

# Sheriff CBAC

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TO: Chair Deborah Kafoury and County Board of Commissioners (2) pages

FROM: Sheriff's Office CBAC

DATE: February 26, 2016

SUBJECT: Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) Report & Recommendations

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sheriff's Office is constitutionally required to provide 24 hour service to people in crisis across the County. Along with many in Multnomah County, we at the CBAC to the Sheriff's Office are extremely concerned about homelessness countywide. We are also concerned, however, that the proposed 2% cuts to core services will be at the expense of the same vulnerable populations that we are trying to help.

The Sheriff's Office is often the first point of contact between distressed individuals and County social services. As we have seen during the last decade, when social services are cut drastically and mental health crisis centers are closed across the State, the Sheriff's Office must provide these services instead, no matter what the cost. The Sheriff's Office does this because it is constitutionally mandated to do so.

We at the CBAC have seen a lot over the past decade, including years upon years of across the board cuts. Running jails at maximum capacity resulted in hundreds of yearly emergency population releases of dangerous criminals. Cuts to mental health programs across the state led to jails becoming mental health wards, in which millions of dollars were spent on suicide watch.

The Sheriff's Office must always be ready to respond to unfunded emergency situations; such as the standoff in Harney County at the Malheur Refuge.

The MCSO only recently achieved some level of financial and staffing stability. Background investigators were hired, so hiring was able to catch up with need. The emergency population release problem lessened significantly. The suicide watch challenge became more financially manageable. This relative stability for the Sheriff's Office is new, and is a delicate balance.

## PROCESS

The Citizen Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) to the Sheriff's Office is a program of the Multnomah County Citizen Involvement Committee (CIC). Both the CIC and CBAC are independent of the County and are therefore in a position to provide input and feedback to the Sheriff's Office and the Board of County Commissioners. We value our opportunity to learn about the County budget process, how the Sheriff manages the budget, and the operations of the Sheriff's Office. We value our ability to share our independent and informed judgments with the Sheriff and his staff, as well as with officials in the County.

The Citizen Budget Advisory Committee to the Sheriff meets ten months out of the year, sometimes twice a month, and is assisted by Fiscal Manager Wanda Yantis, Captain Mary Lindstrand, and Fiscal Supervisor Michelle Rader. In addition to visits from Sheriff Daniel Staton, we were regularly briefed by several knowledgeable members of the Sheriff's Office. We have done "ride-alongs" with the deputies and toured the jails several times to ensure we have a working knowledge of the duties, responsibilities and challenges faced at all levels of the Sheriff's Office.

## EMERGING ISSUES AND CHANGES

There is a widely-held perception that law enforcement simply targets bad guys and locks them up. This is a narrow-minded view of the work the MCSO does. There are homeless encampments all over the County that the Sheriff's Office monitors and keeps safe.

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We at the CBAC did a River Patrol ride-along, and the deputies took us to encampments of homeless living in boats along the rivers. Deputies knew many of the homeless by name, and interacted with them in a very friendly manner. A knife fight had recently occurred in one of the encampments, and MCSO responded to a call and showed up in time to save lives.

The 2% across the board cuts feel good on paper. In a department that must provide 24 hour services to distressed persons, however, this paper savings will end up being spent in some way, whether on covering the decrease in jail bed capacity, or on covering for the potentially expensive parental leave program. The only difference is that this will be unplanned spending, a type of spending which is much more expensive. Cutting the MCSO's ability to keep homeless populations and the community safe could be extremely pricey in the long run.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Dorms 4 & 5 Offers 60041J-17 and 60041I-17** - With 1,310 jail beds in Multnomah County currently, even with the Turn Self In Program (TSI) in place, the daily jail population has been over 90% of capacity. Cutting jail beds back to 1,192 by not funding MCIJ Dorms 4 and 5 is unfathomable. The County will fall right back into the emergency release problem from which we only just escaped.
- **MCIJ East Escort Post Offer 60041H-17** - If the above programs are kept then this jail escort program is a must. These escorts are attached to Dorms 4 & 5 and these dorms cannot function without the escorts.
- **Turn Self In Program Offer 60034D-17** - The Turn Self In Program provides an important sentencing alternative to jail, one which keeps families together, and keeps low risk criminals from taking up expensive space in jails. The TSI Program has historically been advocated for by Judges and the District Attorney as a sentencing alternative. Cutting this program is detrimental to the efficiency and effectiveness of the public safety system.
- **Paid Parental Leave Program Offer 60030B-17** - The County recently instituted an additional parental leave program. This is a good thing for employees, however it has the potential to be an extremely expensive benefit for an agency that must staff not just for 9 to 5, but for 24 hours a day. We understand that this was supposed to be cost neutral. We are concerned, however, that posts empty due to parental leave will likely have to be back-filled with overtime. Currently there is a program offer of \$600,000 to cover this expense. We recommend this program offer be funded.
- **Backgrounders Offer 60003B-17** - Due to the large amount of MCSO retirements and potential retirements, funding for backgrounders has been necessary to keep the process successful, and cut down on overtime to fill critical post vacancies.
- **Suicide Prevention – Safety/Security Lighting Offers 60046-17 & Training – Corrections Crisis Intervention Training Day 2 - 60092B-17** - We have commented several times about suicide prevention in the jails and crisis intervention training for deputies. Both affect safety for inmates and MCSO personnel, and reduce liability to the County. You have historically taken these program offers very seriously and provided funding. We hope that you will continue this sentiment and provide the funds for these programs.