



Legislation Text

File #: 19-0414, **Version:** 1

Item:

Reclassification Request for the Sheriff's Office (30min)

Date of BOCC Meeting: September 3, 2019

Request for Board Action:

The Board is requested to discuss and provide guidance to the County Manager and County staff on Sheriff Birkhead's request to reclassify 11 detention positions that were approved in FY18/19 to staff a female mental health pod in the Detention Center. A copy of the Sheriff's request and justification has been provided with this agenda item. The Sheriff's Office is requesting to reclassify 11 detention officer vacancies in order to meet current operational needs.

Based on the information provided by the Sheriff's Office additional recurring and non-recurring costs are associated with this request (see page 2 of the request). A budget increase of \$171,025 is needed if the reclassification is approved for the current fiscal year and will be a recurring cost in future fiscal years. This increase comes from the salary differences between detention officer positions and law enforcement positions. Law enforcement positions also include vehicle and equipment costs which requires an additional increase of \$596,351 to the reclassification request. Although not annual costs, equipment and vehicles would be replaced based on the County's replacement schedule in the future. Total new cost in the current fiscal year for the reclassification of the 11 positions is \$767,376. *At the FY19/20 property valuations this equals 1/6 of a cent property tax rate increase.* The Sheriff's Office has requested that County Fund Balance be used to fund the new expenses.

Budget and Vacancy Updates

As of August 28, County Human Resources reports that the Sheriff's Office and Detention Center have 39 vacancies, including the positions approved to staff the female mental health pod. Human Resources staff and Sheriff's Office staff are currently working to adjust positions that have multiple staff identified in one FTE number within the County's SAP system. Including the adjusted positions, as of August 28 there are 17 vacancies within the Sheriff's Office/Detention Center. County Human Resources reports that in July 2019 a BLET Academy started with 13 trainees. These positions have been accounted for in the August 28 SAP vacancy data as reported by Human Resources. As previously shared, vacancy data is point-in-time data and can fluctuate daily.

Since FY15/16, 41 new FTEs (17 law enforcement and 24 detention positions) have been approved for the Sheriff's Office/Detention Center. The County's investment in the Sheriff's Office and Detention Center since FY14/15 has increased by approximately \$7,720,000, a 24% increase during this time period bringing the total investment to \$40,017,790 (positions and vehicles) in the current fiscal year. A budget brief which provides a detailed 5-year overview of County investment in the Sheriff's Office has been attached.

As the Board is aware providing a balanced budget this year was a challenging and arduous task. County Departments were asked to collectively reduce their budgets by \$4.2 million. The Sheriff's Office reduced its

FY19/20 operating costs by \$289,824. The County's current practices of not approving new positions when vacancies exist and not using one-time fund balance to address ongoing operational expenses are management and financial best practices that assist in keeping the County in a fiscally sound position.

Mental Health Pods in the Durham Detention Center

In the County's FY18/19 budget 20 new FTEs were approved for the Sheriff's Office/Detention Center to address critical safety and security needs. Thirteen of the 20 positions were approved to provide staffing to create a female mental health pod in the Detention Center. In FY16/17, the Board approved funding for 10 new FTEs in the Detention Center to open a male mental health pod. The female mental health pod opening has been delayed due to safety projects at the Detention Center which are expected to be completed in early 2020. Although the annual number of jail intakes screened by medical has decreased by almost 27% from FY16 to FY19 (7,604 to 5,572), the number of inmates referred to Jail Mental Health (JMH) has increased by over 11% in the same time frame (1,767 to 1,964) (Data provided by CJRC).

At the request of the Sheriff's Office, CJRC's JMH is willing to attempt offering services inside the single female pod in the detention facility since the total number of female detainees has dropped in recent months. However, since there are no alternate housing options for women who are disruptive, high need, or have conflicts with other female detainees, security issues may override the opportunity for programming in the pod. Beginning October 2019, CJRC will offer the following services weekly in the female housing unit: two education groups for all detainees (e.g. hygiene, substance use education, de-escalation, nutrition, mindfulness/relaxation), two mental health specific educational groups for females on the MH caseload, one social activity weekly if a detention officer is available to assist and DCSO can provide incentives for participating detainees. This approach serves an interim solution until the female mental health pod is opened.

Since the Sheriff's request deviates from the Commissioners' original policy decision to fund mental health pods in the Detention Center and new funding totaling \$767,376 from County Fund Balance is being requested to implement the proposed reclassifications it is required and advisable for the Board to discuss and provide further guidance to the County Manager and County Staff on how to proceed.

Alignment with Strategic Plan: This item aligns with the County's Strategic Goal 3: Safe Community and Goal 5: Accountable, Efficient and Visionary Government

Resource Persons: Clarence F. Birkhead, Durham County Sheriff, Deputy Chief Anthony Prignano, Durham Detention Services, Jodi Miller, General Manager, Gudrun Parmer, CJRC Director, David Ades, Asst. Director Budget and Management Services, and Dara Richardson, Human Resources Manager

County Manager's Recommendation: The County Manager recommends that the Board discuss and provide guidance to the County Manager and County Staff on the Sheriff's reclassification request.

County Manager: _____