued layoffs and unfilled vacancies have been cultivated by today's mandate of doing more with less. It would appear that these

economic realities are slowly but surely forcing law enforcement in our county precariously closer to a point of crisis that other communities in New Jersey currently face. Subcommittee No. 6 has proposed a methodology to integrate labor contracts which is reasonable and fair, and it should be given no less than thorough consideration.

SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 7, FINANCE

Subcommittee No. 7, Finance, guided by the leadership of Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli, undertook a quantitative analysis of the financial aspects of the countywide model which emerged through the collective efforts of the other six subcommittees of the Task Force. Among other things, the methodology employed by this subcommittee provides each municipality with (i) a comparison of the projected cost of remaining as a stand-alone department to the cost of joining the regional department and (ii) the net savings projected to be achieved over a ten year period.

Up-to-date financial information from each of the of the county's 19 municipal police departments serves as the cornerstone of the analysis performed by Subcommittee No. 7. This data was provided by the municipalities, themselves, through the use of a template designed by the subcommittee members. After compiling the data, the subcommittee assembled seven extremely informative schedules which should provide valuable assistance, of a quantitative nature, to municipalities as they undertake to evaluate participation in the regional initiative.

Schedule 3 (Municipal Police Department Costs – Actual and Projected) sets forth actual policing costs for 2010 and 2011 for each municipality, and it provides projected yearly costs through 2023 employing an annual two percent (2%) increase. Schedule 5 (Joint Meeting Projected Cost) itemizes projected contributions to the regional department by each municipality and provides the aggregate amount of all municipal contributions (i.e., the total cost of the Agency). Schedules 3 and 5, it would seem, are critical considerations for any reasonable evaluation of whether to join the regional department.

Schedule 7 (Savings/(Deficits) For Each Municipality Joining Agency) is, indeed, another "must read". Warranting a verbatim reiteration in this summary, the net savings for each municipality for years 2014 through 2023 as estimated by Subcommittee No. 7 are as follows:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Savings</u>
Peapack-Gladstone	\$ 338,770
Far Hills	526,513
Bedminster	804,983
South Bound Brook	926,389
Bernardsville	983,417
Warren	1,309,723
Branchburg	1,419,125
Raritan	1,438,392
Bernards	1,462,774
Green Brook	1,685,737
Montgomery	1,738,155
Bound Brook	2,265,169
Manville	2,434,035
Watchung	2,562,992
Somerville	3,027,509
Hillsborough	3,736,481
North Plainfield	4,088,427
Bridgewater	4,499,012
Franklin	<u>8,645,440</u>
TOTAL*	\$43,893,043

Throughout its report, Subcommittee No. 7 provides detailed explanations as to assumptions used, projections made, and conclusions offered. With an avowed goal of

minimizing projected savings, the subcommittee's identified analytical approach has been one of "conservatism".

Subcommittee No. 7 is of the firm belief that, through participation in the regionalized policing agency, each municipality will realize net cost savings over the long-term. The determination of whether or not those savings warrant participation is, indeed, a responsibility of each municipality.

SECTION I

F. PROSECUTOR'S ANALYSIS

The defining trait throughout the history of the law enforcement community in Somerset County is that of professionalism. During his extensive tenure as Somerset County Prosecutor, Wayne Forrest often spoke of the quality of the policing services delivered by our local agencies. Prosecutor Forrest's predecessors, likewise, proclaimed the proficiency with which local police undertook to serve and protect. That our municipal police departments are second to none is a belief to which I, also, strongly subscribe.

Make no mistake, the objective of this analysis has never been to assail or condemn the local departments or the men and women who comprise same. This Task Force was designed to study an alternative; to wit: a regionalized policing agency to serve the citizens of Somerset County. From the outset, critical questions needed answers. Could, from a legal perspective, a countywide police department be formed? Would the department provide to its constituent municipalities a cost savings? Would the policing services provided be at a level equal to or better than those services being provided by any given local department in Somerset County?

If, in a purely academic and hypothetical exercise, all of the 19 departments were obligated by some mandate to consolidate within a specific time frame, I am convinced that a new, regionalized agency would be quickly organized and administered so as to ensure safety to our officers and citizens alike. This is a testament to the quality of law enforcement leadership that we in Somerset County have come to enjoy.

But no such consolidation mandate exists. In fact, an avowed assurance of this regionalized policing study has been that, if a determination was made that regionalization was viable, individual municipalities would decide, on their own, whether or not they would join the consolidated initiative. To be sure, no municipality will be forced to join a regionalized department.

How then does a municipality decide whether regionalization is the proper course? The various Task Force subcommittee reports, which are the critical components of this Final Report, speak for themselves. Through the subcommittee reports, the model for regionalization has been laid out in a thoughtful and comprehensive fashion. No doubt, there are identified issues which must be overcome. Large scale transformations are rarely seamless. More importantly, there are outstanding issues that cannot possibly be addressed until such time as there are municipalities committed to joining a regionalized agency. Indeed, the Task Force subcommittees could not possibly be expected to delve into the minutiae that are an inherent part of law enforcement and that tend to change from one community to the next.

As for these minutiae and by way of examples throughout the county, in North Plainfield Borough sixteen police officers are assigned each day to the Borough schools to maintain order at dismissal. Each morning, Watchung Borough Police patrols are assigned to follow school buses to ensure the safety of students going to the Borough's grammar and middle schools. The Franklin Township Police Department has a Street Crime Unit which targets trending crimes. The Unit accounted for approximately 1,000 arrests in 2011. In Bridgewater Township, officers are allocated to the Bridgewater Commons Mall and to the TD Bank Ballpark to deal with the assortment of occurrences that those venues present. Daily, Somerville Borough patrol officers are required to exit their patrol cars and walk along Main Street for a portion of their routine patrol responsibilities. Bernards Township offers assistance to its grieving residents by providing patrol unit escorts and related traffic control services for funeral processions.

Despite restrictive budgets and personnel reductions, many of the local police departments assign officers to provide instruction under the D.A.R.E. program to fifth graders in school districts. While a number of the departments have School Resource Officers allocated to high schools within their jurisdictions, Bernards Township has an officer act as a School Safety Officer in its middle school. Franklin Township runs a program called "Project Respect" wherein a pool of seven officers meets with senior citizens twice a week to review a variety of subjects and provide general advice. On a regular basis, the Bernardsville Borough Police Department

posts an officer at the train station for the purpose of facilitating the safe passage of upwards of 90 students who use the train for transportation between neighboring rail line communities and Bernardsville High School.

These examples can continue for pages, literally. For certain, this study has shed light on the vast array of law enforcement functions and the disparate levels of service being offered in Somerset County by local police departments to their municipal citizens. These “particularized distinctive tasks” have, over time, been woven into the fabric of the community, and the residents have become accustomed to the completion of same. Because there may be a sense of expectation attached to these tasks, they have a tendency to complicate any decision on regionalization. A regionalized force with standard operating procedures, uniform practices, and unified definitions of calls for service, it could be argued, may very well serve to eliminate the “tailored fit” in those municipalities that have or aspire to have same.

To frame the question plainly and simply: with specific regard to a countywide policing model, will shared service be less service?

Let me suggest a pathway to be followed to answer that question. The starting point, it would seem, should consist of a very open and honest discussion amongst each municipality’s elected leaders, municipal manager, executive police personnel, and schools’ superintendent. The dialogue should begin with an effort to determine whether the given municipal police department is now operating on a “thin margin” as regards manpower and associated operational costs and whether, as a consequence, the ability to provide comprehensive and effective police services has been, is on the verge of becoming, or in the reasonably foreseeable future will be undermined. The analysis provided by Subcommittee No. 7—in particular, Schedule 3 included in its subcommittee report—should be particularly helpful in this regard. Utilizing projected costs, municipal officials should be in an excellent position to assess the future impact to their local agency on a year-by-year basis. Blunt inquiries must be addressed head-on. The precise number of officers a municipality can reasonably expect to continue to maintain in future years and whether or not it can sustain its current level of public service over

the same period of time if it remains a stand-alone agency are just a few which come to mind right away.

In addition to being quantitative, determinations as to regional participation should, no doubt, be qualitative. Through this “internal review”, actual components of the policing services provided by the local department in question should be inventoried. Every particularized distinctive task undertaken by the department should be itemized, and a level of importance should be assigned to each. Once all services and tasks are identified, the focus should shift to determining, as to each, whether same can reasonably be expected to continue in the regional model and, if not, whether the local community is willing—if necessary—to forego same in order to achieve the savings that the regional model offers.

As for the reasonable expectations of the regional model, it should be noted that the total sworn personnel recommended by Team Three is very much in line with the aggregate number of sworn personnel in our 19 police departments. In fact, at present, sworn personnel is slightly less than the county mode (592 versus 606, respectively). This being the case and assuming there will be a concurrence on priority, it would seem logical that the same or similar service and tasks should be provided through a regional department.

The “concurrence on priority” aforementioned is the truly delicate element in the Task Force’s investigative mission. I expressed earlier my opinion that, if mandated, a regionalized department could be implemented and public safety would be achieved. In other words, I am completely certain that a countywide department would provide a level of service—that is, basic service—so as to assure the fundamental safety and welfare of its citizenry. With 19 varieties of policing from which to choose and considering the diversity of the local communities in Somerset County, a detailed assessment of the reasonable expectations of a countywide force is difficult, indeed. There is no assured mode of predicting exactly how the community police leadership will mold the department culture or how policing services and specialized tasks will be prioritized.

The diversity, which is a vital part of Somerset County’s communities, might tend to extinguish the notion that a single countywide force could work. After all, the rolling hills of

Bernardsville, Far Hills, and Peapack-Gladstone; the main streets of Manville, Raritan, and Somerville; and the vast open spaces of Branchburg, Hillsborough, and Montgomery do not lend themselves to an entirely uniform system of policing. Any genuine concerns over the lack of complete homogeneity across the 305 square miles of this county, however, should be allayed by the five precinct plan recommended by Team 3. The criteria which form the basis for the creation of the five precincts certainly takes into account the policing needs (i.e., calls for service) and the current policing styles (i.e., services and particularized tasks) of the municipalities. By and large, thus, those municipalities that have been grouped together in precincts possess a good number of similarities.

The assessment of reasonable expectations, therefore, need not be countywide in scope. Such an analysis becomes much more manageable when limited to the precinct of which any town is a member. Is it likely that Hillsborough Township and Montgomery Township have similar policing styles and priorities? How about Somerville and Raritan? Can the same be said for Far Hills and Peapack-Gladstone?

Again, the decision of whether to join the regional initiative has been placed firmly in the hands of individual municipalities. But does there not need to be a dialogue amongst constituent towns of any given precinct? It would seem that once a municipality's own "internal review" of policing services is complete, a reaching out to other precinct towns (or "town" in the case of Franklin and South Bound Brook) would be in order. This review outside the municipal boundaries could consist of a sharing and comparison of the results of each town's internal audit. Through this the individual municipalities can discern exactly what policing services are being provided by their precinct neighbors as well as those priorities that are in place.

Until the completion of the internal reviews and the intra-municipal dialogues, it is unlikely that individual municipalities will understand the scope of policing on a regionalized basis. Once fulfilled, these efforts should facilitate the assessment of whether the prioritized police services and particularized tasks of any given local department can reasonably be expected to continue in the regional model. In other words, it is only at that point that

municipal leaders will be in a position to forecast how police officers in a given precinct are likely to serve and protect.

In summary, the reports of the Task Force subcommittees collectively construct the regional policing model and provide the accompanying financial analysis for same. This Final Task Force Report consists of an affirmation that a countywide agency can be formed, organized, and implemented and will offer significant savings to its constituent members. However, this Report contains neither edicts nor mandates of any nature. The determination as to whether or not to join a countywide agency has been placed firmly in the hands of the individual municipalities. Thus, it is abundantly clear that the hard work of many will now serve to empower and facilitate a more personalized investigation on a municipality-by-municipality basis to determine whether the regionalization of policing in Somerset County will, in fact, move away from the hypothetical context to the status of reality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman wish to recognize the dedicated effort of all members of the Prosecutor’s Task Force on Regionalized Policing as well as the skilled services of the professionals that have provided vital assistance to the Task Force’s analysis. The guiding leadership of the members of the Specialize Work Action Team is also acknowledged and greatly appreciated. A special thank you is offered to Assistant Prosecutor Kathleen Holly for her proofreading acumen and ardent willingness to assist with the endeavor.

Indeed, a tremendous number of hours were logged, and the collaborative effort has resulted in a final report which is extremely comprehensive and will serve as a resource to many. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are, indeed, abundantly proud and satisfied that the Task Force mission has been accomplished, and, this Final Report shall serve to empower policymakers to make an informed decision specific to their policing agency.

Geoffrey D. Soriano, Chairman

Dr. Richard Celeste, Vice-Chairman