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FROM: Columbia County Board of Supervisors Chairman Matt Murell

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

COLUMBIA COUNTY POLICE REFORM PANEL RELEASES CITIZEN REVIEW PROCESS

“I am pleased to announce that the Citizen Review Panel for Police Reform has completed the process of developing policies and procedures for filing a complaint against a police agency in Columbia County,” Columbia County Board of Supervisors Chairman Matt Murell said today.

In 2020, Chairman Murell established the Columbia County Police Reform Panel. Following a thorough development and plan review process, the completed Police Reform Plan was adopted by the county Board of Supervisors in March 2021.

A component of the reform plan was to develop a process designed to facilitate a complaint, thus the Citizen Review Panel was created in 2022 to address such complaints. To file a complaint against a Columbia County law enforcement unit, forms are available at town and village municipal buildings, 401 State Street in Hudson, and on the Police Reform Panel website at <https://sites.google.com/columbiacountyny.com/police-reform-panel>

There are two separate forms, one for filing a complaint with the Columbia County Sheriff's Office, and another for complaints with Town of Stockport, Town of

Greenport or Village of Philmont law enforcement. The Village of Chatham, the City of Hudson, and the New York State Police chose to not participate in the county's Citizen's Review Panel for Police Reform plan.

In a nutshell, a complainant initiates the process by using the form to state the details and a summary of the complaint. Following acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint, the Citizen's Review Panel will institute a review within 21 days. Details are plainly spelled out on the complaint form. An important part of the process to note is that all complaints must be signed, and anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

"Developing the complaint process was a large, bipartisan undertaking as part of the overall Citizen Review Panel implementation," said Board of Supervisors Deputy Chairman and Town of Austerlitz Supervisor Rob Lagonia, a committee co-chair. "We came out with a good plan at the end of the day. It was a pleasure working with (New Lebanon Town Supervisor and county Board of Supervisors Minority Leader) Tistrya Houghtling – we worked well together."

"I'm proud of the work we did on the complaint process and am excited to have the new Citizen Review Panel to serve as a neutral party for residents to register their complaints and concerns," said Supervisor Houghtling. "We have a diverse committee that is dedicated to ensuring a fair and equitable process. Instead of someone needing to register a complaint directly with the law enforcement agency, which can be intimidating, we now have a neutral body where someone can talk about complaints and concerns. Thanks to my co-chair, Rob Lagonia, and Shari Franks for all her work with the paperwork."