

**Citizen Budget Advisory Committee  
Multnomah County Sheriff's Office  
Fiscal Year 2012**

**Draft Report to the Multnomah County Commissioners  
March 25, 2011**

**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 therefore are 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 Budget and Finance Manager Wanda Yantis, Chief Deputy Drew Brosh, and Office Assistant Lynette Hanson. Again this year, we regularly met with and were briefed by a number of knowledgeable members of the Sheriff's Office:

- Sheriff Daniel Staton has met with us on several occasions and provided valuable insights into both budget management and organizational structure of the Sheriff's Office.
- Chief Deputy Drew Brosh provided us with timely Charter Review Committee updates.
- We met with the Sheriff and staff at the new Warehouse and Training Unit facility. We were given a warehouse tour including office space and commissary operations. We were also given a tour of the ConSim room and classroom, including a demonstration of the Range 3000 training program.
- Chief Deputy Drew Brosh presented a detailed discussion and analysis of the 2009 Corrections Grand Jury Report Workgroup Report.
- Chief Deputy Mike Shults presented the 2010 Grand Jury Report on correctional facilities within Multnomah County and provided insights and answered questions.
- All throughout the year, Budget and Finance Manager Wanda Yantis and Chief Deputy Drew Brosh briefed us on FY2011 budget issues such as possible midyear reductions and jail bed utilization as well as keeping us current on FY2012 financial forecasts and budget timing.

- Nate Reaver, MCSO Communications and Policy Advisor presented an excellent legislative briefing to the committee outlining current legislative activity.

As a result of our regular interaction with a wide array of individuals central to the functioning of the Sheriff's Office, we believe that both the Sheriff's Office and the Board of County Commissioners can gain from our analysis as informed members of the voting public.

### **Major Changes:**

In our report last year, we identified several significant misunderstandings in the 2009 Grand Jury Report. In its recommendations, the grand jury faulted the Sheriff for the high costs associated with the Multnomah County jail system. The jury criticized the Sheriff for, among other things, expensive corrections health care, and for not saving money by opting out of Senate Bill 1145. The report did not take into account the fact that the Sheriff--by statute--has no control over corrections health care or Senate Bill 1145; any decisions in these areas must be made by the County Chair. As a result of these misunderstandings, among others, the former Chair recommended that the responsibility for running corrections be taken away from the Sheriff.

We found the 2010 Grand Jury Report to be refreshingly different from that of 2009. This year, the new Sheriff formed a workgroup tasked with identifying savings opportunities within the authority of the Sheriff. In addition, this workgroup was to develop a jail bed costing model that can be used in comparative analysis. The Sheriff's proactive approach in addressing the issues cited by the previous report was clearly effective. This year's report said, "For several years, corrections grand juries have noted the high costs of the Multnomah County jail system... and what this process has highlighted, is that the high costs of the jail system include certain factors over which the Sheriff has little or no control."

Because of the Sheriff's effective communication with the grand jury, and because of this jury's much more significant efforts to understand the basic responsibilities of the Sheriff's Office, the report produced more effective, easier to implement, cost-saving suggestions.

### **Recommendations/Concerns/Praise:**

There are a number of cost effective and/or necessary program offers that are out of target this year, and we recommend adding them back. These are: Gresham Temporary Hold, Weekend Turn Self In Program, Gang Enforcement Deputy, and Child Abuse Detective.

The Turn Self In Program (TSI) provides a money-saving sentencing alternative to parole or probation. The Sheriff's office has no control over sentencing, but is responsible for effectively managing the individuals in the system. The Turn Self In Program makes good business sense, as it reduces costs associated with booking and release, and jail beds. Additionally, this program allows those who are employed to maintain employment and some of the sentenced

weekenders perform community service during their stay. A reduction of two Deputies would cause an overload and reduce the ability of the Sheriff's Office to fully utilize this economical sentencing alternative.

Losing a Child Abuse Detective and a Gang Enforcement Deputy will reduce the MCSO's ability to protect those in danger in our community. Additionally, the MCSO will lose connectivity in East County, meaning that the Sheriff's Office will not have access to the web of on-the-street information that other counties gather and exchange so that they can participate in targeted operations. Not having an in-depth understanding of known gang members can put the safety of the public and MCSO patrol Deputies at a safety disadvantage.

We have heard time and again that the Gresham Temporary Hold operation provides operating efficiencies for agencies that operate in East County. We agree that it is absolutely necessary, but believe that it is time for some type of cost sharing between those agencies that use it. With House Bill 3154, however, the County may not have any choice but to pay for these services.

In this year's budget, there are a number of vacant positions. Upon first glance, it would be easy to suggest that these be eliminated. However, a closer examination reveals that these vacant positions can in fact save money when balanced with hiring of full-time employees. Without budgeting for vacant positions, the current staff will cost the Sheriff far more in overtime. These vacant positions create a way for the Sheriff's Office to respond to increased demand on staff more efficiently. In the budget preparation process, Sheriff's Office staff has performed a cost/benefit analysis to determine where it is beneficial to hire for vacant positions vs. paying overtime. Other vacant positions that did not need backfilling were cut, and are not included in the budget. If a position was cut, the work was also cut.

#### **Emerging Issues:**

Because the Sheriff's Office must provide certain basic services by statute, it is easy to assume that the MCSO will always have funding. After over a decade of steady, often drastic cuts, it is clear that this assumption is in no way valid. This year, the Sheriff's Office's ability to provide mandated services is in question. Personnel costs have increased over the past five years. Personnel costs are not negotiated by the Sheriff, but by Multnomah County.

As the MCSO struggles to get even basic services into this year's budget, funding may become even smaller as a result of State budget reductions to Counties. Given this difficult situation, it would be prudent to hold costs down by establishing an overall County wage freeze.

Total compensation (salaries and benefits) is the largest single expense to the County, and is an area where the Commissioners can negotiate a significant impact. We understand that it is difficult to strike a balance between an organization's financial health and its provision of prudent and reasonable compensation in order to keep strong employees. This challenging balancing act is one which is currently faced by every employer in the country. Employers have

to be continually creative in their construction and administration of wages and benefits. Employees must take responsibility as well by sharing some of the burden. In this difficult situation, when basic, legally-mandated services are being called into question, all must be accountable.

With the State cuts looming over the County, we are also concerned about the potential passage of House Bill 2168 or Senate Bill 728. House Bill 2168 requires counties to assume responsibility for felony offenders already in custody who, at the time sentence is imposed, have 12 months or less of incarceration to serve. Senate Bill 728 requires counties to assume responsibility for criminal offenders sentenced to terms of 24 months or less. If one or both of these pass, the Sheriff's Office will have to quickly come up with additional funds mid-year to pick up the tab, so to speak, for these groups of offenders.

### **Conclusion**

At this point, the Sheriff's budget has been cut to the bone, and has very little flexibility. Over the last five years the percentage of the budget dedicated to personnel, whose contracts are not negotiated by the MCSO, has increased. At the same time the percent of the budget dedicated to Materials and Services has declined.

In essence the MCSO has maintained core services with fewer resources. The Sheriff's Office, over the last few years, has made significant, creative attempts to work with less money. One such example was the creation of an emergency plan last year, one that could quickly open extra beds for a short period of time if jail populations go through a sudden flux, so that a bare minimum of beds need be open at any given time.

Steady, often drastic cuts over the last decade have reduced the Sheriff's Office to its most basic operations. This is unsatisfactory, since the Sheriff's Office is legally required to perform certain essential functions within society. It is potentially disruptive to efficient management to have such a thin margin for error in this year's budget.

Thank you for your consideration.

### **Members' Names:**

Ethan Atkinson  
Julie Cieloha  
Ray Davenport  
Jim Lasher  
Ron Saroff  
Phyllis Thiemann