

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2023
3:30 P.M.**

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

ALSO

PRESENT: Katie Bonelli, Chairwoman
Carol A. Pierce, Deputy County Attorney
Kerry Gallagher, Commissioner of Finance
Alison Tyack, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Human Resources
Molly O'Donnell, Director of Workforce Development, Department of Human Resources
Paul Arteta, Sheriff
Wilfredo Garcia, Undersheriff
Evelyn Mallard, Undersheriff
Vini Tankasali, Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Emergency Services, Fire Services
Gretchen Riordan, Deputy Budget Director
Erin L. Sztendor, Budget Analyst

Chairman Hines opened the meeting at 3:34 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislator Sierra who was excused.

Mr. Sassi moved to approve the request to reappropriate the previously accepted Emergency Services/Fire Services Division Grant funding received from Orange & Rockland to fund a Pavilion (outdoor classroom) to be built at the Fire Training Center (FTC) into Emergency Services existing Capital Project No. 380 funding to finance the renovations and improvements to Emergency Services Center (ESC) and Fire Training Center (FTC), \$98,000.00, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Mr. Tankasali stated that this project has been discussed for a long time and started with a grant in the amount of \$150,000.00 for National Natural Gas Training. Part of the project includes an outdoor classroom. In addition, they will augment (move funds from one line to another) the funds with Capital Project No. 380 for renovations and improvements to the Emergency Services Center (ESC) and Fire Training Center (FTC).

Mr. Hines asked the total cost of the project.

Mr. Tankasali replied the total cost of the project is \$118,000.00.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Stegenga moved to approve the request to accept donation of a 2003 Spartan/Rescue One from the Slate Hill Fire District for Technical Rescue Response and Firefighter Training to be used at the Fire Training Center, seconded by Mr. Sassi.

Mr. Tankasali explained that the Slate Hill Fire Department replaced one of their rescue trucks with a new apparatus and have been generous enough to offer it to the Fire Training Center to utilize for training purposes as well as respond to technical rescue. There is no cost being asked.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Stegenga moved to approve the request to increase the current per diem rate(s) for the positions of Deputy Sheriff, Per Diem/Part-Time and Correction Officer Per-Diem by 3% annually to commence this year, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Sheriff Arteta stated this was worked out with the Department of Human Resources and this will also help the current pier-diems.

Mr. Hines asked for some clarification about there not being a "close year" on 3% annually because it makes it seem like it is 3% forever and not just for a year since there is no end date.

Ms. O'Donnell replied that ultimately the previous Resolution No. 206 of 2018 offered the per-diem title the same increase as what was negotiated for full-time employees. She added that when the negotiations with the two unions took place, the structure of salary schedules was changed, so they would not all get the 5%, this resolution was a way to memorialize the straight 3%. It is a request of the legislature; therefore, an end date can be added.

Mr. Hines commented that this is not binding, and he is unsure if anyone is aware of that. Mr. Chapman told him that because it is not a contract, it is not a collective bargaining unit, so anyone can change it at any time. He does not want this to be a false promise to someone that takes the job.

Ms. Stegenga asked if this should be amended so it runs along the lines of the contracts with the unions.

Mr. Hines replied yes, it can be amended, and the Personnel and Compensation Committee passed it as written. He stated they can make changes today or leave it as is.

Undersheriff Garcia pointed out that this can be changed at any time.

Mr. Hines expressed his concerns about it being unfair to someone who takes the job, reads this, and thinks that they will be making "x" amount of dollars when in fact they aren't. He asked Sheriff Arteta if he had any suggestions/recommendations.

Sheriff Arteta stated that he does not see a necessity to change it right now, he would like them to get raises as soon as possible.

Ms. Ramos commented that they can come to the legislature at any time to change the request and that is when the committee can reconsider making a change. She suggested that there be language in the resolution that be added to read "subject to change" because this is not set in stone.

Chairwoman Bonelli mentioned that it would have been good to tie it to the five-year contract so everyone could review it, but it is a matter of semantics. It can be interpreted any which way and the fact that there is flexibility helps make everyone feel comfortable. She suggested the committee leave it as is for now.

The committee agreed to leave the request as is.

Motion carried. All in favor with the exception of Legislator Ehlers who abstained.

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

Undersheriff Mallard reported that the boarder revenue for March is \$316,440.00, the year-to-date total is \$963,480.00 and they are currently going through the agility process for those who took the corrections exam which should be finished on Friday. She stated there are 36 vacancies.

Mr. Hines asked how many people got to this phase of the test.

Ms. O'Donnell replied that as of today there are 55 people.

Undersheriff Mallard briefly explained how the testing process works and how long it takes for someone to begin working at the facility.

Mr. Hines expressed his concern about how long it will take because of the overtime issues.

Undersheriff Mallard stated it will take a couple of months.

Mr. Hines asked when a person counts as part of the staff.

Undersheriff Mallard replied they go through the academy for about 12 weeks, graduate, do a background check and then must be with a field training officer for four weeks, so it takes a few months.

Sheriff Arteta added that if someone is already a correction officer the process takes about five weeks, if they are not and have no background, they need to complete the background check, 12 weeks of training, 4 weeks of field training, and the background check.

Mr. Hines clarified that there is a chance that a large portion of issues (overtime) can be solved by the end of the year.

Undersheriff Mallard stated they will have to go through this process again quickly because there are a few retirements coming up. They are taking two steps forward and one step back. She then highlighted that having Narcan in the jail is working well for them. Without giving

out any specific information, an inmate overdosed and the Narcan was able to revive this person who was then taken to the hospital.

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

Undersheriff Garcia stated that Chief McGovern, Sergeant Miller, and Senior Investigator Pascale went to the Cornwall School District to speak about the opioid problems happening in schools. It was well received by all parents and those in attendance. The K-9 Facility training is going well.

Before adjourning, Sheriff Arteta showed the committee a short video of the shooting range so they can see the work that has been done, the signs that have been put up, and a future proposal to add a tower which will include small pavilion with bathrooms and a garage.

The meeting adjourned at 4:03 p.m.