

Sheriff's Office CBAC

TO: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Multnomah County Sheriff's Office CBAC

DATE: March 6, 2026

SUBJECT: MCSO Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The MCSO CBAC appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the Sheriff's Office budget and the County's financial direction. This year, the Sheriff's Office CBAC consists of three returning members and three new members. This letter includes a brief description of this year's process as well as an overview of several major budget topics of interest to this CBAC.

PROCESS

The three returning members of the MCSO CBAC met three times between November and December, with new members joining them for three additional meetings in January and February. New members also attended County CBAC orientation and, separately, a dedicated onboarding session to the MCSO CBAC. And in February, the three returning members participated in a tour of the Multnomah County Detention Center.

MCSO Chief of Business Services Jon Harms Mahlandt was the primary staff point of contact and scheduled and attended each meeting. Member Erica Gregg was once again voted as Committee Chair.

KEY ISSUES

MCSO Budget Reductions

The MCSO CBAC recognizes the significant deficit the County faces for Fiscal Year 2027. While the committee supports the reduction of Close Street, alongside County efforts to reform pretrial services, it does not support any further reductions to the Sheriff's Office budget. In particular, the committee strongly discourages any reduction to jail funding that would result in closure of funded jail beds. The committee would also be against any budgetary changes that

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would further diminish the Sheriff's Office law enforcement function, and in general encourages the Board to prioritize public safety with County dollars.

Jail Facilities

Returning members of the MCSO CBAC recently toured the Multnomah County Detention Center. Despite the best efforts of staff, many of the core systems of the building are in disrepair (e.g. elevators and electrical systems). Because of the design of the facility, much routine maintenance requires both technical staff and a Corrections escort, meaning more labor costs and longer time to complete maintenance work. All this is over and above documented critical system failures of plumbing and HVAC systems.

As this committee noted last year, the County must invest in modern jail infrastructure and should prioritize moving toward a new jail facility rather than spending hundreds of millions of dollars to maintain an aging one. A modern facility would also allow MCSO to more efficiently allocate its staff resources, with deputies focusing on service to adults in custody rather than facilitating building maintenance. Planning and financing a modern jail facility must be a top priority for this commission.

Homeless Services

The committee cannot support the loss of the HOPE team. The County must prioritize community safety and livability, particularly in East County communities that may not have the same services as Portland and Gresham. The County should also prioritize programs, like HOPE, that provide a proactive, preventative function rather than a reactive one, as the loss of HOPE will likely result in greater need for responsive law enforcement.

While the committee recognizes the decision to reallocate funding for the HOPE Team to core services (investigations and civil process), the committee would prefer that those core services receive proper funding so that the HOPE Team can continue to operate. The committee also notes that the Sheriff's Office is proceeding with Body-Worn Cameras without funding from the Board. The committee encourages the Chair and Board to provide funding for these cameras, which should be a community accountability priority, and for the Sheriff's Office to use the resultant savings to continue funding HOPE.

Staffing

The committee encourages the Chair and Commissioners to provide ongoing funding for the Sheriff's Office Human Resources Unit. The agency has made significant strides in reducing its vacancies over the last year and eliminating that funding now would prevent the agency from

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Staff: Jon Harms Mahlandt

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achieving full staffing. As this commission well knows, significant vacancies mean lower staff morale, increased personnel costs, and reduced service to the community, things this committee would very much like to avoid.

Justice System Countywide

Finally, this committee would like to note its support for other components of the County justice system. Shortcomings in one aspect of the justice system, such as a dearth of public defenders, negatively impact the rest of the system. The committee encourages the Board to take a holistic view of public safety in the County and ensure its constituent functions are properly funded. The Multnomah County community expects safety, livability, and accountability, ideals that can only be achieved with a functioning justice system.

Respectfully,

Erica Gregg
Justin Hobson
Fay Reynolds
David Shannon
David Coates
Shira Newman

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