

Village of Cleves Policing Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the Village of Cleves considering contracting with the Sheriff's Office (SO) for policing?

There are three primary reasons. First, the Village cannot afford to have the same number of police officers it had years ago. The Cleves Police department has a budget that has been increasing approximately \$100,000 per year the past few years and the Village can't afford to sustain the constant increases. Second, over the last few years, full-time and part-time Cleves officers have resigned or it has been too difficult to gain interest from Police Officers in hiring for the Village. Thirdly, we have been unable to keep a Police Chief, as Chiefs and Officers come to the Village and then move on for positions in other jurisdictions. So, the Cleves Police Department has both financial and staffing shortages which have caused the Village to explore the POSSIBILITY of another law enforcement solution.

The SO currently provides police protection for our contiguous neighbors, the Village of North Bend, Miami Township and White Water Township, as well as, provides mutual aid for the Village as needed.

How does law enforcement fit into the Village's overall budget?

Almost 2/3 of Cleves's roughly \$1 million budget is consumed by policing. Because of an increasing police budget and small tax base, combined with other revenue losses, Cleves does not have significant financial resources. We have reviewed the budgets to reduce any unnecessary costs to sustain the budget long-term but the Village is already falling behind on needed road improvements, property maintenance, economic development, etc. Essentially, the Village's budget cannot sustain having our own police force, maintaining or reducing tax rates, having no income tax and improving roads and Village infrastructure at the same time. We can do some of these things, but not all.

Why is it cheaper to contract with the Sheriff's Office than to have our own Police Department?

Primarily, the much larger Sheriff's office has economies of scale which is able to achieve lower costs as well as additional SO resources at no additional cost to the Village.

What would it take to keep our own Cleves Police Department?

It would take a substantial tax increase and a couple of years of these revenue returns for the Cleves Police Department to rebuild the force to its former strength. It is not possible to keep and sustain our own Police Department without the voters approving a significant tax increase to pay for it.

What would the tax cost me if voters approved it?

To date, Council has not proposed raising taxes, so it is not yet known how a tax increase would be structured. We do not currently have an income tax. An income tax rate of 1% would generate approximately \$175,000 and an income tax rate of 2% (voter approved) would generate approximately \$350,000. If the tax were a property tax levy, it would take at least ten (10) mills to fund the Police budget. This would cost the owner of a \$100,000 home approximately \$350 more each year or a \$200,000 home approximately \$700 more each year. One (1) mill generates approximately \$50,000, ten (10) mills would generate approximately \$500,000. The previously passed Police levy generates approximately \$180,000 of the current \$650,000 police budget, which has increased by \$100,000 each year for the past few years and is projected to increase at the same rate in 2021 based on new software needs, new training requirements placed on police departments, raises, upgraded and new hardware, body cams, etc.

If it were cheaper to contract with the Sheriff, why would any city have its own police agency?

Until recently, it was rare for Hamilton County municipalities to use Sheriff Deputies for policing. However, given today's economic challenges, state cuts to local government funding and other continued pressures on municipal budgets, it is likely other municipalities will follow.

Has this been done anywhere else?

While it is common for townships to contract with the Sheriff's Office for patrol services, it has become more prevalent for municipalities to partner with the Hamilton County Sheriff as well. This has most recently been done in Silverton and is working well.

Are there any other policing options for Cleves other than the Sheriff's Office?

North Bend, Miami Township and White Water Township are all currently utilizing the SO for police services. Addyston is a smaller community with its own agency that works with our officers today through mutual aid. Addyston is not contiguous to Cleves. Addyston does not have the existing resources to serve Cleves all the time, nor have they shown interest in using the Cleves Police Department for contracted protection services from us, so any contract with them would involve significant hiring and changes to their operations. An important question here is why other municipalities would want to go through this given the risks. In fact within the last calendar year Addyston had significant staffing issues of its own requiring both Cleves and the Sheriff to cover their shifts. As a result relying on another agency that is not the size of the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office is not a viable option to provide law enforcement for the Village.

What will happen to the Cleves Police Officers who are presently patrolling?

All Cleves officers will be offered positions with the Sheriff's Office given successful completion of appropriate background checks.

If we contract with the Sheriff's Office, could we ever have our own agency again?

Yes, but it would be difficult and costly. Should Cleves wish to end the contract with the Sheriff's Office (or vice versa), we would have to rebuild a police agency from scratch. This would involve a significant, upfront capital cost. A greater challenge would be the costs and time to hire, train, and place into service a new police agency. This could be done, but it would be challenging and very expensive.

I am concerned that the Sheriff's deputies will not do a good job. What will the Village do to ensure that the new policing arrangement is working?

Hamilton County Sheriff's deputies have been patrolling in our neighboring communities and have done an excellent job. If Cleves contracts with the Sheriff, we will be assigned a Lieutenant to communicate with and discuss the desires and needs of the Village in regard to performance standards. The Sheriff Deputies have to meet these performance standards to ensure quality law enforcement continues in Cleves. One of these requirements is that the deputies build trust and openness with our community and the professionals at the Sheriff's Office have done this successfully elsewhere. The Cleves Police Department will be the substation for the Sheriff. In addition to the assigned full-time Lieutenant/Sergeant seven (7) days a week, there will also be a Desk Clerk assigned to the station as well five (5) days a week with a total of 5 vehicles assigned to the location, in turn, the SO will not have to travel to and from Mt. Healthy when responding to calls and we should not see any delayed service response time. We would continuously monitor the performance standards and other contractual agreements. Cleves will keep its Mayor's Court as well.