

**Public Safety Committee
August 24, 2007
3 p.m.
Scott Heyman Conference Room**

Present: R. Booth M. Hattery, M. Robertson
Excused: L. McBean-Clairborne, M. Koplinka-Loehr
Staff: P. Younger, M. Lynch, County Administration; P. Meskill, Sheriff; L. Shurtleff, Department of
Emergency Response; S. Cook, Criminal Justice Advisory/Alternatives-to-Incarceration Board

1. Call to Order

Mr. Booth, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

2. Public Comment

No member of the public was in attendance.

3. Changes to the Agenda

The status report on the public safety data sharing project was withdrawn from the agenda.

4. Sheriff

The Committee distributed additional statistics on Jail boardout costs. Sheriff Meskill said \$229,444 has been spent on Jail boardouts through July 31, 2007. There are currently 72 inmates at the Jail and four are boarded out. At the present time inmates are being boarded out to the Chenango County Jail because they have offered to transport inmates when there are two, at no transport cost to Tompkins County.

Ms. Younger asked the Sheriff about medical costs and why they have fluctuated lately. He said this is an expense that the Sheriff has no control over. Regardless of what health insurance coverage an inmate has, the Sheriff is required by Law to take care of the health, safety, and well-being of all inmates.

In response to a question by Mr. Hattery, Mr. Meskill said he very rarely uses road patrol deputies to transport inmates. Mr. Hattery asked if Tompkins County had a large facility if it would free up officers to do road patrol. Mr. Meskill said it would not because he already has the minimum number of Corrections Officers (allowed by the State Commission of Correction). In addition, he said road patrol deputies are a different class of employees. Minimum staffing is based on the physical layout of the facility; in 2001, the Commission wanted Tompkins County to have 52 employees in the Jail, however, a reduced level of 40 was finally accepted. This number does not include positions such as the physician, cooks, etc.

Ms. Robertson said when a new Jail was studied one of the biggest ongoing costs was Jail staffing. Mr. Hattery asked what the situation is in terms of jail capacity throughout the region. Mr. Meskill said he has not seen any major changes in the jail population in other facilities in the region. He said the most commonly used facilities he uses to board prisoners to are Chenango and Tioga counties.

Ms. Robertson thanked the Sheriff for providing the bail chart and said she found it very helpful.

4a. Budget Impacts

Sheriff Meskill said in order to meet the 2008 fiscal target, \$30,000 had to be cut from the Jail. He said in his opinion it is not a good idea because of the labor and mileage expenses related to the transport of prisoners. He said there was no Rollover in the Department in 2006 or 2007 and he does not expect any in the future. Mr. Meskill said he has reduced the Road Patrol Civil Division by one clerical position because of a layoff and he is hoping to use some of the funds to fund another deputy position. He also spoke of increased equipment and fuel expenses.

Mr. Meskill said the Sheriff's budget contains three over-target requests:

One Deputy Sheriff position

One Criminal Investigator position to focus on child sexual abuse cases as previously explained to the Committee by the District Attorney;

One Corrections Officer to transport inmates to work with the Re-Entry Program

He reported as of August 9th the Sheriff is no longer responsible for court security. This has resulted in three employees moving to State employment, therefore, new hires have been undergoing training. He explained the impact the loss of fully-trained employees has on the Department because of the amount of training time involved. He said the Department was previously receiving reimbursement from the State for two court security positions. He said the Legislature will see a decrease in FTE's in the proposed 2008 budget.

6. Criminal Justice Advisory/Alternatives-to-Incarceration Board (CJA/ATI)

Ms. Cook, Chair of the CJA/ATI Board, provided the Committee with a progress report on activities being undertaken by the advisory board. They are continuing to take the Strategic Action Plan, which identified the four objectives, and use them systematically and pull out performance indicators that will enable them to chart and trend the information to see if there is a correlation with any of the other information. They are working on finalizing Drug Treatment and Day Reporting numbers. Once that is complete they will be looking at assessments in the Jail. In September/October they hope to be looking closely at the Re-Entry Program.

Ms. Cook said the next area she would like to see examined is the juvenile system. She thinks a systematic review of this existing information will be useful. She spoke of the recent spike in juvenile cases and stated as of August 1st there have been more juvenile petitions filed in all of 2006.

Ms. Cook said New York State is one of only two states in the entire United States who places individuals who are 16 in an adult court; other courts do so at ages 17 and 18. She said there is a movement underway for New York to go in that direction as well. She said studies have shown that when juveniles are moved into the adult courts they do not do better. She also said if New York moves in this direction it would have a dramatic impact on the juvenile system. Ms. Cook stressed the importance of working with younger children as much as possible to change behaviors that may result in placement in the juvenile system when they get older.

Ms. Robertson spoke of the Dryden and Groton primary program that was started in 2001 and asked if anyone knows how those kids are doing. No answer was available.

Ms. Robertson asked Ms. Cook to provide her with a copy of the information she referenced over the last ten-year period.

6a. Department of Emergency Response Report on Budget Impacts

Mr. Shurtleff reported most of the impacts of the proposed 2008 budget relate to the implementation of the radio Communications System. In the last budget process there was a \$70,000 cut that was restored on a one-time basis. In order to meet the 2008 target Mr. Shurtleff said that amount has been absorbed into the budget reducing several maintenance lines which he hopes will be reduced because of the new system. He said this amount will need to be restored at some time in the future.

Mr. Shurtleff explained over-target requests that were included in the Department's 2008 budget:

1. \$128,000 – this amount includes backup generators; battery backup expenses for the 911 Center (cost transferred from Facilities); electrical costs (\$40,000) because shelters now support the computer equipment that runs radio system; risk management associated with the system (\$30,174); telephone expenses (\$24,000); rental sites (\$24,000)
2. Mr. Shurtleff is working with the County Administrator and Finance Director to identify funding streams. For the last three or four years he has been able to apply to a fund for reimbursement for 911-related funds and he is hoping this can be identified as a reoccurring revenue. Mr. Shurtleff said the larger issue will exist in 2009, when the entire system goes online. He said they are continuing to negotiate with the Statewide Wireless Network and he is hopeful they will either lease a portion of the system or contribute towards it.
3. The Department submitted a 2008 budget request with no over-target requests
4. Mr. Shurtleff has extended an employment offer to an individual for the Deputy Director position.

7. Department of Probation and Community Justice

Mr. Booth reported Ms. Leinthall, Director of Probation and Community Justice is unable to be in attendance, but has submitted the following statement which was provided to all Committee members.

“Given the request by the committee members for Department Heads to review the highlights of the budget and the things we desire them to fight for in the new budget, I would like to emphasize the Microcomputer Specialist position that has received one-time funding for two years running, the Internet Monitoring Program, making up the loss in state aid...those are probably the top priorities. The OTR sheets are self-explanatory, and if members of the committee have questions, if you could write them down, send them to me, I will respond to the entire committee with my responses. Obviously, I would hope the members would fight for my entire budget. Would they expect me to say anything different?”

“The other item on the agenda is the increase from 35-40 hours of four of our ancillary staff. I have explained this in the past when we talked in committee about the use of roll-over monies. While some see this as a short-term need, I suspect that it will be a longer range need than some would like. I say that up front even knowing that is not what folks would like to hear. Obviously, if there is a way around that, I will find it and make the necessary changes. I would request the Committee to approve this resolution and move it forward (it has been approved by Personnel and Budget, I believe) so that it can appear on the agenda for the full Legislature at the first September meeting.”

RESOLUTION NO. - INCREASE IN HOURS – SUPPORT STAFF - DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Hattery, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the following resolution and submit to the full Legislature:

WHEREAS, the redesign of the State's probation registry software has eliminated the ability of the Department of Probation and Community Justice to automate data entry tasks in that area, and given that the software in question is proprietary and highly changeable so as to not make it feasible for County Information Technology Services to develop a local solution at this time, and

WHEREAS, the increased workload to the department has created the need to increase the standard work week of four support staff positions from 35 hours to 40 hours per week, and

WHEREAS, funding for this increase in hours in the amount of \$12,853 has been approved as part of the department's request to use the 2006 Certified Rollover funds, and no further funding is required in 2007, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety and Budget and Capital Committees, That the standard workweek for one position each of Administrative Assistant (12/535), Sr. Account Clerk Typist (9/529), Account Clerk Typist (6/513) and Keyboard Specialist (5/507) shall be increased from 35 to 40 hours per week effective August 1, 2007.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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8. Approval of Minutes of July 20, 2007

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Hattery, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of July 20, 2007 as corrected. MINUTES APPROVED.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

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