

Submitted April 20, 2022

Dear Safety and Justice Subcommittee,

I served on the 2015/16 Multnomah County Charter Review Committee. I have been following some of the other subcommittees, but not yours. I apologize if this comment comes too late for your process, it is an idea recently heard from a friend and was intrigued enough that I thought I should share it.

During the last Charter Review Committee's work, the county had a Sheriff who was embroiled in controversy that I won't resurrect here. The Sheriff's office also had a long history of overrunning its budget with overtime spending on the jails that it operates, spending that the county board has few tools to rein in.

We explored several options for charter changes relating to the Sheriff – offer voters a recall option, giving the county board more control over the Sheriff's budget, but none of them passed muster with the County Attorney.

Fortunately, that Sheriff was eventually persuaded to resign and then Mike Reese was appointed and I think has served us well.

Jails (Corrections Operations and Corrections Services) dominate the Sheriff's budget (see link below) and employment. Law Enforcement has many fewer employees.

The new idea (to me, anyway) is to move management and operations of the jails away from the Sheriff and instead put it under the county chair and board. This appears to have several advantages:

- Jail operations, parole, and release could be coordinated more closely with county public health services, addiction and mental health treatment.
- Control over jail spending would move under the county board.
- Allows the Sheriff's office to focus on law enforcement and not incarceration.
- Because Corrections employment vastly outnumbers Law Enforcement division employment, I think the Corrections employees (and their union) have a substantial influence on Sheriff's races (both on who runs and who is elected). This can lead to election of Sheriffs who are sympathetic to Corrections staff and open to, for example, high overtime spending. If Corrections was moved in with other county operations under the Chair, Corrections staff would have little incentive to influence races for Sheriff.

These topics are far outside my area of expertise. I don't know if this change would be constitutional and legal (but the County Attorney could advise you). I'm not sure what unintended consequences might result. But the potential advantages looked interesting enough that I thought I should share it with you in case you want to explore it.

Link to the Sheriff's adopted budget for 2022: <https://multco-web7-psh-files-usw2.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Tab%20-%20FY%202022%20Sheriff%27s%20Office%20-%20ADOPTED.pdf> as of 4/20/22

Best wishes, and thank you for your service,

Carol Chesarek