



Contracting out Services with the Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office

Municipalities can save thousands of dollars, if not millions of dollars over the long run, by contracting out law enforcement services from the *Sheriff's Office*. Merging township police departments (16 in Hunterdon) is not the answer—the residents will end up with a huge township consolidated high cost police department. Also, the county does not want to start a separate county police force—this would be very costly [Nassau County's police force is an example of out of control costs (see <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/09/nyregion/police-budget-defining-the-cuts.html>)]--and a duplication of services that already exists within the Sheriff's Office (see article entitled **County Police vs. the Elected Sheriff** located at http://njjat.com/media/County_Police_v_Elected_Sheriff.pdf, which explains why creating a county police force is on its very face absurd). Contracting out services with the Sheriff's Office has more flexibility—the municipality can contract out a specific amount of unit hours that it needs without hiring any permanent officers. Many Sheriff's Officers in Hunterdon County transfer to township police departments throughout the county because they can get higher pay (at one time 75% of twp. police officers came from the Sheriff's Office). Thus the Sheriff's Office is a primary contributor to municipalities already.

The article in the Hunterdon County Democrat dated August 5, 2010 by Mr. Curtis Leeds titled Study on merger of local police forces proposed failed to mention that Mr. Capobianco, Hunterdon County Shared Services Coordinator, stated on January 25, 2010 at an East Amwell meeting that the Sheriff's Office is the most cost effective method of policing the county and that a Sheriff's Office Shared Services Proposal for a Patrol Division was submitted to the Freeholders that offered a comprehensive cost analysis of patrol (active and passive) and investigative services for the following municipalities:

- Alexandria Township
- Bethlehem Township
- Bloomsbury Borough
- Glen Gardener Borough
- Hampton Borough
- Kingwood Township
- Lebanon Borough

- Milford Borough
- Stockton Borough
- Union Township

The proposal was withheld by the Freeholders and as a result, could not be included in the Blue Shield Consulting Report (a report about merging Lambertville’s and West Amwell’s Police departments which would have included East Amwell that already has free services from the State Police to reduce costs, but excluded the best option: the Sheriff’s Office)—this made the report a joke. It is unfortunate that Councilman Spencer Peck of Clinton Twp., who is supportive of the idea of contracting out services of the Sheriff’s Office, did not enunciate this position more clearly to Mr. Leeds and, as a result, it did not get printed in the Hunterdon County Democrat (see **Why the Sheriff’s Office Should Replace existing Township Police Departments located at** <http://www.njia.com/local-government.html>). The following are examples of New Jersey Sheriffs’ Offices supplementing local municipal police departments in patrolling and other vital areas of public safety:

- **Atlantic County Sheriff’s Office** (<http://www.atlanticcountysheriff.org/>) does most of the patrolling for the county through its traffic unit.
- **Bergen County Sheriff’s Office** (<http://www.bcsd.us/Default.aspx>) provides security for the Motor Vehicles Commission’s (MVC) Lodi Office; this was recommended by Hunterdon County’s current Undersheriff George Muller for the Flemington MVC and was turned down by the Hunterdon County Freeholders—the county would have been reimbursed by the State for **\$112,000** and the cost of a *Sheriff’s Officer* would have been **\$56,187**, a profit of **\$55,518** in 2009 to the county. When security was provided by *Raritan Twp. Police department in 2008*, it cost them \$86,984 for an annual salary for a senior officer, \$18,681 in benefits, \$25,376 in overtime pay for a total cost of **\$131,041**, a net loss of **<\$19,041>** to the taxpayers of Raritan Twp. (see the 2008 Hunterdon County’s Sheriff’s Report, page 25 located at <http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/sheriff/annualreport.pdf>). In addition, Bergen County Sheriff’s Detectives assist local, state and federal law enforcement agencies and the Crime Scene Unit of the BCSO’s Bureau of Criminal Investigation provides advanced forensic analysis and on-site evidence collection for every law enforcement agency in Bergen County, etc. (<http://www.bcsd.us/>).
- **Essex County Sheriff’s Office** (<http://www.essexsheriff.com/>) has a *volunteer Deputy program*—five-month classroom and field training—at no cost to the taxpayer; the volunteers who successfully complete the Deputy program will patrol and perform other law enforcement activities. [see **Essex County Sheriff’s Office** located at (http://www.essexsheriff.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13&Itemid=22) , **Pierce County Sheriff’s Office in WA** located at (<http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/abtus/ourorg/sheriff/volunteers.htm>) and **West Hollywood Sheriff’s Station in CA** located at (<http://www.wehosheriff.com/reserves.asp>); the *Essex County Division of Police* was transferred by the Chosen Board of Freeholders in 1997 to the *Sheriff’s Office* (see http://www.essexsheriff.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=20&Itemid=55).
- **Mercer County Sheriff’s Office** (<http://nj.gov/counties/mercercounty/officials/sheriff/>) has a sub-station at the Trenton-Mercer Airport and is responsible for patrolling the airport grounds, motor vehicle

enforcement, etc. They have also begun patrolling in Trenton in order to supplement Trenton's Police Dept. because of recent layoffs.

- **Morris County Sheriff's Office** (<http://www.mcsheriff.org/>) has a special services division, which includes a bomb squad, forensic/photo labs to provide evidence processing for local, county, state and federal agencies, criminal investigative unit, operates their correctional facility, etc. The Sheriff's Office also has the **Eddie Eagle GunSafe Program**, sponsored by the National Rifle Association (NRA), in order to teach young children protection and safety (<http://www.mcsheriff.org/community/eddieeagle/>)—the program has prevented many children from harming themselves.
- **Passaic County Sheriff's Office** (http://www.pcsheriff.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5&Itemid=6) supplements the local police in patrolling (you will see Sheriff's Officers patrolling on Rt. 80) and the Sheriff's Office started a counter-terrorist task force with the Prosecutor's Office. It has over 30 divisions (<http://www.pcsheriff.org/>).
- **Somerset County Sheriff's Office** (<http://www.somcosheriff.org/home.htm>) provides security and enforces criminal laws relating to fraud for the Somerville Motor Vehicles Commission (MVC), enforces traffic laws, assists local police departments, conducts prisoner transports, has a Special Response Team (Swat), and has a **School Resource Officer** (Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office could have provided one Sheriff's Officer at *Hunterdon Central High School* at a much lower cost than Raritan Twp. Police and also the Sheriff's Office has jurisdiction in the whole county), etc.

Supplementing, merging or eliminating a township police department through attrition has nothing to do with whether the whole county uses the Sheriff's Office to patrol—it is up to the individual municipalities. (It is a straw man's argument that in order for individual municipalities in a county to merge with the Sheriff's Office, all the township police departments in the county have to be under the Sheriff's Office—this is not the case, the individual municipalities have the option to merge or contract out services of the Sheriff's Office—an already existing county police force—regardless if other townships decide to keep their police department or use the existing services of the NJ State Police.)

The most likely outcome of contracting out police services with the Sheriff's Office is that the size of the current municipal police departments in Hunterdon County would be reduced in size over time by supplementing their police force with Sheriff's Officers or the total elimination of a township police department through attrition *saving taxpayers millions*. The Freeholder's cannot force an individual municipality/township to disband their police department. However, the Freeholder's can help facilitate the contracting out of services (through the Sheriff's Office, *not start a separate county police force* so the Hunterdon County Freeholders can appoint their friends at the expense of the taxpayers and destroy a *Constitutional Office* that is accountable to the people) takes place smoothly for municipalities requesting such services and make known to the taxpayers that this option is available to them. Of course, Hunterdon County would be reimbursed by the individual municipalities requesting such services from the Sheriff's Office. [It should be noted that a Sheriff's Officer goes through the same police academy program that a township police officer goes through—they both attend police

academies that are certified by the [Police Training Commission \(PTC\)](#); and under former Sheriff Bill Doyle, a retired **Lieutenant in the New Jersey State Police**, 15% of his Sheriff's Officers were certified in using the breathalyzers.] The Sheriff's Office is highly respected in this country (except Hunterdon County) and has many honorable, intelligent and talented people. Two outstanding examples: Mr. Joseph M. Demarest, Jr.—FBI Assistant Director in charge of the New York Division—was employed as a *Deputy Sheriff* with the [Hillsborough County, Florida Sheriff's Office](#) for five years and Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno of New Jersey was a [former Sheriff of Monmouth County](#).]

There are former and current Sheriff's, high ranking New Jersey State Police Officers, and current Undersheriff George Muller (Operations, who served in the Marine Reserves) and Undersheriff John Maloney (Administrative, who is an attorney) in Hunterdon County that will do a free analysis on the cost benefits of contracting out law enforcement services with the Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office—the municipalities do not have to pay for an analysis. [I am sure that Mr. Fred Brown incoming Sheriff—who is an experienced law enforcement officer (retired Chief of Police in Raritan Township, who served in the Naval Reserve and has an impeccable record) would be more than willing to work with the current Sheriff's staff with any analysis for contracting out services during the interim period.] Many of the reports prepared for municipalities and Freeholders in regards to contracting out services, security work for the MVC and the cost effectiveness on using the Sheriff's Office have already been completed and should be on file with the Freeholders and Sheriff's Office (see the two articles titled: **“Why the Sheriff's Office Should Replace existing Township Police Departments”** and **“What can County Freeholders do about Township Police Departments”** located at <http://www.njiat.com/local-government.html> and scroll to *Topics Covered, Item 2*). This does not imply that a municipality has to close, reduce in size or merge their police department all out once. A long term plan can be accomplished by the following:

1. When an officer retires, do not rehire (through attrition). If there is a need for more officers, then contract out so many unit hours with the Sheriff's Office—this gives a municipality the flexibility to contract out the hours they need to provide public safety.
2. The average cost of a Sheriff's Officer, which includes *benefits and a vehicle*, is **\$37.35** per hour. The average salary is **\$19.45** per hour or around **\$37,926** yearly without benefits and vehicle. This is substantially lower than the average twp. police officer salary of **\$35.00** per hour, excluding benefits and a vehicle. Don't forget, a twp. police officer pay increases substantially after 5 years. (Even if a Sheriff Officer got the same pay as a twp. police officer, the Sheriff's Office is still substantially lower in cost because you do not have all these separate twp. police departments with their high overhead costs.) Also, many twp. police departments have binding arbitration, which means the police usually get all the pay raises requested. The Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office is civil service and there is no age limit—many Sheriff Offices across the country hire retired military personnel or other highly qualified professionals and thus the community gets mature and highly experienced people at a lower cost. Some volunteer their services to the community as is the case with *Essex County Sheriff's Office* through a *volunteer Deputy program*—five-month classroom and field training—at no cost to the taxpayer; the volunteers who successfully complete the Deputy program will patrol and

perform other law enforcement activities (see http://www.essexsheriff.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13&Itemid=22).

3. A municipality can make the police department smaller over a period of time (10 to 15 years) or the municipality could eventually eliminate the department. Don't forget, each municipal police department has a Chief (some are making over \$130,000 yearly salary), Lieutenants, Sergeants, vehicles (which is a huge capital budget item in some township police departments) equipment, pensions (under reported in the budget in many cases) that can be anywhere from 30 to 50 percent of a municipal budget. The Sheriff's Office could do the same thing for half or a quarter of the cost depending on certain factors.
4. This will also eliminate duplication of services such as other police municipalities overlapping each other's borders. The State Police already patrol many parts of a municipality and they might have one lieutenant to oversee 30 State Troopers in a barrack. It should be mentioned that many **high ranking New Jersey State Police Officers** are 100 percent behind the Sheriff's Office patrolling the county instead of having all these high cost township police departments.
5. The Sheriff's Office has jurisdiction over the whole county and serves warrants throughout the county and thus has more flexibility.
6. The Sheriff's Office is a *Constitutional Office* and the Sheriff is elected every three years and thus accountable to the people. This is not the case with a police chief, who can only be removed by the municipal council/committee. With the current abuses taking place in the various police municipalities in Hunterdon County such as being pulled over with *no probable cause*, mistreatment by the police chief of the officers underneath him, police departments in Hunterdon County that were taken over by the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office because of misconduct or criminal activity, the Sheriff's Office is the correct choice to stop this abuse. If the municipal council/committee members' thinks this is funny, wait until they get a civil rights law suit filed against them, which could cost millions of dollars. Trying explaining this to the taxpayers.

The suggestions above are general guidelines and can be adjusted or modified by each municipality as they see fit.

What about the Sheriff's Office Running the County Jail, Emergency Services, Homeland Security, Communications, etc., which is done in many counties in NJ? Could such an agreement be worked out between the Hunterdon County Freeholders and the Sheriff's Office? My answer: Yes. Give the Freeholder's an option to appoint a person (Chief of a unit/division) to the Sheriff's Office might solve the problem of the continued hostility between both of them.

Because of the problems over the last 30 years between the Sheriff's Office and Freeholders, I would recommend the following:

1. Give the Freeholder's the authority to appoint *1 person as a Chief* over the county correctional facility, Emergency Services, etc., which would report to the Sheriff. [Mr. George Wagner, the current Director of the Hunterdon County Department of Public Safety (PDS) and who worked as

a *Correctional Officer* in the Hunterdon County Correctional Facility], could still be appointed by the Freeholders, assume many of the same functions and would still be accountable to the Freeholders.) The Freeholders would set the salary and would appoint such person at their discretion. It should be noted that the **Passaic County Sheriff** appoints Chiefs over organized divisions and units such as *the Law Enforcement, Correctional, Civil and Security* --see <http://www.pcsheriff.org/index.php/employment-info> . (See article entitled “*Sheriff would run Metropolitan Police Force*” located at <http://www.njia.com/sportsmen.html> -- the Democratic mayor entered into an agreement with the Sheriff to merge the *Indianapolis Police Department* into *Marion Sheriff’s Department* with an agreement to appointment 1 Police Chief/Director by the council, which would be under the Sheriff.) This is not the norm and is not recommended; however, because the city police department was so huge, the mayor wanted 1 appointment.

2. What are the advantages? The consolidation is a cost saver and more efficient to have the PDS under the Sheriff’s Office, especially Homeland Security, the Incident Command Center and emergency services. It also opens the opportunity for having specialized divisions/units in the Sheriff’s Office such as a Swat team, traffic enforcement, security services (which is being performed on a limited bases such as security at the 4-H Fair, Solberg Balloon Festival, Wal-Mart, etc.) criminal investigation division to be used by local (twp. police, Prosecutor’s Office), state and federal law enforcement agencies—this is the case with Passaic County Prosecutor’s Office and other Prosecutors’ Offices throughout New Jersey (<http://www.pcsheriff.org/index.php/bureau-of-law-enforcement>). The Passaic County Sheriff also entered into an agreement with Prosecutor James F. Avigliano of the Passaic County Prosecutor’s Office to create a *Passaic County Counter-Terrorism Task Force* (<http://www.pcsheriff.org/>)—the Passaic County Sheriff’s Office has over **30 divisions** (<http://www.passaiccountynj.org/Departments/window-sheriffsdepartment.htm>).
3. The Hunterdon County Prosecutor’s Office has to pull officers from various township police departments for their so-called Swat Team. The Correction Officers could become Sheriff’s Officers—although Correction Officers are law enforcement officers, they do not have the same authority (traffic patrol & ticketing) or training as a Sheriff’s Officer (the academy time is a little longer). All Sheriff’s Officers attend and graduate from police academies certified by the [Police Training Commission \(PTC\)](#), the same certification as township police officers. Many county jails in the State of New Jersey are under the Sheriff’s Office—this was the case in Hunterdon County until 1978 (in all fairness to the Freeholders, the Sheriff—with her approval because of incompetence--was more at fault when the county jail was transferred from the Sheriff’s Office. The warden is the one who runs the correctional facility anyway.
4. The consolidation would make it easier for municipalities to contract out law enforcement services. Also, the Sheriff is accountable to the people and is a *Constitutional Office*. Also, the Freeholder’s would have someone they appointed in the Sheriff’s Office to oversee the correctional facility, emergency services, etc. *This would be a win-win situation for citizens, Freeholders, and the Sheriff’s Office.*
5. With incoming **Fred Brown as Sheriff**, who is an experienced law enforcement officer (retired Raritan Twp. Chief of Police), who served in the military and is an honest and honorable person, makes this a perfect opportunity to implement these changes over a period of time.

For further information on contracting out services of the Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office, please contact *Undersheriff John Maloney (Administrative, who is an attorney)* at 908-788-1166—the Sheriff's website is located at (<http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/sheriff.htm>). Also, let you Hunterdon County Freeholder's know that the taxpayers and municipalities are interested in such services offered by the Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office, which will save taxpayers of this county a lot of money.

Notes

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Non-partisan Summary prepared by Tom Smith II

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Special thanks to [NJAT](#) (a NJ non-profit education corporation) and the following organizations listed below for supplying valuable information on law enforcement and the Sheriff's Office.

1. [Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association](#)
2. [National Sheriffs' Association](#)
3. [Sheriff's Association of NJ](#)
4. [Pennsylvania Sheriffs' Association](#)
5. [Law Enforcement Alliance of America](#)
6. [American Cop Magazine](#)

County Police vs. Elected Sheriff: If any Hunterdon County Freeholder(s) proposes starting a county police force (a duplication of services) instead of using the Sheriff's Office (an already existing county police force), the Freeholder(s) is either misinformed or purposely not telling the truth to the taxpayers and the township council/committee members in this county. Tell them politely that the county police force already exists through the Sheriff's Office and this is the Office that the townships and taxpayers should use for any mergers or contracting out law enforcement services. I had one former Freeholder tell me he does not believe in *Constitutional Offices* because they cannot control them. Well, this tells me that the former Freeholder does not believe in the Constitution! I thought elected officials take an oath to the U.S. Constitution?

For further information on using the Sheriff's Office, see the NJAT Tabs below:

1. [Police/Sportsmen](#)
2. [Local Government](#)
3. [Homeland Security](#)