

COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

SHERRI CASSIDY, CPFO, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
&
RYAN PARSELL, CHIEF PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

Citizen Outreach Group – June 10, 2019

Members Present: Stephanie Adams, Jeff Aldrich, CheyAnne Clemons, MaryAnna Clemons, Kelvin Dean, Arthur Glynn, Annette Hagopian, Creed Spillane

Excused Members: Ed Dills, Roland Rainey

Unexcused Members: David Couch

County Staff Present: Sherri Cassidy, Ryan Parsell, Deanna Ruschioni, Nikki Simmons, Joel Quevillon

Commissioners Present: Longinos Gonzalez, Jr., Vice-Chair

Guest Speakers/Guests: From the Sheriff’s Office:
Sheriff Bill Elder, Undersheriff Pete Carey, Commander Joseph Roybal, Administrator Larry Borland & Chief of Staff Janet Huffor

An update of the Sheriff’s Public Safety Tax was presented to the COG members prior to a tour of the El Paso County Criminal Justice Center. Highlights of the update and tour:

El Paso County Sheriff’s Office Public Safety Tax Update (PST)

The El Paso County Sheriff’s Public Safety Tax (.0023% tax, modeled after the regular sales tax) initiated in 2012, and the citizens of El Paso County voted in November, 2018 to extend the PST another ten years. The Sales & Use Tax is budgeted to generate \$25.7M in 2019.

In 2012, critical needs were identified in the Law Enforcement Bureau, Detention Bureau and Emergency Response. With the passing of the Public Safety Tax, they have been able to add sworn personnel and civilian support staff; repair, replace, or update old or failing equipment; and create new units and programs. The importance of the Public Safety Tax cannot be overrated. As of April 2018, funds from the PST have funded 189 employees within various bureaus of the El Paso County Sheriff’s Office. Personnel represents 82% of the Sheriff’s budget. There is an 8-10% attrition rate (40% is due to salaries), and it takes about six to seven months to train replacements at a rate of \$60-\$70K per person.

Statutory Responsibilities:

- Custodian of the jail - the only jail in the El Paso County serving all seven municipalities
- Fire Warden
- Transport Prisoners
- Execute Writs
- Preserve the Peace
- Permits for Concealed Weapons
- Search and Rescue

The El Paso County Criminal Justice Center is the only criminal justice center in El Paso County and it serves all seven municipalities. The inmate population is larger than most state prisons and is effectively at capacity. The inmate population in 2012 was approximately 1,200; today it is approximately 1,700 every day.

To construct a new tower to handle the over crowdedness, it could cost approximately \$100M just for the construction alone, and it could take approximately five years to complete.

Price increases continue to occur for inmate care regarding the medical contract which presently costs around \$8.5M per year; the food services contract costs approximately \$2M per year; plus transportation costs regarding the number of inmates being transported to health facilities, doctor appointments, Methadone clinics, the courthouse, etc. The Sheriff's office is presently looking at partnering with community organizations to help save on expenses in these areas while providing the best 24/7 service to our large inmate population. The Sheriff's Office is exploring partnerships with Memorial Hospital on doing some telemedicine services; Peak Vista on becoming their medical provider; and looking for continuity of care inside and outside of the Criminal Justice Center for mental health issues and treatment. Approximately 60% of inmates in the El Paso County Criminal Justice Center suffer from mental illness, and although they receive counseling and proper medications, they should be treated in other ways rather than being warehoused in the jail.

Further details of the Public Safety Tax presentation regarding how these tax dollars are being put to work to benefit our community, and the 1A Spending Brochure can be viewed by the following link on the El Paso County Sheriff's web page at:

<https://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com/public-safety-tax-report>;

El Paso County Sheriff's Office 2018 Annual Report

This report provides an overview of the El Paso County Sheriff's Office Detention Bureau, Law Enforcement Bureau, Administrative & Support Services Bureau, Staff Support and the 2018 Staff Achievements.

This report can be viewed by the following link on the El Paso County Sheriff's web page at:

https://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com/sites/default/files/resources/annual-reports/18_AR_WEB_2.pdf;

Administrative Items

The administrative items on the June 10, 2019 Citizen Outreach Group agenda will be addressed in the next COG meeting scheduled for August 19, 2019 at the El Paso County Department of Public Works building at 3275 Akers Drive.