

Williams County Sheriff's Office

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STEVEN M. TOWNS, SHERIFF

April 5, 2016

Ref: Williams County Sheriff Office request for 3 full time deputies.

Commissioners,

The following information is what you requested from our last meeting March 31, 2016 pertaining to statistics from January 1, 2008 to present March 31, 2016. The information will show the Williams County Sheriff Office has continued to handle more calls for service every year since the layoffs in 2009, and has actually handled more calls for the last two years than the year prior to the layoffs:

4508 calls in 2015
4496 calls in 2014
4486 calls in 2008

There were also more investigations closed by arrests and charges filed:

275 arrests/charges in 2015
304 arrests/charges in 2014
254 arrests/charges in 2008

more drug cases and arrests with charges handled separately in cooperation with the Multi Unit Narcotics Task Force:

171 cases with 289 arrests/charges in 2015
130 cases with 156 arrests/charges in 2014
128 cases with 209 arrests/charges in 2008

hundreds more fingerprinting and backgrounds checks, and more CCW permits issued and renewed:

568 permits in 2015
386 permits in 2014
143 permits in 2008

with 298 permits in the first 3 months already this year.

Please remember, in 2008 the Sheriff's Office had 30 employees on the roster, 29 in 2009 prior to layoffs, compared to 19 employees currently. Among the many issues the shortage of manpower and increased workload causes, it also forces overtime and increased expenses.

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With limited manpower, overtime is too often required. In addition to occasional shift coverage (at times when modifying set, scheduled shifts can no longer accommodate due to short staffing) unexpected emergencies, active calls for service, and other events occur requiring immediate attention. The newly-appointed deputies would be scheduled during times of greatest need, would assist in reducing overtime, and would be used to assist with the many complex on-going investigations and newly reported complaints and other duties required of this office.

We understand as elected Commissioners you are required to work with all other county elected officials to assure they are properly funded to perform their statutory duties. As a reminder, the Sheriff and his deputies are statutorily mandated to preserve the public peace which includes preventing violence and enforcing all laws. This requires us to respond to and investigate all calls in the county outside of municipalities, and bring to justice those who have committed illegal acts. We are required to execute all summonses, orders, subpoenas, warrants and every other process directed by a lawful authority of this and any other state. This often times requires us to locate, apprehend, secure, and transport individuals and groups to and from courts, jails, prisons, mental institutions, and in and out of other states as directed.

The shortage of manpower preventing the Sheriff's Office to perform all of these duties in a timely, efficient, and safe manner is concerning. With the County's elected Officials making any cuts where they could and only spending money when they needed, the County's financial condition has been improving every year and is as strong now as it was prior to the County's budget shortfall in 2009. My requests for deputies have been referred to as "hiring new deputies", but I want to remind you I am only requesting funds to fill three (3) of the vacancies due to the previous temporary layoffs. Also, I would like to point out not only is my current budget lower than the Sheriff's Office budget the year of the budget shortfall seven (7) years ago, every budget I have had to work with since I have been Sheriff has been lower than every year since 2000 over seventeen (17) years ago.

Additionally please note the following:

- In response to your concern about the D.A.R.E. program. You will see the hours being spent working on D.A.R.E. are completely paid for through the D.A.R.E. program.
- In the past you have inquired as to reassigning the fully funded County Scale Team Lieutenant back to the Road Patrol. I would like to remind you that doing so would cost the Sheriff's Office more money than hiring a new deputy at a starting rate, and remove a position from a State-Mandated program.

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- There have also been comments that would imply every County Office's budget is lower than the year of the budget shortfall and none have been given additional funding, but that does not appear to be the case. The County's revenue is sound and the money is there, it's just a matter of funding my budget. I believe if the public was given a choice between your business as usual to more deputies providing more safety and service to the community, they would choose for their taxes to provide more safety especially knowing it would not cost them any additional taxes, fees, or assessments.
- Another issue of concern being addressed is the Village of Holiday City. As you know, the Sheriff's Office has been providing free law enforcement services to Holiday City even after they incorporated in 1997. You have indicated the Sheriff's Office is not required to provide law enforcement services to the municipality, but instead of terminating that relationship, Sheriff Towns is currently negotiating a contract where Holiday City would compensate the Sheriff's Office for these services.

Attached will find supporting records and documentation to support my position. The first section will go over call rates and the fact that the natures of calls are more serious. This is totally separate from any calls that the MAN Unit responds to which will be provided to show we are supporting all of their efforts with officer support.

The next will go over how many times and in what manner our office has requested additional staffing and how the office has made numerous changes to make up for low staffing. The Sheriff's Office has made requests every year I have submitted a budget, and has been denied every time, and despite many adjustments to our line items, we have never went over budget.

The third section will go over financial information from the auditor's office including our offices budget, the entire county's revenue, building project costs and other agencies' budgets over the past few years. Also, it shows new sources of income such as the casino revenue averaging over \$400,000 the last three years and increased income such as the County Sales and Use Tax revenue which has increased over \$1.5 million since 2009.

The staffing can be compared head to head in many of the forms and is some of the same material we have submitted every year with our requests. Dep. Lawrence had assisted me in years past and confirmed these numbers have been presented to the Commissioners in the past.

When the entire picture is considered, it is hard to deny the facts of what has gone on over the past seven (7) years after the 2009 budget cuts. The citizens of Williams County deserve more from you than what has been provided.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sheriff Steven M. Towns

In regards to the DARE program I will try to explain this in two different ways so that it can be comprehended a little more easily. The position on my employee list that the DARE officer now holds was a clerk or administrative position. Before I was Sheriff the past two Sheriff's had either four or five clerks, I only have three! A clerk's position in our budget is about \$38,000.00 a year. A Deputy makes \$48,000.00 per year; this is a difference of \$10,000.00. The amount of money we get from the Attorney General's office and ADAMhs Board totals \$23,000.00. This means in salary alone the DARE program is make \$13,000.00 a year for this office. That's about as simple as I can put it. I took an office position made it a road position eligible for grants and it produced more then what I was already spending for a clerk.

If you would like to break it down by the hour, the DARE officer spends about 10 hours per week in class with the students. The AG's grant pays for 27 hours a week which includes the time preparing for class. In short, we are making a small amount each week he is in school. When he is not in school, he is utilized in many other ways throughout the office. Dep. McCord and I have had active shooter training for almost 1000 people in the last few months; this would cost thousands of dollars for our citizens to obtain without access thru their local school or work place. This training has a real chance to save someone's life and is important. I am not sure why the Sheriff's Office is being overly scrutinized for giving the public back something for their tax dollars.