

For Immediate Release

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## **Town of Bennington Announces Community Discussion Boards**

As a further step in advancing community policing efforts in Bennington, The Town of Bennington is placing five community discussion boards in Bennington and North Bennington beginning October 2. The purpose of the discussion boards is to encourage ongoing conversation about community policing and the implementation of the newly established mission statement for the Bennington Police Department.

The Bennington Police Department mission was developed at an August 5<sup>th</sup> community-wide meeting held at the Bennington Firehouse and over Zoom and adopted by the Select Board on August 24, 2020. The mission states: *The Bennington Police Department is accountable to the Community for providing everyone, regardless of identity, with respectful and equitable law enforcement, protection, and service. The Department and the Community will achieve this through collaborative and positive relationships which contribute to the betterment of our quality of life.*

The first prompt on the discussion boards will be, "What do you expect of a police officer?". Responses will be recorded over the next two weeks. A new prompt will be posted on October 15. The Select Board is encouraging members of the community to record their thoughts on the question on sticky notes at each of the boards.

The community discussion boards will be placed outside at Greater Bennington Interfaith Community Services, Inc. (GBICS) on Depot Street, St. Peter's Episcopal Church's Prayer Hut at School and Pleasant Streets, Town of Bennington Recreation Center on Gage St, Town of Bennington Town Office on South Street and inside at Powers Market in North Bennington.

Other community policing activities by the Town of Bennington have included community meetings, the adoption of a Town of Bennington vision and a Bennington Police Department mission, extensive bibliographies on community policing initiatives and civilian oversight, trainings for town and police department leadership, and the establishment of six community policy advisory committees to develop key policies in conjunction with the Bennington Police Department.

For more information on community policing efforts in Bennington, please visit <http://benningtonvt.org/community-policing/>