

From: Scott M. London

To: Ron Massingill, Kevin Andrews, Nannette Samuelson, Jack Wilson, Dave Eagle

CC: Roger Deeds

Subject: Sheriff's budget requests

Date: Tuesday, June 27, 2023 at 12:55AM CDT

Greetings to the Hood County Commissioner's Court,

I am writing as a concerned citizen and taxpayer of Hood County: one with twenty years of law enforcement experience, and yes, as a candidate for Sheriff of Hood County.

At this point I have completed an initial review of the budgetary requests of the Sheriff's Office. In this email I would like to express some observations and opinions. I have not completed my review, but I did not want to delay with my initial thoughts. I agree with some of the Sheriff's requests and would like to support them, and there are others I do not agree with.

I will cover the following:

An overtime budget

Staffing: Staffing Allocation, and Additional Staffing Requests

Armored Vehicle Request

Handgun Request

New Jail

Overtime Budget:

I am in agreement with the addition of an overtime line added to the Sheriff's annual budget for the deputies. Hood County is the only place I have ever worked or even known of that did not have an overtime budget for law enforcement. I don't have a strong opinion as to which option that the Sheriff presented the County should move forward with. That is to say, if I were a deputy, I know which I would prefer, but any option is better than the current arrangement. I would think Option 3 would be the most desirable option to the deputies (allowing the deputy to choose between OT and comp with a max allowed comp to be carried).

Staffing Requests:

First I want to disclose some assumptions I will use for my calculations. In the Sheriff's PowerPoint handout, it states there are 5 Lieutenants, but he lists six lieutenant positions. I used five in my calculations because that made the numbers add up to the 55 he cited in his total for LE personnel. I would also note that the Power Point handout states he would like to add 6 sworn deputy positions, for a total of 61 sworn. However, the budget spreadsheet shows 2 new investigators (line 010-56640-10500) and 6 new deputies (line 010-5640-10630), which would give a total of 63 sworn. I used the 63 total for my calculations.

I struggle to fully accept the ratio of LEO to 1,000 population presentation because there is too much disparity and disagreement in methodology used. It is too easy for me to use a different methodology to show that we are in line, not to mention the dispute over what an appropriate range is. Workload, I believe, is a better indicator of additional need. That said, if the Court would like me to, I would be happy to prepare contrasting presentations based on LE ratios.

If patrol truly is in need, and I certainly am not disputing their need, I would ask, has anyone discussed personal allocation? I am fully aware the Sheriff has absolute control over how he runs his Office, but I believe it is a worthwhile discussion. Please note the chart below. This is using the information the Sheriff provide with the addition of current numbers from my old agency: the Eddy County Sheriff's Office.

I will use raw numbers followed by percentage of sworn staff

	Eddy Co. SO	Parker Co. SO	HCSO Current	HCSO Proposed
Total sworn	76	102	55	63
Admin *	7 / 7.89%	7 / 6.87%	8 / 14.5%	8 / 12.6%
Investigator **	10 / 13.1%	25 / 23.5%	14 / 25.4%	16 / 25.3%

* Sheriff, Chief, Capt., Lt.

** Includes Sergeants

There are other areas that could be discussed, but we don't have enough information to have an informed discussion, like: comparing court security numbers, does Parker County SO provide bailiffs for their County and District Courts? I know the SO does not in Hood County. That could skew the comparisons.

Based on this, HCSO isn't dramatically high in Admin or Investigators, but being high in both areas does have an impact on available staff for patrol. Patrol is the area we have repeatedly been told is in need. Perhaps relocation of personnel could help relieve some of those pressures. Again, an internal look at workload would be helpful in this discussion.

Armored Vehicle Request:

Like most cops, I like the toys, gaskets, and other cool stuff. A BearCat Armored Vehicle is more agile than a MRAP, which the County already has. Both the BearCat and the MRAP are great for providing cover in an armed encounter. I am not opposed to local law enforcement having tools like these to keep our peace officers safe, but are we having so much trouble in Hood County that we need two armored vehicles? How many missions has our existing MRAP been deployed? It might be easy to justify the purchase if the funds come from "free money", like ARPA funds, but if I may borrow a phrase, it's all taxpayer's money. Is this really the best use of our tax dollars?

Handgun Request:

In keeping with the theme of the best use of taxpayer's money, I will now address the issue of purchasing 55 Staccato pistols. I understand and embrace the concept of a unified weapon platform. However, with a purchase price of \$1,926 each, I must again ask, is this the best use of taxpayer's money? I could purchase four Glock pistols for the price of one of those Staccato pistols.

New Jail:

Finally, let me weigh in on a longer discussion. I don't think anyone could deny the population growth in Hood County. It's easy, then, to make the connection that our current jail capacity needs to grow as well. I have been skeptical from the beginning that a new, all encompassing facility, would be more cost effective or prudent than: making the needed repairs and addressing any deferred maintenance, and then simply adding on, expanding, or by some other similar means, adding capacity to our current facilities. I simply cannot fathom that a cinder block and concrete building that is less than thirty years old is crumbling. Thank you for taking the time needed to continue to explore all options before deciding to move forward on such a costly expenditure.

Respectfully,

Scott M London

From: Scott M. London

To: Ron Massingill, Kevin Andrews, Nannette Samuelson, Jack Wilson, Dave Eagle

CC: Roger Deeds

Subject: Re: Sheriff's budget requests

Date: Tuesday, June 27, 2023 at 8:07AM CDT

Good morning,

Going through my notes, I did overlook one topic: the Simunitions training system. I am a huge proponent of stress inoculation training. Having been through Simunitions training myself, I can tell you it does provide valuable training. My only question is: was it compared to alternate training systems like the StressVest? There are pros and cons to each system, but, in the end, I believe the StressVest fairs slightly better. Let me provide my brief assessment of pros and cons of the two systems.

Simunitions

Pros

- very realistic guns
- provides instant audible and visual feedback to all participants (even smell, as it uses actual gun powder projectiles)
- with an actual projectile, round placement is undeniable

Cons

- the plastic casing gums up the barrel relatively fast, meaning: after a limited amount of training, the training weapon must be cleaned to continue training.
- because it uses actual projectiles, face-shields must be worn for safety. The face-shields muffle voices making communications between participants hindered.
- I suspect the cost of the Simunitions ammunition is more expensive than the blanks used by the StressVest making it more expensive to operate over time

note: I do not know how the two systems compare in initial purchase costs

StressVest

Pros

- can use existing guns with an adapter kit providing consistency with all the weapon systems: gun, holster, sights, etc.

- provides instant audible and visual feedback to all participants (even smell, as it uses actual gun powder blank rounds)
- uses blanks and a laser system, so the face-masks are not required, improving communications during training exercises
- the vest systems have various settings that can be used by the trainees and the actors
- does not have the short turn around time for needed system cleaning

Cons

- though approximate round placement is known, exact placement is not

All that said, a stress inoculation system, such as Simunitions, is an extremely valuable purchase.

Respectfully,
Scott M London