



# City of Geneva

## Police Reform and Reinvention Plan

2021

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### MARCH 18th | PLAN

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*City of Geneva Police Reform and Reinvention Collective Group*



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## ***Geneva Police Reform and Reinvention Plan and response***

Governor Cuomo has mandated, through Executive Order 203, a review of policies and procedures to enhance police accountability and responsibility in local police departments. The City Manager and Chief of Police have challenged administrative staff to facilitate the following process and creation of an action plan for City Council's approval before April 1st, 2021, in accordance with the Governor's order. These efforts compliment City Council's police reform work and the strong call to action from the Geneva community last year. New York State has created a guidebook for reference throughout this process for public officials and citizens - August, 2020 Publication.

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## ***Acknowledgements***

All successful outcomes of *City of Geneva Police Reform and Reinvention Plan* are owed to the dedication and commitment of the whole Collective group on the discussions and work taking place currently. Additionally, members of the community for their perspectives, experiences and interactions (both positive and negative) with the City of Geneva Police Department. This journey to identify community needs and enhance community policing efforts has been insightful to most, eye opening to some but most importantly in one aspect or another, inspiring.

The path towards healing, and moving forward continues on.

Thank You.

Erica Collins, City Manager's Office

Lt. Matthew Valenti, Geneva Police Department

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## **Executive Summary**

In light of the events that have stirred the Nation, we recognize that there are opportunities for change in our community. The City of Geneva is committed to working collaboratively with the community to strengthen our relationship with the police department and the residents we serve. We support the Black Lives Matter movement, our community and our Police Department. We understand that this process requires difficult conversations and reflection on our organizational and community history; we also realize that this work is needed for our City to continue to serve our community.

Through Executive Order 203, Governor Cuomo mandated a review of policies and procedures to enhance police accountability and responsibility in law enforcement operations in communities throughout New York State. In accordance with the Governor's order, the City Manager and Chief of Police challenged administrative staff to facilitate the creation of an action plan with a diverse group of stakeholders (the Collective) for City Council's approval. These efforts compliment City Council's police reform work and the strong call to action from the Geneva community this year.

The City of Geneva's Police Reform Plan represents a collective endeavor of the Geneva Police Department (GPD) and the community to:

- Recommend effective policy, procedures and initiatives;
- Ensure equitable and fair practices;
- Foster community relationship building; and
- Support the well-being of our community members and officers.

The Collective reviewed and made recommendations for four GPD General Orders (G.O. 325; 400; 810; and 950) that covered nine topic areas expressed in the Governor's mandate. Chief Passalacqua will adopt the majority of these policy recommendations (Appendix D).

The Collective members have enthusiastically agreed to continue working together to implement the plan. Key focus areas for implementation include, but are not limited to:

1. Implementation of the Policy Recommendations
2. Creating a road map for Use of Force policy next steps
3. Mental Health Awareness and Partnerships with Behavioral Health Agencies
4. Wellness Initiatives for GPD and all City Staff
5. Trainings for GPD and all City Staff
6. Community Engagement
7. Measurement of Impact of Policy Changes

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We will continue to work with our police department, County and State agency partners, community residents and advocates to ensure that our response to any additional guidelines reflects our unique local needs.

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## MESSAGE TO THE COMMUNITY

With immense gratitude and appreciation for the Police Reform Collective's impactful and collaborative work, we present the City of Geneva's Police Reform Plan to City Council and the community. After input and ultimate City Council approval, the plan will be submitted to NYS' Director of the Division of Budget by April 1, 2021.

We are grateful for the opportunity to engage locally in a statewide initiative and create recommendations with community partners and our police department that aim to eliminate racial inequities, to update strategies, policies, procedures, and to develop practices to better address the particular needs of our marginalized communities. The Police Reform Collective engaged in robust, difficult conversations to dig deep into local and national police reform topics. Collective members brought to the discussion areas of concern and opportunities to increase public safety, community engagement, and trust.

We own the responsibility of creating a just world and working towards eliminating centuries of inequality in systems and practices. Through this process and as we continue this work, we will lean towards love; as it is through love that we have the power to heal, to nurture and to collectively fully serve our community. This plan will serve as the roadmap for our continued collective journey as we move into implementation.

Thank you to these incredible facilitators, who spent countless hours behind the scenes coordinating efforts and held the space for collective members and the community to speak their truths respectfully and fully:

**Dr. Sim Covington Jr.**, Chief Diversity Officer for Finger Lakes Community College

**Erica Collins**, City of Geneva City Manager's Office

**Lieutenant Matthew Valenti**, City of Geneva Police Department

**D Ekow King**, Director of Office of Intercultural Student Engagement, University at Albany

Thank you to the many hours of service from the Police Reform Collective. Your time, energy, and ideas that you brought to the table week after week demonstrates the positive power of working together towards a common goal while being able to honor your different viewpoints and experiences.

Thank you to the community members who shared comments through the survey, emails, conversations and during collective public input sessions.

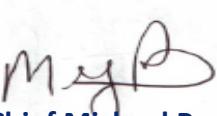
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In addition to policy and community engagement recommendations in the plan, next action steps will call for increasing, through partnerships and funding requests, our ability to serve residents that are faced with mental challenges. Moreover, the health and wellbeing of our police department members is important to us; and the City putting energy and resources towards wellbeing efforts for the police department, as well as the citizens we serve, will be critical as we activate the plan.

Sincerely,



**Sage Gerling**  
City Manager



**Chief Michael Passalacqua**  
Geneva Police Department

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## ***City of Geneva Police Reform and Reinvention Collective Group (The Collective)***

- **Raul Arroyo**, Geneva Police Department, Geneva City School District SRO
- **Carrie Bleakley**, Ontario County Conflict Defender's Office
- **Dr. Jose Canario**, Finger Lakes Community Health, Geneva City School District Board of Education
- **Erica Collins**, City Manager's Office, City of Geneva- Co-Chair
- **John Cromartie**, African American Men's Association
- **Raul Fuentes**, Founder and Pastor of Delivering Word Church, Creator's Touch Barbershop
- **Allauna Overstreet-Gibson**, People's Peaceful Protest
- **Lou Guard**, Ontario County Board of Supervisors
- **Daniel Hickey**, Geneva Police Department
- **Theresa Jackson**, Reverend Mt Olive Baptist Church, Ward 5 resident
- **Leanne Lapp**, Ontario County Public Defender's Office
- **Lucile Mallard**, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Geneva Chapter (NAACP), Ward 6 resident
- **James (Jim) Ritts**, Ontario County District Attorney
- **Richard Thomas**, African American Men's Association, Ward 5 Resident
- **Lieutenant Matthew Valenti**, Geneva Police Department- Co-Chair
- **Steve Valentino**, Mayor, City of Geneva

*Note: Collective member bios in Appendix A.*



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## **A Geneva Movement**

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and the murder of George Floyd highlighted racial injustices in our country's systems. Organizational planning and implementation strategies that are grounded in collective community and government decision-making and acknowledge the realities of the City of Geneva are critical in moving forward towards a community that serves us all well.

On July 13th a local group known as the People's Peaceful Protest (PPP) sent our City Council 11 resolutions for Council to adopt in response to the Black Lives Matter Movement, which took a National Platform in early 2020. Nine of the 11 resolutions were passed. (Resolutions in Appendix G)

Prior to and in parallel with the work of the Collective, City Council focused on responding to the policy recommendation by the People's Peaceful Protest (PPP) and working on recommendations based on input from community members, legal review and others. The result was the creation of these three entities, as well as additional actions articulated in resolutions in Appendix G:

- Police Review Board
- Body Camera Task Force
- Police Budget Advisory Board

In 2021, City staff will work with the City Council to facilitate the implementation of these entities including the appointment and training of new members.

Listening to community members and educating ourselves on the Black Lives Matter Movement has been a top priority. The City of Geneva is committed to working collaboratively with the community to strengthen the relationship between our police department and the residents we serve.

## ***Introduction to the Collaborative Process***

The City created a panel (the Collective) of diverse contributors, both in race/ethnicity and experience/engagement with law enforcement. The majority of the Collective are lay people, without specific experience with policy audit or development. Dr. Covington Jr., Chief Diversity Officer for Finger Lakes Community College and professional facilitator, engaged the Collective to guide the discussion and keep the policy review framework on track and schedule.

Collective members met weekly over a five-month period to accomplish Governor Cuomo's New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative directive:

*To rebuild the police community relationship, each local government must convene stakeholders for a fact-based and honest dialogue about the public safety needs of their community. Each community must envision for itself the appropriate role of the police. Policies must be developed to allow the police to do their jobs to protect the public and these policies must meet with the local communities' acceptance. (Governor Cuomo's Message from the "New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Resources & Guide for Public Officials and Citizens, August 2020)*

This directive was provided to over 500 municipalities across New York State. The Collective rose to the challenge with grace and vigor. In order to address the charge in a short timeframe, Collective members prepared in advance for each session by completing required reviews and research and meeting in subgroups to dive into the work. Sessions involved learning about existing GPD procedures and policies, discussing policy recommendations, listening to community needs, and engaging in conversation to incorporate the diverse perspectives represented by the group.

Through this process, Geneva has taken a broad-based and collaborative approach at evaluating the relationship between the community and the police department; particularly as it relates to our community members with a disproportionate volume of interactions with the department.

The City Manager selected a panel of approximately fifteen contributors (the Collective), addressing the charge of the Executive Order with respect to community involvement and ensuring that this plan is co-created with our community. The Collective's work provided an opportunity to learn about existing policies, determine alignment with nationally-recognized best practices, recommend changes in areas identified for improvement, and set the course for new policy implementation.

The Collective is committed to working with Chief Passalacqua as he implements policy recommendations and will continue serving after the plan is complete, seeking additional methods to strengthen our police department and nurture our community.

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## ***Contributor Expectations***

The Collective was facilitated by Dr. Covington Jr., Chief Diversity Officer for Finger Lakes Community College with additional support from D Ekow King, Asst. to the VPSA for Intercultural Engagement, Equity and Inclusion Director, Intercultural Student Engagement at the University at Albany. Both gentlemen have facilitated other municipalities' police reform collective groups. Coordinating the process were co-chairs Erica Collins on behalf of the City Manager's Office and Lieutenant Matthew Valenti on behalf of the Police Department (GPD). Workgroup members, as outlined in the Executive Order, included: the Ontario County District Attorney; Ontario County Public and Conflict Defenders; the Mayor and Ontario County Supervisor; City administration; GPD officers; Faith-based and non-profit groups; and community members from areas with high numbers of police and community interactions.

Given the tight timeline, the commitment of the Collective was essential. The Collective group met weekly, beginning October 13th. The Collective was charged with ensuring police department policies provide the framework for police officers to help address the needs of the community, especially the community members disproportionately impacted by systemic racism with respect to policing. Systemic racism nationwide has led to or resulted in distrust of government institutions, including the GPD. The Collective addressed many issues affecting law enforcement and the community while also strengthening our community relationship with public safety.

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## ***Scope of Work***

The main focus of the Collective work was evaluating policies, practices, and procedures of the GPD. The Governor's mandate and plan guidebook outlined the following focus areas as a starting point:

- Use of Force Policy
- Deployment of Procedural Justice
- Systemic Racial Bias/Justice in Policing Training
- Implicit Bias Training
- De-Escalation Policies and Practices Training
- Policies related to Law Enforcement Diversion/Restorative Justice
- Approach to Community Based Outreach/Conflict Resolution
- Approach to Problem Oriented/Hot Spot Policing
- Approach to Focused Diversion
- Execution of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design
- Approach to Violence Prevention
- Policies related to Model Policy Review

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## **Session Flow**

Eighteen weekly working sessions were held to accomplish the work. In Session 1, the Collective reviewed the project, schedule, and facilitated approach. Collective members collaborated to develop an organizational framework, and committed to rules of procedure necessary for an efficient execution of the charge at hand.

Sessions began with a review and confirmation of the organizational framework and rules of procedure adopted at the initial session. At the beginning, GPD provided an overview of the department and then background on each policy to provide an existing framework for conversation. Sessions concluded with the facilitator providing an overview of the policies or topic area to be discussed in the following session.

Collective members came prepared for each session. Preparation materials were provided that included an overview of the affected policies, examples of model policies and best practices, and other information necessary to conduct a review. Members were asked to score the policy against model policies and best practices, and be prepared to discuss potential improvements to the policies. The Collective was divided into three subgroups tackling certain sections of each policy. Those subgroups met independently to edit and offer suggestions on their assigned sections.

Working session time focused on discussing ideas, learning from each other hearing different viewpoints and reaching common ground. Subgroup leaders were asked to suggest ideas for improvements to the policies in place, or if policies in the affected areas were lacking, to suggest components to add for consideration (Appendix C).

After the group reached consensus for policy recommendations, the Chief of Police and GPD representatives, as well as legal and outside counsel, reviewed recommendations. The Chief of Police and GPD representatives met with the Collective to review changes, ask additional questions and shared what changes will be implemented (Appendix D).

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## ***Public Engagement and Input***

Public input was welcomed through multiple channels throughout the process to ensure that the Collective heard many perspectives, experiences and suggestions. The Collective provided a range of opportunities for feedback. The City created a section on its website, and posted session agendas, preparation materials, recommended policy changes and draft plans as they were developed. All virtual meetings were available both live and as recordings on the City of Geneva's YouTube channel. The website has a module allowing visitors to submit comments or questions, which were considered by the committee during the sessions and will continue to leave available for the public to provide input throughout the journey forward. In addition, community members were asked to participate in a survey (Appendix E), as well as speak during three virtual public forums. Throughout the process, community members were encouraged to connect with the City Manager's office or individual stakeholders.

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## ***Identification of Community Needs***

Following two public forum sessions, the Collective paused to reflect and brainstorm community needs. The needs, listed below, served as key components as policy recommendations were made, and will continue to be utilized during implementation.

- Transparency (where applicable) throughout the process (Complaints, Investigations etc.,)
- Relationship building between the Geneva residents and the police department (Joint ventures may help)
- Development of local recruits
- Diversify the police department to represent the community at large better in the women/men that are hired into the GPD.
- More outreach from the GPD/City of Geneva to all communities and neighborhoods to who the GPD is and what they stand for.
- Better transparency and accountability from all our City departments, from firefighters to police to City Hall.
- Fair Policing that doesn't disproportionately target marginalized members of the community.
- An end to the divide between Black Lives Matters and Blue Lives Matters
- Community Outreach – be an active part of the Community outside of investigations
- Recognize and be intentional about identifying implicit bias
- Police accountability/community accountability reformation on both ends
- In depth de-escalation training that models current best practices.
- Police officer training and added support for mental health response calls
- Monthly review of positive de-escalation incidences for officers to model

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## ***Community Policing and Community Engagement***

The Collective spent time generating community policing ideas and developed the following policing strategies to develop further during implementation:

- Creating Opportunities for Non-Structured and Organic Interactions: Interacting with the community in an unofficial capacity. Being involved in community events that are not necessarily tied to the police department is essential. Community members can assist by engaging with the members of the police department and encouraging others to do the same. Community policing must include the fostering and maintenance of positive relationships between members of law enforcement and the community. Law enforcement should look for opportunities to be in the community in ways that fall outside of the traditional enforcement of laws, such as speaking engagements with school classes and community groups, or involvement with community events.
- Listening for Constructive Feedback: The PD should endeavor to be both transparent and solicitous of community feedback.
- Generating Proactive Community-led Efforts: The community needs to engage with law enforcement, too, for this working relationship to improve and succeed. The community should invite law enforcement to speaking events, or ask questions about matters of concern or interest. The community also needs to appear at public forums to make their views known.
- Seeking Out and Having Honest Dialogue: Both the community and law enforcement should create opportunities and make a concerted effort to engage on a personal level and have open and honest discussions, as we were able to have as a subgroup and as a collective. This, and behaving respectfully toward each other in general, will go a long way toward creating an atmosphere of understanding and empathy.
- Working as a Community Team: Both community and police need to come together as one. The police cannot do their job without the community. We need to understand each other, treat each other with respect at all times and work to better this City as a whole. People cannot be afraid to talk, have a conversation and be real. If we can change the way we communicate and address one another. Humanize each other – because no matter what, we all start from that position – we are all human beings who, at the end of the day, want to be safe, happy, and healthy.

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## ***Collective Policy Recommendations***

The Collective recommended specific updates and changes to the following policies. The full policies and specific recommendations are located in Appendix C. The majority of recommendations will be implemented by Chief Passalacqua this Spring (Appendix D). Determination of implementing recommendations for the Use of Force Policy are still under review.

- Deployment of Procedural Justice- GO 325/950
- Training as to Systemic Racial Bias/Justice in Policing- GO 325
- Training as to Implicit Bias- GO 325
- Policies related to Law Enforcement Diversion/Restorative Justice- GO 325
- Use of Force Policy – GO 400
- Training as to De-Escalation Policies and Practices- GO 810
- Approach to Community Based Outreach/Conflict Resolution- GO 950
- Execution of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design- GO 950
- Approach to Violence Prevention- GO 950

\*Please note GO abbreviation for General Order.

## ***Reimagining Process – Implementation Next Steps***

The Collective, alongside the Community Compact and input from our community, will continue to guide the implementation of the action plan. Key focus areas for 2021 include:

- Identifying metrics to measure success of the plan
- Implementing programs to address community needs as identified during work sessions
- Developing ways to genuinely build a bridge between our law enforcement and residents

The Community Compact and the Collective will play large roles in assisting with bridging gaps of distrust and/or mis-understanding other perspectives.

Once a timeline and scope of work for 2021 is put together, we will release this information to the public for input. This will demonstrate progress and allow for necessary adjustments or shifts in focus. This interactive process will ideally help us serve the needs of our residents and law enforcement collectively.

The tentative 2021 focus areas include, but are not limited to:

- Implementation of the Policy Recommendations
- Creating a road map for Use of Force policy next steps
- Mental Health Awareness and Partnerships with Behavioral Health Agencies
- Wellness Initiatives for GPD and all City Staff
- Trainings for GPD and all City Staff
- Community Engagement
- Measurement of Impact of Policy Changes

### *Implementation of the Policy Recommendations*

Chief Passalacqua will amend the policies amendments (Appendix D) within two months. Chief Passalacqua will continue to work with the Collective as additional policy recommendations are developed.

### *Creating a road map for Use of Force policy next steps*

As a Collective we plan to have future discussions as it relates to the General Orders of the Geneva Police Department including the Use of Force Policy (G.O. 400) with the City of Geneva Police Department. We will continue to consider the Use of Force Policies of other Police Departments in the State of New York. We will also consider the Use of Force Continuum developed by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) as well as the Bureau of Municipal Police. The Collective's Use of Force policy recommendations shall be used as a reference for changes to the current Use of Force policy.

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Appendix C contains the Collective's version of G.O. 400, while Appendix D contains the Chief's current version of G.O. 400. The Collective will continue to have conversations, coming to a consensus on an acceptable Use of Force Policy that meets the needs of all the members of the City of Geneva.

### *Mental Health Awareness and Partnerships with Behavioral health agencies*

The Collective and City staff will look into switching to a co-responder model, allowing GPD and behavioral health providers to work together, providing a holistic approach to serving and responding to persons in crisis. Efforts have already begun to work with Finger Lakes Community Health (FLCH). Working together with FLCH and other community partners would provide a full circle of comprehensive care. Community partners from these areas would include, but are not limited to: medical, behavioral health, substance abuse, and case management. The utilization of mental health services in collaboration with GPD offers many benefits, including but not limited to:

- Providing additional support and resources to GPD's Crisis Intervention Team;
- Promoting recovery; and
- Providing a higher level of care to responding to persons in crisis.

### *Wellness Initiatives for GPD and all City Staff*

In recognition of the critical role that officer wellness plays in police work, law enforcement agencies across the country have created programs aimed at preserving and promoting officers' physical and emotional health. The Collective will work to assist GPD in creating a wellness plan, yielding positive outcomes for police officers, their agencies, and the communities they serve. These efforts will complement the City's existing wellness program and provide additional ideas and resources that the City could utilize for all staff.

### *Trainings for GPD and all City staff*

In addition to Fair and Impartial Policing instruction that GPD currently receives, GPD will be implementing implicit bias training, which was created and will be instructed by Dr. Covington. This training will be completed in Spring 2021. The following is a summary of the training:

*Through a lens of social justice, effective Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training raises employee awareness of the importance of working together with people from different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs. As the world of law enforcement requires the intentional dedication to organizational culture, complexities of human behavior require resources that not only support employee skill sets, but also communicate standards that govern expected behavior. As public servants, a law enforcement agency that understands the rules of etiquette, ethics, and respect for ALL, is more equipped to have employees thrive and positively contribute to the welfare of society at large. Implicit bias training assists executives, supervisors, and staff in developing a deeper understanding of civility and respect, which allows organizations to excel in their duty to serve as well as retain talent. Personnel learn*

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*how to detect and minimize behaviors that can undermine individuals and groups, along with inclusive actions that reflect a commitment to civil communication.*

All city staff will also participate in a modified version of Dr. Covington's Implicit Bias Training.

Furthermore, GPD is rolling out an updated version of Procedural Justice Training, now known as Principles in Policing. Training of the trainers is in progress. All GPD will participate in the training in 2021.

### Community Engagement

Utilizing ideas from the Collective and the community regarding what effective community engagement looks like, the Collective will generate an action plan. The Collective will seek community partners to join the efforts.

### Measurement of Impact of Policy Changes

The Collective will look to develop a process for measuring the impact of policy changes. Measuring data and data collection comparison to years past, the Collective would like to learn from the:

- Collection of Use of Force/ Response to resistance events- type of force and the findings of follow-up investigations
- All civilian complaints-type of complaint and findings
- Additional items and success measures to come.

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## Appendices

### **Appendix A: Collective Members**

*Bios*

### **Appendix B: Geneva Police Department Background Documents**

*Duties of the Chief of Police; Chief Bio*

*Police Department Presentation*

*City of Geneva Police Department Roster*

### **Appendix C: Collective Group Subcommittee Working Documents**

*Recommendations from Collective Subcommittees*

*General Orders; 325, 400, 810, 950*

*Subgroup Closing Questions and responses*

### **Appendix D: Final Policy Amendments Approved by Chief Passalacqua**

*Recommendations from Chief and Legal review*

*General Orders; 325, 400, 810, 950*

### **Appendix E: Community Engagement**

*Community Engagement; Public Forum Flyer*

*Police Reform and Reinvention Collective Survey and responses*

### **Appendix F: City Staff Initiatives Approved by City Council**

*Proclamation: ‘No Place for Hate’ in the City of Geneva*

*Resolution #49-2020: Establishing Implicit Bias training for City of Geneva Staff and City of Geneva Council*

### **Appendix G: Approved City Council Local Law and Resolutions**

*City of Geneva Local Law 1-2021: Local Law Amending the Geneva City Charter to Establish a Police Review Board*

*Resolution #30-2020: Creating Process and Timeline for Revising the City of Geneva Police Department Body Camera Policy*

*Resolution #53-2020: Adopting the City of Geneva Body Camera Task Force Policy*

*Resolution #31-2020: Ensuring Diversity and Standards for the Geneva Community Compact Committee*

*Resolution #32-2020: Requiring Collection and Reporting of Geneva Police Department Data Metrics*

*Resolution #34-2020: Establishing a Public Hearing for a Local Law Establishing a Police Accountability Board in the City of Geneva*

*Resolution #35-2020: Establishing a Police Budget Advisory Board*

*Resolution #38-2020: Establishing a Whistleblower Protection Policy for the City of Geneva*

*Resolution #46-2020: Encouraging a Use of Force Policy (Interim Provision) for Geneva City Police Department*

*Resolution #54-2020: Adopting the City of Geneva Police Budget Advisory Board By-Laws*