

Citizen Budget Advisory Committee
Multnomah County Sheriff's Office
Fiscal Year 2013
Report to the Multnomah County Commissioners
March 23, 2012

Introduction

The Citizen Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) to the Sheriff's Office is a program of the Multnomah County Citizen Involvement Committee (CIC). Both the CIC and CBAC are independent of the County and are therefore in a position to provide input and feedback to the Sheriff's Office and the Board of County Commissioners. We value our opportunity to learn about the County budget process, how the Sheriff manages the budget, and the operations of the Sheriff's Office. We value our ability to share our independent and informed judgments with the Sheriff and his staff, and well as being utilized by other officials in the County.

The Citizen Budget Advisory Committee to the Sheriff meets ten months out of the year, sometimes twice a month, and is assisted by Fiscal Manager Wanda Yantis, Chief Deputy Drew Brosh, and Office Assistant Lynette Hanson. Again this year, we were regularly briefed by a number of knowledgeable members of the Sheriff's Office:

- Sheriff Daniel Staton met with us on several occasions and provided insights into both budget topics and the MCSO's strategic focus on public safety needs for the community.
- Lieutenant Mary Lindstrand presented the Frequently Booked Report and an overview of the Resource Analysis Unit.
- Sergeant Shawn Skeels presented an overview of the Inmate Work Crew Program.
- CJIS Manager Andy Potter provided an overview of Criminal Justice Information Systems.
- Chief Deputy Drew Brosh briefed us on "Multnomah Evolves", the 2011 Corrections Grand Jury Report, and the Inmate Welfare Audit.
- Chief Deputy Jason Gates updated us on Enforcement Division Capital Projects.

- Sergeant Tom Jacobs gave CBAC members a tour of Booking, MCDC Jail, including the Mental Health Infirmary.
- Nate Reaver, MCSO Communications and Policy Advisor, presented a legislative briefing to the committee outlining current legislative activity throughout the year.
- Fiscal Manager Wanda Yantis and Chief Deputy Drew Brosh briefed us on FY2012 budget issues such as midyear reductions and jail bed utilization as well as keeping us current on FY2013 financial forecasts and budget timing.

Major Changes:

We were pleased that this year's Grand Jury Report highlighted some of the good work the Sheriff's Office is doing. The Report commended the implementation of mandatory suicide prevention training in the corrections division; the institution of sustainable living measures, which are good for the environment and save the county money; and the improvement in safety operations at the courthouse, to name a few things. The Report had some useful suggestions as well, and cited the Sheriff's Office (MCSO) favorably for acting on recommendations from previous Grand Jury Reports. For example, the MCSO followed the advice of previous reports and eliminated some upper management positions, including four captains' positions.

We are concerned that this year may be a significant one for the MCSO, in that it will be forced to make cuts that will be widely felt throughout the county with reductions in direct services. Any cut to make constraint will be a cut to direct service to all county residents, including all cities in the county including the City of Portland.

If MCSO has less it will be forced to do less.

MCSO's funding for materials, services, and supplies has decreased yearly for over a decade (from 14% to currently 6%), while the portion of the budget dedicated to personnel, whose contracts are not negotiated by the MCSO, has increased. In our report from two years ago, we expressed concern that almost a decade of cuts had reduced the Sheriff's Office budget to bare bones. Last year was even more difficult. We acknowledge the Board's restoration of key programs that originally were out of target.

This year, we are concerned that MCSO will be forced to make significant reductions to statutorily-mandated core services.

Another key challenge MCSO faces is a much higher average jail population. This February (usually a time that jail populations are low) 70 prisoners had to be released. This is only 17 fewer in one month than the number released during *all* of last year. If jail populations are this high during the "quiet" time of year, we may be faced with a serious jail bed shortage in the summer and fall.

The Sheriff has done everything possible to keep jail beds open over the last two years, as funds have contracted, including closing funded jail housing areas during times of low inmate populations. The Board was helpful with this effort. We complimented the Sheriff in last year's report for development of an emergency plan, which kept funds on hold for the opening of a dorm for a short period of time if jail populations went through a sudden flux. This saved the

county money without reducing the number of jail beds available. Because of this creative use of funds, the Sheriff was narrowly able to avoid permanently closing dorms and releasing increasingly dangerous prisoners into the streets, preserving some basic standard of safety in the county, as well as avoiding public outcry. We (the Citizen's Budget Advisory Committee) warned in last year's report that 2012 would likely involve a much larger number of forced releases if funding decreased for jail system beds.

Last year it became apparent that any further cuts to MCSO would cripple core services. With a further constraint this year, MCSO will have to close Dorm 4 of MCIJ, as part of a balanced series of cuts to meet a constraint of 1.5%. We understand that this is a very difficult time economically, but we are concerned that Multnomah County will fail to meet its public safety obligations to its citizens.

Recommendations/Concerns:

The work the Sheriff's Office performs--that of dealing with individuals who are dangerous to the community--is often seen as a necessary evil. This work, however, is absolutely essential to the maintenance of a safe, fair, and effective criminal justice system and to the success of democracy in general. Because we expect to live in a just and safe community, we often don't notice the benefits of an organization like the Sheriff's Office until they disappear.

Our top recommendation is to restore Dorm 4 of MCIJ, especially since the jail system is operating at over 95% capacity. This releases higher risk prisoners onto the streets. "The most valuable jail bed is the empty one."

We are concerned with the elimination of the In-Jail Gang Intelligence Deputy and the In-Jail Human Trafficking Intelligence Sergeant. A jail is a potential gang intelligence goldmine, since the MCSO has 24-hour access to gang members who are locked up, and can legally monitor all their phone calls. Not having access to intelligence that is essentially right under our noses would be unfortunate. Additionally, eliminating these vital sources of in-depth information about gang members and criminals involved in human trafficking would put the public and MCSO patrol deputies at a safety disadvantage.

The Child Abuse Team Detective position is out-of-target this year, which is also of significant concern. Cutting this essential service, which protects our children, seriously hampers MCSO's ability to keep its commitment to the community.

Emerging Issues

This year there are an unprecedented number of corrections deputies retiring. It might seem best to simply let these deputies retire and make up the difference with existing staff, but it would cost an immense amount in overtime. The MCSO has performed a cost/benefit analysis to determine when best to hire and when best to pay employees overtime. Currently, a number of new deputies need to be hired in order to save money in overtime payments. MCSO and the Budget Office have put forth a proposal to use "one-time only money" to hire the employees that are necessary to achieve the most overtime savings. This will cost \$880,000 of "one-time only money" (spread over 2 years), but is projected to save more than \$1.1 million over three years after complete cost recovery of the original expenditure.

Over the past several years the MCSO has made noteworthy progress in improving efficiency of expenditures and controlling costs. But there is a limit.

Personnel costs account for 82% of the MCSO budget. Personnel costs are negotiated by Multnomah County staff and the Multnomah County Commissioners.

Such costs are decided through labor negotiations. Not by MCSO.

The MCSO CBAC strongly urges Multnomah County to bargain *both* in good faith-and with vigor to help control the largest single budget item: **Personnel.**

Sheriff's Office CBAC Members:

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