

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, 2023
3:30 P.M.**

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

ALSO

PRESENT: Betsy N. Abraham, Esq., Legislative Counsel
Kerry Gallagher, Commissioner of Finance
Alison Tyack, Deputy Commissioner, Human Resources
Alan C. Mack, Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Emergency Services
Wilfredo Garcia, Undersheriff
Dustin Palen, Captain, Special Services, Sheriff's Office
John Potter, Captain, Jail
Gretchen Riordan, Deputy Budget Director
Erin 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 Ehlers who was absent and Legislator Sierra who was excused.

Mr. Mack addressed the committee with an update on Flood Damage. He stated the request for Individual Assistance (IA) and Special Priorities Assistance (SPA) has gone to FEMA, Senator Schumer has endorsed it and it has not moved forward since.

Mr. Hines asked if the County met the criteria.

Mr. Mack replied yes, the County very objectively met the criteria. There were 50 homes with major damage out of 110, 15 were destroyed and 100 had minor damage and a few others had no damage. We exceeded what was needed to meet the criteria.

Mr. Hines commented that he is glad we exceeded it and hopefully help is on the way with the endorsement from Schumer. He asked the status of the 3-1-1 line.

Mr. Mack replied the 3-1-1 line is still active and the calls are no longer being handled by those who work for the Department of Social Services. At this point in time, it will not do anyone good to call, so he suggests that it not be advertised.

With respect to FEMA, Mr. Hines asked if there is a maximum amount that people can collect.

Mr. Mack responded that it varies with each disaster and how much money is allocated. He does not have an exact number, but he can say it will not make anyone whole. Regarding assets, the RUPCO funds (\$3 million set aside by the Governor), have been allocated. Three-hundred and

fifteen people made inquiries, two-hundred and six were eligible, and nineteen people have been approved.

Mr. Hines clarified that people within those income limits qualified.

Mr. Mack stated that is correct.

Mr. Hines further clarified that there have been no provisions on whether the State can do better.

Mr. Mack stated no and the other downside to the RUPCO funds is that if one receives the funds and is declared from Individual Assistance, he/she cannot get FEMA funds because it offsets.

Mr. Hines asked if the county would get funding for future storms.

Mr. Mack replied that is Hazard Mitigation which has been done for years will be resubmitted this month.

Before moving on to the next agenda item, Mr. Hines asked when Mr. Casey's is official last day is.

Mr. Mack responded that his last day is August 25th.

For those who were unaware, Mr. Hines mentioned that Mr. Casey is retiring and Pete Cirigliano, Captain of the State Police for Troop F will be taking over once approved by the County Legislature.

Mr. Sassi moved to approve the request to create one (1) Confidential Secretary to the Sheriff, Grade 12. Upon incumbent obtaining permanent status in the new position, position #23143, Secretary and Administrative Assistant II, Grade 9, will be abolished, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Undersheriff Garcia stated the current position will be eliminated and the grade for the new position will be changed.

Mr. Hines pointed out that this has been done in other departments.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Sassi moved to approve the request to create one (1) Contract Coordinator, Grade 11, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Undersheriff Garcia explained that they currently have a Sergeant on the roadside and Captain Potter on the jail side to handle the grant coordinating which takes away from their daily duties. The person for this position is currently employed and will be transferred.

Mr. Hines commented that the prior administration had spoken about doing this.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Sassi moved to approve the request to accept and appropriate funding from the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services for the Gun Involved Violence Elimination Initiative (GIVE), \$25,000.00, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

This is a State funded program that has been in effect for several years. The Sheriff's Office will be working with the City of Middletown on focus spots such as gun violence.

Motion carried. All in favor.

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

Captain Potter reported that as today the facility headcount was 335 of that 59 were ICE, the year-to-date boarder revenue is \$2,339,551.00 and there are twelve vacancies with four out on long-term 207-C. He added that there are twenty people "hitting the line" on Saturday to help alleviate the overtime and five weeks from that, there will be thirteen more.

Mr. Hines asked Captain Potter to specify what "hitting the line" means.

Captain Potter replied that "hitting the line" means they will be working in the position of a Correctional Officer and will eventually train.

Mr. Hines clarified that these people came from the class of thirty-three.

Captain Potter stated that is correct. Twenty will "hit the line" this week and the others have five more weeks of training.

Mr. Hines then asked if they would be fully staffed once the others come on.

Captain Potter replied no, they will have twelve vacancies and four people are retiring.

Undersheriff Garcia stated they will be sixteen down.

Mr. Hines asked if they will run another class.

Captain Potter replied yes. They will run another class after this one as they had 125 people on the list.

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

Captain Palen stated that over a month ago, one of the deputies attended a Drug Reinforcement Expert (DRE) Recognition Class. It is very difficult to get accepted, and once you do it is extremely hard. Not only did this Deputy excel in the application process, but when she attended the class, she achieved the top score. Once the classroom portion was completed, she went to Florida for a week to do evaluations. He added this is a great tool and the Deputy is available to assist throughout the county. The White-Collar Task Force met and reviewed different cases and the only other topic to mention is Freedom Fest which is being held tomorrow if the rain holds out.

Mr. Hines moved to adopt a resolution of the Orange County Legislature recognizing September 18 through September 24, 2023 as Sheriff's Week, seconded by Mr. Sassi.

Mr. Hines stated this is the Legislature's way of saying thank you to all the staff for keeping the people of Orange County safe on both the Corrections side and patrol side. There are a lot of things done daily that are above and beyond, and for that, thank you.

The meeting adjourned at 3:51 p.m.