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## **SHERIFF FARRIS PRESENTS BUDGET FOR FUTURE GROWTH**

PUTNAM COUNTY, TN – Tonight, on May 12, 2025, Sheriff Eddie Farris presented his detailed budget to the County Commission's Budget Review Committee. This Committee is comprised of nine appointed members of the County Commission and is chaired by Ben Rodgers. Sheriff Farris was able to provide details of the justifications and needs that PCSO seeks to address in our budget for the coming fiscal year. The Budget Committee members were also provided with the details and had the opportunity to ask questions related to our budgetary needs.

Sheriff Farris discussed how this past year has been a very good year financially, especially with the jail edition opening. The Putnam County Jail is currently fully staffed and has been running smoothly with 60 Corrections Deputies employed. The revenue coming in from commissary, the inmate phone call system, and inmate housing has totaled approximately \$3.175 million in the past year, which has doubled what the revenue was in 2023-2024 due to the housing of federal inmates. Sheriff Farris projects that from PCSO's 2023-2024 budget, approximately \$1-\$1.4 million will be turned back into the county general fund of unused monies.

PCSO is on track to reach Tier 2 of Accreditation which will increase the revenue of state inmates from \$43/day to \$52/day. State inmates are housed in the Putnam County Jail because there are approximately 16,000 scattered state inmates across Tennessee due to the overcrowding in prisons.

Putnam County Jail also houses, which has been averaging, 37 federal inmates which bring in revenue of \$75/day. Sheriff Farris has signed a contract with the U.S. Marshal's to save 110 inmate beds for federal inmates, but the U.S. Marshal's do not have that many needing to be housed currently. Sheriff Farris has also signed the same contract with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to house inmates that are in ICE custody for the same revenue of \$75/day.

Sheriff Farris then went on to discuss how PCSO is extremely busy on the patrol side and how there has been an overall increase in call volume. PCSO has answered over 30,000 calls in 2023-2024. Patrol

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Deputies are not only answering calls, but also attending state mandated training, covering close to every event in Putnam County, on top of things like vacation and sick time. Sheriff Farris stated, “We want to be able to cover those local events and serve the taxpayers, but we are being asked to do that more and more due to the increase of events. It is our duty to make sure the Citizens of Putnam County are safe at these events.” Taking all of this into consideration, Sheriff Farris is asking for 6 new commissioned Deputies and 1 new Dispatcher.

Four out of 6 of the new commissioned Deputies would be assigned to patrol, meaning there would be one more Deputy on each patrol shift. This would also give each of our Specialized Units an opportunity to grow, such as K-9, SWAT, Motors, Training, Aviation, and Honor Guard.

Two of the new commissioned Deputies would be assigned to the Criminal Investigation Division, one as General Investigator and the other as a Narcotics Investigator. The General Investigators cover a range of Investigations such as: DCS referrals, SRO investigations, homicides, scams, burglaries, internal jail investigations, background investigations, and many more. Depending on the complexity of the cases, it can range from 1 hour-200 hours of investigation time. In the past years PCSO has seen an average of 892 DCS referrals and over the past 3 years there have been over 500 on average.

Sheriff Farris stated that another Narcotics Investigator will be vital to the PCSO because drug investigations are the one thing that PCSO can do to be proactive. In the past year PCSO has seized 29 pounds of Methamphetamine, 64.67 pounds of Cocaine, over half a million dollars, and 1.53 pounds of Fentanyl. According to the DEA 2 mg of Fentanyl is a lethal dose which essentially means over 300,000 lives have been saved by getting this Fentanyl off the streets. PCSO has opened 82 new drug investigations in the past year which benefits other investigations with the intelligence gained from drug investigations.

In addition to the 30,000 annual calls PCSO received, some emergency and some non-emergency, there was in total over 950,000 telephone calls of all various types that came into PCSO Dispatch during the past year. Sheriff Farris stated that there needs to always be 2 Dispatchers on each shift, and due to sickness and other federal laws it makes it difficult to keep 2 on at all times. With Sheriff Farris asking for 1 more Dispatcher it will help relieve some overtime pay and prevent call ins of Dispatchers who just got off a shift.

The Putnam County Sheriff’s Office is one of the best Sheriff’s Offices not only in the State, but also in the country. As technology improves and Putnam County grows, more funds must be spent and a lot more resources must be used to prevent the crime we do not want to come into our county. With the growth of Putnam County and the increase of population in the past year we have seen more violent crimes like the shooting of Trooper Cothron on July 19, 2024, the more recent shooting in the

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Cookeville Walmart parking lot on April 11, 2025, and the tragic murder of Cassidy Jackson. All of these crimes were gang related with the gangs coming from the Nashville area. In order to prevent Putnam County from being infiltrated with this gang related crime it is critical that PCSO continues to be vigilant. This does not only apply to technology and training, but also to simply needing more manpower so we are able to have the bodies to cover the volume of our county. Sheriff Farris stated, "The taxpayers deserve the best Sheriff's Office and security since this is their tax paying dollars. We want to continue to be able to live up to that request."

Sheriff Farris made it clear that any budgetary request is not something that he wants to cause any type of tax increase. If the Budget Committee deems it necessary to raise taxes to meet our budgetary needs, the PCSO will reevaluate and have a second look. Sheriff Farris said, "It is early in the budget process, and it is evident that the county commissioners and the citizens of Putnam County trust me to run our Sheriff's Office. I would be doing them all a disservice if I did not ask for what we need."

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