

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

**(REMOTELY)  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 2021  
3:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Kevin W. Hines, Chairman  
Thomas Faggione, **Kevindaryán Luján**, Rob Sassi,  
Joel Sierra, Kathy A. Stegenga, John S. Vero

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman  
Michael Amo, Independence Party Leader  
Leigh J. Benton, Legislator  
Barry J. Cheney, Legislator  
Harold J. Porr, III., Deputy County Executive  
Dan Bloomer, Director, Operations and Cost Control  
David M. Hoovler, District Attorney  
Carl E. DuBois, Sheriff  
Kenneth T. Jones, Undersheriff  
Anthony Weed, Assistant Undersheriff  
Timothy A. Davidian, Acting Director, Probation Department  
Gretchen Riordan, Budget Analyst

Chairman Hines opened the meeting at 3:31 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present.

Mr. Faggione moved to approve the confirmation of reappointments to the Orange County Police Advisory Board (K. Hines, B. Zaccaro, C. DuBois), seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Mr. Porr pointed out that these are all reappointments, and he can vouch for all three. The terms of office will extend to December 31, 2023.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Hoovler addressed the committee with a review of the 2020 Annual Report (see original minutes).

Mr. Faggione ask that he give the committee a brief update regarding overdoses throughout the county and how the District Attorney's Office is dealing with it.

Mr. Hoovler stated they are dealing with a problem that no one has answers to because the pandemic has shut everything down and Bail Reform has limited their access to the courts. Being there is limited access and a social economic situation the overdose is not complete and is going to be very high. He added there is no help in sight for it as everyone is focused on the pandemic, which is understandable, the other issues such as substance abuse disorder are neglected. Since the court systems are shutdown, they cannot get people into treatment. Furthermore, while Bail Reform was

needed the unintended consequence of it in Orange County where there is no centralized service has become very difficult to create pathways to get people into treatment. As a result of all this, the one good thing is that Hope Not Handcuffs received almost \$3,000.00 in a grant and they have the software and technology now to be able to track cases. On Monday, the District Attorney's Office and Hope Not Handcuffs will be launching a new program where the police can divert people to treatment or use 311 where they can track the individuals and the outcomes of the cases after 120 days. If the person is successful in treatment during that period, their case will go away. If the person is not successful or is rearrested, then the police have the option to come back and do the paperwork to follow through on the original arrest of that individual. He pointed out that this is a big undertaking for Orange County because as he has stated earlier, the biggest problem he has with treatment and diversion in the county is that there are 32 different municipal police agencies, five different hospital systems and no centralized location for treatment. The Hope Not Handcuffs program is now the funnel where they can put people into and then they can get the person the treatment needed. He is hopeful that after 120 days of working under the new program that they can get results and see new trends.

Mr. Sassi thanked Mr. Hoovler for the detailed report and commented that he is glad he introduced the District Attorney's Office to Hope Not Handcuffs several months ago because it looks like it is really taking off which he is happy to see. He asked how many virtual court appearances there have been.

Mr. Hoovler replied in a typical day, they do around 20 or so. He stated that they are currently doing essential matters and whatever can be done virtually.

Ms. Stegenga asked if the Hope Not Handcuffs Program will be a pilot program and if so, will it move further into Orange County. She stated that she is hoping this a program that will grow and end up throughout the rest of Orange County.

Mr. Hoovler replied that the program is currently a 120-day pilot and he has every reason to believe it will go further.

Mr. Faggione commented that Mr. Hoovler mentioned that nearly half of the violent crime comes from Newburgh. He asked that he further explain some of the crime trends in Orange County as well as Newburgh.

Mr. Hoovler responded that Newburgh did a good job over the summer with a law enforcement surge, so the crime rate was monitored which led to over 200 arrests and multiple guns taken off the street. The City of Middletown did the same thing in the fall, but with a different take since they have a lower crime rate and Port Jervis has remained steady. He added that they have seen an increase in overdoses due to fentanyl and the number of guns is a disturbing trend.

**Mr. Luján thanked Mr. Hoovler for his hard work** in addressing violent crimes in the City of Newburgh. **Regarding the Diversion Program, Mr. Luján** asked if a Stabilization Center would be possible for Orange County.

Mr. Hoovler replied the Stabilization Center is something he would like to see, but when the jail was built, it was built as a state-of-the-art facility and still is in every respect. When it was built, it was meant to have its own treatment for detox and other things. Dutchess County has an excellent model and someday we may see the same in Orange County, but the investment is extreme. He added that it would cost \$2 million to get it off the ground and then you would need

various partnerships with non-for-profits. It would be beautiful to have, but until then they are stuck with what they have.

Mr. Luján commented that the cost savings would be immense and in the long-term, they would save taxpayers millions of dollars.

Mr. Hoovler stated that he does not disagree, but he is unsure of how much it would cost for a year and it is more in the legislature's wheelhouse.

Mr. Sassi moved to discuss a presentation on the Probation Department and Status of Activities, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Mr. Davidian gave the committee a brief synopsis of his background. As far as visions for the department, he stated that he is not making any wholesale changes as he is evaluating things done over the years. He was fortunate to make a lot of the decisions under department direction with Mr. Miller and has had a lot of input over the past five to six years; therefore, he believes the department is headed in the right direction. The biggest items on the agenda for 2021 is implementing a new financial system for restitution and fee collection, training for nine officers who need to be fully certified, using the range twice a month for the entire year, and continuing to cross training staff.

Mr. Hines commented that it seems to be a seamless transition to have Mr. Davidian jump in as the director which is appreciated.

Mr. Sassi moved the request to accept and appropriate funds from the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) provided through the NYS Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC), Ignition Interlock Device Monitoring program to support probation supervision monitoring services and will be provided contingent upon the availability of funds. This allocation is for period 10/1/2020 – 9/30/2021, \$42,156.00, seconded by Mr. Luján.

Mr. Davidian stated the only piece that is different than in years past, is after review by the Budget and Finance Departments, there was a request to include the funds into an expenditure and receivables line.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Sassi moved the request to accept and appropriate funding from DCJS for use to assist in purchasing Fingerprint Equipment and software, \$15,000.00, seconded by Mr. Luján.

Sheriff DuBois stated this is for live scan equipment so the old equipment can be replaced.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Stegenga moved to discuss the Corrections Report for November and December, seconded by Mr. Sassi.

Mr. Mele stated the headcount for November was 352, of that 60 were ICE detainees and 69 were Marshals and the boarder revenue was \$8,293,824.00. As of this morning the facility headcount is 376, of that 74 are ICE detainees and 76 are Marshals. He added the total boarder revenue for the year is \$8,873,553.00.

Sheriff DuBois pointed out that the jail has only had three cases since March which came from outside.

Ms. Stegenga moved to discuss the Sheriff's Report for November and December, seconded by Mr. Sassi.

Undersheriff Jones stated there is nothing in particular about the November report and the December report is a summary of the whole year.

Mr. Faggione moved to adopt a resolution of the Orange County Legislature calling for transparency in the distribution of COVID-19 vaccine and data relating thereto, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Mr. Amo explained that when Dr. Gelman addressed the Health and Mental Health Committee meeting and everyone heard how the vaccine is being distributed throughout the county and given, it was clear that there is no transparency between the State and the County of Orange. Dr. Gelman also informed the committee that the State exclusively told some providers that they could not communicate with the Orange County Health Department about dosage and who gets vaccinated; therefore, he is proposing this resolution.

Mr. Sassi thanked Mr. Amo for putting the resolution together and commented that it is shameful for the State of New York to play games with this as the keyword is transparency.

Mr. Hines stated that Dr. Gelman had also told the committee that the facilities that provide the vaccines could be fined up to \$100,000.00 if they shared any information with the County Health Department. He does not understand the logic behind it as it seems absurd.

The meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.