

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, JULY 18, 2019
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
Janet Sutherland, Legislator
Peter Tuohy, Legislator
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel
Dan Bloomer, Director of Operations and Cost Control
Karen Edelman-Reyes, Senior Assistant County Attorney
Darcie Miller, Commissioner of Social Services and Mental Health
Brendan R. Casey, Commissioner of Emergency Services
Kenneth T. Jones, Undersheriff
Lawrence Catletti, Jail Administrator
Jeremy Yela, K-9 Deputy Sheriff, DSPBA President
Gretchen Riordan, Budget Analyst
Dominick Blasko, Chief of Police, Town of Crawford
Jeffry Holmes, Chief of Police, Village of Walden
Guy Farina, Sargent, Town of Montgomery Police Dept.
Annette Kahrs, President of the Tri-County Partnership and
Orange County Program Director, Hope Not Handcuffs
Laura Beck, Orange County Angel Coordinator, Hope Not Handcuffs

Chairman Hines opened the meeting at 3:35 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislator Stegenga who was absent.

Mr. Faggione moved the request for supplemental appropriation to the capital project budget in the amount of \$350,000.00 for the building expansion at the Orange County Sheriff's Office. This project has been approved under the 2019 Capital Plan as Project No. 76 (bonding), seconded by Mr. Sassi.

Undersheriff Jones stated this represents the initial cost of engineering, designing plans and SEQRA for the expansion of the Sheriff's portion of the jail facility. He added that it was reintroduced in the capital plan this year.

Mr. Hines asked the Undersheriff if he would alter the plans if he thought there would be 200 less prisoners in the jail come January 1st.

Undersheriff Jones replied no, this is the deputy side.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Sassi moved the request to accept and appropriate 2019-2020 Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) grant funding from DCJS to conduct overtime operations with partner agencies, \$62,000.00, seconded by Mr. Lujan.

Undersheriff Jones stated this request is for the Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) Program which is done yearly in conjunction with the city Police Departments.

Motion carried. All in favor.

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

Mr. Catletti pointed out that the current head count is 648 inmates of which 186 are ICE detainees and 45 Marshalls. The current boarder revenue is \$5,071,200.00.

Mr. Hines asked for the record, how many ICE prisoners get arrested by the Sheriff's Department.

Undersheriff Jones replied none.

Mr. Hines stated that he would like to make sure everyone knows the Sheriff's Office does not arrest them, we just provide a facility.

Undersheriff Jones explained that agencies; state, county, and private are authorized by law to house federal inmates.

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

Undersheriff Jones stated that it has been an ordinary month except for two protests that took place which everyone was well-behaved and there were no incidents. There is a designated area that protesters can go to and as long as it is peaceable there are no issues.

Mr. Lujan moved the request to accept and appropriate Federal funds from the State of New York Governor's Traffic Safety committee for the 2020 Traffic Safety Program Grant for the continuance of providing educational programs to reduce the incidents of fatalities and serious personal injury vehicle accidents. County to administer the funds, \$65,870.00, seconded by Mr. Sassi.

Mr. Casey explained this is yearly grant money that is used for the STOP DWI Program, bicycle safety and other programs that enhance traffic safety throughout the county.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Sassi moved the request to accept HAZMAT equipment totaling \$35,500.00 as part of the 2018 NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Regional HAZMAT Team of Hazardous Materials Grant from Rockland County Office of Fire and Emergency Services. Equipment consists of meters and general maintenance on grant funded equipment, seconded by Mr. Lujan.

Mr. Casey stated that they have several multifunctioning meters that go out with the HAZMAT Team to do air testing. There are several things that need to be done to the meters such as; calibration and flow testing on the air packs.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Faggione moved to discuss funding recommendations for opioid addiction, seconded by Mr. Lujan.

Legislator Sassi and Legislative Counsel addressed the committee. Mr. Sassi explained that a little over a year ago, he approached Chairman Brescia about creating an opioid sub-committee of the legislature which unanimously moved forward. The committee appropriated \$10,000.00 in the legislative budget for unspecified items that can be used in the best way possible. He stated that today is the one-year anniversary of the passing of one of his former students from the opioid epidemic, his father spoke at the Opioid Committee meeting about how his son succumbed to fentanyl. Many agencies and people are doing great work as we continue to battle the epidemic. Some people have approached him about what is happening with the money budgeted for the Opioid Committee and where the committee is going. He would like to move forward and utilize the money even though it is a small amount, it will make a big difference. He then read several facts and asked for legislative support to use the money in aiding the Police Chiefs' Association and utilizing Hope Not Handcuffs through police training and marketing. He then deferred to Mrs. Reed on how this can legally be done and asked that Ms. Miller join the Public Safety Committee at the table as they can combine it with the Opioid Committee to bring the meeting to conclusion.

Mrs. Reed stated that she has been working with the Law Department to decipher the best way to get \$10,000.00 out to the public and cover everyone's region. The best alternative/option would be to funnel the money to the Police Chiefs' Association because a component of the Hope Not Handcuffs Program is training police officers who need two hours a year of training. The legislature would get the money to the Police Chiefs' Association who would work with Hope Not Handcuffs to do the training. We would also give them money for material literature that can be distributed at local police departments and then \$5,000.00 would be used for billboards stating that "The Orange County Legislature is sponsoring the program." The billboards are very effective, and it is a good way to spread the word. She reiterated that \$5,000.00 would go toward police training and/or materials to be distributed and \$5,000.00 for billboards. Each municipality whose police department would like to participate can participate through the Police Chiefs' Association Training Program. Furthermore, she and Legislator Sassi are looking for the committee to accept that as the option for the expenditure of the \$10,000.00 and hopefully next year, another \$10,000.00 or more will be added to the budget to fund the project. She pointed out that the legislature would enter into its own contract with the Police Chiefs' Association for the money.

Mr. Hines asked if this will be done as a motion through the Public Safety Committee.

Mrs. Reed replied yes, she hopes so. She stated that the money is available, and Chairman Brescia can sign the contract today if he so chooses. Since this is coming from the legislature, the committee would approve it and then do a memorialization stating this is what the legislature wants to do, so that all legislators can vote on this at the August 1st session.

Mr. Hines commented that he thought the money had to funnel through the Sheriff's Office and asked if that is correct.

Mrs. Reed replied that they were trying to identify how to get the money to the Police Chiefs' Association and that is when the Law Department suggested the legislature should do their own contract.

Mr. Hines asked Chief Blasko is he is willing to accept the money if the legislature chooses to approve this.

Chief Blasko replied yes.

Mrs. Reed pointed out that the agreement is called a "Law Enforcement Funding Agreement" and that has been the form that was created by the Law Department by the attorney who represents our department and handles contracts.

Mr. Hines clarified that a letter is sent with the check stating what the monies are to be used for.

Mrs. Reed stated that is correct and explained the process for distribution of funds.

Ms. Kahrs mentioned different materials that they are utilizing.

Mr. Lujan asked what the training would look like and fulfill because it sounds a lot like Crisis Intervention Training.

Chief Blasko replied that with the new Criminal Justice Reform, they need to partner with non-for-profits so this will enable them to partner with Hope Not Handcuffs who will be able to give them another tool. He stated that they will purchase a lot more training materials for the officers, not only in-service, but also for the academy.

Mr. Lujan asked what the training will look like, how long it will be and who will be in the training.

Chief Blasko replied it would be in-service as the departments sign on to Hope Not Handcuffs, but also to the recruits and it will be two to three hours.

Ms. Miller added that Crisis Intervention Training still takes place, but Hope Not Handcuffs requires more of a specific training because they are located within law enforcement and they meet people within it. It is very important that the department that signs on is familiar with Hope Not Handcuffs and what happens within the process. She stated that this is a specialty piece within the department.

Ms. Kahrs stated that Crisis Intervention Training is not in competition with Hope Not Handcuffs, it is completely different. She deferred to Sgt. Farina to explain the differences.

Sgt. Farina explained that Hope Not Handcuffs is its own organization run by volunteers and filled with community members; however, it is a law enforcement program, a non-traditional law enforcement strategy. Addiction comes from certain crimes and law enforcement can only arrest and release. Hope Not Handcuffs is a pre-arrest diversion program, so they get to the person before they enter the criminal justice program. The person will not be judged, just helped to get the services needed.

Mr. Hines asked that Legislator Sutherland join the committee because this has merged into the Opioid Committee even though Public Safety has not ended. He does not think they will need much of an Opioid Committee because it seems like this is running hand in hand.

Mr. Lujan expressed his concerns about this sounding like Crisis Intervention Training and does not see the difference between the two even though he loves the model of it. However, he recognizes that it is more focused.

Sgt. Farina stated it is a more specialized form of it that requires a specialized training for volunteers.

Mr. Lujan emphasized that he is favor of this as he wants them to have materials and resources, he just wants to know what the training entails because he does not want to contribute money to a training that already takes place.

Ms. Kahrs mentioned that this is a way of integrating the community into the officers' "home" to work with them. She reiterated that this is a specialized training for how the program works and how the community will serve.

Mr. Sierra commented that he is in favor of this proposal and asked how many agencies are in Orange County.

Ms. Kahrs replied there are ten agencies, but Orange County is the largest and busiest. She stated that they have 504 angels that volunteer to be trained, so the \$10,000.00 may not be a lot, but it means the world.

Mr. Sierra then asked Chief Blasko how many members of his association are participating with Hope Not Handcuffs and if the training is open to all participants.

Chief Blasko replied ten and the numbers will increase, and the training is open to everyone.

Mr. Hines asked if there are any further questions before they vote on the \$10,000.00 which has to be passed by the statutory committee.

Mrs. Reed reiterated that the money is already in the budget, the committee needs to vote on it so it can go to the floor.

Chairman Brescia commented that Mr. Sassi has worked hard on this and even though this is not a lot of money, they can increase it incrementally each year.

Mr. Hines confirmed that all members of the committee will sponsor the request.

Mrs. Reed clarified that \$5,000.00 will be for marketing and \$5,000.00 for training material.

The committee concurred.

Motion carried. All in favor of utilizing \$10,000.00 of the Opioid Committee's recommendation for police training, materials and billboard to promote opioid awareness throughout the county.

In closing, Mr. Sassi thanked everyone for their bipartisan effort in doing something positive. He reiterated that it is by no means to undermine any other organization whether it is Commissioner Miller's Office, ADAC, Cornerstone, Access, etc. He thinks the biggest obstacle the county faces is stigma and getting past that. It is important that they act as a legislature and show the public they are doing something. As Ms. Kahrs mentioned earlier, there are 500 angels that volunteer, and are not paid who want to help their community. He then thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and speaking.

Ms. Miller thanked Ms. Kahrs and Ms. Beck for allowing her to be an angel and for all their hard work and support. She then briefly mentioned that they are working on the 311-phone system as all the phone companies have signed-off on the cellphone towers and landlines so that the calls will go to 311. It sounds simple but it has been complicated and she is working with the Law Department and Emergency Services to get this up and running.

Before adjourning, Mr. Sassi asked Mrs. Reed if a vote is needed for the contract with the Police Chief's Association.

Mrs. Reed replied yes.

Mr. Sassi clarified that the Opioid Committee will endorse the agreement.

Mrs. Reed stated that it is correct.

Mr. Lujan moved to adopt a resolution authorizing the Chairman of the Orange County Legislature to enter into an agreement with the Police Chiefs' Association of Orange to provide law enforcement training, promotional materials and marketing efforts for the "Hope Not Handcuffs" community-based volunteer program, seconded by Mr. Hines.

Motion carried. All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.