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CBAC 2011 Annual Report

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The following outlines the feedback and recommendations of the Citizen Budget Advisory Committee to the Central Budget Advisory Committee regarding the FY11 Proposed Budget for the Department of Community Justice.

Section 1: Process

The first meeting of the Department of Community Justice (DCJ) Citizen Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) was held on February 25, 2010. The committee met four times to familiarize themselves with departmental activities and review FY11 budgetary proposals. During this period, the committee met with several key DCJ staff members including: Scott Taylor, Director; Dave Koch, A.D. Juvenile; Carl Goodman A.D. Adult Services; Karen Rhein (Administrative Analyst); and Kim Bernard (Policy and Communication Manager). In addition, the committee reviewed several documents related to DCJ budget and operations including the FY10 Program Summary and FY11 Proposed Budget. Lastly, the Committee toured the juvenile detention facility and had the opportunity for a question and answer session with Craig Bachman (DCJ Juvenile Services).

The committee has experienced challenges with participation and attendance. Of the original six committee members, two have opted to leave the committee prior to submitting the 2011 annual report. One member left at the start of the committee's formation while another member left in the two weeks prior to the report. Regardless, the four remaining committee members are in shared agreement on their final budget recommendations.

Section 2: Budget Recommendations and Major Changes

The Committee has had opportunity to review both the department's proposed budget and the Chair's budget recommendations. The priority areas identified by our committee were:

- ✓ Adult Housing Services
- ✓ Addiction Services for Offenders
- ✓ Juvenile and Adult Gang Services

The committee feels a commitment to these three areas is an important component to providing and maintaining public safety. Therefore, **CBAC fully supports the Chair's decision to restore these services in the FY11 budget.**

Section 3: Emerging Issues

It is the committee's understanding that DCJ had already experienced significant reductions in staffing due to cuts sustained in prior years. For example, 22 FTE have already been cut in the areas of Juvenile Services Division and Adult Services Division. While we understand the budgetary challenges associated with the recent economic downturn, CBAC will be monitoring the department's activities with great interest to determine if the staffing reductions are being properly managed and that public safety is not being compromised.

We would also like to underscore our concerns about gang violence in our community and request that funding levels for gang prevention and gang suppression activities be continued or even enhanced, if possible. We would like to routinely receive information to monitor progress in this important area.

As a group, we toured the juvenile detention center and noted that the electronic monitoring system appeared aging and obsolete. We would support a one-time expenditure to update the system. This action will likely alleviate a potential staff safety issue in the future. The longer the wait for the upgrade, the more likely there will be an incident involving a malfunction in the system.

Section 4: Recommendations

Both DCJ and current CBAC members are in agreement that membership of the committee needs to be revisited and that new recruitment strategies are required to maintain a robust and active committee. We recommend that at least three new members be recruited. We also recommend that a sub-set of both current and previous committee members be interviewed to determine how to best structure participation to increase interest and involvement in CBAC's activities.