

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2023
3:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Kevin W. Hines, Chairman
Kathy A. Stegenga, Glenn R. Ehlers, Janet Sutherland, Robert C. Sassi

ALSO

PRESENT: Katie Bonelli, Chairwoman
Thomas J. Faggione, Majority Leader
Peter V. Tuohy, Legislator
Betsy N. Abraham, Esq., Legislative Counsel
David M. Hoovler, District Attorney
Christopher Borek, Chief Assistant District Attorney
Richard B. Golden, County Attorney
Kerry Gallagher, Commissioner of Finance
Andrea Concanon, Deputy Commissioner of Finance
Langdon Chapman, Commissioner, Human Resources
Alison Tyack, Director of Personnel Management, Human Resources
Paul Arteta, Sheriff
Wilfredo Garcia, Undersheriff
Evelyn Mallard, Assistant Undersheriff
Brendan Casey, Commissioner of Emergency Services
Vini Tankasali, Deputy Commissioner, Fire Services
Deborah Slesinski, Budget Director
Erin L. Sztendor, Budget Analyst

Chairman Hines opened the meeting at 3:30 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislator Ramos who was absent and Legislator Sierra who was excused.

Ms. Stegenga moved to approve the request to accept and appropriate funds for FY2023 for the Criminal Justice Discovery Reform Grant from the Department of Criminal Justice Services for the Orange County District Attorney, \$1,702,199.00, seconded by Mr. Sassi.

Mr. Hoovler stated the positions were already approved and the funds have been available since January 15th. This is unique because there are no quarterly and/or grant reports, the money is distributed according to the plan.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Sassi moved to approve the request to accept and appropriate Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds for Project No. 4567-0018 from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the amount of \$190,000.00 for mitigation planning, drafting of County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan and submission of such plan to the FEMA Regional Administrator for approval. A required local match of \$20,000.00 will be covered by contingency funds, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Mr. Casey explained this is Tom Green's operation because he goes to the municipalities to develop Hazard Mitigation Plans on what they would like to do for their town/village. There must be a plan in place to get reimbursed for FEMA.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Sassi moved to approve the request to accept and appropriate FY2021-2022 Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) Grant for the period 9/1/2022 – 9/29/2023. A local match of \$3,947.25 will be covered by existing operating budget, \$15,789.00, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Mr. Tankasali stated this is a yearly grant to offset the cost of equipment for the Hazmat Team and is a regional partnership. Orange County is the administering agency which means we accept the funds and split it up between the four counties.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Sutherland moved to approve the request for supplemental appropriation to the capital projects budget for the replacement of the Fire Investigation Response Truck and the purchase of Water Rescue Boats and related equipment for the Technical Rescue Team. This is proposed Capital Project No. 66 in the 2023 Capital Plan. Upon approval, a new capital project will be created, \$230,000.00 (bonding), seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

This is a capital project that he has spoken about for a year. The current fire investigation vehicle is an old mini bus that is over 20 years old and needs to be replaced. He further stated that the new boat will include the capability of technical rescue which is needed.

Mr. Tankasali stated the vehicle itself will allow them to use more apparatus for shared purposes as the water rescue volume has increased.

Mr. Hines asked how many boats they will be purchasing.

Mr. Tankasali replied they will be getting two boats.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Stegenga moved to approve the request for supplemental appropriation to restore Alive@25 unexpended revenues that were rolled in the General Fund at the end of 2022, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Mr. Casey explained that these funds are rolled over each year and are used for education such as, combating underage drink, all night graduation parties, and speakers who come to the high school and share their experiences and what they went through with the students.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Stegenga moved to approve the request to create a second Undersheriff position, Management Grade 27, and eliminate the Assistant Undersheriff position, following approval from New York State. It would be a title change for the current Assistant Undersheriff position (#021758) to the title of Undersheriff, seconded by Mr. Sassi.

Sheriff Arteta stated they modeled their decision to make the Assistant Undersheriff an Undersheriff after Rockland County. Undersheriff Garcia and Assistant Undersheriff Mallard have extensive State Police experience. His intent is to have two Undersheriffs; one who oversees the jail, and the other will oversee road patrol and it can be interchangeable which is similar to Rockland County. He further stated that giving them equal power will allow for a direct line for chain of command.

Mr. Hines asked how the salaries would be affected.

Sheriff Arteta replied this would eliminate the Assistant Undersheriff's position and make the Undersheriff's equal.

Mr. Hines asked Mr. Chapman if this influences the current agreement.

Mr. Chapman responded there is not a current contract, but it is being addressed. He does not see this as having an effect because there is already a provision for Undersheriff.

Mr. Hines then clarified that there is no step from Deputy Undersheriff to Undersheriff with respect to salary increase.

Sheriff Arteta stated the Assistant Undersheriff to the Undersheriff has a 3% difference and then the Assistant Undersheriff to the Chief/Colonel is another 3% difference.

Mr. Hines expressed his concern for losing a step and it effecting a higher level.

Mr. Chapman explained that the Assistant Undersheriff makes less than the Undersheriff, so they would both end up making the same salary as an Undersheriff. The "step" for Assistant Undersheriff would go away.

Mr. Hines stated he is happy with this proposal and asked if there is a succession plan.

Mr. Chapman replied yes, a succession plan would go on file with the County Clerk's Office and the Legislature.

Mr. Hines asked if there is a change in the job description.

Mr. Chapman replied that the job description for the Undersheriff will be structured to the jail aspect.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Stegenga moved to approve the request to create one (1) Fiscal Director, Management Grade 25, seconded by Mr. Ehlers.

Sheriff Arteta explained that the Sheriff's Office and the jail have several grants and contracts that are handled by a full-time Captain (Correctional Facility) and a full-time Sergeant (Sheriff's Office) rather than doing their designated jobs. This fiscal director would oversee all the grants, contracts, and the budget.

Mr. Sassi asked if any other labor will be needed for this position.

Sheriff Arteta replied no.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Ehlers moved to approve the request for supplemental appropriation to the capital projects budget for renovation of the Sheriff's K-9 Facility. This project has been approved under the 2023 Capital Plan as Project No. 123. Upon approval, a new capital project will be created, \$389,000.00 (bonding), seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Sheriff Arteta stated the K-9 Facility has had longstanding infrastructure problems and the floor is rotting, therefore, he is requesting that funds be appropriated to fix it and make it safer.

Mr. Hines clarified this is the facility at the airport and asked if that is his plan or would he like something different.

Sheriff Arteta stated that is correct and replied that he would love to build a state of the art facility with a training component for the members and K-9's, but that will not happen overnight, so the floor must get fixed.

Mr. Ehlers asked who owns the facility.

Sheriff Arteta replied the land is owned by the airport and the structure is owned by the Sheriff's Office.

Ms. Stegenga expressed her concerns about the cost for only repairing the floor and nothing more. She suggested they explore another avenue and come back next month with ideas because it is a lot of money when wanting to build a new facility in the near future.

Sheriff Arteta responded they located a space on their property in front of the Sheriff's Office where it can be used as a facility. He stated that he does not see them building a new facility within the next year and the floor is deteriorated.

Mr. Hines asked if they could rip out what is there and have a concrete floor in the interim instead of spending that amount of money for a temporary fix.

Sheriff Arteta replied he would like to repair the floor and then move forward with a new facility. The quote is from the previous administration.

Mr. Hines suggested that Mr. Denega have one of his engineers look at the floor and see what can be done for the interim.

Chairwoman Bonelli asked how they are currently operating.

Sheriff Arteta replied they have a class coming up, so there will be ten dogs and two instructors that train inside and then outside for the rest. It is being used as a building for training so the inside component is very important and needs to get done.

Chairwoman Bonelli clarified that it is not safe.

Sheriff Arteta stated no, there are pieces of the floor that someone can stick their foot through. He believes that DPW did look at it and the remedy was to replace the plywood underneath in the places that are not safe.

Chairwoman Bonelli asked if that was done.

Sheriff Arteta replied they replaced a couple of pieces, but he has not been advised that more work was done.

Mr. Hines asked that Sheriff Arteta speak with Mr. Titsworth about a temporary fix so it can be discussed at the Physical Services Committee meeting. He then asked the committee if they would like to approve this "as is" or hold off for more information.

Chairwoman Bonelli suggested the committee take no action on this today and wait for more information about what can be done and how much it will cost. She added that it can be further discussed at the Ways and Means Committee meeting.

Ms. Stegenga stated that she is in favor of the project, but would like to see a permanent fixture at a lower cost.

The committee agreed that no action will be taken.

Ms. Sutherland moved to approve the request for supplemental appropriation to the capital projects budget in the amount of \$869,147.00 for the purchase of body cameras. The Sheriff's Office currently has Capital Project No. 324 to purchase body cameras in the amount of \$725,000.00. Upon approval, the funds will increase Capital Project No. 324 to a total of \$1,594,147.00 (bonding), seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Sheriff Arteta stated this was created and approved prior to his administration. These are the payments that were agreed upon for the next four years for the body cameras.

Mr. Hines asked if this includes the body cameras for the correctional officers.

Sheriff Arteta replied no, they currently do not have the funds to set aside as it will be a larger number of cameras.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Stegenga moved to approve the request for supplemental appropriation to the capital projects budget in the amount of \$2,500,000.00 for the building expansion at the Orange County Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office has Capital Project No. 326 for the expansion in the amount of \$350,000.00. Upon approval, the funds will increase Capital Project No. 326 to a total \$2,850,000.00 (bonding), seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Sheriff Arteta explained that this project began under the former administration who requested the amount be increased to get it going in order to create more office space which would include investigations as the current space is too small and only has one interview room. Another addition would be a second floor, so it is connected to administration for the jail. He stated that there are some people working in different office spaces because there is no more room. One other expansion would be the locker rooms as there is not enough space for the law enforcement. He is looking to get this project moving forward.

Mr. Hines clarified that this is not construction money, it is only for design.

Sheriff Arteta stated that the design is complete and was prior to his administration.

Mr. Hines asked if this is the cost for design and construction.

Sheriff Arteta replied he is unsure.

Ms. Slesinski stated she will look at the paperwork.

Sheriff Arteta pointed out that this figure was given to Mr. Titsworth and the Department of Public Works to the prior administration.

Mr. Hines stated that this sounds like the cost for design and construction and asked how big the addition will be.

Sheriff Arteta replied that according to an email from April 8, 2022, the addition will be 4,000 square feet.

Mr. Hines asked Sheriff Arteta if he has seen the design and if so, is he happy with it.

Sheriff Arteta replied yes, he is happy with the design and even made a few changes, but not the space size.

Chairwoman Bonelli stated that they are at a disadvantage because they are looking at a building plan that they were not involved with from the beginning and will need more information to proceed so the right decision can be made. She then suggested that Mr. Titsworth address the Physical Services Committee and maybe Ways and Means so this can be further discussed.

Ms. Slesinski interjected that the funds are for construction of addition of the Sheriff's Office.

Mr. Hines asked if the committee would like to approve this or wait for further information to see what occurs at the other committee meetings.

Mr. Faggione suggested this be tabled for 30 days so it can be discussed next month at the Public Safety, Physical Services, and Ways and Means Committees.

Chairwoman Bonelli stated that being the agendas for Physical Services and Ways and Means committees did not go out yet, this can be discussed next week at the two committee meetings, so the request can move forward.

The committee agreed that no action will be taken today.

Mr. Sassi moved to discuss the Corrections Report,
seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Assistant Undersheriff Mallard stated that as of the close of business on January 31st, there were 311 incarcerated individuals of that 80 were ICE prisoners, and there are 32 officer vacancies. The boarder revenue to date is \$350,579.00.

Mr. Hines asked if COVID-19 is under control.

Assistant Undersheriff Mallard replied there are not too many inmates with COVID-19.

Ms. Stegenga moved to discuss the Sheriff's Report,
seconded by Mr. Ehlers.

Undersheriff Garcia reported that two members attended a crisis intervention class as it is becoming more and more prevalent when having to deal with people who have substance abuse issues. It is a very important component of the Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff Arteta stated the fingerprinting time has been increased by 10% in order to get people their permits a little quicker, but he is not seeing the return. People are not signing up the way they used to and the tough sell is the price of the course and that it is three days long, therefore, the permit process is slowing down considerably.

Mr. Hines asked if the 29 part-time employees handle the pistol permits.

Undersheriff Garcia replied yes, and a few are in investigations.

The meeting adjourned at 4:37 p.m.