



Work Session Summary Minutes

O R E G O N

Sheriff's Office Updates

January 30, 2025. 1:00 PM

Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Salem
5th Floor, Suite 5232, Commissioners Board Room

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Colm Willis, Kevin Cameron, and Danielle Bethell.

Board's Office: Matt Lawyer, Alvin Klausen, and Toni Whitler.

Legal Counsel: Steve Elzinga, and Cody Hawkins.

Sheriff's Office: Jason Bernards, Jeremy Landers, Jacob Ramsey, Jay Bergmann, and Nick Hunter

Commissioner Danielle Bethell called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

Summary

The operations team is managing vacancies, with a focus on efficiency through use of a new budget and grants monitoring dashboards. Concerns were raised about Senate Bill 48's impact on jail capacity and the potential for a new state overdose response team. The discussion also touched on the 1115 waiver for Medicaid coverage in jails, highlighting the need for careful consideration of costs and implications. The Sheriff's Office discussed the need to re-establish engagement with county staff through casual interactions like lunches and beer meetings. Enforcement Division staffing issues were highlighted, with 89 total sworn positions and 16 vacancies, including a lieutenant position. The division saw an increase in applicants, particularly from out-of-state, but challenges remain in the hiring process. December's calls for service totaled 4,283, with traffic stops being the most common self-initiated activity. The division confiscated 5 firearms in December, developing a partnership with Salem to test-fire confiscated guns. A proposal for a five-person drug team, including a sergeant, was presented, with an initial cost of \$1.3 million and an ongoing cost of \$1 million annually.

Operations Update

- Staffing overview for various divisions, including 51 total positions across leadership, deputies, support, and specialized roles:
 - Have one support services technician vacancy and actively recruiting for a budget analyst position.
 - New Code enforcement officer starting in February with a strong background and experience.
- Developed budget and grants monitoring dashboards to improve efficiency and reduce staff time needed for tasks:
 - The dashboard provides monthly updates on budget and grant status, spending, and cost monitoring.

- Concerns about the alarms program, which has seen a significant downward trend in annual expenses and revenues:
 - The existing software contract is expiring, and new providers could significantly increase costs.
 - Commissioners emphasized the importance of public safety over revenue generation.
- Challenges in managing graffiti, including an increase in calls during the summer months:
 - Explored using youth involvement and a GIS app for community members to report graffiti locations to aid in proactive efforts.

Institutions Updates

- Staffing and vacancy updates for the institutions division:
 - 10 deputy vacancies.
 - 4 Corrections LPN Vacancies
 - Ongoing efforts to fill support service technician positions.
- Inmate population statistics:
 - 2,535 bookings in the fourth quarter.
 - Average daily population of 400 once intake is excluded.
 - Average length of stay of 32 days.
- No deaths due to overdose in the facility this year:
 - One medical response to a possible overdose.
 - Confirmed case in December involving drug introduction.
 - State Police standing up SORT (Statewide Overdose Response Team)
 - Available to investigate overdoses
 - Pushback from DAs on structure and purpose
 - Better coordination needed between agencies
- 1115 Medicaid waiver and its potential to save the general fund by providing Medicaid coverage for a high percentage of the inmate population:
 - Challenges include providing medications upon release and conducting required screenings.

Enforcement Updates

- Staffing and vacancy updates for the enforcement division:
 - 89 total sworn positions.
 - 16 vacancies, including a lieutenant position.
- Increase in applicants, including from out-of-state:
 - Efforts to streamline the hiring process, such as leveraging online testing and proctors to minimize travel expenses.
- Overview of calls for service in December:
 - 4283 calls were responded to in the month of December
 - Traffic stops being the most common self-initiated activity.
 - Crashes and domestic disturbances are two of the most common calls responded to.
- Commissioners are interested in understanding the relationship between domestic disturbances and substance use.
 - Biggest offender/influence is alcohol.
- East Salem Service District is responsible for half of the calls in the county with a similar case mix as the rest of the county.

- Shooting Data for the month of December, shots fired calls 30, confirmed shots fired 5.
- Proactive efforts to seize illegal firearms:
 - 96 firearms taken off the street in 2024:
 - Including 5 in December alone.
 - Potential partnership with the City of Salem to use their National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) system for testing fired bullets and tracking them across jurisdictions.

Discussion

- Concerns about the impact of drug use and drug dealing on vulnerable populations, such as the homeless, and the need for a comprehensive approach to address the issue.
- Challenges in enforcing drug laws and providing accountability, given the changes in possession laws from felonies to misdemeanors:
 - Capacity of the DA's office to handle additional drug cases.
 - Potential expansion of the restorative court program.
- Potential collaboration with the City of Salem to address drug-related issues and share resources, including the possibility of a joint drug team:
 - Commissioners emphasized the need for a creative conversation to address both hiring and drug issues within the limited budget.
- Importance of maintaining relationships and communication with community partners, including judiciary, to ensure a coordinated approach to public safety.

Next Steps

- Explore the use of a GIS app for community members to report graffiti locations, potentially involving the public works GIS coordinator.
- Provide data on inmates in custody for over a year on aid and assistance charges, including the cost to the county.
- Schedule a meeting between the sheriff's office leadership and the City of Salem mayor to discuss drug enforcement efforts and collaboration.
- Propose a meeting agenda for the next quarterly sheriff's office update at least two weeks in advance to allow for commissioner input and ensure all relevant topics are covered.

Adjourned – time: 3:03 p.m.

Minutes by: Mary Vityukova

Reviewed by: