

# Village of Croton-on-Hudson Justice Court Consolidation Proposal

February 28, 2022



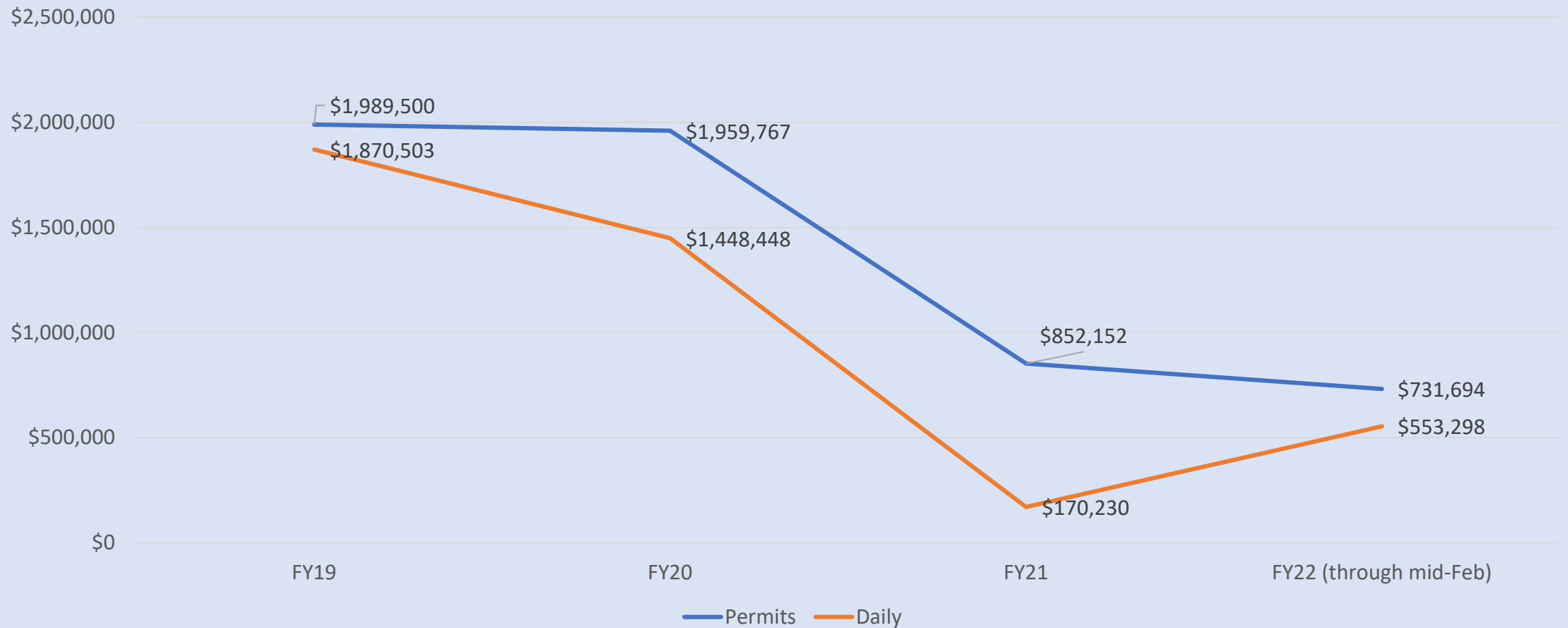
## *Why are you considering this proposal now?*

This proposal is being considered now because the Village is getting ready to begin the budget process for 2022-2023. The tentative budget is due on or before March 20 of each year. Additionally, the consolidation of a justice court can only be made effective at the conclusion of the term of the Village Justice, which ends this year. In the Village of Croton-on-Hudson, the Justice's term is four years.

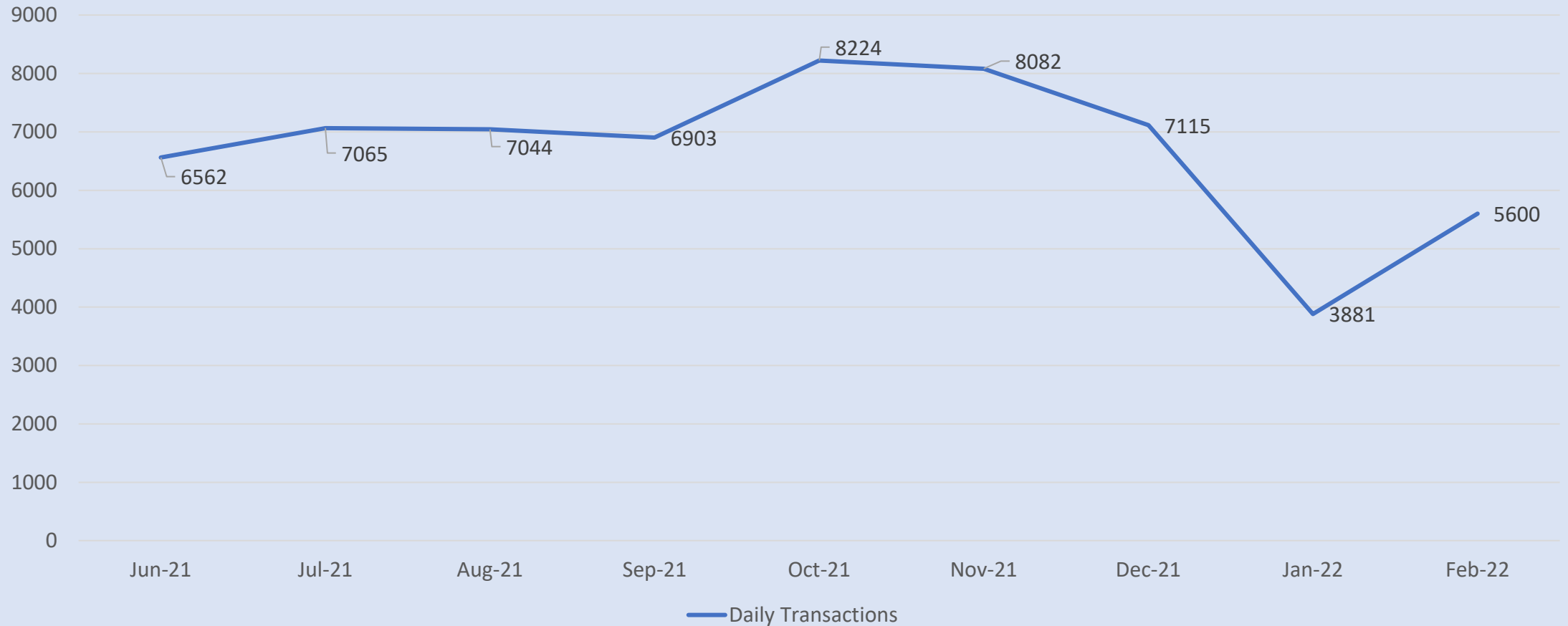
## *Will parking revenue will come back from the train station parking lot after COVID?*

Two years after the pandemic began, the usage of the parking lot is about 50%. This is for the daily lot as well as the permit parking. It is our belief that a number of commuters have permanently switched to working from home, and some have likely switched to a hybrid work schedule. These individuals will likely not be renewing their permits. An optimistic estimate is that parking lot usage may rebound to 75% of its pre-pandemic level. In 2019, the budgeted amount of revenue from the parking lot was forecast to be \$3,735,000. A 75% usage would result in a permanent loss of \$933,750 in revenue for the Village.

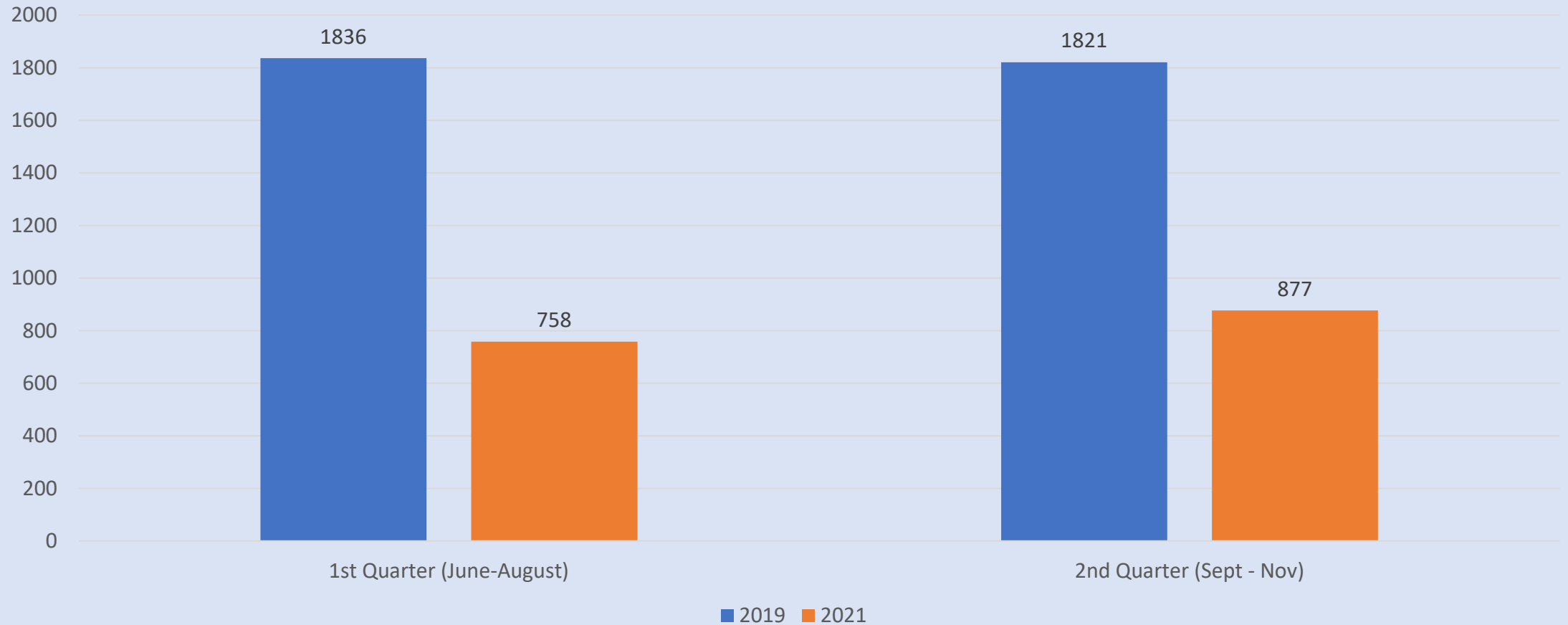
# Revenue Received – Permits & Daily



# Daily Transactions June 2021 – February 2022



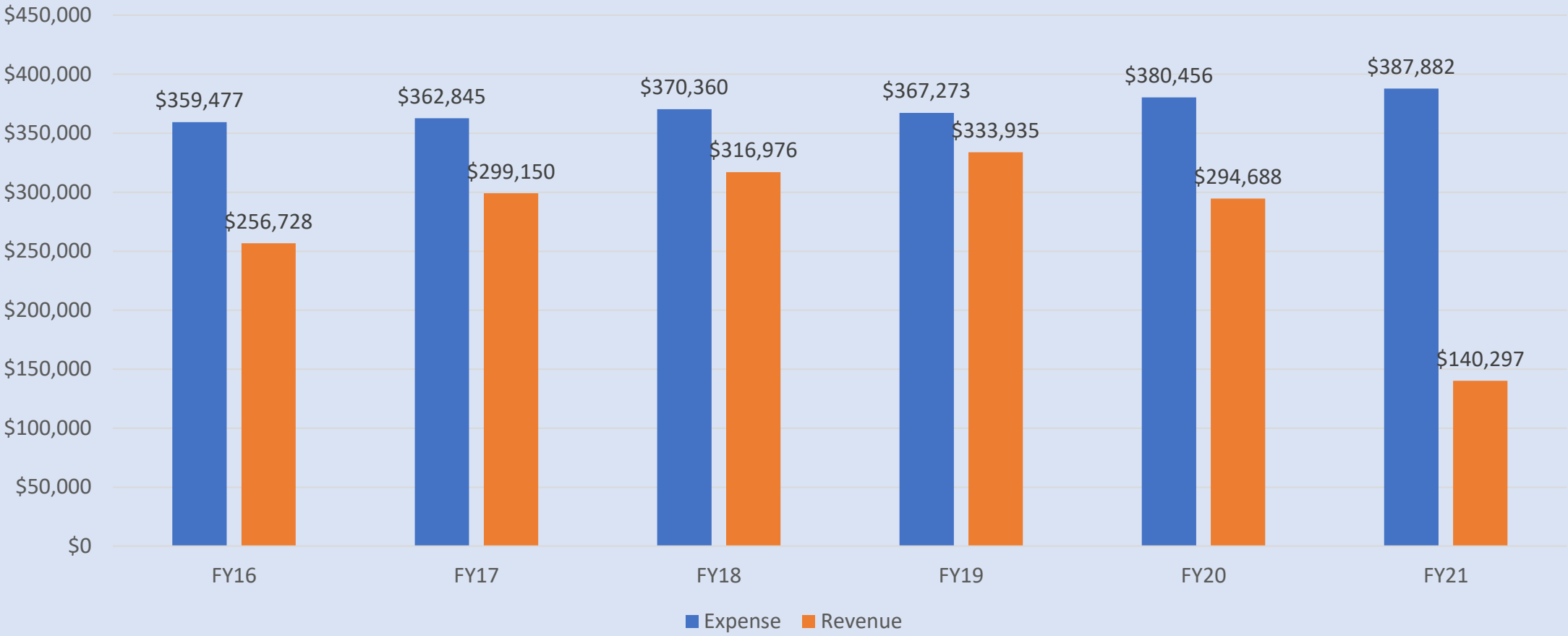
# Parking Permits Sold: 2019 vs 2021



*Doesn't the Court cover its costs every year and sometimes make money for the Village?*

This is not correct. Over the past six fiscal years (FY16 through FY21), the court has run an average deficit of \$97,750.

# Justice Court Expenses vs Revenues





*How does the consolidation benefit the Village financially?  
Does the Town get to keep all the revenue from the Court?*

The Village will still be able to retain a portion of the revenue from Village cases adjudicated in the Town Court while having almost none of the costs. Under state law, the Village is entitled to fines issued under Village ordinances. These include parking tickets, violations of the Zoning Code and dog violations. The Village is also entitled to the local surcharge of any handicapped tickets issued in the Village. In FY 2019 (the last pre-pandemic year), that number was approximately 71% of total revenue. In FY 2021, this number was more than 52% of the total revenue brought in by the Court. The reduction is related to the lower number of parking tickets issued at the train station.

## *What's the current cost of the Court?*

In FY 2022, a total of \$363,270 was budgeted for the court. This represents \$237,290 (most of A1110 in the budget) and \$125,980 (comprised of the salary of the Village Prosecutor, the overtime for police and the fringe benefits provided to each employee in the budget). The fringe benefits include health, life and dental insurance for each full-time employee, as well as the required contribution for each employee to Social Security, Medicare and retirement system by the Village.

## *How many residents use the Village Court?*

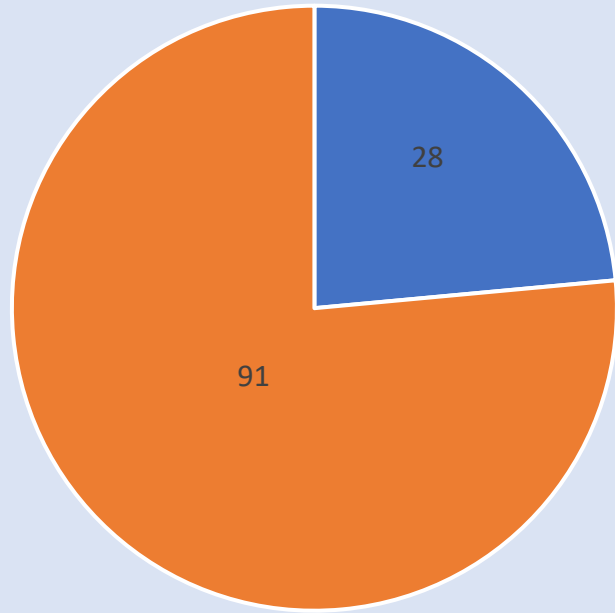
Assistant to the Village Manager Thomas Morzello has analyzed the dockets from November 2021 to January 2022 to determine how many Village residents were served by the court during the period and came up with a total of 338 individuals with 521 cases. These charges include criminal, traffic, landlord-tenant and small claims. Of the parties in these cases, 75 (or 22%) were Village residents during these three months.

## *How will this will impact the police department?*

The Chief of Police has been consulted regarding this proposal. Due to various reforms instituted by the State of New York (bail reform and police reform), few arrests require an immediate arraignment in front of a judge. In 2021, the total number of arraignments resulting from arrests by the police department were 28. This was 24% of the total number of arrests by the police department that year. The Village has requested in our memorandum of understanding with the Town that the Town Justices consider holding arraignments at the Municipal Building when feasible.

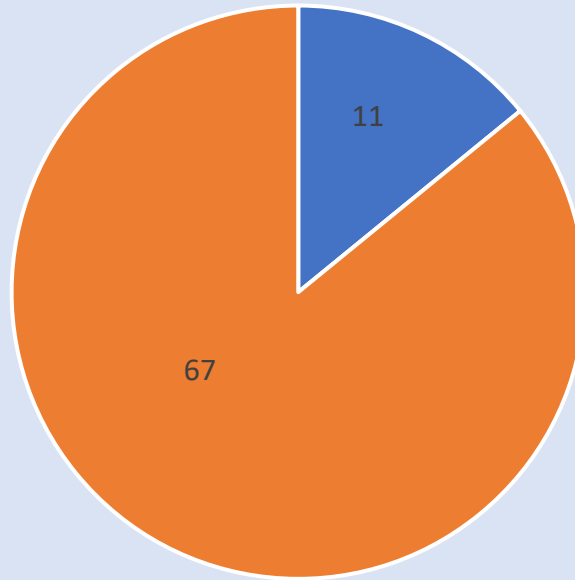
# Arrest Data from CPD: 2019-2021

2021 Arrests



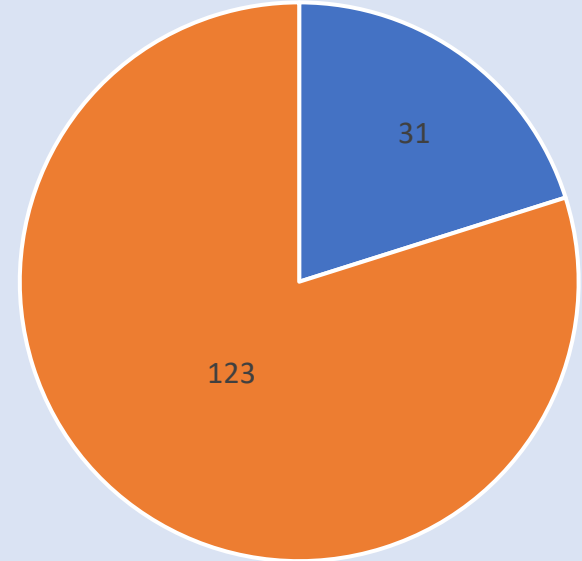
■ Arraignment ■ No Arraignment

2020 Arrests



■ Arraignment ■ No Arraignment ■ ■

2019 Arrests



■ Arraignment ■ No Arraignment ■ ■

*Have other municipalities in New York State consolidated their justice courts?*

Yes, the consolidation of Village justice courts has been a growing trend in New York State. Between 2010 and 2020, 45 courts consolidated in the state (almost 14% of all village justice courts). Since 2020, some local municipalities have consolidated their courts, including Port Chester (May 2021) and Pawling (December 2021).

*Is this a permanent decision by the Village?*

No, there is nothing prohibiting the Village from re-establishing the office of Village Justice at some point in the future.