

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**(REMOTELY)
THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 2021
3:30 P.M.**

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

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman
Katie Bonelli, Majority Leader
Barry J. Cheney, Legislator
Peter V. Tuohy, Legislator
Betsy N. Abraham, Legislative Counsel
Harold J. Porr, III., Deputy County Executive
Dan Bloomer, Director, Operations and Cost Control
Robert J. Conflitti, Executive Assistant District Attorney
Lara Morrison, Senior Assistant County Attorney
Carl E. DuBois, Sheriff
Kenneth T. Jones, Undersheriff
Anthony Weed, Assistant Undersheriff
Lawrence Catletti, Jail Administrator
Allen Wierzbicki, Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Emergency Svcs/
Emergency Communications
Vini Tankasali, Deputy Commissioner, Emergency Svcs/Div. of Fire

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. Sassi moved to approve the request to reappropriate the remainder of grant funding for the Statewide Interoperable Communications Grant program for the period 1/1/20 – 12/31/21. Funding was previously accepted under Resolution No. 54 of 2020. The capital funding will be reallocated to cover additional operating expenditures for maintenance and monitoring of the new completed Trunked P-25 Radio System and the purchase of portable radio equipment and accessories (Capital Project No. 376) \$822,055, seconded by Mr. Faggione.

Mr. Wierzbicki stated the grant is for \$822,500.00, they allocated \$500,000.00 to go toward the project and \$320,000.00 to offset operating expenses. They then further moved \$322,00.00 to offset to fund leasing and fiber, an additional \$320,000.00 was moved to offset tower rentals which left them with \$179,896.00 for equipment. He added they have had delays due to COVID-19 and getting the work done; therefore, they are requesting that \$179,896.00 from equipment to tower leases which will lower the operating budget.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Vero moved to approve the request to abolish one (1) Chief Criminal Investigator position, and create one (1) Deputy Chief Criminal Investigator position, seconded by Mr. Faggione.

Mr. Conflitti explained that they have had two Chief Criminal Investigator positions for a while the incumbent of one of them retired several months ago and as a result this causes chain of command issues. They need someone with supervisory authority in the Newburgh Office. He stated they have had someone who's title is Career Criminal Unit Coordinator being paid out of class to undertake the supervisory responsibilities over the investigators in that office. This request is to abolish the one vacant Chief Criminal Investigator position and create a Deputy Chief Criminal Investigator position which would have the supervisory responsibility in the Newburgh Office. He added there would be no additional investigators hired, it would be a change of title and moving this person from one budgeted position to another.

Mr. Hines clarified that the position comes with a cost savings of \$40,000.00.

Mr. Conflitti stated that is correct.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Sassi moved to approve the request to authorize the approval and execution of an inter-municipal agreement between the Counties of Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Orange for HAZMAT equipment for the Regional HAZMAT Team under General Municipal Law 119-o. The equipment was already accepted under Resolution No. 85 of 2021, however, the Rockland County Agreement is asking for General Municipal Law 119-o approval, seconded by Mr. Faggione.

Mr. Tankasali stated that this was approved through a prior resolution. The agreement received stated that Rockland County has a different law reference, so he is asking that this be approved so the resolution can quote the correct law which is 119-o.

Motion carried. All in favor.

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

Mr. Catletti stated that as of this morning the facility headcount is 454, of that 138 are ICE detainees and 67 are Marshals. He added the total boarder through the end of May is \$3,397,489.00. There has been an influx of ICE detainees and additional housing units have been opened to accommodate them. In addition, they will be opening almost every unit due to new legislation with the Holt Act and the impending medication assisted treatment rooms they will have to provide.

Mr. Hines asked that Mr. Catletti further explain to the committee what opening more units means.

Mr. Catletti responded that due to the impending Holt Act, they must begin their training which was signed into law. This means the facility must create transition units for inmates that have disciplinary issues because they are unable to enter general population. He added the units would be supervised by security staff and aided by mental health professionals. The Medically Assisted Treatment Program is similar and helps inmates that come in who are chemically dependent. There is a variety of medication that can assist the inmate in detoxing, but with that they must have their own dedicated units for transition into general population. Furthermore, this is in addition to their regular classification such as ICE and the male/female population.

Mr. Hines asked Mr. Catletti what he means by security staff.

Mr. Catletti replied there are 25 vacancies, so they are hoping they will be opening soon so they can start hiring and get back up to par.

Mr. Hines then asked if security staff is the same as correctional officers.

Mr. Catletti replied he is speaking of correctional officers who will be in the housing units along with mental health professionals.

Mr. Hines stated that he confused by the term "security staff" and asked if that is a correctional officer.

Mr. Catletti replied yes, it is a correctional officer.

Mr. Faggione moved to discuss the Sheriff's Report, seconded by Mr. Sassi.

Before discussing the Sheriff's Report, Undersheriff Jones mentioned that they recently submitted 15 vacancies to the County Executive's Office for the jail as the numbers have increased. Between the new legislation and the influx of ICE prisoners, they are mandating 30 people per day. It has been an ordinary month for the Sheriff's Office and the activity numbers have increased since everything is beginning to open back up.

Mr. Hines asked if the boat is back on the water.

Undersheriff Jones replied yes.

Mr. Hines then asked if the 15 vacancies were approved by the County Executive.

Undersheriff Jones replied that they are awaiting approval.

Mr. Sierra asked if they are seeing any savings since the enrollment numbers are down.

Sheriff DuBois responded that anytime there is a reduction in ICE detainees, there will still be revenue, but the lower the numbers, the lower the margin. He stated the facility was lucky to continue to take prisoners and take detainees from New Jersey. There is still revenue coming in, but it diminishes as vacancies build up and ICE detainees decrease.

Undersheriff Jones added that they were fortunate to get 50 more ICE prisoners, but the legislature created two more classifications at the same time which means there are prisoners who were formally housed together and must be split up between new units. The legislature and the state government failed to mention that they were going to create these new classifications that expand the usage of the pods. Currently, the employees who work 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. are getting stuck two to three times a week.

Mr. Sierra then asked if they are supplementing the enrollment numbers with ICE detainees and if so, is the revenue worth the overtime.

Undersheriff Jones replied bail reform, but temporarily because of COVID-19 and now that the police agencies and court activity has increased, there will be an increase in prisoners. It is complicated because of the two classifications.

Further discussion continued with Undersheriff Jones and the committee regarding prisoner classification and ICE detainees.

Mr. Faggione clarified that the classification changes came from the state legislature.

Undersheriff Jones stated that is correct.

Assistant Undersheriff Weed addressed the committee with the last agenda item which was a presentation regarding Axon Taser and Body Cameras (see original minutes). He pointed out that this will retain storage for at least 18 months, it is easy for the deputies to operate, reliable, easy for training, cost effective, and interoperable with the taser. In addition, this package includes the instructor class every year as well as a master instructor class.

Mr. Hines asked if there is a safety lock within the gun or taser when cleaning it, so the camera does not trigger.

Assistant Undersheriff Weed replied yes, if they are in a proximity of 21 feet the body cameras will activate and a requirement for the taser is to do a spark test to make sure it is operational, and it is recorded on the body camera.

Mr. Hines expressed his concern that the camera will go off in a meeting because someone else is doing something with their belt.

Assistant Undersheriff Weed stated that was discussed with the company and should not be an issue. The camera lights up and vibrates when activated, so they will know and if it is a mistake the system can log it and turn it off.

Mr. Cheney asked if there are multiple companies that provide this similar service.

Assistant Undersheriff Weed replied that there is a GSA contract which the State Police had purchased through Axon and there is a sole source letter. They are the only company that provides a body camera that is integrated with the taser system. All the other companies have a thirty-day retention with the based price, whereas, this is unlimited retention and unlimited amount of data.

Mr. Cheney then clarified that they would be working off someone else's procurement.

Assistant Undersheriff Weed stated that is correct. The State Police just entered a contract in upwards of \$43 million. He then briefly discussed the pricing. The original amount quoted was \$1.7 million and they will be able to trade-in the existing tasers and cartridges, even the ones that don't work, for full price. They will also be given a discount of \$129,278.00 which leaves them with \$1.6 million that is payable over 5 years.

Mr. Hines clarified that they will be given all the equipment upfront.

Assistant Undersheriff Weed stated that is correct.

Mr. Cheney asked if there is an option to save the camera footage for more than 30 seconds.

Assistant Undersheriff Weed replied yes, it is programmable up to 90 seconds.

Mr. Hines commented that this sounds great and is a good investment. He added that there is no vote today as this is only a presentation. If anyone has any further questions, they can contact Assistant Undersheriff Weed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.