



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

DAVID H. KNAPP
Chairman

MELANIE VILARDI
Deputy Clerk

401 Montgomery Street • Court House • Room 407 • Syracuse, New York 13202
Phone: 315.435.2070 • Fax: 315.435.8434 • www.ongov.net/legislature

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES – May 11, 2021 CHRISTOPHER J. RYAN, CHAIRMAN

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Rowley, Ms. Kuhn, Mr. Holmquist, Mr. McBride

ALSO ATTENDING: Mrs. Ervin; Sheriff Conway, see attached

Chairman Ryan called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m. *A motion was made by Ms. Kuhn, seconded by Mr. McBride to waive the reading of the previous committee meeting. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.* *A motion was made by Ms. Kuhn, seconded by Mr. McBride to approve the previous committee meeting minutes. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.*

1. **SHERIFF** ~ Sheriff Eugene J. Conway:
a. **INFORMATIONAL: Budget Update**

Chair Ryan:

- 4.16.21 projection looks good
- Quarterly number's less than 25% even more on target
- Vehicles in budget taken, put a couple back in, not sure if that was the automotive equipment
- Vehicles out of the \$150,000 or the \$130,000 expenses year to date

Sheriff Conway:

- \$150,000 was allotted, we ordered some vehicles and have to order other vehicles when dates open
- Manage internally with trying to acquire the number of vehicles needed through our own resources

b. **INFORMATIONAL: Evidence Storage**

Sheriff Conway:

- Ongoing, historical situation, 20 years in UPS Basement on Molloy Road/Joy Road, always have property evidence as long as we have police department
- Continue with issues of being in the basement of an old building
- Process of trying to reach a level of accreditation, international in scope, called CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies)
- Town of Manlius Police Department was 1 of 5 police agencies out of 300 in NYS that had achieved CALEA Accreditation, there's more than 500 standards to adhere to
- Outside assessors come in to make sure you are adhering to them, not just a rubber stamp
- In those 500 Standards, many things to meet or achieve, one is storage, keeping and proper chain of custody of evidence of property
- Town of Dewitt is CALEA Accredited, one of the first, time for the Sheriff's Office to become CALEA Accredited
- CALEA Accreditation ties into police reform; speaks to hiring, training, professionalism, and discipline
- Good working relationship with Chief Buckner, SPD, they are trying to achieve CALEA Accreditation

- Chief Buckner felt that at the moment, unless something changes for them they will fail CALEA Accreditation, based on their property evidence situation alone
- Trying to work together, consolidation, decided to attempt to bring forth the governing bodies of the departments, the situation, the needs and efficiencies that come with that
- Letter to Mayor and County Executive, stating both agencies need more space, can share that space; share in personnel and share in the efficiencies of having one building instead of two in disrepair
- Opportunities in City or County, waiting for leaders to decide

Chair Ryan:

- Fully support combined facility in City of Syracuse/County, secondary benefit would be to add efficiencies in the Towns, Villages all together
- Is the current facility a hindrance for Accreditation?

Sheriff Conway:

- Will not be able to achieve CALEA Accreditation based on the set up both agencies have at the moment
- They will send out pre-assessments phase, Undersheriff is team leader on the Assessment Team, very familiar with the process, as is Chief Buckner

Chair Ryan:

- Conversation long overdue, look at what, how and when the county will do it
- Joint meeting with Public Safety and Facilities, include SPD

Sheriff Conway

- The DA sent message saying however he can be helpful, he will
- Proximity, convenience, one facility alone would be a benefit
- Town of Dewitt says depending on size of agency, and property evidence
- With investigations, would welcome any agencies, not sure of their storage needs being as critical

Mr. Rowley asked if there are any ball park numbers on what a facility would cost. Sheriff Conway:

- Yes, based on square footage needs, now and with growth, office space, parking, purchasing vs leasing something, city is leasing currently, county owns it
- Depends on where and what that would be, ready to share what space there is; identical on how operate
- Not in position right now, ready to share ideas and what is needed, truly consolidating

Mr. Rowley stated he would support the facility.

Mr. Holmquist:

- Echo this, long overdue, both the Sheriff and City Police Department pursuing CALEA Accreditation is wonderful
- Is there a consultant? Leasing, or purchasing? Are there going to be recommendations?
- What is the process? What should the Legislature do? How is that going to look?

Sheriff Conway:

- Compiled information and what the requirements should be
- Sat down together and discussed space, parking, office needs, outside storage, looked at potential space throughout the county
- Will assist with Chief Buckner where potential places could reside, but no boundaries; governing bodies decide

Mr. Holmquist asked when recommendations will be forthcoming, weeks, months. Sheriff Conway said they signed the letter, and they are ready. It would be ready for an RFP, as it has been going on for two months. Mr. Holmquist asked when the Legislature should see that here. Sheriff Conway responded that they are ready to provide any specific information needed to further the process.

Ms. Kuhn asked if there has been a response to the letter. Sheriff Conway replied that a letter has been sent to the County Executive and Mayor. There is a conversation scheduled with the Undersheriff and Mr. Donnelly the week of May 17th.

Mr. McBride was inaudible.

Sheriff Conway:

- Timely, doing CALEA, we can forgo the CALEA process; always willing to help during the process, seeing sites, etc.
- One of the meetings next week is about that; sites locally looked at for square footage
- Up to governing body to lease or purchase building

Chair Ryan:

- Send letter with questions to County Executive and Mr. Donnelly, with what CALEA requirements are
- This committee thinks good idea to go forward

c. INFORMATIONAL: Body Cameras

Sheriff Conway:

- Proposal is straight forward, Sheriff's Office has 4 departments (Civil, Police, Correction and Custody)
- Each department has sworn personnel that interact with citizens; Civil department serves papers of the court, convictions, order of protection; interact with people on a daily basis
- Police Department, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Correction Department tasked with correction officers who secure the facility, leave the facility with inmates, take them to doctors, hospital, in between facilities, justice center, state facility, etc.
- Correction Personnel is involved using Sheriff's vehicles
- Custody Department is the same as Corrections on a larger scale; take inmates to Family Court, Medical, Hillbrook and back; large transport unit, interacting with people
- Proposal is complete, the required number of body worn cameras
- Have been looking at body worn cameras for a few years; involves more than wearing the camera
- Vendors will say the camera is free, with other requirements such as storage, the cloud, requirements for FOIL, requirements for redaction, the unknown person; for privacy reasons, need to redact
- All parts of the program come with required staffing and expenses
- 1 & 5 year basis, 1 year cost \$954,700 and 5 year cost \$3.4 million
- 224 is sworn member with police department that interacts with public; all complete with body cameras
- Under Police, 40 body worn cameras for secondary work usage, deputies who work secondary jobs

Sheriff Conway agreed with Chairman Ryan that the \$954,700 includes personnel. Chairman Ryan asked what the Sheriff can get with the \$606,000. Sheriff Conway responded that he does not know where that number came from.

Sheriff Conway responded to Chairman Ryan that they create policies on everything incoming. This goes back to CALEA, as far as necessary policies. When they are worn, and what happens once they come back and put on the charger.

Ms. Kuhn asked if the cost includes data storage and are the cameras used similarly by the SPD. Sheriff Conway answered that the Syracuse Police use a product made by Axon. The quotes are based on that. Sheriff Conway would defer technology questions to IT.

Ms. Kuhn asked how long it would take to develop a policy around body worn cameras. Sheriff Conway replied that they will have policy ready and in place prior to when the cameras arrive. There will also be some training when they arrive. Ms. Kuhn asked if there is any union related issues regarding their usage? Sheriff Conway responded that he has not spoken to the union about it.

Mr. Rowley asked if other counties in NYS issue body worn cameras for Correction and Custody Deputies. Sheriff Conway replied that he does not know without doing a survey. Mr. Rowley asked if there is a select group of custody deputies that will get personal body worn cameras and everyone else shares in a pool. Sheriff Conway:

- Custody and Corrections people whose main mission is housing and watching inmates, not included
- Pool numbers would be for those who have to go on (i.e.) transport detail

Mr. Rowley said the camera itself is not the cost, it's the storage and management of the system. Sheriff Conway's response was inaudible.

Sheriff Conway replied to Ms. Kuhn that this came up rather quickly, and he has not heard anything regarding a discussion with union leadership on wearing body cameras.

Mrs. Ervin asked what can they do with the \$600,000 approved. Sheriff Conway replied that they will sit and see what is needed for storage. He will not know until he sees who the vendor is, cost, and then prioritize.

Mrs. Ervin stated that they are in support of cameras, but they want to do it the right way.

Chairman Ryan thanked Sheriff Conway for his time and budget. If there is more information on cameras and specifics, he will be forthcoming. Chairman Ryan said he will follow up with evidence storage and help facilitate that.

Sheriff Conway:

- Legislator Kuhn asked about reimbursement from the state for holding state ready inmates; the county received a check for \$300,000 from the state
- Concerned about Retirement Incentive, pay period 13 stoppage of any further hiring; effected all departments; concerned going into summer; critical shortage of staffing in Custody Department
- Retirement Incentive and unfunding of vacant positions after pay period 13 has resulted in 30 unfunded Custody positions, 15 unfunded positions in Corrections, 20 in police, 1 in civil, 7 civilian
- Most concerned about Custody, Corrections; 45 positions unfunded a year ago, in addition people from Custody have resigned and retired; losing ½ dozen custody members to SPD
- Projection since last November – end of June going to lose another 16 Custody members
- Tried to enlist a recruiting effort from other surrounding facilities as far as Watertown; had 4 people interested, maybe one to do that
- Waiting for COVID to get better to have an academy; end of this month, will swear in 7 new recruits to Correction and 8 to Custody; 12 week academy to end of summer, assuming no more leave
- 10-12 Correction Officers working at Justice Center under separate titles; Jamesville's numbers are less concerning
- Steps are necessary to keep both inmates and staff safe; overtime will not help; courts slowly opening up, transport will pick up
- Housing, 24/7; spoke to Judge Murphy about delays; have to look at everything in Custody and Corrections
- Summer month's population is higher; Police starting with 20 unfunded positions
- Uptick of situations, COVID related or not; overdose at high rate; mental health and suicide calls are up

Chair Ryan:

- Not good news, but thank you
- Storage facility, talking about road control 230-240 people, down to 180 now, it is unsustainable
- Is Corrections up? Cannot keep throwing in overtime; people have families and want to get home
- Governed by NYS Dept. of Correctional Services
- How many Sheriff Deputies in Custody per inmate?
- Do not want to hear the Sheriff’s Department is out of compliance with the state
- Hard time with putting on a class, cannot lose people, not enough deputies to watch inmates
- If lose 16 additional by June, in a much worse place now; Are they close to that?

Sheriff Conway:

- 16 is the number of those who have left, people putting in their two week notice without further notice

Ms. Kuhn asked if the Sheriff has a Memorandum of understanding of Liberty Resource Mobile Team (mental health). Sheriff Conway’s response was inaudible. Ms. Kuhn asked if the state is still making the county hold onto inmates, or are they now receiving inmates back. Sheriff Conway responded that they are slowly starting to accept them and the numbers are going down.

Mrs. Ervin asked if the new academy has a diverse group of people. Sheriff Conway responded yes. They did not fill all the vacancies based on the list available.

Mrs. Ervin asked when the swearing in will be. Sheriff Conway replied that he thinks it will be on May 21st. He will make sure the notification goes out to everyone.

A motion was made by Ms. Kuhn, seconded by Mr. McBride, to adjourn the meeting. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Respectfully submitted,



DEBBIE KAMINSKI, Assistant Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

COMMITTEE: PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

DATE: MAY 11, 2021

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
TAVIET HUGHES	Finance
Yvette Velasco	LAW
✓	