

**Public Safety Committee  
Review of Departmental Budget Scenarios  
May 22, 2002  
10:30 a.m.  
Scott Heyman Conference Room**

Present: L. McBean, N. Schuler, B. Blanchard, G. Totman  
Excused: K. Herrera  
Staff: S. Whicher, K. Smithers, P. Meskill, K. Leinthall, F. Newkirk, L. Shurtleff, G. Dentes, J. Hughes, B. Richmond, S. Robinson  
Board Members: M. Robertson, T. Joseph, P Penniman (arrived at 11:40 a.m.)

Mrs. Schuler called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

**District Attorney**

Mr. Dentes described the budget situation in the District Attorney's Office as a result of the 20 percent reduction scenario as being grim.

He alerted the Committee that he has applied to have the Assistant District Attorney positions in his office reclassified and the Personnel Department has responded favorably to that request. This reclassification will result in a request to the Board to pay the ADA's more. The impact in 2003 will be \$83,000. Mr. Dentes reviewed past and present staffing levels with the Committee. He said he cannot conceive of how the office would function if the proposed 20 percent reduction were approved because the 20 percent scenario would result in 2 3/4 positions in the department be eliminated. Mr. Dentes said he has curtailed spending in travel and training accounts as part of his efforts to reduce spending in 2002. Because the District Attorney's Office is primarily personnel expenses, there is little room to save money.

**Rollover Request**

The Committee was presented with a request for rollover funds for the District Attorney's Office in the amount of \$10,000. Mr. Dentes said denial of this request would not have a significant impact on his office. No motion was made to approve the request.

**Assigned Counsel**

Ms. Hughes said although caseloads have consistently risen, staffing in the Office has not increased since the program's inception. She noted the additional demands placed on the office because of new programs, a new judge, the jail population, and the court system. She also reminded the Committee that staff hours were reduced from 40 to 35 during the last budget process.

A reduction of 20 percent in the budget for 2003 would take the office down to below 20 hours per week per staff member. It would be impossible to maintain the program since they service 16 courts, most of which are full-time. The program has no revenue, no grant funding, or outside reimbursement. The Department's budget has not grown in the last five years; in fact, has gone down by approximately five percent. A 20 percent reduction in 2003 would make the program almost non-existent and would have a great impact on the courts, the jail, and other programs.

### **Emergency Response**

Mr. Shurtleff reviewed staffing levels and functions of the Department with the Committee. He said if approved, the 20 percent reduction in target would result in a delay in answering emergency calls and would impair the dispatchers ability to listen to pagers, thus, delaying a response to an emergency situation. A reduction in staffing would result in, and would also put the Sheriff's Department and Fire and Disaster Department in jeopardy. Mr. Shurtleff said in order to reduce spending in 2002, he has reduced service contracts and has identified \$5,000 in other revenue lines. In addition, the Coordinator position will not be filled.

#### **Rollover Request**

Mr. Shurtleff noted this money is going to keep the communications equipment running until the new system is up and running. He said these problems occurred because maintenance money was removed from the budget to meet the 2002 target.

It was MOVED by Ms. Blanchard, seconded by Mr. Totman, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the rollover request submitted by Emergency Response in the amount of \$84,548. MOTION CARRIED.

### **Sheriff's Department**

Sheriff Meskill stated certain areas were eliminated that required calling deputies in on overtime. The only new areas in the Department are related to traffic safety; these areas are funded through Traffic Safety grants. Mr. Meskill explained the length of time it takes to make an arrest, stating that when an individual is arrested it could take between two and five hours and require one to three officers.

There was discussion in regard to the new mandate from the Commission of Corrections requiring additional corrections officers at the Tompkins County Jail. Ms. McBean asked what is different in the Jail that has led to this requirement. Mr. Meskill said the Commission of Corrections have not been in the Jail to perform a staffing analysis since 1991 and things have been changed based on programs and Commission requirements. Mr. Meskill said during the time he has been Sheriff he has witnessed changes in the Commission to becoming more rigid and structured. Ms. McBean asked if the County could renegotiate with them. Mr. Meskill said he already negotiated the number of corrections officers that have asked for from 50 to 40. He said he is not uncomfortable with what they are asking for based on the job duties and responsibilities of those officers. Ms. McBean said she is uncomfortable with it because of the amount of cutbacks the County is currently facing.

When asked what efforts were being made to reduce spending in 2002, Sheriff Meskill responded that three positions were eliminated during last year's budget process, service contracts have been drastically reduced, and travel and training costs have been reduced.

#### **Rollover Request - Sheriff**

Sheriff Meskill was asked why he was asking for funds to purchase PERS units. He responded that the Office for the Aging doesn't have funding, there has been an increase in use, and recently they have been used for non-traditional things that have provided direct public safety access for County residents. Mr. Joseph said he does not support one department buying these units for another.

Mr. Meskill said for the past three years he has successfully used rollover to pay for one-time purchases that were needed.

Mr. Joseph questioned what "new efficiencies" have occurred in the Department. Mr. Meskill said there have been savings on a daily basis because he has held off purchasing items, repairing equipment, and hiring employees.

It was MOVED by Ms. Blanchard, seconded by Mr. Totman, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve \$33,700 in rollover funds for Radio Equipment/AED's. No motion was made to approve other requested amounts for the Sheriff: Retro-Payroll - \$160,000 and PERS units - \$10,000.

Rollover Request - Jail

It was MOVED by Ms. Blanchard, seconded by Mrs. Schuler, to approve \$150,000 in rollover funds for the Jail Transition Program (\$10,000) and Payroll for additional personnel - \$140,000. A voice vote resulted as follows: Ayes - 3 (Schuler, Totman, and Blanchard); Noes - 1 (McBean); Excused - 1 (Herrera). MOTION CARRIED.

**RESOLUTION NO. - BUDGETING UNIT RECONFIGURATION AND FISCAL TARGET ADJUSTMENT – MENTAL HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY – DOMESTIC OFFENSE OFFENDER REEDUCATION SERVICES PROGRAM**

MOVED by Ms. McBean, seconded by Ms. Blanchard. Ms. Blanchard expressed concern that there is no documentation that shows whether this program is effective. It was agreed that it is difficult to find information that evaluates this program. Ms. Herrera agreed that it may be difficult to measure this type of program; however, said she feels this is a tool and the only program that attempts to fill this gap. Ms. Blanchard said she would support the program for one-year, with no fiscal target increase. Mr. Totman said there are a lot of good arguments for programs, but the time has come to begin saying we cannot afford any new programs.

A voice vote resulted as follows: Ayes - 3 (Blanchard, Schuler, and McBean); Noes - 1 (Totman); Excused - 1 (Herrera). MOTION CARRIED.

WHEREAS, TST-BOCES has notified the County that they will discontinue their supervision of the Domestic Offense Offender Reeduction Services (D.O.O.R.S.) program effective June 30, 2002, and

WHEREAS, Mental Health has agreed to incorporate the D.O.O.R.S. program into their clinic services effective July 1, 2002, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety, Health and Human Services, and Budget and Capital Committees, That effective July 1, 2002, the D.O.O.R.S. program 4506 shall be transferred from Public Safety as a stand-alone program to a Clinic Services Program 0736 within the Mental Health budget,

RESOLVED, further, That the 2003 Mental Health Fiscal Target shall be increased by \$31,411,

RESOLVED, further, That the Director of Finance be authorized and directed to make the following budget adjustment:

FROM:	A6314.54400 D.O.O.R.S. Program Expense	\$15,705
TO:	A4311.54400 Mental Health Clinic	\$15,705

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

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**Probation Department**

Ms. Leinthall said the budget reduction scenarios of 20 percent would take the Department back to the days of "pre Drug Court". She discussed staffing levels and said cases have not declined.

**Rollover**

It was MOVED by Ms. Blanchard, seconded by Ms. McBean, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the Probation Department's rollover request.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.