

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: SHERIFF & COMMUNICATIONS

DATE: OCTOBER 26, 2006

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS BENTLEY
VANNESS
O'CONNOR
BELDEN
MASON
STEC

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR HASKELL

OTHERS PRESENT:

LARRY CLEVELAND, SHERIFF
JOAN PARSONS, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE
AND FISCAL SERVICES
JOAN SADY, CLERK
SUPERVISORS:
GERAGHTY
F. THOMAS
JOHN H. ADAMS, PROBATION DEPARTMENT
MADELINE FARBMAN, THE POST STAR
MATT SOKOL, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY
AMANDA ALLEN, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Bentley called the meeting of the Sheriff & Communications Committee to order at 9:35 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 29th meeting subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Larry Cleveland, Sheriff, who distributed copies of his agenda to the Committee members, a copy of which is on file with the minutes. Sheriff Cleveland began the agenda review with the first two items listed, which he noted were both notices of intent to fill vacant positions. He explained the first position was that of a Correction Officer, vacated by resignation for medical reasons, and the second was a Patrol Officer's position vacant due to termination.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to approve both requests and refer same to the Personnel Committee. Copies of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position forms are on file with the minutes.

Sheriff Cleveland apprised that the third agenda item pertained to the scheduling of future meetings of the Committee. He noted that Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, was attempting to standardize the meeting arrangements for each group and he asked for the Committee's preference. It was the consensus of the Committee that the meetings should continue to be scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on the second Thursday following the monthly Board meeting, as they were currently.

Proceeding with the agenda review, Sheriff Cleveland apprised that the third item addressed overtime costs. He distributed a chart to the Committee members listing the overtime balances by code; a copy of this document is on file with the minutes. Sheriff Cleveland stated that both the Law Enforcement Division and the 911 Call Center had incurred reasonable overtime costs which would be covered within the Budget; however, he noted, the Corrections Division had sustained a drastic amount of overtime costs. Sheriff Cleveland attributed the increased costs

to the inability to budget overtime, holiday pay and sick time incentives for new hire employees. He said that the attempt had been made to include some of those costs in the 2006 Budget request; however they were removed from the final Budget causing a shortage. Sheriff Cleveland explained that estimated overtime costs had been included in his 2007 Budget request; he added that he intended to make adjustments for holiday pay and sick time incentives in the next year.

Sheriff Cleveland reminded the Committee that in a prior meeting he had discussed the delay in the hiring of 18 Officers due to a missed exam. He said that because the Department was understaffed, the remaining personnel incurred additional work hours covering the responsibilities of the vacant positions, leading to higher overtime costs. The upside to being understaffed, Sheriff Cleveland noted, was that the salaries budgeted for the vacant positions were not being paid and could be used to temporarily off-set overtime costs. Sheriff Cleveland estimated that by doing this, the deficit for the three divisions combined would be approximately \$2,000. Furthermore, he stated, Law Enforcement positions could only be filled in January and July when academy testing was available, leaving the positions vacant for an extended period.

Mr. Belden asked when the two vacant positions approved at the start of the meeting would be filled. Sheriff Cleveland replied that the Patrol Officer position could not be filled until January, and the Corrections Officer position could not be filled until the eight open positions before it were filled, which he also estimated to be in January.

Mr. Geraghty asked what percentage should be budgeted for overtime costs and Sheriff Cleveland said that in the Corrections Division he would estimate 15% to 18% and lower for the Law Enforcement Division. He added that the difference between the Divisions was that the Corrections Division could not be short staffed according to New York State Law, and if a Corrections Officer called in sick another had to be dispatched to fill that vacancy. On the other hand, Sheriff Cleveland advised, if a Patrol Officer were absent, an Officer currently on duty could cover both patrols, under normal conditions, leading to lower overtime costs.

Sheriff Cleveland asked how often overtime cost reviews should be presented and Joan Parsons, Commissioner of Administrative and Fiscal Services, advised that the Committee had requested the presentation at each meeting, and in the form of a Budget Performance Report. Sheriff Cleveland stated that he would be sure to present the requested report at the next Committee meeting.

Mr. Belden asked Sheriff Cleveland if he intended to present transfer of funds requests in December to balance the budget and cover deficits caused by overtime costs. Sheriff Cleveland replied that he had never had to make such requests in the past and Mrs. Parsons noted that she was unsure how the Treasurer's Office would handle the matter this year. She advised that there had been some discussion indicating that the Department Heads would be required to balance their own budgets.

With respect to the Corrections Division, Mrs. Parsons asked if the Department could be staffed according to the average census or if it was required that the number of beds available in the facility be used as the staffing standard. Sheriff Cleveland advised that New York State Law required the facility to be staffed according to the number of beds available. He noted that if one could prove that the occupancy of the facility was consistently lower than the maximum, a

decreased staffing level could be achieved. Sheriff Cleveland advised that this was not an issue at the Warren County Jail because occupancy was constantly at a level of 90% or higher. He said that the only way to scale back the Corrections Division personnel would be to close down one of the pods currently in use; however, Sheriff Cleveland noted, that would require the boarding out of inmates.

Mr. Bentley asked if it had been necessary to board out inmates recently and Sheriff Cleveland replied in the negative. Mr. Bentley asked if the majority of the inmates were residents of Warren County and Sheriff Cleveland replied that they were. He added that the jail currently boarded approximately 25 inmates from other Counties.

Returning to the agenda, Sheriff Cleveland apprised that items five and six related to contractual services. He said that he had been working on the program to provide contractual services to the Department of Social Services in the form of an investigator in their Department; the costs of the position had been included in the 2007 Budget request, he added. Sheriff Cleveland noted that in addition, he had met with the Village of Lake George to discuss a contract to provide Patrol Officers in the Village for the summer season. He stated that the contract would provide a substantial amount of revenue; however, the project would hinge upon the addition of the new positions included in the 2007 Budget request, Sheriff Cleveland added.

Sheriff Cleveland advised that he had put a hold on all contractual services until the budget was approved, assuring that additional manpower would be available to guarantee the services promised in the contractual agreements. He noted that because of the possibility of Budget and position cuts, he was prepared to scale back the Patrol staff currently in place, by way of the contractual agreement, in the Town of Chester and reassign some of that staff to the southern part of the County. Sheriff Cleveland noted that a contract had not yet been signed to ensure the placement of an investigator at the Department of Social Services, and he stated that he would not be in favor of the placement if the additional staff listed in the 2007 Budget request were denied. He advised that the Department was understaffed and carrying a very heavy workload and it would not be feasible to leave another vacancy by transferring an investigator.

Statistically speaking, Sheriff Cleveland apprised that the Department received approximately 2,000 calls for car accidents alone each year. He added that they responded to an average of 50-55 service calls per day, more than 20,000 per year, and when compounded with the fire and emergency medical service requests that number rose to more than 40,000, Sheriff Cleveland advised. He noted that in the past 14 years the Department had added only two Patrol Officer positions and they were now seriously understaffed. Sheriff Cleveland stated that if budget constraints demanded the removal of the new positions requested, his staff would continue to work as they always had; however, he added, re-allocations of staff would be required.

Mr. Belden asked how many Officers were currently working in the Town of Chester and Sheriff Cleveland apprised that there were ten uniform and two non-uniform officers in place. He said that a new five-year contract had just been signed with the Town of Chester for law enforcement services.

General discussion ensued.

Mr. Stec entered the meeting at 9:53 a.m.

As there was no further business to come before the Sheriff & Communications Committee, on motion made by Mr. Stec and seconded by Mr. Belden, Mr. Bentley adjourned the meeting at 9:54 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amanda Allen, Legislative Office Specialist