

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

**(REMOTELY)  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2020  
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  
Barry J. Cheney, Legislator  
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel  
Steven M. Neuhaus, County Executive  
Harry Porr, Deputy County Executive  
Brendan R. Casey, Commissioner, Emergency Services  
Craig R. Cherry, Deputy Commissioner, Emergency Services/ Police Liaison Services  
Carl E. DuBois, Sheriff  
Kenneth T. Jones, Undersheriff  
Deborah Slesinski, Budget Director  
Gretchen Riordan, Budget Analyst

Chairman Hines opened the meeting at 3:32 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present.

Ms. Stegenga moved the request to accept and appropriate Federal funds from the State of New York Governor's Traffic Safety Committee for the 2021 Traffic Safety Program Grant for the continuance of providing educational programs to reduce the incidents of fatalities and serious personal injury vehicle accidents. The County will administer the funds, \$65,870.00, seconded by Mr. Vero.

Mr. Casey stated this is a yearly grant given to support the educational programs within schools.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Stegenga moved the request to accept and appropriate FY2020 Emergency Management Performance Grant COVID-19 Supplemental (EMPG-S) program. Funding is provided by U.S. Department of Homeland Security and FEMA to be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19 public health emergency (will utilize funding to purchase PPE and replenish inventory – target distribution includes medical care facilities, medical first responders, and public safety-first responders) \$81,502.00, seconded by Mr. Sassi.

Mr. Casey explained this request is regarding a supplemental grant as a result of COVID-19 which the department agreed to because it will be used for PPE. He added the PPE is put in their main storeroom and distributed on an as needed basis.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Hines asked Mr. Casey to update the committee on his department during this pandemic as well as the outage that took place at the E-911 Center.

Mr. Casey stated the EOC is still operational and supervised by Alan Mack and his team. Most of the PPE required was pushed out to BOCES to help the schools get ready for whatever it will look like which changes daily. They have continued to track hospitalizations and important numbers that everyone would like to know about. As everyone knows, Orange County is in a good place with a low number of cases and infection rate. He added that he is hoping the county does not see the predicted resurgence in the fall with the coming flu season, but they are prepared to respond and will stay in an enhanced moderate mode moving forward.

Mr. Hines clarified that the EOC is not supplying schools with the PPE, they are giving them the initial items needed to get started.

Mr. Casey stated that is correct. They received a lot of bulk shipments from FEMA through New York State which are being pushed out.

**Mr. Luján** asked Mr. Casey if his department is still distributing PPE for legislators to pick-up.

Mr. Casey replied no, there is no more surplus, just strategic reserve. He reiterated that they pushed everything out. He suggested the legislature submit an order through the Department of General Services. Furthermore, his department wanted to get out the business of just being "Walmart" because they were purchasing a lot with county tax dollars or taking in a lot and distributing it to everyone.

**Mr. Luján** asked Mr. Hines if the committee would be interested in putting together a PPE order.

Mr. Hines replied the County Executive has already spent over \$4 million on PPE; therefore, someone could call his office and see if this is something he would like to entertain. If he does not want too, the Ways and Means Committee can entertain it on Tuesday, but it would be up to Chairman Benton. He stated that the school districts should have their own budget they should be running even though no one saved for this.

**Mr. Luján** thanked Mr. Hines and stated that he will reach out to the County Executive.

Ms. Stegenga commented that before anyone entertains this, they should check with the school districts because she believes the schools will offer PPE to the students which is a requirement under the opening procedures.

Mr. Hines stated that is correct.

Chairman Brescia pointed out they need to watch the budget as the legislative office had to make cuts, so this is an affordability issue. He stated they have done a lot already.

Mr. Hines reiterated that this can be further discussed with the County Executive and then be put forth at the Ways and Means Committee if Chairman Benton allows it.

Mr. Casey then updated the committee on the 911 outage with respect to Frontier Communications. He noted that he sent everyone a memo regarding the issue as to what happened this past Tuesday night when part of the 911 system went down. Frontier is the phone company who had some aging infrastructure out of the headquarters in Middletown. The system they had in place was in compliance with NYS Public Service Commission as far as what was needed to have to support 911 which does not address maintaining it properly or geographical diversity of switches and selective modems. Leadership from Frontier Communications explained what happened which was understandable, but he and Mr. Mack were disappointed when seeing how dated the infrastructure was. Furthermore, he was able to get them to agree to some geographical diversity on the back-up systems and will update him each week on the progress of it.

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

Undersheriff Jones stated the total revenue to date for boarders is \$5,757,375.00, but ICE and Marshals are still not operating at 100%. He added there is nothing that stands out for this month.

Mr. Hines asked how the jail is doing with respect to COVID-19.

Undersheriff Jones replied they remain with zero cases in the inmate population as well as zero employees with COVID-19 related illnesses.

Regarding an emergency or catastrophic situation, Sheriff DuBois suggested the legislature schedule a visit to the jail to inspect the new generator system which will light up the entire building. He stated that everyone can socially distance, wear masks, and a few legislators at a time can view it so everyone is spread out. Furthermore, the generator is stationed outside, so there will be no inmate exposure.

Ms. Stegenga commented that she would be interested.

Mr. Hines stated he will work with Chairman Brescia to set something up, but it will have to be done in small increments.

Mr. Sierra clarified that the total inmate count is correct.

Mr. Hines stated yes, it is accurate.

Undersheriff Jones pointed out that the numbers are low because of bail reform.

Sheriff DuBois stated a big part of it is bail reform as well as judges setting low bail due to COVID-19.

Mr. Sierra clarified that the ICE detainee count is correct.

Undersheriff Jones stated that is correct and they are remaining static or slightly dropping because ICE is not conducting current operations due to COVID-19 restraints.

Mr. Sierra asked if the number of inmates will increase during the year.

Undersheriff Jones replied it is hard to predict because of the changes of the atmosphere and the economy being far from open.

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

Undersheriff Jones explained the report shows a little less than normal activity and fingerprinting for handgun permits has a six month wait due to an uptick for a variety of reasons.

Ms. Stegenga commented the influx of New York City people who are moving to Orange County are expecting to get their handgun permits immediately because they do not understand that it is a process. The other issue is the pandemic and people being stuck at home as well as not knowing what is going on, there is a fear with the protests and change in arrests. She stated a lot of woman are wanting to take a class because they want to protect themselves and their families.

Undersheriff Jones stated the classes are 40% woman and there has been an influx of mother and daughters which is unprecedented.

Before adjourning, Sheriff DuBois asked that Undersheriff Jones comment on Executive Order 203.

Undersheriff Jones explained that as everyone is aware, the governor issued an executive order that will affect policing across the state known as Executive Order 203. Today the Sheriff's Office received a soft textbook on what is required. He stated it is the County Executive that is responsible in the order, but most of it is about police work. The good news is because of the Sheriff's Office accreditations, they already meet a lot of the standards, but it does not mean some standards do not have to be re-designed. The reform plan must address the use of force by police officers, crowd management, community policing, implicit bias awareness training, procedural justice, de-escalation training and practices, law enforcement assisted diversion programs, community based outreach and conflict resolution, a transparent citizen complaint disposition procedure, hotspots policing, focused deterrence, crime prevention through environmental design, violence prevention and reduction interventions, model police and guidelines promulgated by the New York Municipal Police Training Counsel, and standards promulgated by the New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Program of which the Sheriff's Office is accredited. Those topics must be addressed in a plan by a committee appointed by the County Executive. He stated this is a process that is going to take months.

Sheriff DuBois added this program also is required or the department may not be eligible for funding and the plan must be submitted by April 1, 2021. About a month ago the Sheriff's Office began looking into this, but there was no clear guidance. Within the next two months, there will be more guidance and his office will work with the County Executive's Office and the stakeholders to comply, so they are eligible for funding.

Mr. Hines clarified that is only with respect to the Sheriff's Office as each town supervisor/mayor is responsible for their police agency.

Undersheriff Jones stated that is correct.

County Executive Neuhaus stated he is aware of this and has the packet. As the Sheriff and the Undersheriff stated, they will put a plan together and his intentions are not to make this a political committee, but a subsistent one. It is obvious that the Sheriff's Office is the biggest law enforcement group in the county who will be on the committee as well as some local law enforcement agencies and possibly some of the New York State Police partners, but he will also expand the net and have the interested agencies involved such as Mental Health, Social Services, etc.

**Mr. Luján** commented that he is happy to see that community organizations would be involved and there is intention to be diverse.

County Executive Neuhaus mentioned there is still guidance coming out on this and as everyone knows, the governor makes announcements which then takes time for things to catch up with him. He added that there is guidance being put together in addition to the book that the governor's office put out. Furthermore, there is time to get this done and he will not rush into this as a political statement. He would like it to be a well thought out process.

Mr. Hines asked that the plan be sent in a share file to all legislators.

Undersheriff Jones stated this will not change the objectives of policing, it will change the methodology. The Sheriff's Office will continue to operate in the same parameters and trainings will continue.

Mr. Sierra commented that if needed he would be honored to sit on the committee.

The meeting adjourned at 4:37 p.m.