

LONG ISLAND / NASSAU

Old Brookville will cease police patrols in 2022 in Matinecock, Cove Neck and 3 other villages



Old Brookville broke ground in August on a new village hall and police headquarters.

Credit: Howard Schnapp

By Ted Phillips

ted.phillips@newsday.com  @tedephillips

Updated October 6, 2021 5:08 PM

The Old Brookville Police Department will stop patrolling neighboring communities next year after the six villages the department serves failed to resolve disagreements to renew an agreement for joint protection.

An intermunicipal agreement between Old Brookville, Brookville, Upper Brookville, Mill Neck, Matinecock and Cove Neck expires on May 31, 2022.

Old Brookville Mayor Bernard Ryba declined to be interviewed and instead forwarded a July 19 statement he delivered to village trustees.

"We are making plans for the transition to a police department that will exclusively protect our residents," the statement said. "The Old Brookville police department will continue to provide our residents with the highest quality of police protection."

The disagreement arose, according to Ryba's statement, when the six-village board of police commissioners voted to change the longstanding practice of approving healthcare benefits to retirees in every five-year contract to a lifetime guarantee. Old Brookville, as the employer of the police department, would have been on the hook to

pay those lifetime benefits — calculated at \$40 million — if other villages failed to make their contributions, according to Ryba's statement.

Old Brookville offered to continue as the police department's nominal employer if it had full control over labor relations, but that proposal and others to spread the healthcare cost liability were rejected by the other villages, according to Ryba.

Old Brookville broke ground on a new village hall and police headquarters in August.

The police department's audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending May 31, 2020, said that 48 inactive and 32 active employees were covered by the department's healthcare benefits.

Brookville Mayor Daniel Serota, asked Monday whether the village planned to establish its own police department, said, "That could be" and declined further comment.

Brookville trustees passed a resolution on March 16 to establish the village's own police department, according to meeting minutes. The resolution authorized Serota to set up the administrative and physical elements of a police department, including hiring personnel, obtaining equipment and establishing a physical police headquarters.

On Monday, Brookville's quarterly newsletter was updated on the village website and included statements that the village would create its own police department.

A June/August letter to Matinecock residents on the village website said a resolution was passed to establish a four-village Brookville police department under a joint police protection agreement that includes Brookville, Matinecock, Mill Neck and Cove Neck.

"All four Villages have contributed the requested startup funding to allow equipping the new force and hiring the needed personnel," the letter stated. "We are excited that the new Department will be up and ready on June 1st, 2022 and will provide our Village residents with excellent police protection."

Matinecock Mayor Kenneth Goodman did not elaborate.

"At the moment we're not supposed to discuss it," Goodman said Monday. "We're keeping everything under wraps right now."

Upper Brookville, where the Old Brookville police department is headquartered, could announce its policing plan next week, village Mayor Elliot Conway said Wednesday.

"We're very close to a signed agreement but we have not announced where we're going," Conway said. He added that the police headquarters building will be converted into a new village hall with a portion set aside for police.

Mayors of Cove Neck and Mill Neck did not return calls.

OLD BROOKVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Founded 1949

Serves villages of Old Brookville, Brookville, Upper Brookville, Mill Neck, Matinecock and Cove Neck under an agreement expiring May 31, 2022.

On June 1, 2022, the Old Brookville Police Department will serve only the village of Old Brookville.

SOURCES: Old Brookville, Brookville and Upper Brookville

By Ted Phillips

ted.phillips@newsday.com  @tedephillips

Ted Phillips covers the Town of Oyster Bay and has been a reporter at Newsday since 2011. Over his career he has covered state government in Albany, municipal finance, local government, crime, economic development and armed conflict.