

**Town of Plainfield
Community Survey on Policing
Data and Analysis
March 13, 2022**



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Executive Summary

Plainfield has invested significantly over the past three years to establish a full-time police department. The Plainfield Select Board issued this community survey to gather residents' perceptions of the safety and quality of life in Plainfield, overall performance of the department, direct feedback about how our police department engages with citizens, and how citizens view their interactions with our police department. The objectives of the community survey are:

- To offer all adults in Plainfield the opportunity to provide their input to the Select Board on matters relating to policing in Plainfield;
- To provide the Police Department with information that can help form specific goals and objectives for addressing the policing needs of the community;

- To provide the Select Board with information to help hold the Police Chief accountable to the needs and concerns of the community.

The survey was designed by the Plainfield Police Working Group, an advisory group reporting to the Select Board, and included input from the Police Chief and Select Board members. The survey was conducted between February 14 and February 28, 2022, with the option of providing responses through a website form or via paper form. The survey was completed at no cost to the town, with time and supplies donated by PPWG members.

Plainfield adults age 18 or older were eligible to participate in the survey. 546 were invited to respond by means of letters mailed to homes, with 177 responses received (a 33% response rate). In addition to answering 21 specific questions, respondents were invited to provide open-ended feedback, and between 36 and 80 people shared multiple perspectives in each of 5 survey sections. Sharing demographic information was optional, and most respondents did. 54% of respondents have lived in town 20 or more years; 45% of respondents identify as female; 33% are between the ages of 50 and 69; and 77% identify as white.

Key Survey Findings:

Safety and Quality of Life:

The top three issues presenting the biggest challenges to safety and quality of life are 1) speeding motor vehicles; 2) burglary/theft; and 3) random sounds of gunfire. Lack of local police coverage on evenings and weekends was noted as a significant concern throughout the comments.

The vast majority of respondents consider Plainfield to be a very safe community and two-thirds of respondents said their feelings of safety have stayed the same over the past 3 years. More than 90% of respondents have not changed their activities due to concerns about crime or safety, and 98% won't consider moving from Plainfield due to concerns about crime.

Overall Performance of the Police Department:

When asked if the Plainfield Police department is addressing the top one to three problems/concerns the respondent had relative to safety and quality of life, 35% of respondents said they did not know; and 47% agreed or strongly agreed.

On the question of whether police coverage should change, approximately one-third of respondents said coverage should decrease and another one-third said coverage should stay the same. Based on comments elsewhere in the survey, it seems that the term "coverage" is interpreted in many ways, including number of hours a week

of local police on-duty time; the allocation of that time over any particular day; the allocation of that time over any particular week; and/or the number of police officers employed by the town. Given the investment in expanding the police department, many respondents believe adjustments to the work hours and shifts should be made so as to provide increased coverage throughout each week without necessarily increasing the budget.

When asked if police have sufficient funding to provide adequate protection for the town, 35% disagreed, and think there is too much funding; 25.4% agreed, and think there is sufficient funding; 17.5% disagreed, and think there is not enough funding; and 22% had no opinion/did not know.

When asked if Plainfield Police, in context of the Monday through Friday 6AM to 9PM work schedule, respond to emergency calls in a timely manner, 40% said they had no opinion/did not know, and 47% either agreed or strongly agreed. When asked if the State Police, providing coverage outside of the regular Plainfield Police work schedule, respond to emergency calls in a timely manner, 60% of respondents said they had no opinion/did not know; an equal number, 14%, either agreed or disagreed.

On the questions of whether telephone calls are answered in a timely manner and whether a complaint against a Plainfield police officer would be handled likewise, approximately 60% of respondents had no opinion/did not know. More than 60% of respondents believe the Plainfield police treat people with dignity and respect.

Based on the open-ended comments, there appears to be opportunity for deeper engagement between the Select Board, Police Chief and community on the issue of what constitutes adequate funding, how scheduling/coverage is established to maximize resources, and how decisions are made with regard to reliance on local police vs. State police.

Satisfaction with interactions with the Plainfield Police Department:

Respondents were asked to indicate satisfaction in interactions with the Plainfield Police Department over the last 36 months in these areas: 1) traffic situations (warning, citation, disabled vehicle or crash, driver assistance); 2) police involvement in medical 911 responses; 3) police involvement in fire/911 responses; 4) non-emergency calls (report a crime, suspicious activity); and 5) firearm permits (new application or renewal). The greatest number of respondents consistently indicated no interaction in any of these areas. For those who have had interactions, more were satisfied than dissatisfied.

On the questions of response time to 911 calls and calls to the police station, the greatest number of respondents (129 and 119 people, respectively) have had no interactions with the police in the last 36 months. For those who have placed calls for police service, the response time was about right or faster than expected.

Community Engagement

When asked if Plainfield Police are effectively practicing community policing, defined as a law enforcement agency working with the community to address the causes of crime in an effort to reduce the problems themselves through a range of activities, 48% said they are unsure/don't know; 36% said yes, and 17% said no.

When asked if Plainfield Police make it easy for community members to provide input about the department's activities, 50% of respondents said they are unsure/don't know; 29% either agreed or strongly agreed, and 21% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked if the presence of the Police Chief at a monthly Select Board meeting provides an adequate forum to address questions or complaints about policing in Plainfield, 65 respondents said they are unsure/don't know; 85 agreed or strongly agreed; and 27 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

When asked if the information the Plainfield Police Department provides to the community is useful to understand the goals, objectives, activities and accomplishments of the department, responses varied based on the method of information dissemination. Information published in the Plainfield Post proved to be most accessed and most useful, and this likely correlates to the demographics of the survey respondents. Select Board meetings and the Police Department webpage are less accessed or useful. Respondents provided several suggestions for how to improve both the quantity and quality of information shared by the police, as well as ideas for how to deepen community engagement.

Responses to this survey provide the Plainfield Select Board with timely information separate from, and alongside, the typical town budget development process or town meeting decisions. Survey findings will help the Select Board execute its supervision and oversight responsibilities of the Police Chief and department and will also help inform the Select Board as it grapples with general questions of public safety and quality of life in our small town. We appreciate the strong response to this survey and the thoughtful and constructive input shared by members of our community.

About Plainfield, Massachusetts

Plainfield is on the northwestern edge of Hampshire County, Massachusetts approximately 25 miles east of Pittsfield and 25 miles northwest of Northampton. According to the 2020 Census, the town has a population of 633, 21.1 square miles, 48.27 road miles, with a population density of 30 people/square mile. Plainfield's population decreased 2.31% between 2010 and 2020.

Plainfield is governed by town meeting open to all registered voters (one person, one vote). Ongoing town matters are managed by an elected three-person Select Board complemented by volunteers serving on dozens of other committees and boards. The town employs twenty people serving in central administration, health and sanitation, highway, fire, and police capacities.

Schools are regionalized, with no school facilities located within the town. There are no medical facilities. Commercial activities are very limited, with no gas stations or retail stores and just one restaurant. Service businesses include auto repair shops, tire sales and several home-based businesses offering computer repair, custom sewing/alterations, architecture, construction-related services (carpentry, plumbing, excavation), and many artisans and craftspeople.

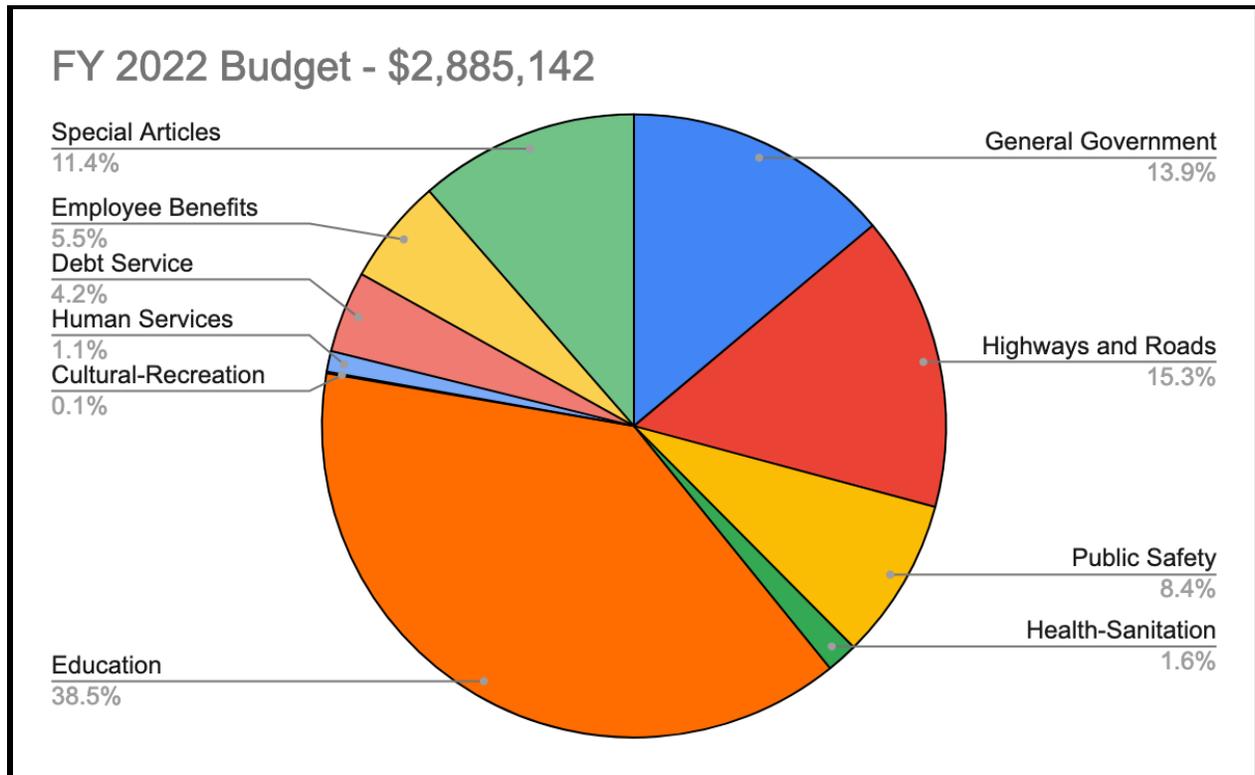
There is one marijuana growing facility with no retail sales. There is one drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility that spans property in Plainfield and Cummington, with administrative and residential buildings located in Plainfield. Several Plainfield properties are listed for short-term vacation rentals on sites such as AirBnB and VRBO.

Plainfield's demographics:

- Median Age: 51.9
- Sex: 53% male, 47% female
- Race and Ethnicity: 92% White, 4% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 1% Multi-racial
- Households: 302
- Median Household Income: \$59,375 (44% under \$50K; 31% between \$50K-\$100K; 18% between \$100K-\$200K)
- Per capita income: \$28,662
- Poverty: 6.7% (children in poverty 10%, seniors in poverty 2%)
- Transportation to work: 38.6 minutes
- Housing Units: 363 (83% occupied, 17% vacant; 82% owner occupied, 18% renter occupied)
- Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units: \$240,300

Over the past five years, Plainfield’s annual budget has increased 40% from \$2.057M (FY2018) to \$2.885M (FY2022). Revenues come from property taxes, state aid, local receipts, and other sources. The average single family tax bill is \$3,874.

Education, highways and roads, and general government represent the top three expense items. Current year budget allocations for all items looks like:



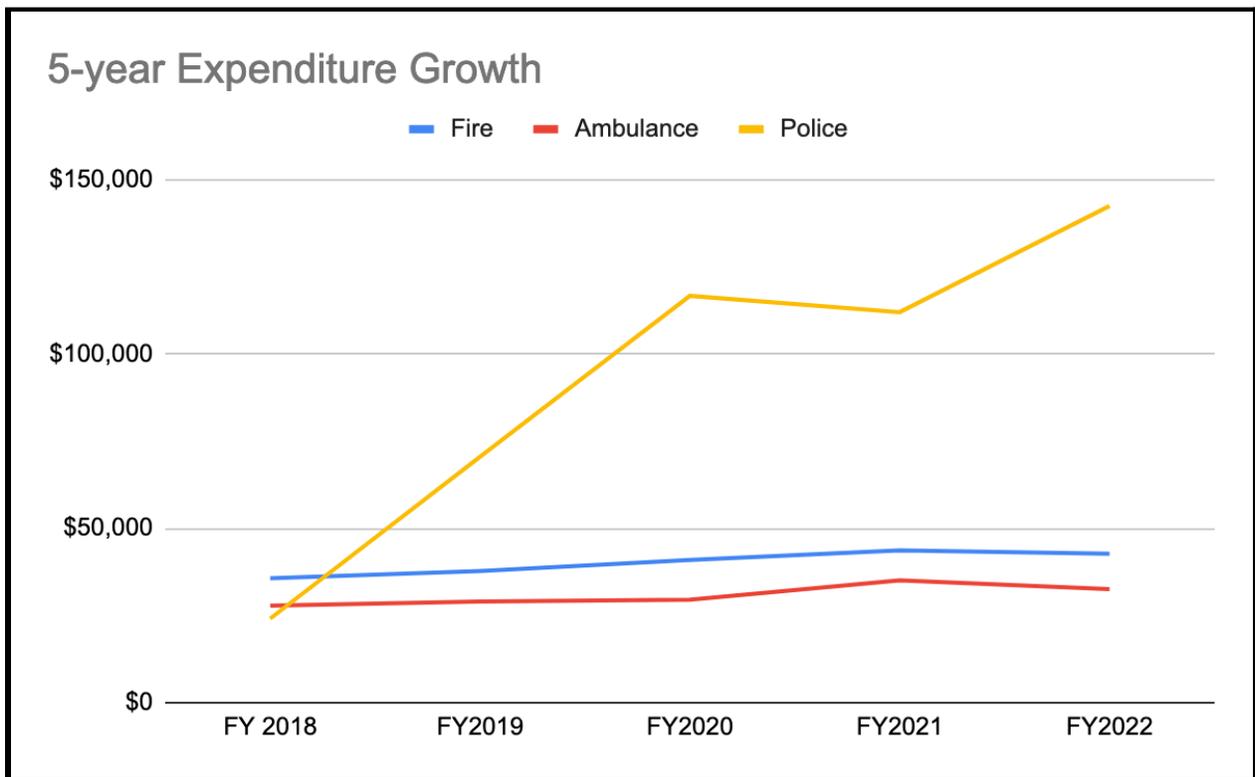
Over the past 5 years, expenditures related to public safety have risen from \$108,350 (FY2018) to \$240,472 (FY2022), an increase of 122%. Public safety costs as a percentage of total town budget was 5.27% in FY2018 and is 8.33% in FY2022.

Public safety costs include: emergency management; animal control; fire department; ambulance services; police department; building, electrical and plumbing inspection; town building alarm systems; and town-wide emergency alert communications system.

Over the past 5 years, Plainfield has increased expenditures in each of the top three areas of public safety (fire, ambulance and police), as follows:

Public Safety	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	5-Year Change	% Change
Fire Related	\$35,661	\$37,731	\$40,953	\$43,686	\$42,686	\$7,025	20%
Ambulance Related	\$27,798	\$28,967	\$29,527	\$35,097	\$32,593	\$4,795	17%
Police Related	\$24,124	\$70,535	\$116,644	\$111,980	\$142,423	\$118,299	490%

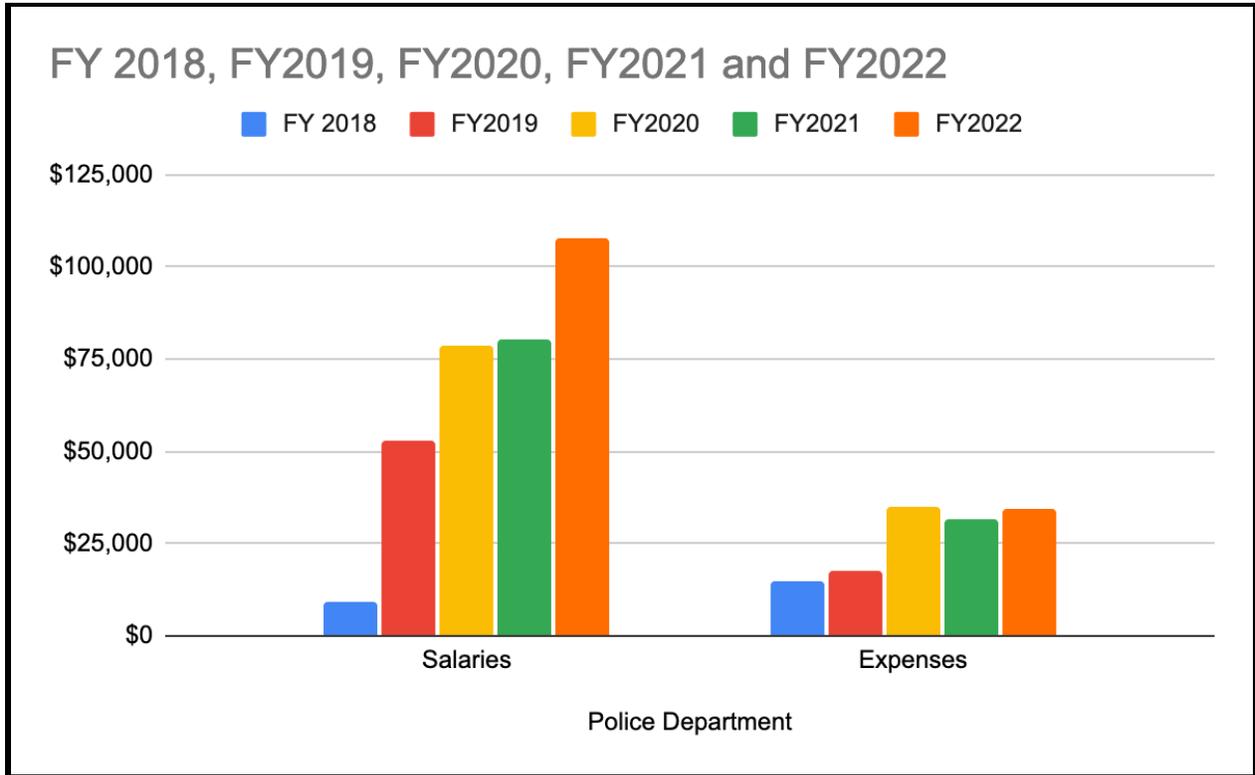
Growth in these areas looks like this:



Police department expenses represent the most significant recent growth in public safety expenses. Police department expenses include salaries (either hourly pay or fixed annual wage) and other expenses (which include gasoline, cruiser maintenance, uniforms, office supplies, ammunition, and training/certification fees, among other expenses).

Police Department	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	5-Year Change	% Change
Salaries	\$9,151	\$52,999	\$78,468	\$80,273	\$107,892	\$98,741	1079%
Expenses	\$15,000	\$17,536	\$35,187	\$31,707	\$34,531	\$19,531	130%

Police department budget growth over the past five years looks like this:

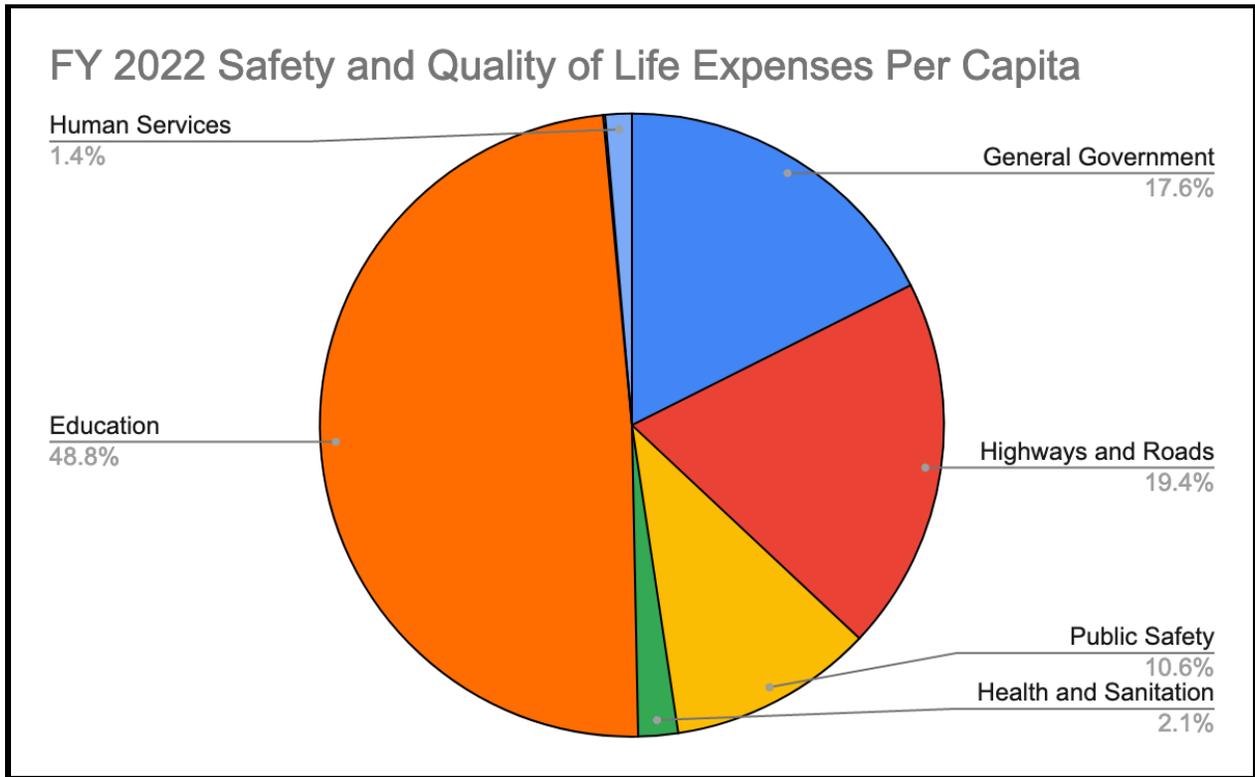


In FY2022 Plainfield’s per capita expenses on the elements of the budget that impact safety and quality of life are:

	FY 2022 Budget	Per Capita
General Government	\$398,091	\$628.90
Highways and Roads	\$439,454	\$694.24
Public Safety	\$240,472	\$379.89

Health and Sanitation	\$46,582	\$73.59
Education	\$1,105,508	\$1,746.46
Culture and Recreation	\$2,350	\$3.71
Human Services	\$31,115	\$49.15

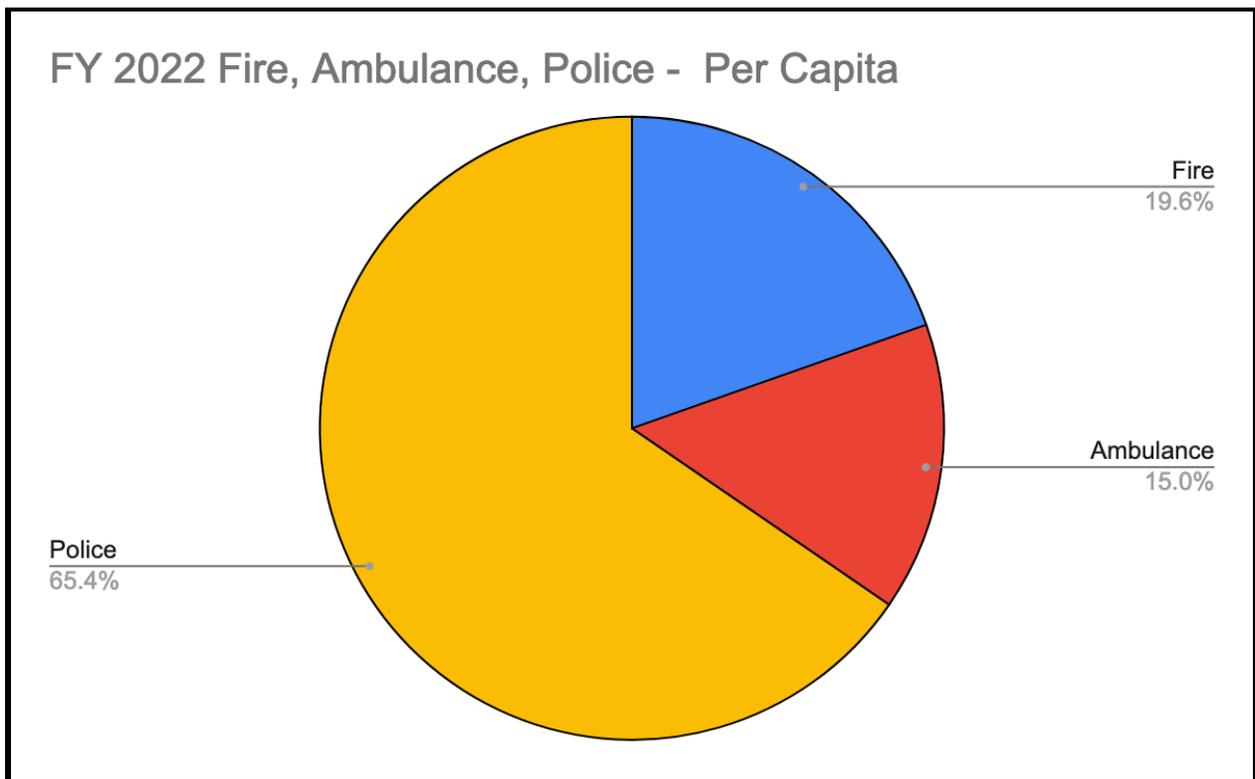
This looks like:



In FY2022 the per capita costs for the top three areas of public safety are:

Public Safety Related	FY 2022 Budget	Per Capita
Fire	\$42,686	\$67
Ambulance	\$32,593	\$51
Police	\$142,423	\$225

This looks like:



Background on the Community Survey on Policing

Plainfield's decision to increase policing presence and expenditures was led by the Select Board and began in early 2018. This effort was driven by the Select Board's investigation of the challenges facing the Police Department and the realization that over time the town had lost officers and the capacity to meet the local law enforcement requirements.

Plainfield had been served by a part-time chief and two reserve officers since 2014, with Chief Stacy Hudson, who had been a firefighter/EMT prior to her service as Chief. At the time of Chief Hudson's resignation, she had one officer who had recently moved out of town and relied on mutual-aid from the Cummington Police Department and their reserve officers. When the Select Board began the hiring process for the new chief they also began to address the issues of upgrading our Police Department to current standards as soon and as much as possible.

Chief Litchfield had grown up in Plainfield and received his first Police training and assignments under then Plainfield Police Chief Edward Morann. Litchfield went from being a Junior Firefighter to attending the county firefighter training in 1992 and on to Police Academy in 1994. He served both as volunteer firefighter and Police Officer in Plainfield until he left the area in 2004 and served as a police officer and Sheriff's Deputy in Georgia and Florida.

At the time of Chief Hudson's resignation in 2018, Litchfield had recently returned to town to care for his mother and take up family farming. He applied for the police chief posting and was selected from an interview pool of three.

The new police chief pay was set at a monthly stipend of \$400 with additional hourly pay per response to a police call (source: [Daily Hampshire Gazette June 14, 2018](#)). After the new police chief's hiring, the Select Board began a review of the available methods for police officer compensation (salary or hourly pay rate).

In October 2018, the Select Board scheduled a special town meeting to ask voters to approve \$200,000 for a new dump truck (a request to purchase a dump truck with a grader had been rejected by voters at the May 2018 annual town meeting, and the request was modified to drop the grader for this special town meeting). The special town meeting also included a request for \$50,000 to cover increases in police training and administrative work and to bring the department up to current standards and requirements (source: [Daily Hampshire Gazette October 30, 2018](#)). Voters approved both requests.

At the 2019 annual town meeting, held in May, voters approved a \$2.385M town budget which represented a \$89,599 increase (3.9%) over the prior fiscal year. Voters also increased the police department salaries to \$78,468 (48% increase) and \$35,187 for police department expenses (100% increase).

At the 2020 annual town meeting, held in June, voters were asked to approve a 26% increase to police department salaries (from \$78,468 to \$99,216) to raise the hourly rates of pay for the chief and officers. Voters rejected this increase, and

instead approved a cost of living increase of 2.3%, raising the police salary budget to \$80,273 and level funding the police department expense budget.

Since the founding of Plainfield, annual town meeting decisions over line items in the budget have drawn vigorous debate over expenditures as small as \$100 and as large as \$1.3 million. Voters use the town meeting floor to exercise their democratic right and responsibility to participate in the governance and financial decisions of the town. However, voter refusal to approve the requested increase for the police department in June 2020 raised the passions of people throughout town, and some townspeople were left angry over their perceived lack of support for local police and others remained angry over their perception of a lack of an inclusive processes to educate and inform the community about multiple years of significant increases in costs of policing without similar attention to other important town governance and public safety expenses. All of this was happening against the backdrop of the emergent COVID-19 pandemic, and in context of the nation-wide citizen uprisings protesting police brutality and killings of black and brown people. A developing polarization in our community around the issues of policing was sensed by many folks throughout town.

During the summer of 2020, the Plainfield Select Board received suggestions from Plainfield residents to convene a community forum to discuss matters related to policing in Plainfield, and to provide more information about police department activities through publication of the police log in the Plainfield Post (a town newsletter published twice each month), among other discussions. On September 22, 2020, the Select Board established an advisory group composed of a member of the finance committee, a member of the Select Board, the Police Chief, the Sergeant, and one community member. At its November 24, 2020 meeting the Select Board discussed the need for a more coordinated review of the FY2021 police department budget, to include the advisory group.

The advisory group's first meeting, with the Chief and Sergeant, took place January 6, 2021 and included discussion of the potential scope of work and roles and responsibilities. After receiving a report from the advisors, the Select Board, on January 26, 2021, appointed Rebecca Coletta (Select Board), Bob Baker (Finance Committee), Kimberly Longey, Joe Sabourin, Jack Nelson, Susi Westwood, and Bob Mellstrom to the Plainfield Police Ad-Hoc Working Group to serve through June 30, 2021 (source: Plainfield Select Board meeting minutes June 2020 - January 2021). Bob Mellstrom declined.

In their March 21, 2021 report to the Select Board, the working group summarized its findings and recommendations regarding Plainfield's police department staffing structure; time study findings; comparisons to several other

western Massachusetts area police departments' staffing, fleet, and budget size; examples of regionalization and shared services; analysis of growth in public safety costs in Plainfield between FY 2015 and FY 2021; review of Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) legislation; and analysis of the Plainfield Police Department's recommended budget request for FY 2022. The report has been available on the town website in the Select Board files. (See Appendix C for this report.)

Plainfield's May 2021 Annual Town Meeting voted to appropriate \$107,892 for police salaries (a 34% increase from prior year) and \$34,531 for police department expenses (a 9% increase from prior year). Costs for police employee benefits, police station expenses and acquisition of police vehicles were included in separate line items in the town budget.

The resulting funding allowed the Select Board to change the Chief's position from part time to full time. In June 2021, the Chief subsequently re-structured the department to consolidate 4 part-time positions to one full-time Sergeant and 2 part-time patrol officer positions. The FY 2022 department work schedule was set at 85 hours of coverage, including 80 hours Monday through Friday and 5 hours on the weekends. Chief Litchfield has a roster of qualified officers, some who volunteer for road duty and are certified and properly trained and therefore available should he need additional personnel. It is from that group he is able to assign a qualified officer to the weekend patrols.

The Plainfield Police Department employs one full-time chief, one full-time sergeant and two part-time patrol officers. Chief Litchfield and Sgt. Miazga are on duty Monday through Friday, covering the hours from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. The police station is staffed Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and by appointment. Police coverage outside of this schedule is provided by Massachusetts State Police.

At its May 25, 2021 meeting, the Select Board re-affirmed the PPWG and established the following priorities for FY2022:

1. Conduct a community survey, assuring anonymous input by participants;
2. Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) legislation and state-wide regulations: gather data and seek assistance from legislators;
3. Research regionalization;
4. Work on a comprehensive plan to establish a supervisory relationship between the Select Board and the Plainfield Police Department.

The PPWG met numerous times between early September 2021 and January 2022, providing the Select Board with notes from each meeting, and issuing progress reports to the Select Board on October 28, 2021 and January 16, 2021. The

primary thrust of the PPWG work during this period was to research, draft and design a community survey to be implemented in early 2022, so as to provide additional opportunity for the community to provide input – beyond the typical town budget creation and review cycle – on matters pertaining to policing in Plainfield.

The objectives of the community survey are:

- To offer all adults in Plainfield the opportunity to provide their input to the Select Board on matters relating to policing in Plainfield;
- To provide the Police Department with information that can help form specific goals and objectives for addressing the policing needs of the community;
- To provide the Select Board with information to help hold the Police Chief accountable to the needs and concerns of the community.

Issuance of the survey provides the Plainfield Select Board with an efficient and effective way to gather broad and diverse input about policing in Plainfield. Survey responses provide timely information separate from, and alongside, the FY 2023 typical town budget development and town meeting process. Survey findings will help the Select Board execute its supervision and oversight responsibilities of the Police Chief and department. A community survey will also help inform the Select Board as it grapples with general questions of public safety and quality of life in our small town.

Data Collection and Analysis

The Plainfield Community Survey on Policing was issued by the Plainfield Select Board, the appointing authority for the Plainfield Police Chief.

The Plainfield Police Working Group conducted extensive research on survey design, content, data collection and data tabulation methods. The group researched:

1. How community surveys can serve to increase public awareness of police department activities, provide a mechanism for community evaluation of the department's performance, and provide information that can be used to establish future priorities;
2. Police department surveys previously conducted in Massachusetts and across the U.S.;
3. U.S. Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Service (COPS) sample community surveys;
4. International Association of Chiefs of Police sample community surveys.

The PPWG designed the survey for ease of dissemination, to ensure anonymity for responders while also controlling to one response per adult resident (via randomly

assigned control numbers), and to keep costs of survey data collection and tabulation as low as possible. The survey was available as an online web form on the Town's website and via paper form available for pick up at the Town Offices or Town Library.

PPWG members contributed their volunteer time to drafting, vetting, editing, and finalizing the survey instrument; preparing and mailing the notice about the survey to all Plainfield households; manually entering survey responses that are returned via paper form into the online survey data collection form; tabulating survey results; and summarizing survey findings. Paper, envelopes, labels and postage were either donated or paid for by members of the PPWG (total out-of-pocket expense amounted to \$304). No town budget line item was impacted by this survey.

The survey asks respondents for their perceptions and opinions of:

1. Safety, crime and quality of life in Plainfield;
2. Overall performance of the Plainfield Police Department;
3. Contact and satisfaction with the Plainfield Police Department;
4. Effectiveness of the Plainfield Police Department's community information and engagement efforts;
5. Any other feedback related to policing in Plainfield (optional);
6. Demographic information (optional).

A complete list of survey questions is presented in Appendix A.

Respondent perceptions and opinions were collected through topical lists with multiple choice response checkbox or multiple choice grids and through text boxes provided for short or long narrative responses.

On February 14, 2022 notice of the survey, on town letterhead, was mailed to 546 adults age 18 or older using mailing address information from the street list provided by the Town Clerk. The envelope was prominently marked as containing time-sensitive and important information. The deadline for survey responses was February 28, 2022.

Three survey notices were returned by the post office as undeliverable. 178 responses were received, with one response invalidated because it did not contain one of the 4-digit control numbers randomly issued and included in the survey notice. Twenty responses were made via paper form delivered to the town offices and 158 responses were received online. In addition to the survey responses, two letters providing additional information were submitted. See Appendix B.

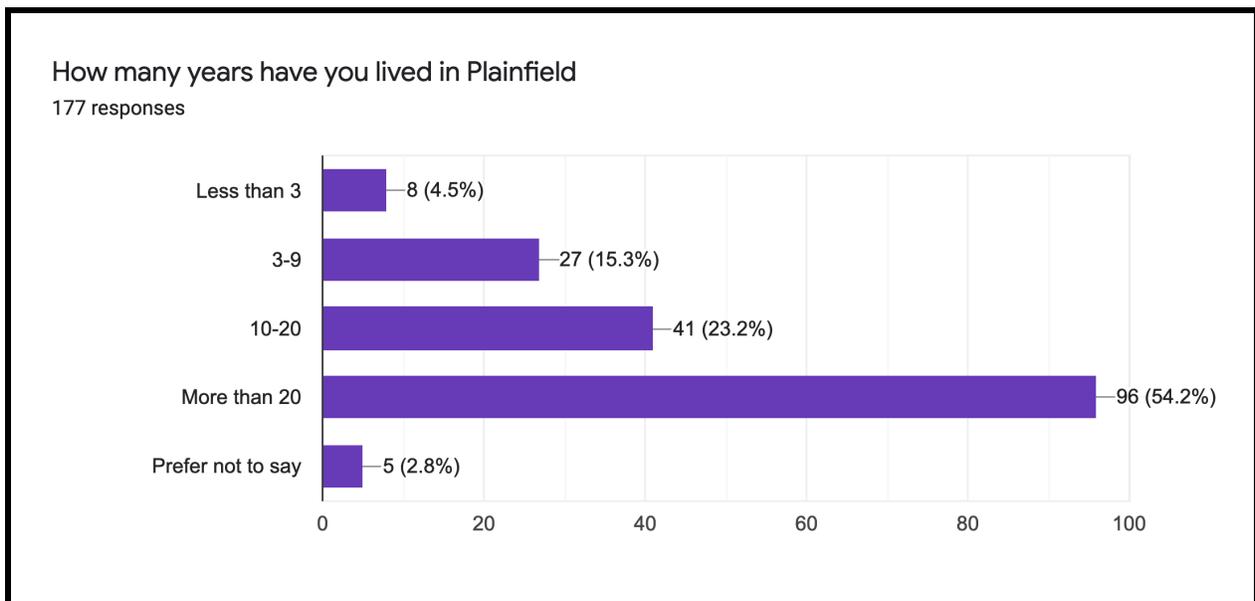
The response rate of 33% (177 out of 543 delivered notices) shows strong interest on the part of Plainfield adults to share their input to the Select Board on matters relating to policing.

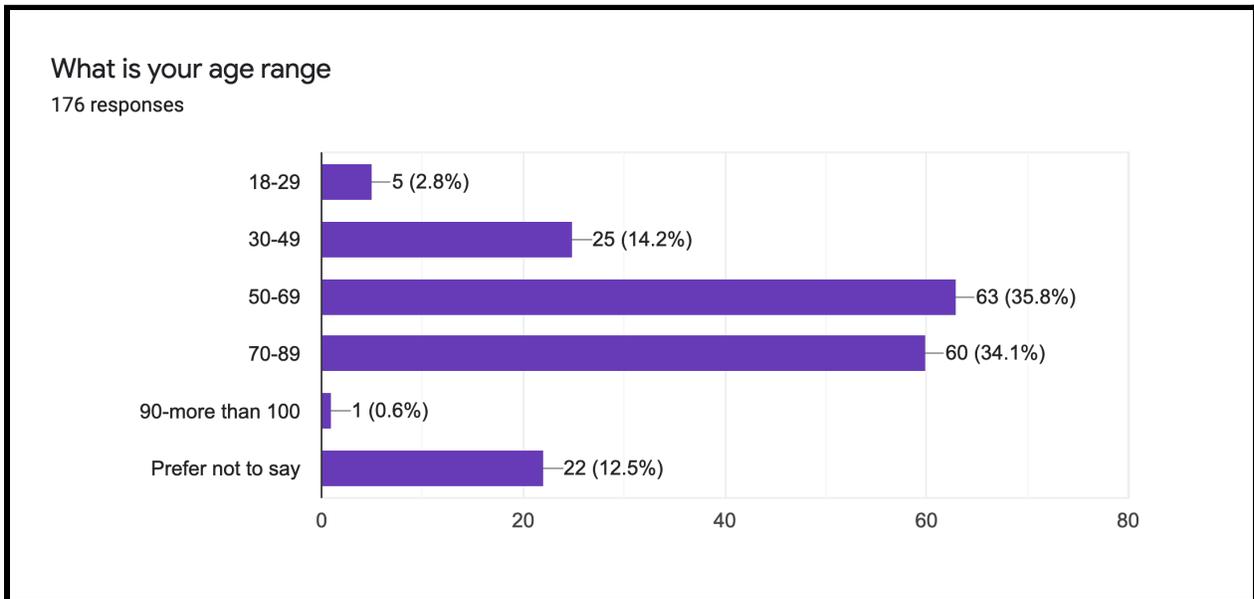
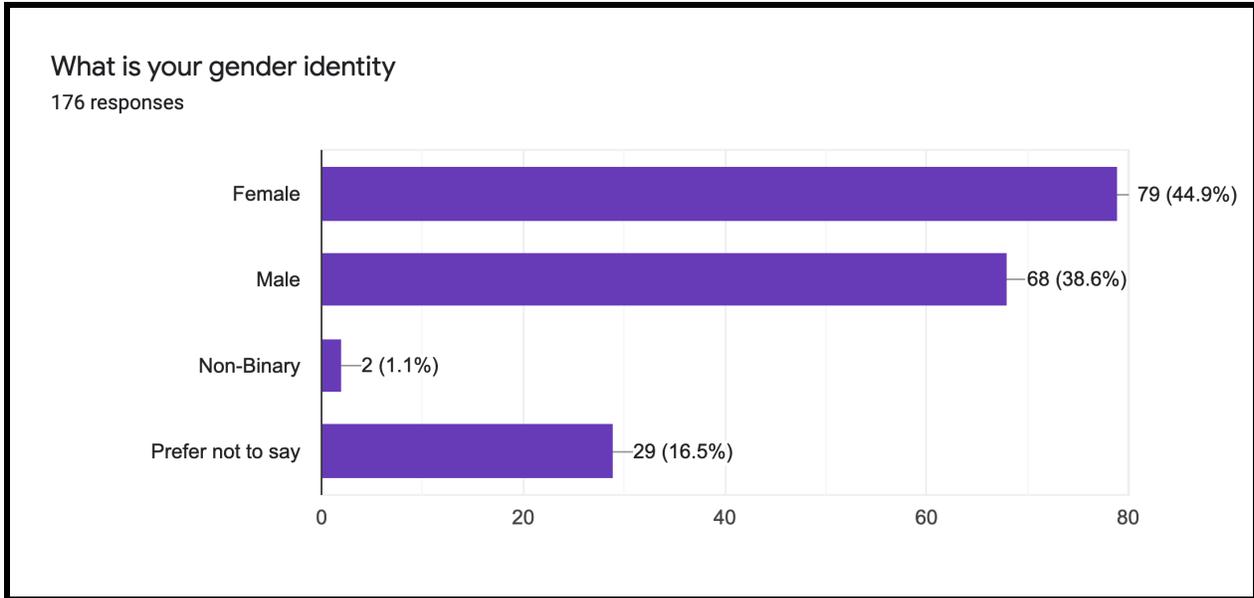
Survey Responses: Graphs and Comments

Demographics

Providing demographic information was optional for survey respondents, though the vast majority of overall respondents answered 4 questions about length of time residing in town, gender identity, age range, and racial identity. 54% of respondents have lived in town for 20 or more years and 4.5% less than three years. 45% of respondents identify as female, 39% as male, 1% as non-binary and 17% preferred not to say. 36% of respondents are aged 50-69 and 3% of respondents are aged 18-29 and 13% preferred not to say. 77% of respondents identify as white, 2% as multi-racial, and 1% as asian, with 13% preferring not to say.

Survey response demographics looks like this:





Section 1: Our Community: Safety and Quality of Life

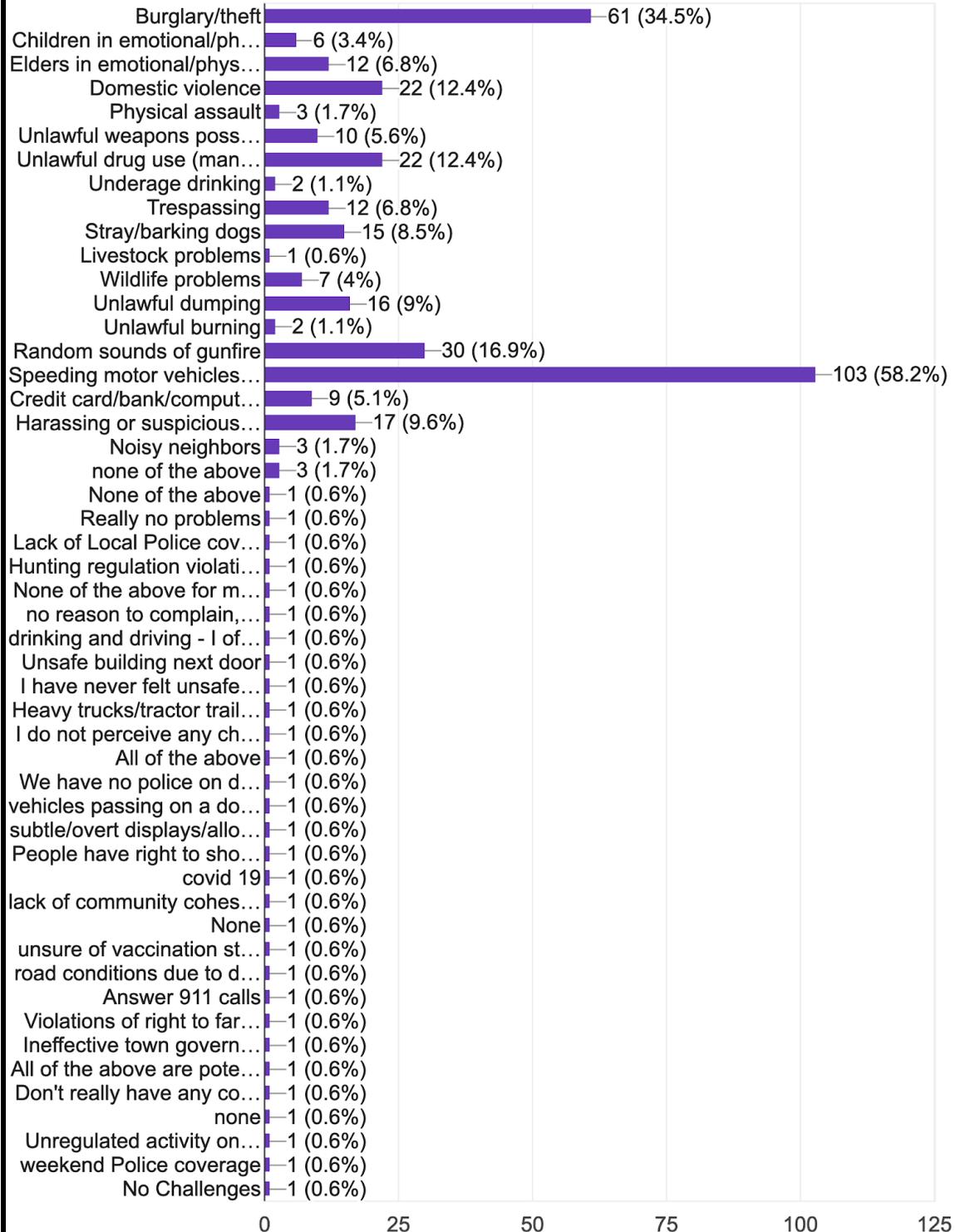
Responses indicate the top three issues presenting the biggest challenges to safety and quality of life: 1) speeding motor vehicles (103, 58.2%); 2) burglary/theft (61, 34.5%), and 3) random sounds of gunfire (16.9%).

Many respondents selected "other" as one of their top three issues of concern, and a selection of these responses is as follows:

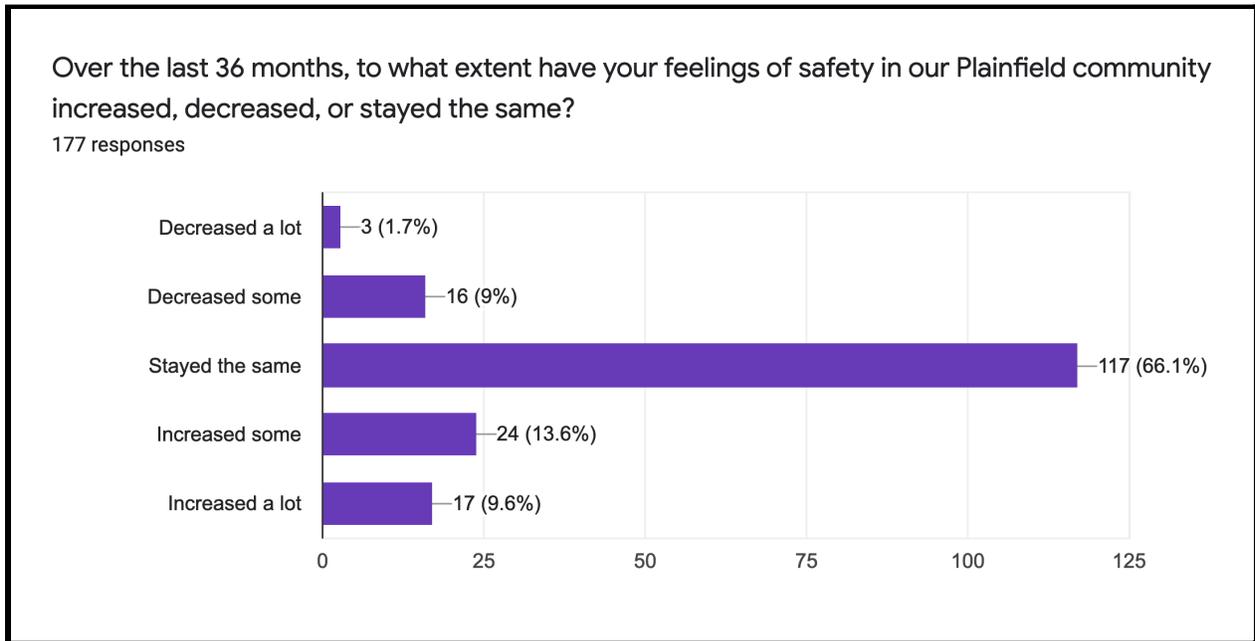
None of the above (or equivalent): 12
Lack of local police coverage on weekends: 3
COVID-19/vaccination status: 2
Road conditions, deep mud ruts:1
Heavy truck traffic: 1
Vehicles passing on double yellow lines: 1
No answer to 911 calls: 1
Hunting regulation violations: 1
All of the above: 1
Drinking and driving: 1
Unsafe building: 1
Unregulated activity at Plainfield Pond/out-of-town use of Plainfield Pond: 2
Ineffective town government: 1

Please select at least one (1) and up to three (3) issues you think are the biggest challenges affecting your safety and quality of life in Plainfiel...er" (if choosing "other" provide a brief description).

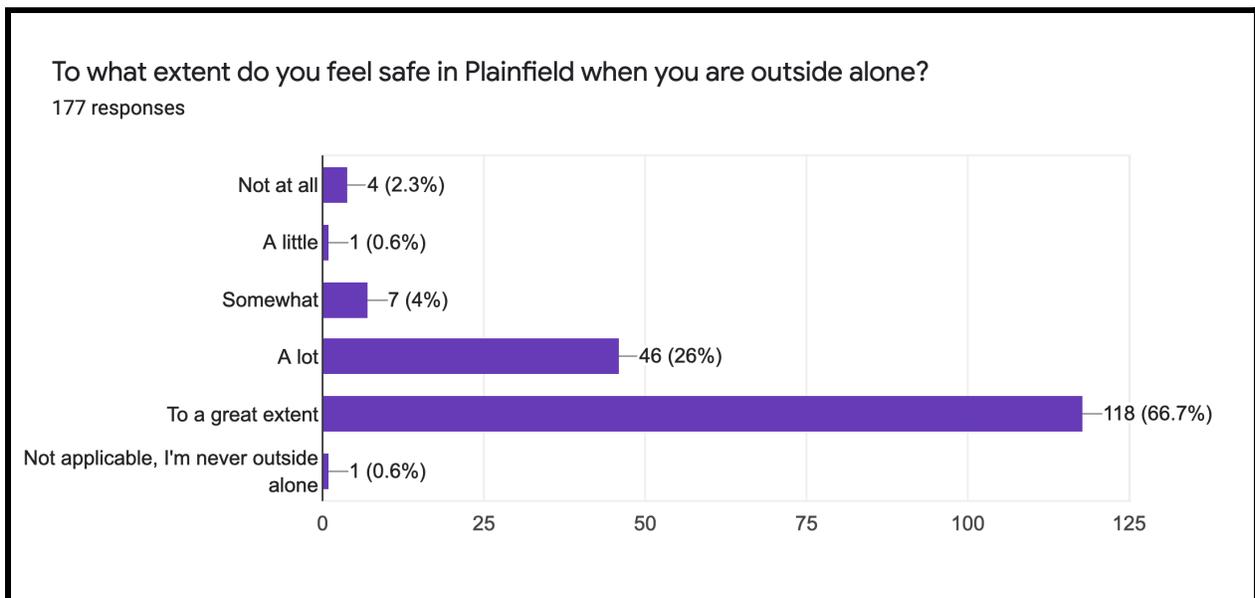
177 responses



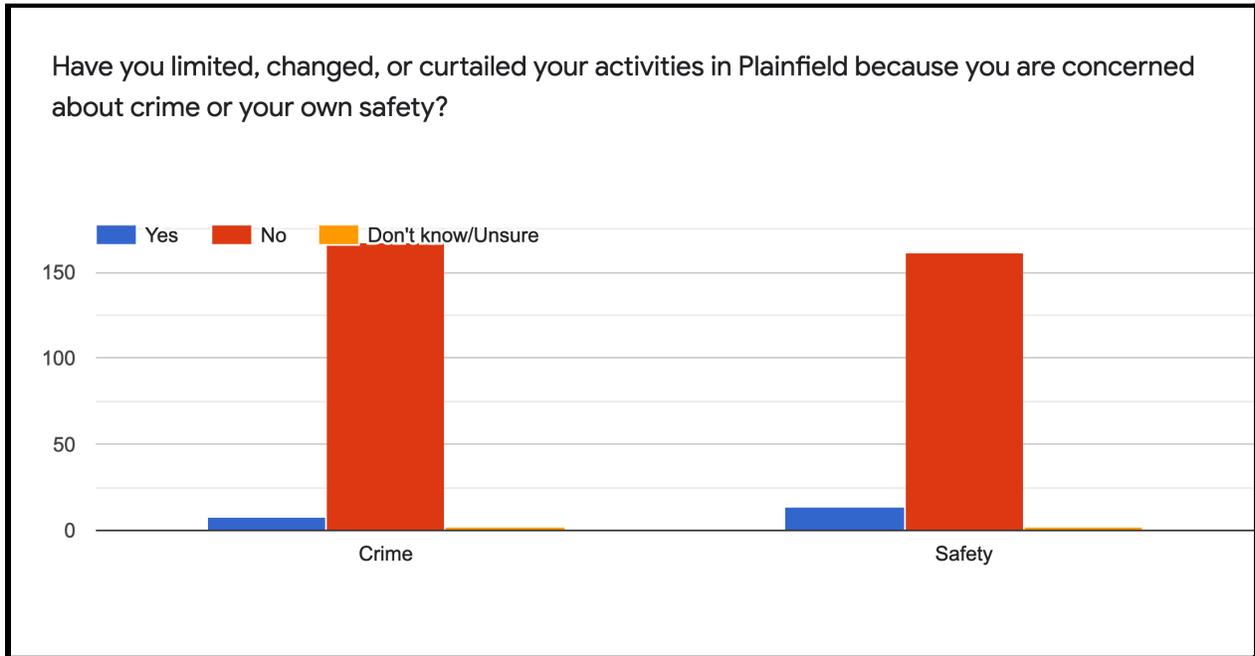
Feelings of safety in Plainfield have stayed the same for 117 people (66.1%), increased a lot for 17 people (9.6%) and decreased a lot for 3 people (1.7%).



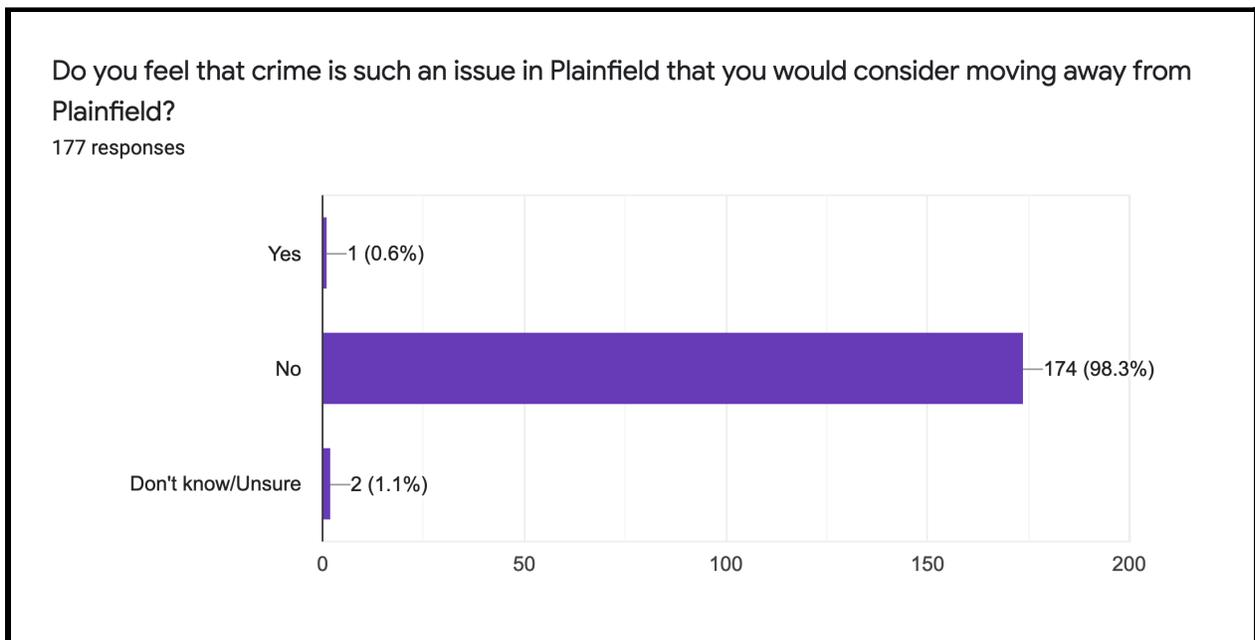
Most respondents feel safe when outside alone; 4 people do not feel at all safe outside alone.



When asked about changes in activities due to concerns about crime, 167 people have made no changes; 8 have made changes and 2 did not know/were unsure. When asked about changes in activities due to concern about their own safety, 161 have made no changes; 14 have made changes, and 2 did not know/were unsure.



98.3% of respondents will not consider moving from Plainfield due to crime.



Section 1 Comments: Safety and Quality of Life

Please provide anything else you'd like us to know regarding your perspectives of Safety and Quality of Life in Plainfield: 90 respondents provided multiple perspectives in the open-ended section inviting feedback about safety and quality of life. Comments were not edited to correct typos and are presented as received. The themes are as follows:

Issues of Concern:

- The way that the high-speed chase and on-foot pursuit in Ashfield was handled last year has left me with no faith in our town administration and police force. I was shocked that Plainfield residents weren't alerted to this issue while it was happening, and that we had to learn about it on Facebook.
- Much of my concern is from others' reports not from my own experience. Luckily we have not had a break in but I never used to lock cars left overnight, now we put them in the garage
- Plainfield is a wonderful town, and I deeply appreciate the police presence. Barking/stray/aggressive dogs is a major problem. Minimal response from ACO to reports of aggressive dogs. Loud neighbors and domestic disputes are a problem.
- Drug traffic on 116 needles found at boat ramp
- I never used to lock my vehicles or house, and now I do because of theft that I hear about in neighboring towns but I have never experienced any crime at my home in Plainfield..
- Too many guns, both owned by my neighbors and by the police.
- Gunfire on Sunday or in the early evening does not fit my understanding of "peace and tranquility."
- Concerned about hunting/hunters; concerned about speeding vehicles
- Hunters/ Speeding vehicles
- Unleashed dogs

- I think this is a very safe place to live. My only concerns are the break ins that I've heard about and wanting to make sure that all hunters are using registered weapons and not trespassing.
- I would also like to see more patrolling of Plainfield Pond, River Rd.

Speeding:

- I would add that speeding on our road is an issue
- The speeding on North Union Street is out of control, and I've never seen anyone get a speeding ticket on this road. I'm scared to walk on the road and hold my breath when I have to be out there to get to the trails with my horses.
- It's my opinion that speeding is the majority of our communities issues and the town should lower all road speed limits and ask for speed enforcement until speed limits are adhered to.
- Speeding is a huge issue and has jepordized my families safety.
- Theyre sitting in areas where people are going 23-30
- Speeding om Route 116 and drug convoys in the early morning hours
- speeding vehicles make it unsafe to walk on roads (that have no side walks)
- Love seeing our Police Department pulling speeding vehicles over!!!
- In the question about changing my outdoor activities because of concern for my safety I am concerned about speeding on Rt 116 and other places in town. Once cannot walk safely on the side of the road even if you are not in the road. Cars and trucks are going through town at way over the speed limit. I see our police stopping some but it seems no where near enough to make any difference.
- It is encouraging to see the police making traffic and speeding stops. This has been an issue for years and is long overdue.
- I have curtailed some outside behaviors because of speeding cars and angry drivers
- Traffic speeds exceeding posted limits increased

- Concerns about increased speeding in town, especially on Gloyd now that it has become a through-route for out-of-state drivers.
- More speed control
- Speeding is a huge issue, and I would like to see more speeding patrols and controls.

Staffing/Coverage and Budget:

- Too much policing
- Plainfield is very safe and overpoliced.
- It is a scary thought that our officers are not on overnight. After 9 PM I cannot call for help. I would like to see our police station staffed round the clock for more security and safety. Their needs to be more officers staffed more often.
- Added police coverage on weekends
- I feel that the police department is overfunded for the size of our town
- I think it is insane that we have absolutely no police presence on weekends. I am certainly willing to pay more to have our cops on duty or at least on call on weekends. I don't want to wait for the state police to get here, god forbid I ever need a police officer on a weekend.
- I don't see a reason for our police dept. costing so much and being so large. Unless there are others who need all the "policing" it seems over bloated.
- I honestly dont feel any challenges to my safety or quality of life and don't feel we need to support a Police Dept. whose primary role is to stop vehicular traffic going fast through town.
- While our local Fire & EMT personnel are on-call during weekend & late night emergencies, Plainfield police seem to not be, and calls for help go to the State Police. Response time is about an hour. This limited police response concerns me and causes me to wonder about my overall safety in town.
- I feel safe in Plainfield and think we may have more "policing" than we need

- Limited Police on weekends is a safety issue.
- The state police are too slow!
- I think safety is created through things like strong relationships with my neighbors, arts and cultural activities that can bring people in Plainfield together, strong supportive systems for common goods, and resources for working through potential issues with respect and care for each other. I don't think the police have a large role to play in whether I am safe in Plainfield.
- Officers should not be allowed to take a town cruiser road detail out side of plainfield
- local police in non 911 calls is important to me
- We don't need a cop 40 hours. What do they do all that time besides ride around town wasting gas and tax payers \$\$\$\$.
- To many cruisers and police officers we don't need.
- I do not feel any safer now with police presence than many years ago with almost none.

Quality of Life:

- Small town-less problems than more popululated areas.
- Neighbors look out for and support neighbors
- We have a great quality of life here and we feel very safe and supported
- I feel safe and would like to trust that my neighbors have my safety in mind too.
- I feel very safe in Plainfield. Only safety issues would be fear of slipping on ice. (I know that's not a police issue).
- Seems to be an incredibly safe town in the years we've lived here.
- I have no concern for may safety

- we live in a very safe neighborhood of plainfield but i am also confident that all of plainfield is safe as it has always been since we bought land and moved here 30 years ago -
- quality of life here is great. I feel safe.
- Also, my feeling of general safety when I am outdoors in Plainfield has very little or nothing to do with our police department.
- To what extent do you feel safe in Plainfield when you are outside alone? I worry more about wild animals than I do people.
- Plainfield is one of the safest places to live.
- impacts to quality of life for me have less to do with police department operations and more to do with civic engagement in and on our town boards and committees, many which directly contribute to my quality of life (library, COA, historical society, land conservation and environmental protection); I am more concerned about resources for our fire and ambulance and highway personnel than I am about our police.
- for 12 years i have felt completely safe
- safety and quality of life have been constant for many years- I have not experienced a change one way or the other.
- Quality -- remains same. Safety -- don't feel any safer in any way. I do feel safer in regards to our EMT's, their training and our fire department, also ambulance service.
- I feel that Plainfield is a safe and wonderful community, I wouldn't want to live anywhere else.
- Plainfield is the nicest town we have lived in and the people are great.
- Despite the political division, most folks are responsive to a neighbors needs and care. I would hope the town police persons respond with genuine care to everyone.
- GREAT little town !

- Where would you possibly find a safer place than Plainfield Sometimes bad things happen and there is nothing anyone can do about before it happens. you have to deal with as it happens That's life no matter where you live
- I have lived in Plainfield since June 1990 -- except for 3 years from 1992-1995 in Cummington. I have lived in New York City (or just outside of it in Jersey City, NJ) throughout the 1980's. I have never felt concerned about safety & crime in the Hilltowns. I know that there have sometimes been periods when break-ins & car thefts have occurred. But to me -- that is a given in a society where resources & wealth are so unevenly distributed & there are so many social & economic justice issues that are not realistically dealt with.
- I feel very safe living here!

Police Performance:

- Have always been there when we needed them...reliable
- I feel that there is an increased sense of safety just knowing that there are police personnel around town and on duty more so than there were 3 years ago.
- having police available as a local resource has been a blessing to the town of plainfield
- The chief is very out going and kind in any interaction that I've had with him.
- I love this town and our current officers are amazing they have helped me on numerous occasion but we need them more.
- As octegenarians with medcal conditions our biggest concern is falls. On the 3 times we've had one,911 hone call has brought police officer and ambulance quickly.
- There needs to be more support for our police.
- I think our police are amazing.
- Plainfield is a wonderful town, and I deeply appreciate the police presence.
- We get an immediate response when we contact police which is a change for the better.

- seeing the Plainfield police patrolling makes me feel safe.
- Police do not necessarily make things safer, and in some cases make things less safe
- I feel safe in Plainfield because we have a police department that cares about the residents and are available to respond to situations with some knowledge of everyone living here. I live with my parents who are retired but hardly elderly. They are out and about in vehicles as well as walking regularly. The situation with them will change eventually but I think Plainfield is a good place for them for end of life living because of the police, other departments and residents of this town combined.
- Majority of 'problems' in this town are trivial according to the police log
- We need police to continue to have a safe community
- love are police department. why wouldnt you. there doing there job.
- The increased police presence on Rt. 116 in and of itself is a good thing. Sometimes I wonder if it is feasible to patrol back roads in the state forest from time to time (resources permitting).
- Thank you for patrolling S Central for speeders - a very positive difference

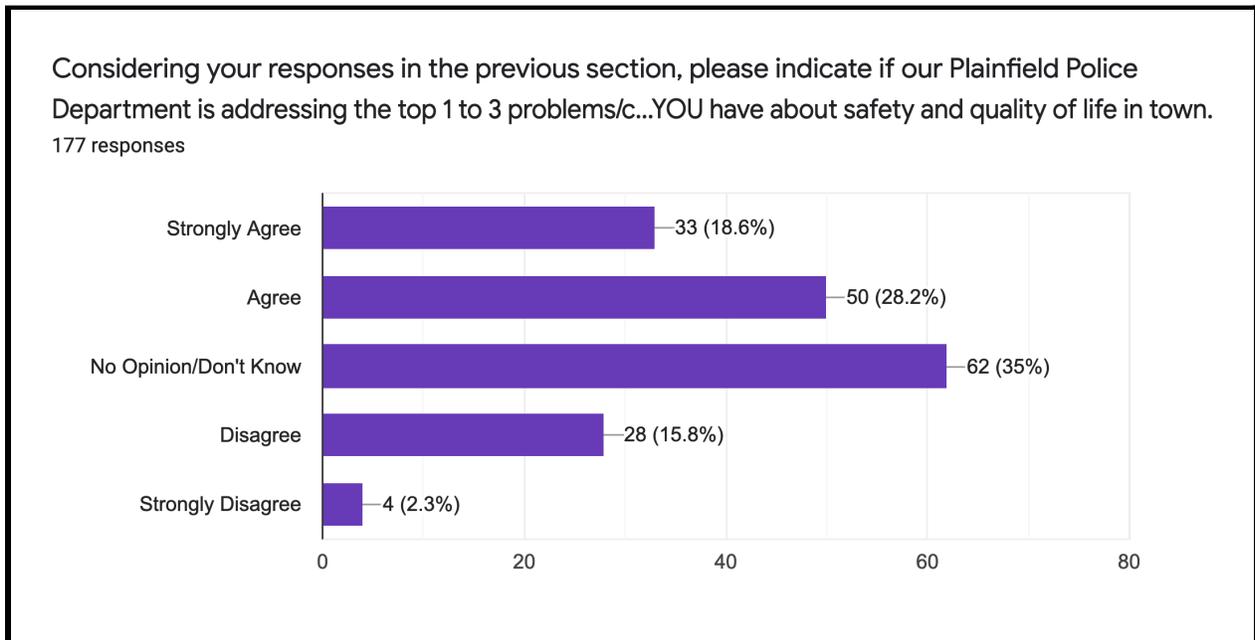
General/Other:

- I feel that the quality of life is diminished by a lack of concern for the environment.
- Everyone should own guns
- Timely reports on burglary etc. helpful.
- more patrolling of back roads by police
- bike lanes and sidewalks
- Continued existence and protection of our EMT's and Firefighters.
- Car junkyards on our road

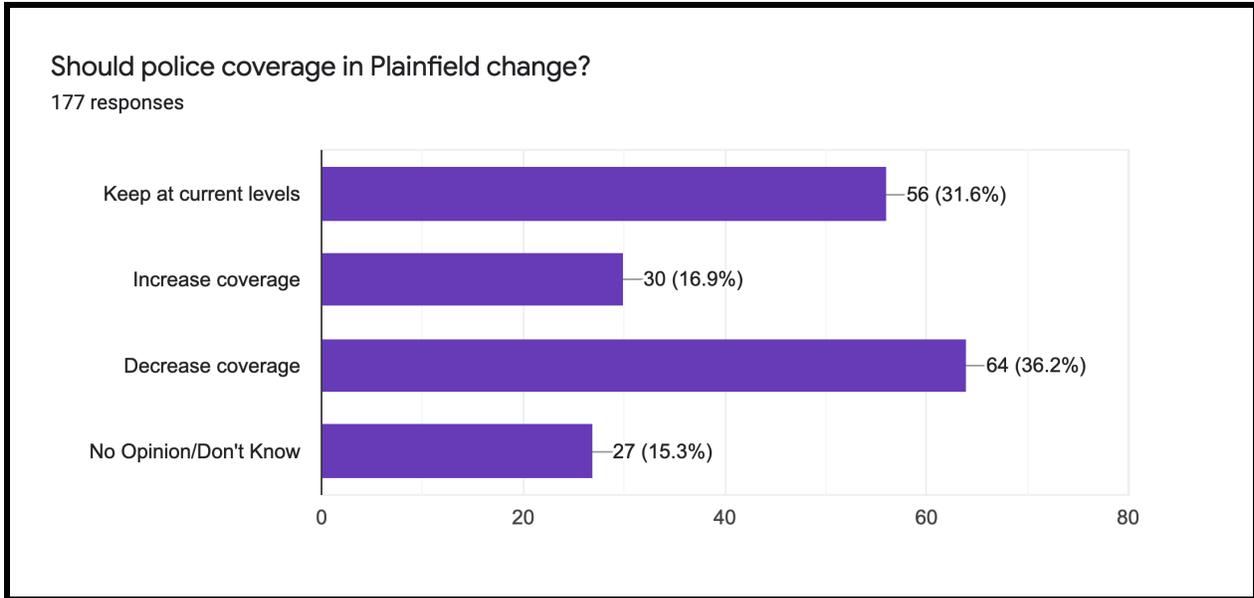
- most people are very considerate of COVID issues, but politics intervenes
- Taxes way too high.

Section 2: Overall Performance of Plainfield Police Department

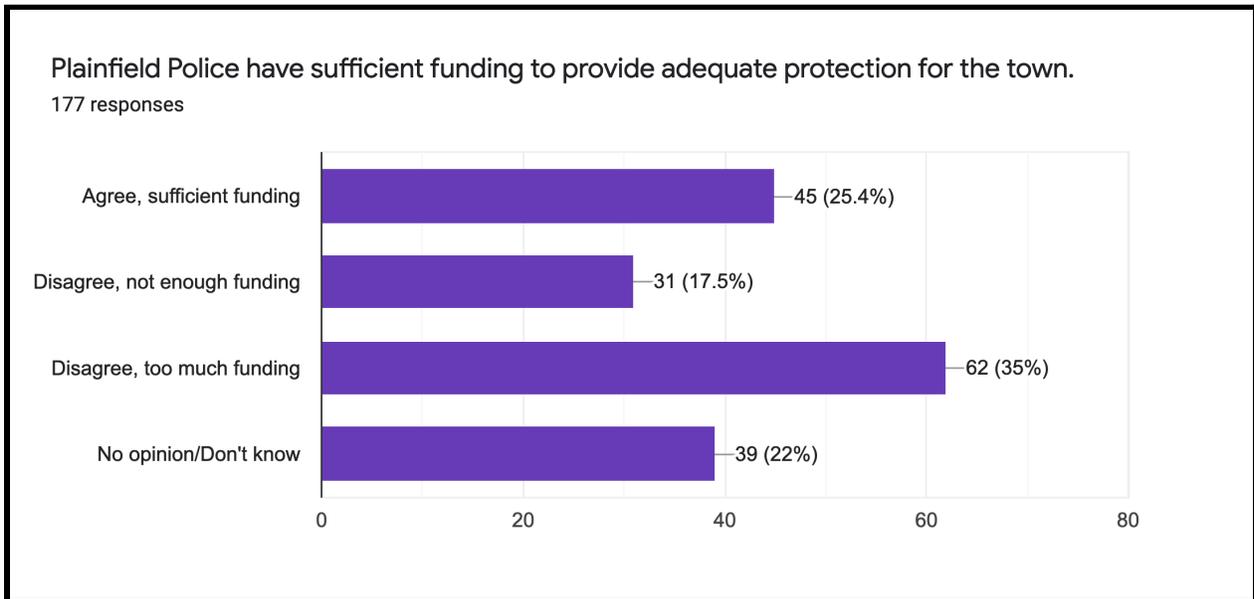
When asked if the Plainfield Police Department is addressing the top one to three problems/concerns the respondent had relative to safety and quality of life, 62 people (35%) said they did not know/no opinion; 33 (18.6%) people strongly agreed, 50 people (28.2%) agreed, 28 people (15.8%) disagreed and 4 people (2.3%) strongly disagreed.



When asked if police coverage should change, 36.2% of respondents (64 people) said coverage should be decreased, 31.6% (56 people) said coverage should stay the same, 16.9% (30 people) and 15.3% (27 people) said they had no opinion/did not know. **NOTE:** Based on the comments elsewhere in the survey, it seems that the term "coverage" is interpreted in many ways, including number of hours a week of local police on-duty time; the allocation of that time over any particular day; the allocation of that time over any particular week; and/or the number of police officers employed by the town.

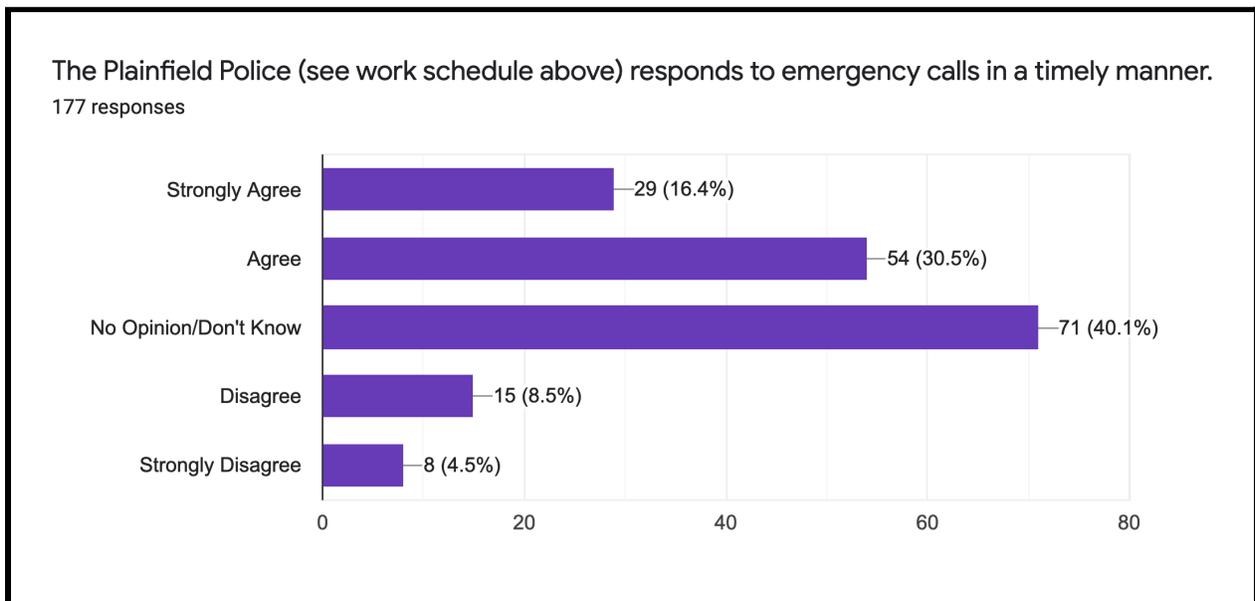


When asked if police have sufficient funding to provide adequate protection for the town, 35% of respondents (62 people) disagreed, and think there is too much funding; 25.4% (45 people) agreed, and think there is sufficient funding; 17.5% (31 people) disagreed, and think there is not enough funding; and 22% (39 people) had no opinion/did not know.

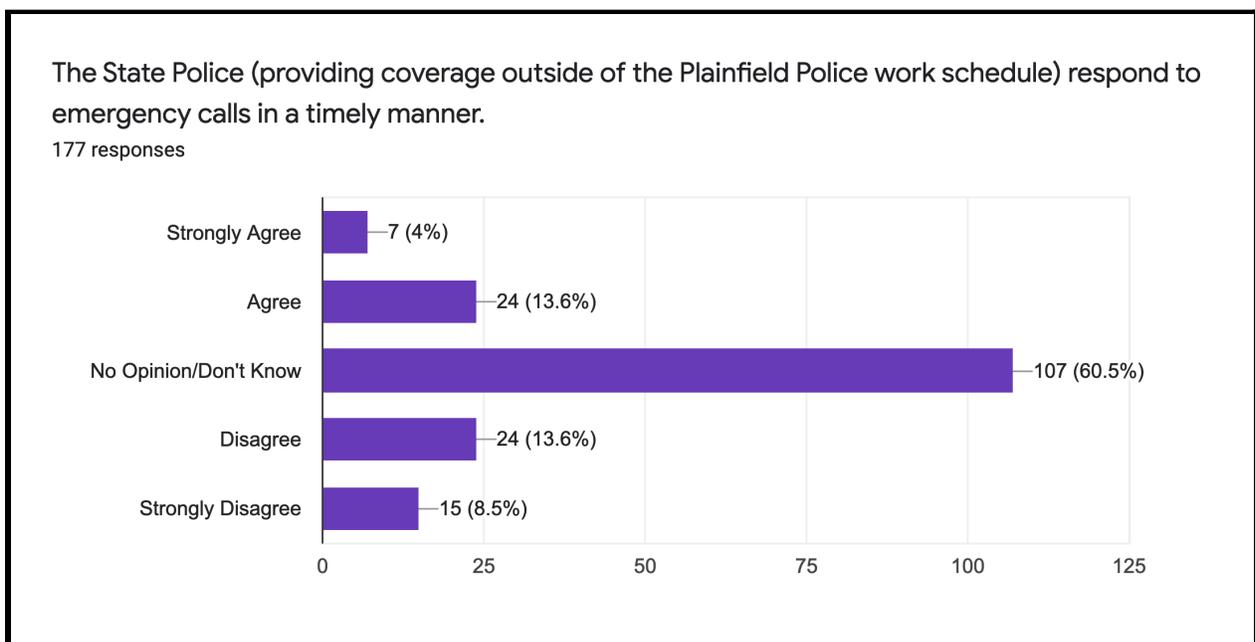


When asked if Plainfield Police, in context of the Monday through Friday 6AM to 9PM work schedule, respond to emergency calls in a timely manner, 71 people (40.1% of respondents) said they had no opinion/did not know; 54 people (30.5%) agreed;

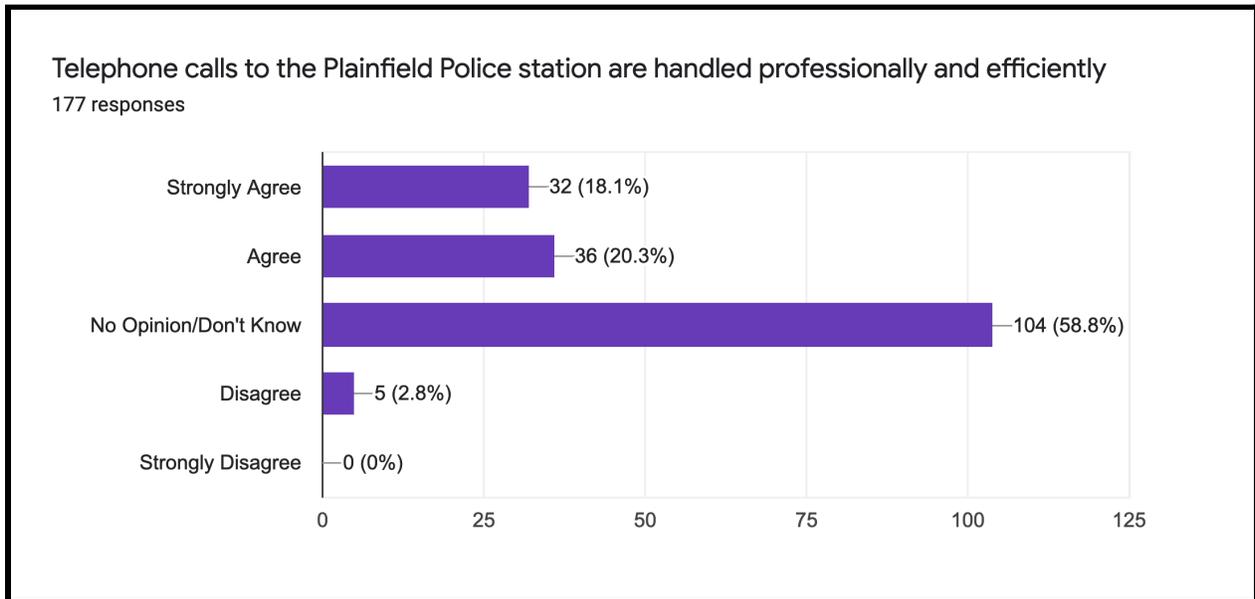
29 people (16.4%) strongly agreed; 15 people (8.5%) disagreed; and 8 people (4.5%) strongly disagreed.



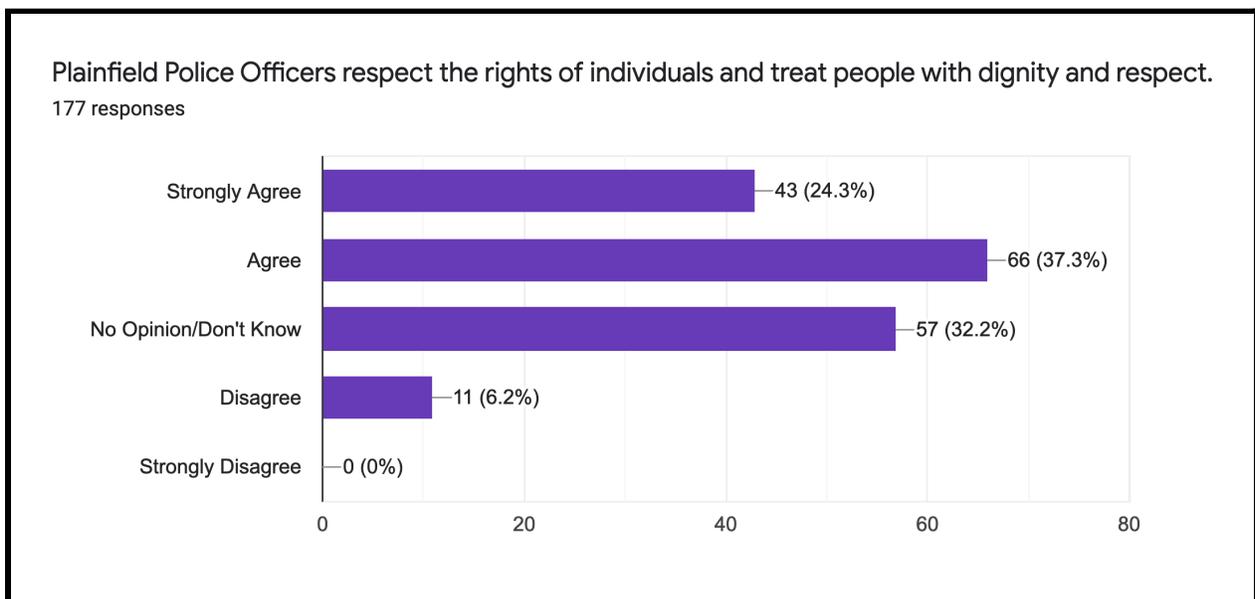
When asked if the State Police, providing coverage outside of the regular Plainfield Police work schedule, respond to emergency calls in a timely manner, 107 people (60.5% of respondents) said they had no opinion/did not know; an equal number of people agreed and disagreed (25, 13.6%); 15 people (8.5%) strongly disagreed; and 7 people (4%) strongly agreed.



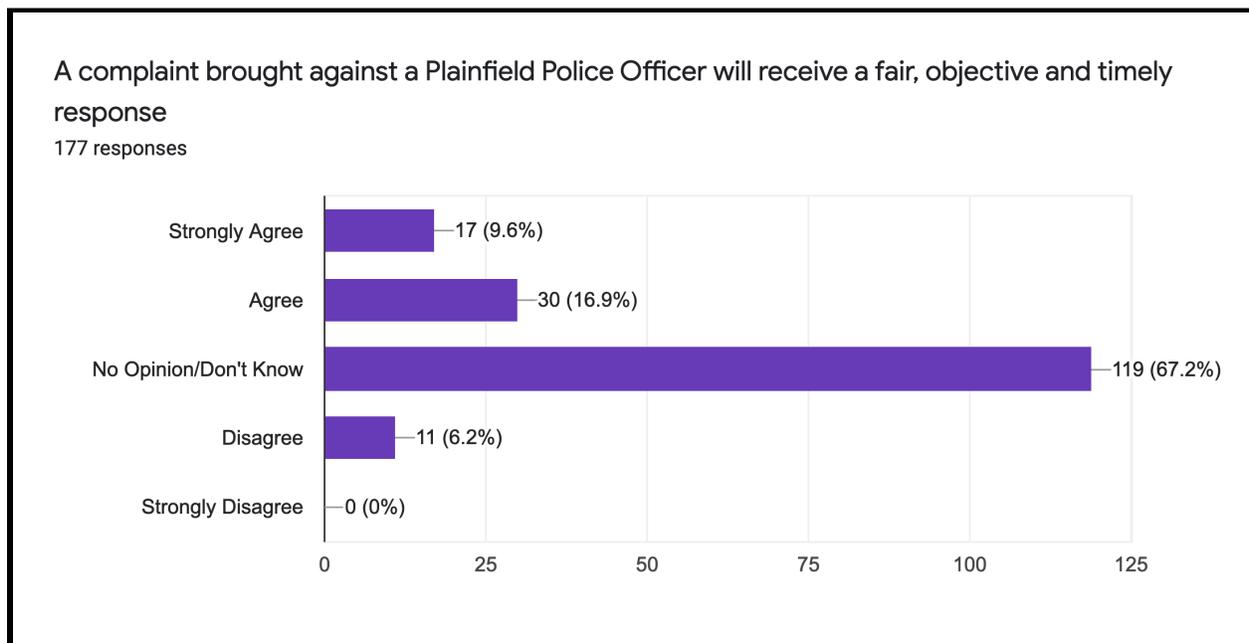
When asked if telephone calls to the Plainfield Police station are handled in a timely manner, 104 people (58.8% of respondents) said they had no opinion/did not know; 36 people agreed (20.3%), 32 people strongly agreed (18.1%); and 5 people disagreed (2.8%).



When asked if Plainfield Police Officers respect the rights of individuals and treat people with dignity and respect 66 people (37.3% of respondents) agreed; 57 people had no opinion/did not know (32.2%), 43 people strongly agreed (24.3%); and 11 people disagreed (6.2%).



When asked if a complaint against a Plainfield Police Officer will receive a fair, objective and timely response, 119 people (67.2% of respondents) have no opinion/do not know; 30 people agreed (16.9%), 17 people strongly agreed (9.6%); and 11 people disagreed (6.2%).



Section 2 Comments: Overall Performance of Plainfield Police Department

Please provide anything else you'd like us to know regarding your perspectives of the Overall Performance of the Plainfield Police Department: 36 respondents provided multiple perspectives in the open-ended section inviting feedback about the overall performance of the Plainfield Police Department. Comments were not edited to correct typos and are presented as received. The themes are as follows:

Staffing/Coverage and Budget:

- Have had very little interaction with police in town. I believe that they are not paid enough per hour according to what I learned at last town meeting.
- Officers should be able to flex hours to respond to calls outside normal work hours. State Police coverage to emergency calls takes too long and is inadequate.
- As long emergencies happen from 6 am to 9 pm we should be fine. For the amount of money, we must have the finest department in the hilltowns.
- Too many vehicles.

- I have no experience with Plainfield Police yet but I feel that police are often called for matters outside their expertise, and that funding should be directed towards more community-oriented services and support networks.
- officers should be available 24hours/day
- It never seems like there is an officer on duty when there is heavy traffic however we see them frequently in the early mornings when traffic is minimal
- Saturday and Sunday need coverage by our Police Department, not the State Police.
- Why Monday through Friday. Should be Tuesday through Saturday.
- I only wish they were on duty more. I don't feel safe when I know I have to wait for state police.
- Need to be on call with a pager
- Too many police and not enough availability
- Since crime and other events occur mostly at night and on weekends, I believe the hours of "on duty" should change to reflect this.
- i have n interaction with the plainfield police - my understanding is that most my guess 90% of plainfield residents do not interact with plainfield police - so it seems a waste to spend so much oof the budget for such a small percent of population
- it is not right for people to wait for state police to come, it takes around 30 to 45 minutes,
- Do not understand why weekends are not covered
- I think the police are grossly overfunded.
- we need more patrol cars to stop speeders

- Plainfield appears to have more coverage at a greater cost than surrounding towns so the coverage we have is beyond adequate as is the compensation. Unfortunately, our police department seems to be shirking responsibility.
- Why do we need to spend so much more on salaries and overall budgets than most other towns and why do we need so many police vehicles? Also I find the police logs totally unhelpful in that they don't explain what exactly the police did in answer to the call.
- Trainings should be given on inherent biases in policing. More funding for town social worker to address issues of domestic violence
- I have never personally called the police department so I can't answer those questions. The police with the finance committee and select board would better be able to tell if funding of our department is appropriate.
- Plainfield should re-allocate coverage and have officers on-call to allow for emergencies.
- no need for a full time chief and sergeant.
- Police coverage was better before we had full time paid police
- I've never heard of a M-F police dept; what other town with this many officers cannot create schedules to serve the community on Saturday and Sunday? Regarding officers treating people with dignity and respect, I've seen several officers directing traffic who are either too busy drinking coffee or looking at their cell phones to see what drivers need or who take the opportunity to bully or lecture drivers while they are slowed down for construction. Not helpful and not a good look.
- We need to examine when policing is necessary and schedule according to that, not "9-5, M-F."
- Performance based on their pay -- average. Would rather see performance on weekends and less on weekdays. No need for two full-time officers weekly.
- We don't need two full-time officers, and 85 hours of policing a week is excessive for a very small town.
- Weekend coverage is essential

- Plainfield Police must have someone on duty on the weekend. To stay home and not respond is unacceptable!
- I would like to see some of the budget from the police department going to support the firefighters and EMTs and any resources they need to keep us safe. Highland Ambulance EMS was just asking for personal donations to get another ambulance. Could our town spend some of the funds we spend on police to chip in for a new ambulance instead? Also, I understand that the police currently handle some of the disputes among neighbors. Could we instead have a social worker or someone working for the town that can support neighbors in working through conflicts and healing their relationship?
- I think there should definitely be weekend coverage and patrolling, and more patrolling overall! Is it necessary that someone be in the station for so many hours or could a cell phone number be posted on the door while officers patrol?
- The only issue to me is weekend local police coverage. It is a large budget and I wouldn't like to see it rise but perhaps some rearrangement of duties or schedules would accommodate the police availability during the weekend.
- Change coverage to include more weekend hours
- With two full time staff each weekday, I don't believe additional paid administrative personnel as rumored, are justified.
- I think maybe weekends should be covered. Maybe split the time up differently.
- Weekend coverage is an issue. Plainfield Police department are doing a good job for the town.
- Budget is way too high for our town. We do live in the country not a city.
- Our officers are amazing they just need more funding to do their job more often
- state police - 45 minutes!
- Budget is too high!

Overall Performance:

- Too many lectures at construction sites, etc.
- Other than speed traps on Rt 116, I have no direct observation of them doing anything. Not a criticism, just that they are invisible.
- Sub par job directing traffic on the 116 construction job
- Did not get help from the department after complaining about someone frequently speeding on our road
- I spoke with Chief Litchfield about a neighbor constantly speeding. He told me I would need to call the office. And then he could only help if there was other complaints.
- I think the performance of the PPD is of high standard
- The Police have always responded to any call I have had in a timely matter, even before we had a full-time force
- I had ID theft and reported to police - very responsive
- I have little interaction with the police. But have heard of two instances that happen in the last several years that were upsetting, one yelling across Plainfield pond at kayaker unnecessarily and another being way overly aggressive with a neighbor when he was pulled over in his driveway. The police do a lot of good but they need to not overstep.
- Nice but ineffective with some problems
- I have no complaints about the Police Department.
- Our Caregver was rear ended by an officer and the person who observed it caled the Dept. Got no response
- I have heard from others in Plainfield and outside that when stopping someone speeding that the officer was not at all polite.
- Very grateful for service of PD members.
- very good job proud of them

- I support the PPD.
- Excellent
- Having seen Justin twice in accident instances am impressed by his competence.
- Response to a recent medical emergency was excellent
- I have had 2 instances of police response over the past 2 years - neither highly serious. In both instances they have been responsive and professional.
- When I've needed to call 911 - Plainfield police have always responded very quickly, been professional, and treated me with respect.
- having a police presence is reassuring
- I see a lack of information (do they check gun permits?), accountability, and oversight. Who would I even complain to if I had a complaint? Insufficient civilian review.
- Know very little of goes on with the Plainfield Police Dept.
- Residents are not provided with sufficient information to know much of anything about what the PPD does
- recently we had a badly injured moose on our property after regular hours, and the police still responded very quickly!
- My interactions with the police have been friendly.
- Overall performance seems good
- The police seem to be doing a good job!
- generally I feel they are respectful but I had a very unfortunate encounter w/Chief Litchfield
- As stated, I have virtually no experiences of the overall performance of the dept. Once when I was driving on a dirt road with/a work crew and an officer stopped me and said I would need to wait 15 minutes or could go back & use Bluff St -- & I had to tell them that Bluff St. is impossible to drive on -- I was

surprised that the officer didn't know that & wondered what a driver from out of town would have experienced had they followed those directions.

General/Other:

- Police presence is a must
- I have yet not required to have a response from the police police
- Acquisition of a radar speed sign would be a real
- I have not had to call for an emergency, so have no direct experience with emergency response. And as far as budgeting, I would have to see more data to opine.
- I have never filed a complaint against a Plainfield Police Officer and my answer to the above question is based merely on perceptions at a national level
- PPD should publish a monthly log for residents to review in either the daily Hampshire Gazette or Springfield Republican
- I have not had any interaction with the police department in the last 36 months so I really don't have any experience to draw upon to answer these questions..
- I've never needed the police or heard of other people in town who have interacted with them, so it is difficult to have an opinion.
- Ive noticed a change from part time to full time presence of the police dept
- I don't know some things -- are our police treated fairly? I hope so. Are our police adequately compensated? And how are they handling problems? I don't know.
- I only answered some of these questions because only way to complete the survey. I don't have enough information to answer these questions. I really wish we were given a way to respond at each question instead of at the end my overall feeling is I think we have a good police dept that cares about our community and the people.use it was the only way to complete the questionnaire. I had no concerns for my safety so that didn't apply, without looking at their budget to see how the money is used i can't answer that , i don't know if state police respond in a timely manner but assume they do

due to how far away they may be when they get the call. i'm sure it takes them longer than local but 30 or 40 miles versus 10 miles

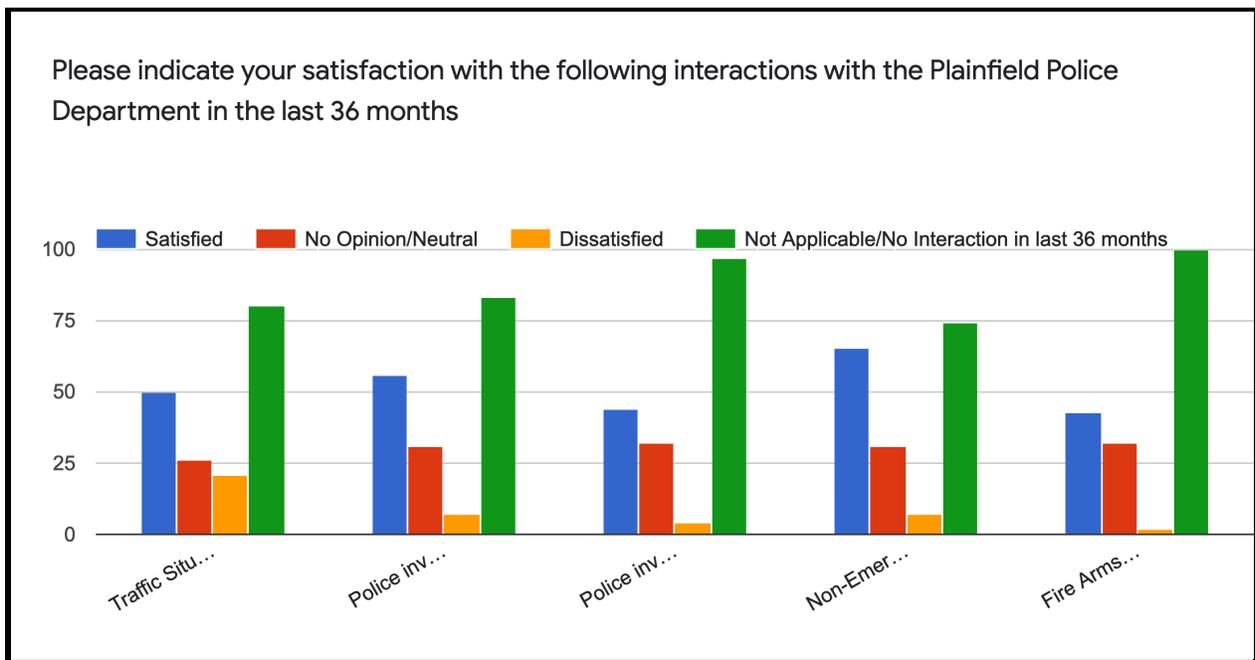
- Now all complaints will go to state and POST!!!
- Don't have enough personal experience to answer some of the questions.

Section 3: Contact and Satisfaction with Plainfield Police Department

Respondents were asked to indicate satisfaction with interactions with the Plainfield Police Department over the last 36 months in these areas:

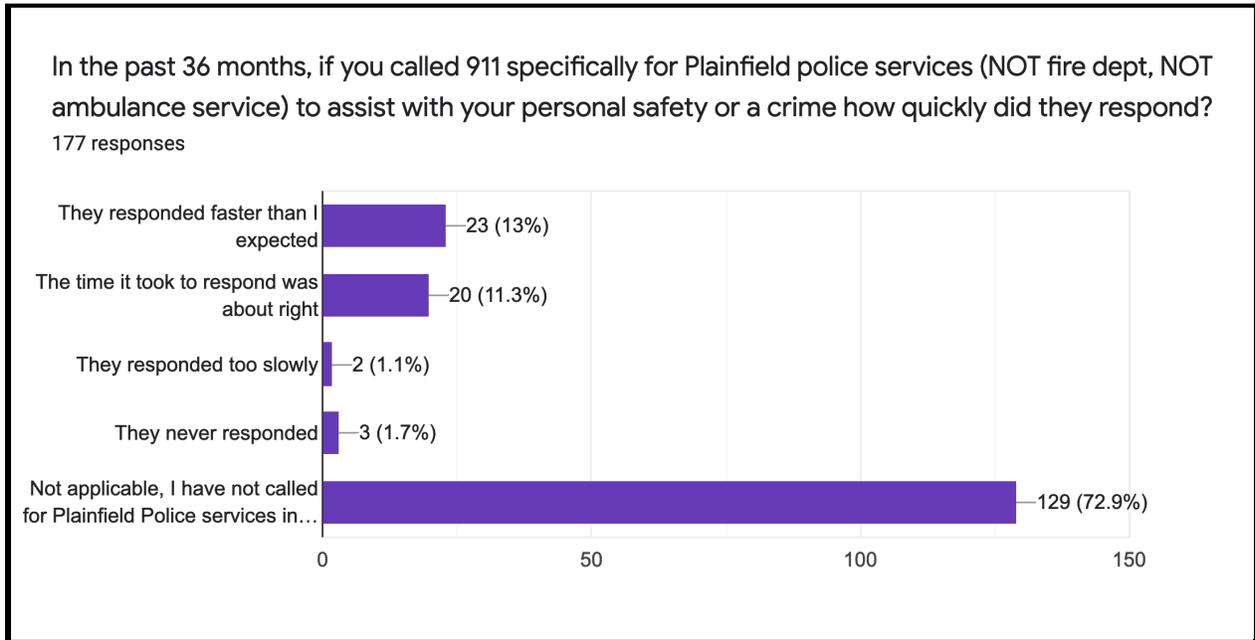
- Traffic Situations (warning, citation, disabled vehicle or crash, driver assistance)
- Police involvement in Medical 911 Response
- Police involvement in Fire 911 Response
- Non-Emergency Call (report a crime, suspicious activity)
- Firearms Permit (new application or renewal)

The greatest number of respondents consistently indicated no interaction with any of the above.



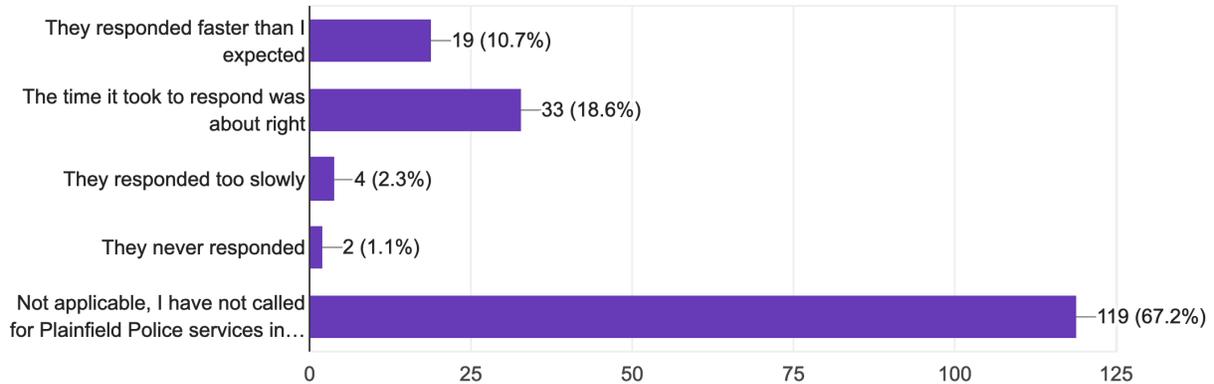
When asked about response time for emergency 911 calls for Plainfield police services, the majority (129) of respondents have had no interaction with the

department in the last 36 months. For those who did have interactions, 23 (13%) found response time faster than expected; 20 (11.3%) found response time about right; 2 (1.1%) found response too slow and 3 (1.7%) said Plainfield police never responded.



When asked about response time for calls to the police station for Plainfield police services, the majority (119) of respondents have no interaction with the department in the last 36 months. For those who did have interactions, 19 (10.7%) found response time faster than expected; 33 (18.6%) found response time about right; 4 (2.3%) found response too slow and 2 (1.1%) said Plainfield police never responded.

In the past 36 months, if you called the police station for Plainfield police services (NOT fire dept, NOT ambulance service) to assist with your personal safety or a crime how quickly did they respond?
177 responses



Section 3 Comments: Contact and Satisfaction with Plainfield Police Department

Please provide anything else you'd like us to know regarding your contact and interactions with the Plainfield Police (not State Police): 36 respondents provided multiple perspectives on their interactions with Plainfield Police. Comments were not edited to correct typos and are presented as received. The themes are as follows:

Staffing/Coverage and Budget:

- should provide 7 day per week coverage
- We need more coverage on the excessive vehicular speeding along Route 116.
- as i said before in other words plainfield is over policed
- I think we are spending far too much on police work for a town the size of Plainfield.
- Speeding is a problem; weekends are no exceptions.
- I expect better coverage on Sat & Sun -- either one in town limits, time wise for emergencies.

- Response -- on the average based on their work schedule -- no better than normal. It's their job.

Overall Performance:

- I called for help regarding a situation where traffic needed to be stopped about a year ago. I ended up calling back 15 minutes later to cancel the call; the police never arrived during the time when they were needed. This was in the middle of the day on a weekday. I had a similar experience at 8:30 pm on a weeknight.
- Chief and sargent pushed our csar ut of a snow ban 8t had been backed into. Great joviality about it and accepted our thanks
- Both our chief and sergeant have always been wonderful to deal with and have left me feeling safe and reassured. My thanks to them and the other officers, whom I have not met.
- The one time I stopped at the HQ was to ask a question and it was answered quickly and poitely
- Timely responses from officers.
- very satisfied excelent job
- I have had excellent interactions with Plainfield Ems / Fire Dept. Police are invisible.
- they are respectful, they have been on alot of medical calls that is help ful
- Justin and Matt are very respectful and listen. And I have complained multiple times about the speeding and vehicle violations I have witnessed. Most important they listen.
- they seem to be dedicated to the town and townspeople
- there great. no changes with the police, maybe the selectboard
- In a 2021 incident involving the PPD in a high-speed chase with a drug suspect, that ultimately involved Ashfield and the State Police, PPD did not notify Plainfield residents in general, nor those living as close as .5 miles away from the incident.

- my only contact with police was when they responded to a medical call for someone in my home. the officer who responded was first to arrive on the scene, but then was completely unhelpful, talking endlessly about nothing and performing no medical intervention. Despite being asked to stop talking endlessly and nervously he kept going. this did not help the situation at the moment. another interaction with the police was to report identity theft. my call to the police station was never answered.
- I was told that I have to wait 10 seconds at a stop sign after coming to a full stop. Not in the manual.
- courteous and helpful!
- I did not have a very good initial experience with the current police dept but willing to give benefit of doubt after one experience
- courteous and professional
- I am especially relieved to see a town police car parked at the pond/boat launch area to stop the tremendous increase of speeders there!!! Thank you!
- All contact has been amicable
- I have mainly interacted with Matt when I have reported concerns. He has been very polite and responsive to my concerns. I also recently called Justin when concerned about a possible car break-in (turned out not to be). He was informative and helpful.
- The Plainfield Police and chief are and have been willing to go up and beyond for citizens of Plainfield. They are all good cops -- not nasty, not arrogant nor power drunk.

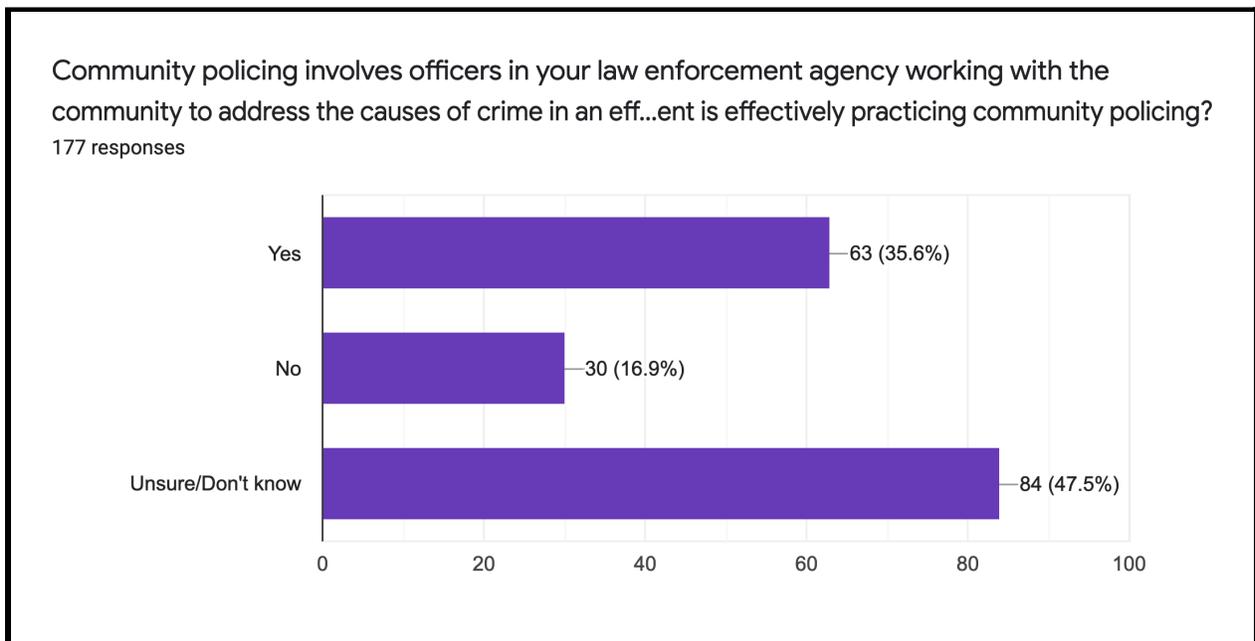
General/Other:

- Every town needs police
- Have lived in Plainfield for 48 years and have called police just twice and one was for a dog problem.
- I called to let them know my elderly mother was now living with me. Just so they would know. The Sgt. was pleasant and noted the information.
- Always appropriate

- I am not sure if my encounter w/Chf Litchfield was w/in 36 mos.
- They always wave to me when they drive by. Stop letting the fruit loops on the left harass them
- N.A.

Section 4: Community Engagement

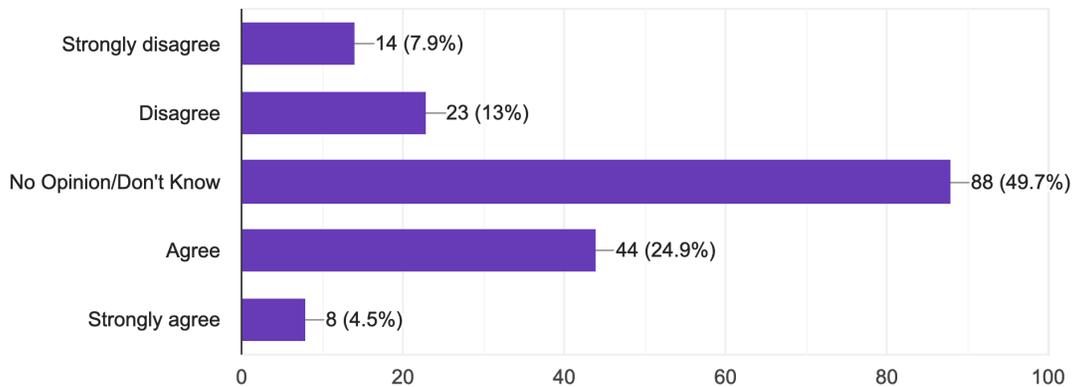
When asked if Plainfield Police are effectively practicing community policing, defined as a law enforcement agency working with the community to address the causes of crime in an effort to reduce the problems themselves through a range of activities, 84 respondents (47.5%) said they are unsure/don't know; 63 (35.6%) said yes, and 30 (16.9%) said no.



When asked if Plainfield Police make it easy for community members to provide input about the department's activities, 88 respondents (49.7%) said they are unsure/don't know; 44 (24.9%) agreed; 23 disagreed (13%), 14 strongly disagreed (7.9%) and 8 strongly agreed (4.5%).

The Plainfield Police Department makes it easy for community members to provide input about the department's activities (suggestions, praise or complaints)

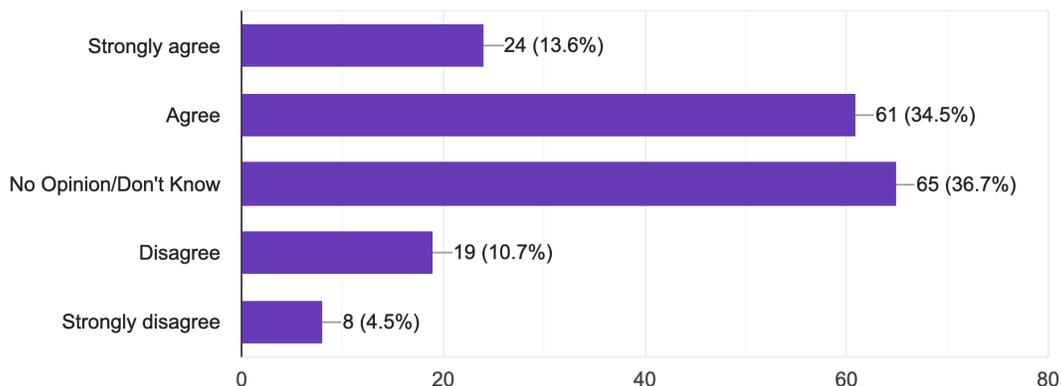
177 responses



When asked if the presence of the Police Chief at a monthly Select Board meeting provides an adequate forum to address questions or complaints about policing in Plainfield, 65 respondents (36.7%) said they are unsure/don't know; 61 (34.5%) agreed; 24 strongly agreed (13.6%), 19 disagreed (10.7%), and 8 strongly disagreed (4.5%)

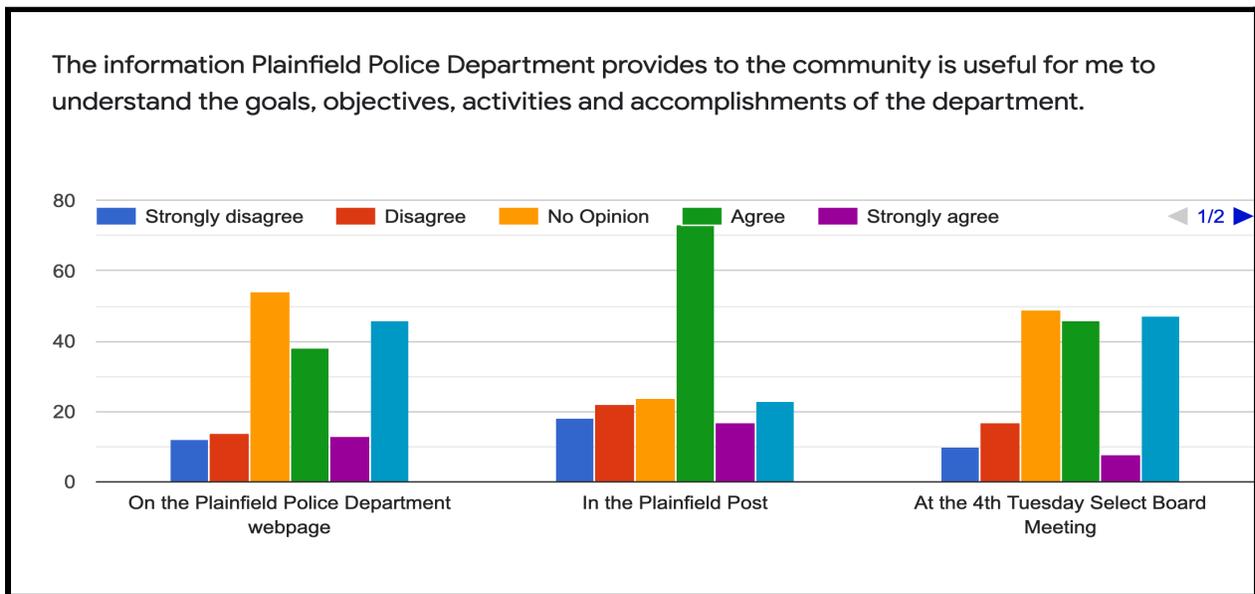
The presence of the Police Chief at the Select Board meeting on the 4th Tuesday of each month provides me with an adequate forum to address ques...tions or complaints about policing in Plainfield.

177 responses



When asked if the information the Plainfield Police Department provides to the community is useful to understand the goals, objectives, activities and accomplishments of the department, responses varied based on the method of information dissemination. Response counts are as follows:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A don't receive info
PD Website Page	12	14	54	38	13	46
Plainfield Post	18	22	24	73	17	23
Select Board Meeting	10	17	49	46	8	47



Note: the light blue color in the chart above, in the vertical bar on the right side of each section indicates "N/A, don't receive this information", the chart legend was too large for a single page.

Section 4 Comments: Community Engagement

Please provide anything else you'd like us to know regarding Plainfield Police Department's Community Engagement. 43 respondents provided multiple perspectives in the open-ended section inviting feedback about the methods the Plainfield Police Department uses to share information about goals, objectives, activities, and accomplishments. Comments were not edited to correct typos and are presented as received. The themes are as follows:

Community Engagement and Outreach:

- Have not attended sb meetings. Reporting without action results is not so helpful. Suggest action be reported.
- I think all this business with Covid and all of the mandates may have made an increase community interaction difficult
- Police have been present at town meeting and I have attended. . I don't usually attend select board meetings.
- I think they could use more support from the community.
- Officers seem to care about good community relations.
- We can't tell how they do if we don't know the details and the outcome of the complaints.
- Not aware of the community engagement.
- I don't feel the department is approachable
- When I look at the Plainfield Post, such light work for police.
- We could use a community wide meeting with the police either on Zoom or in person
- I get the feeling that the Plainfield Police Dept puts out information about the number of calls they get etc so that we are sure to see how much work they are doing for the town. Seems insincere. All style and not much substance. Just do your job and we will notice.
- Need to have more information in Plainfield Post of the Police Activity Log
- As mentioned earlier, the police logs are useless to my understanding of police activity
- Work with a social worker to address mental health situations
- Being a fairly law abiding person, my only interaction with the police is in the community. They always wave, stop to chat if I have a question or other. I

am sure that the information provided in these venues is enough for me to find what I am looking for if more involved questioning is necessary.

- The PPD webpage has little pertinent material, and the call log is a meaningless collection of numbers. No one attends the Tuesday SB meetings to confront the PPD. There needs to be an anonymous form of complaint going directly to the SB
- the police chief talks a lot but provides little information. the log information contains no locations, and no information about actions taken or follow up. it would be more useful to my family to know the types of calls and when and where they happen and what was done about them.
- The log should have dates, times, and approximate locations, and results of police intercession, so we know what we are dealing with.
- I don't know anything about their goals, objectives, activities and accomplishments. I would like to know much more.
- Not necessary to be at monthly meetings.
- I think community building and engagement can be done by people who work for the town other than the police--firefighters, business owners, town clerk. What if the town put aside a pot of money in the budget that those of us who live in Plainfield could meet about and make decisions together about how to spend it? That seems like it could be an opportunity for us to get to work together and to be engaged around decisions in the town.
- I never hear about the Police Department engaging the community
- I don't think the police dept. has much of a presence
- have not seen any proactive engagement/prefer to see positive human-police interactions on website rather than cars
- A quarterly 'open house' might provide an opportunity for both police personnel and town folks to meet one another outside formal meetings. I have no idea Plainfield Police Dept. initiated any Community Engagement. Is there one? A quarterly 'open house' might provide opportunity to a more constructive understanding of policing within a small town. It might help to reduce the line between 'them vs. us'.

- More people read the Plainfield Post than the Town Website. I think it would be helpful to have more of the information that is posted on the webpage referenced in the Post, as well.
- Justin and Sargent Matt are readily available to speak to any citizen who has questions or concerns. There is absolutely no reason anyone should be afraid to approach our police.

Staffing/Coverage and Budget:

- Get out of the office more...
- plainfield is over policed
- The phantom police seem to have absolutely no presence in this town. Never see the SIX! Vehicles even parked in front of the police station
- explanation of #of big cars, etc., lacking

Overall Performance:

- I find our officers open and responsive to suggestions.
- Doing a good job
- Reverse 911 on recent thefts was helpful
- No other comments. Completely satisfied
- I feel both our chief and sergeant are easy and openly approachable all the time.
- Wouldn't it be a shame if we had no police, as it has been in the past. Wouldn't it be a shame if there was a bad situation and the time of response from the State Police was extreme to cause hardship. Plainfield residents should be very happy to have the current police department. Get off your high horses and appreciate what you have. You know who you are!!! Start treating people with respect.
- They are doing well.
- They do their job, that's all.
- Leave them to do there job

Section 5: Other Feedback

Please provide any other feedback here. 87 respondents provided perspectives in the open ended section inviting feedback about anything related to policing in Plainfield. *Note: Comments pertaining to the survey itself, or the Select Board, or the Plainfield Police Working Group were consolidated from other sections of the survey and included here in this section. There were a few people very critical of just the fact of the survey, or of members of the Select Board or the existence of the PPWG. A few respondents used every one of the open ended comment sections to express their disapproval with this survey and to express disdain towards asking questions about the police department. There were also people who expressed appreciation for the opportunity to provide input and who offered constructive suggestions about future community engagement on this topic.* Comments were not edited to correct typos and are presented as received. The themes are as follows:

Staffing/Coverage and Budget:

- they deserve a raise

- Given the size of our town, I feel fortunate to have the amount of police protection and service that we have especially since I feel that our officers are underpaid.

- Having no weekend or after hours coverage is a significant problem. Our VOLUNTEER Fire/EMS are not police and should not have to direct traffic or monitor traffic safety instead of providing direct patient care or fire services at car accidents or other emergencies (these incidents occur more on weekend or nights).

- I am not sure why we have a budget that exceeds that of Ashfield's when our population is about 1/3 of theirs. Additionally, our proposed budget is greater than ANY of the other towns surveyed. This small town does NOT need this level of service.

- I don't think this size community needs a full time police officer....nor all those cars!

- The town is spending far too much money for policing not needed for the size of the town

- I feel that Plainfield is spending too much on the Police Dept. budget. We have no coverage during the weekends. If we are going to spend this kind of money the weekend is when coverage is need as most people are out of town working during the weekday. We have so much happening in town during the weekends (recreation, travel through town). If we are going to have two full time police officers, then I would like to see a rotating schedule (many police forces do this) example 12 hour shifts 4 days on 3 days off that way the weekends are covered, and the police officers would be working some weekends and not others. It would be helpful to know when they are the busiest to know when they should be on call.
- Plainfield had a small police force which did a fine job, now it has a larger, more expensive force with no significant difference in crime.
- I only want to see more staffing overnight. I work at the rehab and not having the ability to call the police at night is very scary. We need someone on at night.
- Too many special officers, they are in it for road detail money.
- We need 7 day coverage. We pay for 2 full time officers. Why can't one work Monday -Friday and another Tuesday-Sunday. It would give us a more effective response time and cut down of State Police response
- I have lived in Plainfield for over 40 years. There is now more "police presence" then ever before. While I appreciate their help, and that they keep Plainfield safe; I don't like our beautiful, sleepy, little town being know as the "hill town with all the police."
- The department has a lot of equipment that is unnecessary for the size of our town
- The number of police vehicles in town seems excessive for a town of 600. In fact, it is ridiculous and embarrassing.
- If the busiest day is Saturday, why aren't our two officers working on Saturday. THEY don't need more resources, they just need to change the days they work. Take Sunday and Monday off or have one of the other officers cover on Monday. On Saturday there is a lot more traffic in the area and 116 becomes a speedway. In the Summer the weekend is when people use the beeches the most, etc.... I don't like the thought that we are beingg

asked to increase spending, when we could just allocate the resources already provided in a better way.

- Less paid officers
- We spend way too much money for what we get. I do not think a town this size needs so many police and vehicles. I very seldom see any police around town
- again plainfield is overpoliced
- I am concerned about the desire to issue tickets to make money for the town. If there was less emphasis on this activity, we might be able to have a smaller force that matches the low population of our small town and the budget and force could be smaller. It would probably save the town more money.
- I don't think they need to get any bigger, but they need a police officer on weekends, if we need police, state police takes to long to get here .
- The police department should be able to respond 24/7 to local emergencies. To hear of fire personnel directing traffic while waiting for state police to respond to an accident because there is no one covering weekends or on duty is not right. When we had just the chief and an \$8,000 budget, if there was a need for the police, someone from the town department answered the call. It seems like the 'community' in this community policing has been lost.
- I think the police force is overfunded. Too much coverage and funding for our small town.
- Once again---people are speeding through town. Private vehicles and trucks, including tractor trailers going way over the speed limit. I have witnessed vehicles racing side by side on 116. It is not a matter of if someone eventually gets killed either walking on the side of the road or trying to pull out from a side road like Church Lane, but when. And when we have a motor vehicle accident as we recently had, they fail to respond because they are not on duty at that time. What if one of the drivers involved was drunk? Or drunk and had a fire arm? And yet, our volunteer fire department shows up and does their job and the police department's job until the State Police can arrive. Does this mean that if someone breaks into my house in the middle of the night and I call 911 that our police won't show up because they are not on duty at 2 AM? Our police department does not instill much confidence.

Just the mere fact of police presence in town does not indicate a job well done. I see our current police personnel far more than in previous years but I feel less safe. In the past, I always felt that one could depend on our police to respond if one called them about anything. That does not hold true anymore. And the facts that we have more officers on duty for more hours and that we are paying them far more than in the past would seem to indicate that one should be feeling more safe, not less so.

- The budget for the police department is way out of line. Some version of regionalization makes sense.
- I would like to see more part time officers out on the weekends, I like the chief and sgt,'s schedule of 6-9 Mon thru Fri.
- Strongly feel that there should be local police coverage on the weekends
- Very confused why Plainfield is funding a work- program for (mostly non-residents) to do construction road duty. The risk to our town of having unqualified people driving our cars is disturbing.
- End outside details, i.e., "rent-a-cop." Save money on fewer cruisers/maintenance/gas. Make sure the chief has a physical examination on a regular basis.

Why are there so many special officers listed on the webpage. What do they do? Do we pay them?

- I think the police department is too large for the size and needs of this town. missteps by police personnel whether intentional or accidental could expose the town to costly litigation and severe financial penalties or settlements. Our town vehicle fleet has grown, especially in the police department. this must be costly. I don't think crime is a problem in Plainfield. I think public safety resources should focus on fire and ambulance. I send the fire dept a check every year
- The number of police officers, full time and not, and the militaristic equipment they have, make it feel as if our town is occupied by a quasi-military force.
- I would hate to see any major changes in our Police Department. I feel that we have the right mix currently where no one is being micro managed yet the presence is felt and safety is a proirity. As a parent, I love having the

police more active around school bus routes, not only remind drivers to slow down and take caution but also knowing that if something were to happen they would be able to immediately respond. Also knowing that 116 is a routine transportation route from Holyoke to North Adams for drug movement, having the patrol keeping an eye on this is very refreshing as well. Personally, if there were to be any major changes in either direction it would be detrimental to our town.

- I think we are overstaffed. I would think one full time position is adequate.
- Increase coverage hours to weekends as well
- Do we really need this much police presence in our town. Appears the majority of time spent is on traffic stops. Can we look into sharing resources with neighboring towns?
- In my opinion we should have paid town police on all weekends in Plainfield.

I don't understand how in about 5 years' time our policing budget and staff have ballooned to its current level. Have the needs of the town changed that much? I don't think so.

- 1. More traffic control. 2. Weekend coverage.
- As a resident of Plainfield for almost 20 years, I find the Police presence disheartening. Do we really need 2 officers on duty at a time, 2 cruisers doing radar at the same time. One cruiser for every 100 citizens, or one officer for every 50 people. The budget is appalling, and they ask for more. The true cost is not even shown, or easy to find (vehicle maintenance, fuel, insurance, building costs, costs for out of town traffic details). Is the crime rate, and quality of life really less than similar towns with a fraction of the budget? Personally i feel no safer, or more protected than when i moved into town, and am planning on coming to town meeting to vote against budget increase. Also wondering about how to go about seeking a budget decrease for the following year.
- I do not believe we need Plainfield officers using Plainfield cruisers to do road details in other towns.
- For what the department does, I believe that their budget is too high. I also think that they don't need 4 police vehicles for such a small department.

- I think that the town spends far too much money for what we receive . Having four officers (2 full/ 2 part time) is unnecessary. What do they do all day?
- I am a bit concerned about the \$ used to purchase new vehicles and technology, even if part of this is coming from available grants, I'd like to be sure that the police budget is not increased for these things or anything pertaining to more/other weapons, vehicles or tech.
- Over the last few years, it seems there has been a lot of confusion on the part of both the police department and the town about the desired and appropriate size and role of the police force in town. I have been glad to see the increase in communication between the police department and the town, including this survey. I also feel that speeding, especially on Rt. 116, is a big issue for people in town that needs to be better addressed. I would like to see an increased use of speed trailers and also patrolling. I also feel that weekend patrolling of the roads and public use areas is important, especially as we get into the warmer months which brings a significant increase in traffic and people to our town.
- Do not understand the need for all the vehicles and patrols.
- I have lived in Plainfield from 1990-1992 & from 1995-2022. I try to come to annual town meetings -- but don't always make it. It seems to me that in the decades I have been here -- crime, safety & policing were not huge issues in Plainfield until very recently. I am very curious as to how -- in only the past ten years -- there has been this urgent need to make the Plainfield Police department a major player in town affairs -- and where the requests to increase the size of funding of the Dept. are coming from. In other words, I would like to find out where this conversation began and how and why. I don't remember, when talking to neighbors at community events & meetings -- folks talking much about the need for more prevalent policing in Plainfield and wonder how it has become such a major issue in recent years.
- Lower budget. Less hours.
- Budget is too high! We don't need TWO full time officers!

Issues of Concern:

- Several issues have been very frustrating over the past few years. The handling of the Ashfield high speed chase/crash is one of them, but the issue with the bear/wildlife cannon that farmers started using last summer is

another. I'd also like to see the police take a more active stance on the car thefts/break-ins that have occurred in the Hilltowns over the past few years. An active patrol presence and sharing information on where/when these break-ins occur would be appreciated.

- Again, we need coverage for the excessive speed on Route 116. Drug runners are using this route in the late and early morning hours to speed through our town. Other drivers are speeding through settled areas along Route 116. If there were police stakeouts like they have in Chesterfield, Cheshire and Goshen, I am sure this would stop.
- Since we live on 116 at the Savoy line, we need to see a lot of speeding tickets given to get drivers to slow down.
- Our police spend too much time at Swift River. Swift River needs to take care of their own problems. Plainfield, as compared with our past expenditures and compared with other regional communities presently spends a ridiculous amount of money on policing.
- We are on a busy street. It is dangerous for children, to walk, and to walk dogs with all the speeding vehicles. We need more speed patrols to issue more speeding tickets. Since our street is busier than many in Plainfield, we are more aware of speeding vehicles.

Community Engagement and Outreach:

- I miss having a neighbor who knows the folks in town be our police department. It seemed to work for years. There is a disconnect with police efforts to get to know residents and their circumstances. That would be a more friendly approach. That is what i feel is missing. It would be a mature approach that might help bring the community back together.
- Details of what they do and why they make the calls they do. All parties I evolved so the residents can be aware of the situation and be careful.
- Information available in Plainfield Post is not informative. Is there any good reason why a police log cannot be provide which gives more detail on incidents? Number of calls is useless to understand what it is they are doing and the level of need.
- The extreme - and all too frequent - examples of police abuse that you see taking place in certain municipalities can sometimes cast a shadow on the role of policing in general. In a small community such as ours it is particularly

important that police are as sensitive to the rights and wellbeing of every individual in the community as they are to its overall peace and safety. I have never had reason to question the commitment of Chief Litchfield and the department to this end. On the contrary, they have been professional and responsive in any interchange I have had with them.

- Have mental health and domestic violence situations aided by social worker so things do not escalate
- While I am glad we now have a full time police position, Plainfield has gone too far from barely there to overkill in funding and staffing. I question the judgment of the board of selectmen and I doubt the judgement of the chief of police. I wish more extensive care for the community was taken in to account while supporting such a big increase in police budget and the number of officers and vehicles and taking over the Hathaway Hall space. Fire department, ambulance services and highway department are also important to public safety and have people those departments that care about the community. The police in our town now seem to be using their position to line their pockets.
- We need civilian oversight of the police department. We need more information about what the police does. We need less police presence at such things as town meetings and elections. But most of all -- we need to get together with 2-3 towns and have one chief and shared equipment.
- I wonder how it came to be that the entire Hathaway Hall has been taken over by the police. It use to be a multi use building for the whole community, ei play group for preschoolers, art shows, COA functions, Christmas children's party with Santa and so forth. When it was built what was it designated use, has that been conveniently forgotten? Does a small community like ours really need such large police building?
- We have limited funds in our town. It seems like we could be spending at least some of the money we've recently started spending on the police on other town services such as our fire and emergency services, animal control, library, school, cultural events, and maybe a social worker or services that help neighbors and families handle conflicts they might otherwise go to the police to handle. I'm not familiar with a situation where a neighbor involves the police in handling a conflict with another neighbor, and they end up having a positive relationship as a result. I think there can often be a more negative impact when we call the police on our neighbors. Also, I have heard about concerns around speeding cars through Plainfield. This is a concern

because we want to keep our roads safe for everyone! Though, I wonder if it's possible for traffic stops to be performed without a firearm? Also, I worry about potential profiling by police with traffic stops. I would like to better understand the demographics of who is being stopped and cited for traffic violations in Plainfield.

- I hope there is still a place for volunteerism to fill at least some of the PD coverage needs outside of the paid shifts, as has been the primary model for Plainfield and surrounding towns. This would be a great asset rather than complete reliance upon State Police every time.
- While I support paying our police, we don't need two paid full-time police in this small town, especially compared to other towns. The strength of a community is not only in paying our professionals, but also keeping the spirit of volunteerism alive. The Fire Dept. members respond to many emergencies without payment. There was a recent accident on a weekend day and no police officer responded. I would have respected them more if an officer had volunteered to respond. That is part of what community engagement means.

Overall Performance:

- They are doing a great job
- Their intentions seem ok. I don't have confidence in their judgment. Office person is helpful.
- They are doing their job the way it should be done
- I recognize that community policing is a difficult job and I appreciate overall the work they do in our town.
- I think the Plainfield police work hard. I just wish they were more transparent about their activities and more available for late night weekend emergencies.
- Have not had the need for policing in the last 36 months except for a scam from another state. Plainfield police handled this promptly and efficiently. I was very pleased with their response.
- They are doing a good job.
- Chief Litchfield has exceeded expectations

- I feel safe in my hometown in that I can trust the police department of Plainfield to do a timely, fair, and exemplary job to any situation set before them.

General/Other:

- It is good to see activities going on at the Police station and cruisers around town. A few years back there would have been no indication to an out of towners that we even had police in this town.
- My comments cover specific contacts. Overall feel good about the PD
- Please invest in education and poverty reduction not more police!
- The PVFD (firefighters and EMT's) need to have Plainfield Police protection, when requested, 7 days & nights/week.
- I am open to explanations in answer to my questions. Perhaps in the Plainfield Post?
- Nothing in this survey was mentioned about Police compensation. I feel should have been an important part of the survey.
- It has taken a few years to build our department back up from nothing. It is important that we maintain a strong and effective department and presence in town. We would be a very vulnerable community if we did not have a strong department
- Based on their job description as police officers, they do it.
- Firearms could be secured in officers vehicles if needed. I see no need to have guns strapped to ones waist. Guns do not deter crime nor do they keep peace within town.
- I'm happy that my taxes are helping to pay them. I'm not happy that I'm paying taxes to an internet service that I'm not using and is costing the town a lot of money.
- There is a big divide in this community regarding the police. A lot of undercurrent. Too much micro managing the PPD and its Chief. It is a toxic environment for the PPD and the Chief. It appears that the powers to be want to make the police so uncomfortable they all quit. When that happens and

Plainfield has no Chief or Police Department, the State will step in and hire the town a chief. Good luck with that!

Comments about the survey:

- This questionnaire is a waste of time & money
- Plainfield is a quiet community I do t understand the purpose of this survey.
- maybe this individual putting this out needs to get a life and possibly anxiety med and move on to something else and stop dividing the town against the department.
- The Police Study Group appointed by the selectmen should be dissolved. This is a very bias group of individuals who are aghainst cops and feel they are all rogue, dishonest and nasty. Members of this committee should stay in their lane -- not overseeing something you all have no expertise in.
- Stop harassing the Police Department and let them do their jobs. It is an embarrassment to even receive this survey. They are doing a good job and it is shameful they have to continually put up with these people who are disrespecting them.
- there doing a great job, and others ive spoken to say this survey is ridiculous. theres no problems with the department only the person putting this out.
- Thanks for the survey
- Id like to know why the person on the selectboard has issues with the police? maybe they got a ticket AND there lashing out at them for it. or maybe that person should just get a life and move on isntead of dividing the police against the department. shameful.
- Not sure why a small town like Plainfield feels the need to have a survey about our Police.
- feedback!! stop policing the police, we live a small town, not the city. work on something else that can better the community. use your time wisely because its time for a new selectboard member?members
- Survey a waste of time, energy and resources.

- Thank for putting time, and effort into this survey, and making the information accessible to the citizens of Plainfield. I truly hope feed back from the survey helps benefit the towns people, and the police department. Please lets make this a town with more peace, and not more police.
- I did not like the survey, some questions i didn't feel I could answer from the choices I would have liked to be able to add or expand the answer right next to the question

Appendix A: Survey Questions

PLAINFIELD COMMUNITY SURVEY ON POLICING

About this Survey

The goals of this survey are as follows:

- To offer all adults in Plainfield the opportunity to provide their input to the Select Board on matters relating to policing in Plainfield;
- To provide the Police Department with information that can help form specific goals and objectives for addressing the policing needs of the community;
- To provide the Select Board with information to help hold the Police Chief accountable to the needs and concerns of the community.

This survey will likely take you less than 10 minutes to complete. The survey seeks your opinions about: 1) the overall safety and quality of life in Plainfield; 2) the overall performance of our police department; 3) your contact and satisfaction with the police department; and 4) effectiveness of the police department's engagement with the community. We also invite you to provide demographic information to assist with analysis (doing so is optional). There is space at the end of each section, and at the end of the survey to add any other input about policing in Plainfield that you would like to share.

Online survey responses are strongly encouraged. If you prefer to complete the survey via paper form, you may download the form from the town website, or pick up a survey form at the Library or Town Offices. Completed paper survey forms can be returned via mail to Plainfield Town Offices 304 Main Street, Plainfield MA 01070, or put in the drop box there.

The deadline for survey responses is February 28, 2022. A summary of the survey responses will be shared with all townspeople. Thank you for taking the time to provide your input!

One Response per Plainfield Adult (18 years or older)

We encourage input from all Plainfield residents who are 18 years or older. We discourage multiple responses from any one individual. For these reasons we have developed a method to randomly assign numbers to survey respondents so as to validate the response and prohibit duplication of response.

1. Please provide the 4 digit number included in the USPS mailing you received about this survey here: _____

Note: This is a randomly assigned number. The number is not matched to your name or address, it was randomly included in the info you received about this survey. We will match all numbers provided in all survey responses to the master list of numbers (which does not include names or addresses). This method ensures your response will remain anonymous, and also ensures that only one response per adult member of a Plainfield household will be validated.

Our Community: Safety and Quality of Life

Please provide your perspectives on safety, crime and quality of life in Plainfield.

2. Please select at least one (1) and up to three (3) issues you think are the biggest challenges affecting your safety and quality of life in Plainfield. Select from this list or add "other" (if choosing "other" provide a brief description). *Check at least one and up to three:*

- Burglary/theft
- Children in emotional/physical danger
- Elders in emotional/physical danger
- Domestic violence
- Physical assault
- Unlawful weapons possession or use
- Unlawful drug use (manufacture, transport or sale of controlled or unlawful substances)
- Underage drinking
- Trespassing
- Stray/barking dogs
- Livestock problems
- Wildlife problems
- Unlawful dumping
- Unlawful burning
- Random sounds of gunfire
- Speeding motor vehicles or other traffic problems
- Credit card/bank/computer fraud or identity theft
- Harassing or suspicious phone calls
- Noisy neighbors
- Other: _____

3. Over the last 36 months, to what extent have your feelings of safety in our Plainfield community increased, decreased, or stayed the same? *Check one:*

- Decreased a lot
- Decreased some
- Stayed the same

- Increased some
- Increased a lot

4. To what extent do you feel safe in Plainfield when you are outside alone?

Check one:

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- A lot
- To a great extent
- Not applicable, I'm never outside alone

5. Have you limited, changed, or curtailed your activities in Plainfield because you are concerned about crime or your own safety? *Check one answer per row:*

	Yes	No	Don't Know/Unsure
Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Do you feel that crime is such an issue in Plainfield that you would consider moving away from Plainfield? *Check one:*

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/Unsure

7. Please provide anything else you'd like us to know regarding your perspectives of Safety and Quality of Life in Plainfield.

Overall Performance of Plainfield Police Department

The Plainfield Police Department employs one full time chief, one full time sergeant and two part time patrol officers. Chief Litchfield and Sgt. Miazga are on duty Monday through Friday, covering the hours from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. The police station is staffed Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and by appointment. Police coverage outside of this schedule is provided by Massachusetts State Police. The current fiscal year police salaries and operating expenses, which are part of the public safety section of the annual town budget, are \$142,423 (costs for police employee benefits, police station expenses and acquisition of police vehicles are included in separate line items in the town budget). The Plainfield Select Board oversees the police department.

Please provide your perspectives on the overall performance of the Plainfield Police Department.

8. Considering your responses in the previous section, please indicate if our Plainfield Police Department is addressing the top 1 to 3 problems/concerns YOU have about safety and quality of life in town. *Check one:*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- No Opinion/Don't Know
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

9. Should police coverage in Plainfield change? *Check one:*

- Keep at current levels
- Increase coverage
- Decrease coverage
- No Opinion/Don't Know

10. Plainfield Police have sufficient funding to provide adequate protection for the town. *Check one:*

- Agree, sufficient funding
- Disagree, not enough funding
- Disagree, too much funding
- No opinion/Don't know

11. The Plainfield Police (see work schedule above) respond to emergency calls in a timely manner. *Check one:*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- No Opinion/Don't Know
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

12. The State Police (providing coverage outside of Plainfield Police work schedule) respond to emergency calls in a timely manner. *Check one:*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- No Opinion/Don't Know
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

13. Telephone calls to the Plainfield Police station are handled professionally and efficiently. *Check one:*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- No Opinion/Don't Know
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

14. Plainfield Police Officers respect the rights of individuals and treat people with dignity and respect. *Check one:*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- No Opinion/Don't Know
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

15. A complaint brought against a Plainfield Police Officer will receive a fair, objective and timely response. *Check one:*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- No Opinion/Don't Know
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

16. Please provide anything else you'd like us to know regarding your perspectives of the Overall Performance of the Plainfield Police Department.

Contact and Satisfaction with Plainfield Police Department

Chief Litchfield and Sgt. Miazga are on duty Monday through Friday, covering the hours from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. The police station is staffed Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and by appointment. Police coverage outside of this schedule is provided by Massachusetts State Police. Please provide your perspectives on interactions you have had with **Plainfield Police** (not State Police).

17. Please indicate your satisfaction with the following interactions with the Plainfield Police Department in the last 36 months. *Mark only one box per row:*

	Satisfied	No Opinion/Neutral	Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
Traffic Situations (warning, citation disabled vehicle)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police involvement in Medical 911 Response	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police involvement in Fire 911 Response	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-Emergency Call (report a crime, suspicious	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

activity)

Fire Arms Permit
(new application or renewal)

18. In the past 36 months, if you called **911** specifically for Plainfield police services (NOT fire dept, NOT ambulance service) to assist with your personal safety or a crime how quickly did they respond? *Check one:*

- They responded faster than I expected
- The time it took to respond was about right
- They responded too slowly
- They never responded
- Not applicable, I have not called for Plainfield Police services in the last 3 years

19. In the past 36 months, if you called the **police station** for Plainfield police services (NOT fire dept, NOT ambulance service) to assist with your personal safety or a crime how quickly did they respond? *Check one:*

- They responded faster than I expected
- The time it took to respond was about right
- They responded too slowly
- They never responded
- Not applicable, I have not called for Plainfield Police services in the last 3 years

20. Please provide anything else you'd like us to know regarding your Contact and Interactions with the Plainfield Police (not State Police).

Community Engagement

Please indicate the effectiveness of Plainfield Police Department's community information and engagement.

21. Community policing involves officers in your law enforcement agency working with the community to address the causes of crime in an effort to reduce the problems themselves through a range of activities. Based on this definition, do you think the Plainfield Police Department is effectively practicing community policing? *Check one:*

- Yes
- No
- Unsure/Don't know

22. The Plainfield Police Department makes it easy for community members to provide input about the department's activities (suggestions, praise or complaints). *Check one:*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- No Opinion/Don't Know
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

23. The presence of the Police Chief at the Select Board meeting on the 4th Tuesday of each month provides me with an adequate forum to address questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints about policing in Plainfield. *Check one:*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- No Opinion/Don't Know
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

24. The information Plainfield Police Department provides to the community is useful for me to understand the goals, objectives, activities and accomplishments of the department.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral/ No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable/ Don't Receive
-------------------	-------	------------------------	----------	----------------------	----------------------------------

On the Police
Dept. Webpage

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

In the Plainfield Post

At the 4th Tuesday Select Board Meeting

25. Please provide anything else you'd like us to know regarding Plainfield Police Department's Community Engagement.

Any Other Feedback

This is the place to provide any additional feedback you would like the Plainfield Select Board to have related to the Plainfield Police Department.

26. Please provide anything else you'd like us to know regarding Plainfield Police Department's Community Engagement.

Demographics

This section is optional. providing information about how long you've lived in Plainfield, your gender, age and race will assist with survey response analysis.

27. How many years have you lived in Plainfield? *Check one:*

- Less than 3
- 3-9
- 10-20
- More than 20

Prefer not to say

28. What is your gender identity? *Check one:*

Female

Male

Non-Binary

Prefer not to Say

29. What is your age range? *Check one:*

18-29

30-49

50-69

70-89

90-more than 100

Prefer not to Say

30. What is your race identity? *Check one:*

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

Multi-racial

White

Prefer not to answer

Thank You!

Appendix B: Other Community Feedback

Plainfield Policing

I used to live in Hawley and one of my favorite things about being there was that it had no police department. It was a statement on the simplicity of life there.

I have lived in Plainfield for 18 yrs. now and I am very uncomfortable with the increased police presence, way too much in the way of speed traps and being watched.

I assume that in the event of a big crime, outside forces would be brought in (Murder/Rape/car crash/assault) so I don't see why we need so much Policing in such a small town. The money could be better used elsewhere.

Anonymous (lest the police
come for me)

Comments/opinions additional to the survey...

Policing started in response to community size increasing enough and community interdependence decreasing enough that members were no longer motivated by a need to get along with each other. This time coincides with the beginning of the end of people thinking it necessary to 'do unto others...'. The costs of bad interpersonal behavior diminished. In response, the outsourcing of problems of crime and violence and generally antisocial behavior to an armed (with not just weapons of physical violence but of authoritarian power) extra-community group has never worked very well, for so many reasons. Community members are neither served nor protected. If we do not back up and start with these facts (are they facts, shared opinion?), I don't see an honest discussion of what Plainfield, a community numerically small enough to generally police ourselves, can do with a police department. The biggest question is about whether enough community members remember how to solve problems: by listening, seeing all sides, compromising, taking the long view, by simply agreeing that a problem needs to and will be solved. This isn't the world we live in but boy, wouldn't it be great?

I think of Plainfield as a small town with few major problems and a population that likes to see itself as a community with common goals. This may or may not be true but it may be time to find out what we can do together. Times are becoming increasingly challenging and if there are questions about how we might need to work together in a true emergency, long or short in duration, rather than on a pretty small issue like this one (it might feel big but take a look around and see how many worse problems we could have but don't) now might be a good time for some testing. It might not matter what issue is on the table; solving problems is about process, not content.

For example, let's say residents wanted to take on speeding, make it a project with the police. Would residents agree that speeding in town is not desirable? That they would like to eradicate it? That it actually can be eradicated, or almost? Would the police agree? Or is it just understood that speeders are a revenue source and a justification for the existence of police and therefore necessary? Would residents agree to not speed in town? Is it an option for residents and police to work together on speed limits? Would residents help each other practice speed limits that were agreed upon? Would residents take responsibility for mandated penalties if not? What would fair penalties look like? How would the town address speeding by non-residents, given an understanding that a lack of any community connection creates a different kind of problem? Imagine if residents used this

specific issue to learn how problems are solved. I see you readers shaking your heads. And I understand. But this is exactly why it is left to the police. The outsourcing serves a purpose and I don't think we can have it both ways. Either community members take responsibility or it is left to the 'professionals'. They each have their pros and cons (and there is no question that at this moment in history, given how far down the rabbit hole we are living, it would be way easier to just keep paying them to do what they do then try to change it enough to matter. Change is tons and tons of hard work, so many layers.). Let's just be honest about what those are. It is a good starting place for acceptance of either what we have or what needs to be done.

I have not personally had much interaction with the Plainfield police. They seem to be nice enough as people, not like certain actual scary angry men in other nearby towns who one could imagine drawing a weapon for no good reason. But I also can hardly imagine them doing much beside stopping speeders and looking at minor crime-ish scenes. I mean, let's face it, policing here and in most places isn't about noticing and stopping anything bad from happening but coming in after and doing, well, not much, most of the time. Since we apparently need to have a police force and they don't seem to do much to earn what we have to pay for them, I would like to see them working to integrate themselves into the community in ways that actually would serve and protect. Them getting to know us and vice versa, learning who is at risk and likely in need of community intervention of any kind, bringing people together to solve potentially mediation worthy problems to promote harmony instead of escalation, developing relationships instead of buying flashy boy toy equipment. That kind of policing. What we have is kind of disgusting. But the people who are our police did not make it this way; they are filling roles that were created by us all. Countless decisions over a very long time made by many, many people have brought us to here and now. We, not they. Change will only happen as a we. Can we imagine and then make a police department that meets our needs?

Done.
Good luck.

Appendix C: March 2021 PPWG Report to Select Board

DATE: March 21, 2021

TO: Plainfield Selectboard

FROM: Bob Baker, Rebecca Coletta, Kimberly Longey, Jack Nelson, Joe Sabourin, and Susi Westwood, as Plainfield Police Ad-Hoc Working Group

CC: Chief Litchfield, Sergeant Miazga, Paula King, David Kramer

RE: Update, recommendations and request

We are providing this update on our recent activities, recommendations and near-term next steps as part of our effort to keep our work transparent and to fulfill our advisory responsibilities to the Selectboard. We would like feedback from the board about the usefulness of our research and advice as well as some guidance from the board on areas of focus for next phases of work.

Background/Context

Plainfield Police Ad-Hoc Working Group is advisory to the Selectboard with an initial scope of work to 1) determine what the police department does and 2) what policing costs in Plainfield.

The group includes Rebecca Coletta (liaise from Selectboard), Bob Baker (liaise from Finance Committee), Kimberly Longey, Jack Nelson, Joseph Sabourin and Susi Westwood. There is no expense budget for this activity. The group works closely with Chief Litchfield and Sergeant Miazga who are kept apprised of our activities and who are included in meeting invitations/meeting notes and who have been helpful in providing requested information.

Progress Report/Recent Activities

The group met 3 times between February 17 and March 17, with additional work carried out by individuals or pairs in between each meeting. We also attended the March 1 finance committee meeting. An update was provided to the Selectboard on March 9 outlining near-term research activities. Since then substantial information has been gathered from within and outside of Plainfield. To date we have:

- **Learned more about the department staffing structure and schedule, which includes:**
 - A part-time (20 hour) chief paid at an hourly rate, working evenings and weekends primarily focused on FID/pistol permits and call responses.
 - A part-time (30 hour) sergeant paid at an hourly rate, primarily focused on training, scheduling traffic details, administration, call responses.
 - Three part-time regular officers (ranging from 10-12 hours each) provide a total of 32 hours a week for administration, grant writing, DART, HOPE, patrols, and call response. *(Please note: FY'21 & FY'22 budgets indicate that 42 officer*

hours/week are budgeted?)

- 7 “special officers”, 2 constables, 1 animal control officer (note that both constables and the animal control officer are also designated as “special officers”, so of the 10 positions there are 7 individuals involved). We are awaiting details on what the special officers do, if they are paid and if they are required to comply with the mandatory training (current and expanded under POST).
- **Compiled and analyzed the police logs published since July 2020. Key findings:**
 - Monthly 911 call volume ranged from a low of 17 (January 2021) to a high of 43 (August 2020). Calls are handled by the Northampton dispatch center and include medical and fire calls to which police respond (along with firefighters and EMTs). Calls include: alarms, animal complaints, assisting citizens, assisting another department, breaking/entering, fraud/larceny, motor vehicle accident, motor vehicle complaint, noise complaints, road hazards/wires, suspicious activities, unwanted persons, welfare checks, and misdials/hangups.
 - Calls to our local department (police office phone, chief or sergeant cell phones, Ed Morann cell phone) varied from a low of 72 (December 2020) to a high of 220 (September 2020). A few people walk into the station each month. This activity includes: traffic hazards; reports of phone scams; fraud; speeding complaints; snowy roads complaints; suspicious persons/cars; questions about Plainfield weather conditions; questions from citizens or other towns about Plainfield crime rates, court related work, hunters, etc.
 - We have developed a spreadsheet to assist in the analysis of police logs.
- **Worked on a tool for use by the department to track their daily activities at a high level of detail (including administration, call response and training) so that we can get a better understanding of how much time typical police activities require.**
 - This is a simple excel spreadsheet tool that can be accessible to each officer either on a smartphone or a desktop computer, with the ability to merge and sort data to provide a variety of information reports.
 - We have requested Chief Litchfield to maintain this level of detailed activity tracking for at least 2-4 weeks, after which time we can revisit the need for continuation.
 - This level of information will be useful to both the Chief and the Selectboard in future staffing capacity analysis and planning.
- **Learned more about a regional Records Management System (RMS).**
 - Plainfield is part of a grant-funded effort to equip towns with software, training and ongoing support on a Records Management System that will streamline the

mandatory records retention and data collection process. This project began over a year ago, has been delayed by COVID-19, and is expected to be implemented by July 1, 2021. Costs for implementation are included in a multi-town grant coordinated through the Northampton dispatch center on behalf of their area towns. Funding for annual costs of the software and training for the first year are also included in the \$83K project. After that, annual software licenses will need to be paid for through the department's expense budget (approx. \$3K).

- This system will only provide data for calls handled through Northampton dispatch (911 calls). This system will not provide records of all daily activities of the department.
- **Conducted one/one telephone interviews with several area towns to compile data on department staffing, fleet size, physical plant, pay rates, benefits and current year and projected FY 2022 salary and expense budgets.**
 - We targeted towns close in population size to Plainfield (Hancock, Cummington, Peru, Windsor) as well as nearby towns with larger populations (Ashfield, Worthington, Chesterfield, Westhampton, Chester, Blandford, Huntington). We spoke with town administrators or police chiefs (or both). Key findings:
 - Towns closest to our population size all have part-time chiefs (ranging from 19 to 25 hours per week), most are paid an annual salary (not an hourly rate) and are considered management and exempt from overtime. All of the chiefs have part or full-time jobs elsewhere (either in town or out of town).
 - Chief pay ranges from annual stipend of \$1,700 (Hancock) to annual salary of \$32,000 (Peru).
 - Chief benefits, where they are offered, include state retirement and health insurance. A few have small amounts of paid time off.
 - Most towns have a part-time Sergeant and 1 or 2 part-time officers working 20 hours or less (some are very part-time, 5 hours or less).
 - Most towns have 1 or 2 "special officers", retained to provide manpower for traffic detail work.
 - No other towns include animal control officers on the police force.
 - Current officer pay rates range from \$17 to \$20 per hour.
 - Most of the part time officers work less than 20 hours per week and are therefore not eligible for benefits.
 - Two departments have designated administrative (not police) staff providing 3-10 hours a week of support. These staff provide general centralized administration to the town and other departments. Many towns are exploring this as a way to

shift/consolidate administration and to reduce the need for the mandatory training expenses.

- Most departments have 2 cruisers.
- Most departments have designated space in their town offices or in a shared public safety building.
- Department annual expense budgets ranged from \$700 to \$28K.
- All towns have at least two major state highways, and none identified the presence of those as major impacts to the department's policing needs.
- No towns identified particular socioeconomic impacts that were driving their policing needs.
- Three towns have established annual evaluations of the department, typically conducted by the designated Selectboard member liaison to the department. These are not complicated processes. The other towns are figuring out evaluation methodologies. All see the need for evaluation as part of accountability.
- Publication of police logs are inconsistent throughout the towns we spoke with. Some publish in local papers; most have the Chief provide reports at regular Selectboard meetings (monthly or quarterly); a few do not post logs. *(Please note: **MGL, Section 98F: Daily logs; public records; confidentiality of certain entries** -... pursuant to section 63 of chapter 22C, police departments shall make, keep and maintain a daily log, written in a form that can be easily understood, recording, in chronological order, all responses to valid complaints received, crimes reported...)*
- Community engagement in policing objectives is also inconsistent. Some Chiefs are proactive about gathering information about concerns/needs; most Selectboards have a designated liaison to the department. Selectboard often acts only in reaction mode when there are complaints or other similar problems.
- All towns are concerned about the costs and training demands that will be required by POST. Some have begun discussing "leaning up" their police force, reducing the number of part-time officers in favor of fewer positions working more hours per week.
- Also in the context of POST, several towns are concerned about retention, and are actively discussing bringing their part-time chiefs to full-time status to ensure retention (assumes higher pay and benefits will assist with this).
- **Gathered information about regionalized or shared services between towns.**
 - Blandford and Chester have a shared services agreement that is working well. They identify that the criteria for success included geographic proximity, location

within the same county, and similar size (population, budgets, etc). See their shared service agreement for more.

- Windsor has an agreement with Dalton. Dalton handles all calls to Windsor police and dispatches calls to either state police or local officers, as they are available.
 - Several towns employ part-time officers that work in neighboring towns, i.e., informal shared services.
 - While all towns do rely on state police as back up, and a few rely heavily on state police, all mentioned the lengthy response time as a down-side to doing so, and noted that the state police have little interest in providing robust services to any town.
 - While many towns agree conceptually that regionalization could be a good solution, many have identified concerns about the details and the cons as compared to pros (better to be host, so capacity is local). There is concern on the part of very small towns that their voice would have less weight if part of a regional solution.
- **Examined the growth of Plainfield's annual town budget, including all public safety line items between 2015 and 2021.**
 - Public safety expenses include emergency management, animal control, fire department, Highland Ambulance, police department, town building alarms/Blackboard Connect and radio repair/maintenance, and building/plumbing/wiring inspectors.
 - Plainfield's overall budget grew 51% from \$1,821,052 to \$2,744,164, an increase of \$923,113 over 6 years.
 - The portion of the budget devoted to public safety grew 153% from \$84,692 to \$214,635, an increase of \$129,943 over 6 years.
 - The police department salaries budget grew 792% from \$9,000 to \$80,275, an increase of \$71,275 over 6 years (with the significant increases starting in FY2019).
 - The police department expense budget grew 190% from \$11,986 to \$34,707, an increase of \$ 22,721 over 6 years.
 - The police department budget in FY 2021 represents 53% of the total public safety costs for the town.
 - The public safety costs in FY 2021 represent 8% of all town costs.
 - With the exception of the fire department general expenses (increase of 74%) and fire department salaries (increase of 11%), other public safety line items have been level funded year over year, have had small increases, or have been

eliminated.

- **Reviewed the proposed police department budget for FY 2022, which includes:**

- A proposal to raise hourly pay rates from \$16.78 for all officers (including the Chief) to hourly pay rates of \$25.65 (Chief), \$23.01 (Sergeant), and \$19.56 (other regular).
- A proposal of 4,784 hours a year for police officers (92 hours each week).
- A total salary budget of \$105,291 (a 31% increase from current FY 2021) **(3/23 update: Plainfield Chief updated budget proposals on March 23, 2021 to include his preferred scenario of \$127K salary budget)**
- A proposal for department expenses of \$34,530, which includes \$10,000 for fuel and \$6,000 for cruiser maintenance, among other expenses (basically level funded, just a slight decrease from FY 2021).
- We also received information from Paula King about “off budget” expenses related to the police department, which include:
 - Retirement benefits (available to officers who work more than 20 hours per week); not yet quantified (waiting for Treasurer data).
 - Health insurance benefits (available to officers who work more than 20 hours per week): Town pays 75% of \$729.84 monthly premium, for an annual cost of \$6,569 (worth roughly \$4.21 per hour as a benefit).
 - Law Enforcement Liability Insurance: \$1,665 per year.
 - Firefighters/Police Insurance: Not broken out; covers all officers, including auxiliary/special; and includes workers compensation insurance.
 - Unemployment tax to Massachusetts at .01% of salaries.
 - Facility expenses for utilities, maintenance, cleaning, repairs (falls under Buildings Committee budget).
 - Capital expenses: Vary from year to year. FY2022 request for facility improvements is approx \$26K.

- **Reviewed the revenues attributable to the police department:**

- FY 2020 traffic details \$22,005
- FY2021 year-to-date (Feb) traffic details \$18,983
- FY 2020 civil fines \$6,702
- FY 2021 civil fines (not yet available)
- We are awaiting information about grant revenues raised for department activities.

- **Crafted additional potential staffing hours/pay rate scenarios which include:**
 - Assumptions for meeting the requested hourly pay rates while reducing the annual hours
 - Assumptions for phasing in the requested hourly pay rates over a few years

- **Reviewed the Peace Officer Standards and Training POST legislation and gathered available information (which is minimal):**
 - Legislation enacted in December 2020 goes into effect July 1, 2021.
 - Details of the legislation still being developed.
 - Lack of clarity on how this will apply to small rural towns (e.g., credentialing vs. accreditation standards are different).
 - Lack of clarity as to whether mandatory POST training will apply to auxiliary/special officers.
 - Lack of clarity as to whether State financial support to become POST compliant will be forthcoming (e.g., payment of training fees) and/or time for the additional annual manual training.
 - Awareness that western Mass area Chiefs are organizing to coordinate communications about concerns and needs.

- **Compiled an inventory of our research, internal correspondence, reading/reference materials and model documents received from other towns. with records stored in a Google drive.** See attached list.

Recommendations for Selectboard:

- **Focus on retention of well-trained and well-performing staff.**
 - Increase pay rates from the current \$16.78 hourly rate
 - Consider establishing the Chief position as a salaried position (not hourly), with potential to increase from half time to $\frac{3}{4}$ or full time.
 - Consider “leaning up” the rest of the department to create fewer jobs that are better paid and benefited jobs.
 - Consider shared service agreement with nearby towns to cover evening/weekends (with reciprocity) to give officers a break.

- **Evaluate the significant proposed increase in FY2022 police department budget in context of overall town government needs and budget requests**

- Keep in mind that many boards and committees are under capacity, have been level funded for years, and retention and succession planning for the volunteers who serve on those committees is also a priority for our town, and in many ways contributes to public safety.
- **Explore overall administrative needs of police department in context of the town-wide administration needs.**
 - The effort to explore options to bring added capacity to centralized town staff, via a regional agreement or another way, could support the police department as well as other departments and committees that contribute to public safety (e.g. highway, fire, planning, building, etc). There may be ways to create efficiencies and lower police department costs.
- **Evaluate the investment in needed police department capacity to provide traffic details outside of town.**
 - There are pros and cons of the traffic detail programs. Pros are that this activity provides a perk to existing officers to earn off duty income. Cons are that it takes a considerable amount of officer time, as well as central administration time, to administer this program. It is not clear if this program actually covers costs or makes a “profit” for the town. Revenue from this program is not offsetting growth in department expenses.
- **Continue the practice of a designated Selectboard liaison to the Police Department (and all departments)**
 - Serves to fulfill the responsibilities as appointing authority for Police Chief.
 - Having a liaison system allows support and regular performance evaluation (at department level) to occur routinely and provides opportunities to engage in problem solving with the Chief outside of the public meeting forum.
- **Actively engage with Representative Blais and Senator Hinds to advocate for a “right sized” application of POST to Plainfield, and for financial support to offset the anticipated costs for compliance.**

Next Steps

We have highlighted key trends and themes related to policing activities and costs in Plainfield and compared to similarly sized towns in our area. These internal and external comparisons will hopefully assist the Selectboard in evaluating Plainfield’s future policing needs, activities and costs. We would like to know if our body of work is useful, and whether you have specific questions or would like us to gather additional information.

Our group is a working group. We are scheduled to meet on April 7 and again on April 21st, though we would like to have feedback from the Selectboard before we proceed further, so that we are working in alignment with the board and with clarity on the direction you’d like us to take.