



SHOOTING STRAIGHT

(The following is an excerpt from my comments to the Hennepin County Board on October 28, 2010. The Board will be making decisions about the budget for all county departments, including the Sheriff's Office, during the next several weeks.)

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I hope you would all agree with me that adequately funding local law enforcement is an investment with positive returns. Residents gain financially by investing in crime prevention and intervention.

All Departments have had their budgets cut in 2009 and 2010. The proposed Sheriff's Office 2011 Budget represents a 2.0% decrease in Property Tax Funding (approx. \$1.5 million) and a 2.6% decrease in overall spending (\$2.2 million).

We are operating a leaner Agency. In 2007 we had 817 Full Time Employees. With the current proposal, for 2011, we will have funding for just 756 FTEs funded by the Board.

The major cost-drivers in our budget are Personnel Costs of \$1.3 million. This includes wage/step increases of \$498,000. There was a \$634,000 increase for health insurance, and \$105,000 in PERA/pension increases, plus vehicle, equipment and IT cost increases.

Just to keep pace with the 2010 Budget would have required a 2.25% INCREASE in Property Tax Funding.

The proposal that County Administration is recommending is a 2.0% DECREASE from last year, which is 4.25% less than we needed to keep pace with cost increases. As a result, a reduction in personnel will be necessary.

We have cut through both innovation and efficiency. We cut our training, equipment and maintenance budgets. But these cuts deliver only short-term savings...they are not sustainable.

Jail Overtime is down considerably. The result has been 10,800 fewer hours of overtime so far this year compared to last year (Jan-Sept.) This equates to an estimated savings of nearly \$400,000 in overtime costs.

We have aggressively sought and secured State and Federal Grant Funding to leverage our declining Property Tax resources to offset our reduced operating budget.

We have nothing left to cut but personnel, which now represents 84.2% of our 2011 budget. (in 2007, our personnel service budget was 82.7%).

The 2011 budget will have impacts including; delayed services, reduced levels of Public Safety, and increased operational risk.

Across the agency, we expect to see an overall decline of service levels-which equates to a pass-thru cost to our cities. There may be slow-downs in intake and release areas, longer wait times for street officers booking an arrestee which means less time for them to patrol in their city. There may be delays in the courtroom. We'll need to reduce collaborative efforts such as conducting unannounced visits to serious offenders paroled in Hennepin County. There may be restricted ability to maintain our website reporting mortgage foreclosure sales. With up to 42 less FTEs in 2011, there will be reductions across the agency.

As Sheriff, I must be a risk manager and I will prioritize the resources available. Our agency has unique budget challenges and works 24/7/36. This imposes additional staffing demands and costs.

We also have to remain flexible to respond to unforeseeable incidents such as plane crashes, floods, and catastrophic car crashes, and spikes in crime. Responding adequately demands that we maintain proper levels of training, equipment and personnel.

Our Jail is another area where we have little control over the demand or the costs for the services we provide (not unlike at HCMC). 70% newly-admitted male inmates test positive for drug use. Erratic drug-induced behavior requires demands for intensive security and medical treatment. Our Jail Staff is very professional, and they do a phenomenal job.

With the budget cuts and returns we have delivered back to Hennepin County in recent years, the Sheriff's Office will continue to be a strong partner in that effort of good stewardship of our taxpayers investment.

I am extremely proud of our agency and the men and women who do the important work of protecting and promoting public safety in Hennepin County.

Click the links above and below this document for the full Shooting Straight!