

Some Ulster agencies reluctant to answer police-efficiency survey

Commission to analyze feedback

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KINGSTON — Some Ulster County towns have refused to fully cooperate with a voluminous and detailed survey of Ulster County's police agencies to be reviewed by the county Legislature's police efficiency commission.

The 141-page survey was answered and returned by municipalities and police agencies to the law enforcement efficiency commission, which met Thursday morning.

Tasked with streamlining police activities throughout the county, the commission has gotten a cold reception from some police chiefs and elected officials who think the task is too broad, police budgets are already cut to the bone and agencies already work together effectively.

The electronic survey asked questions ranging from what police budgets were, to staffing, to the amount and types of vehicles each agency has. But some towns refused to answer some of questions, or any of them.

Ken Ronk, a commission member and the majority leader for the Legislature's GOP until January, said some supervisors didn't want all of their information out there, even though the information is already public.

"They're concerned about the possibility that one document can be used against municipalities from police unions in arbitration," Ronk said.

That reluctance made for a survey where each question was answered by a different amount of agencies. Still, Ronk said it does give members information to work with. He said he already noticed days with higher manpower because of shift changes.

Dave Donaldson, a commission member and minority leader for Legislature Democrats, said members may just request information they didn't get through Freedom of Information requests.

"It's really absurd because all that information is available anyhow," Donaldson said.

Donaldson said he needs to look over the survey more to get a better idea of where efficiencies may be found. But he already pointed to looking at getting more towns to get special prosecutors to avoid heavy overtime costs for police answering traffic summons.

The information from the survey will now be crunched and analyzed to find trends, possibly by contracting with SUNY New Paltz's Center for Research, Regional Education and Outreach. The next meeting is Nov. 25.

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