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January 2012 Newsletter & Commission Report

PERSONNEL & TRAINING

Sheriff Doug DeBoer: I will be attending an advanced ICS (Incident Command System) class at Cedar Shores in February (12th – 18th). This class is being provided tuition and expense free to me so long as I remain on the Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) program hosted by the state Department of Public Safety, Office of Emergency Management. This advanced class is on “logistics” and will afford me insight and advanced training into obtaining and managing resources during a disaster.

Deputy Jim Henson: Will be back to the Law Enforcement Training center in Pierre to complete EVOC (Emergency Vehicle Operations Course) training. This will begin on January 8th and conclude on January 13th. Once completed, Jim’s credential file will be completed and he will become “certified”. If he fails, his employment will end per statute. Once he passes, Jim will be able to take a step increase in pay for becoming certified, this is a \$0.50 increase per hour. This would be an action item for February.

Jim is approaching his one-year anniversary and should have been in line to receive his step increase of \$0.50. That is now pending certification and completion of his probationary period from his disciplinary hearing. This is an action item for March, so long as he is certified this next week.

Jim has yet to complete the requirements of his “disciplinary” action, due entirely to the lack of facilities in which to participate. Once his “regular employment” is stabilized, we will probably have to send him off for this part of his correction action plan.

Deputy Jim Keeter: Will be attending “Glock” handgun training later this month. The class is in Mitchell and is a one-day class which has a tuition fee of \$195. The Miller Police Department has agreed to share the cost and receive services from Deputy Keeter’s training. This training will certify Deputy Keeter to make repairs and adjustments to our handguns and remain within our policy and procedures guidelines. This will also help lengthen the lifespan of the firearms.

Evening Clerk position opening: To date I have received a couple of incomplete applications for this position. It is “striking” to me that applicants willfully refuse to provide all the required data for the employment. I have a couple prospective people working on their applications. It remains “open until filled”.

Experience Works (Formerly Green Thumb) program: Ida Moser is in her second month as the E.W. employee here at the courthouse. Initially she was shared between my office and the custodian and later the library. Ida is now exclusively working in my office scanning and archiving old reports from the 1990’s. Ida is available to help other county offices as needed with advanced notice. There are limitations on what she can and cannot do. So far this program has provided us with 16 hours of extra

help per week with no direct cost. We contribute by providing training, guidance and support. I also continue (with Gina Ortmeier) to supervise the E.W. employees at HELPING HANDS.

EQUIPMENT

In my 2012 sheriff's budget I asked for and was approved for \$25,000 to replace the 2001 Chevy Tahoe. That is \$20,000 for the actual vehicle and \$5,000 for replacement equipment and accessories. When the provisional budget was approved I asked Dave Peterman to see what the market had for 2008 or 2009 Chevy Trailblazers, just as we bought last year. This vehicle has proven to me to make a good, solid work vehicle. Peterman searched and believes he has found a 2008 Chevy Trailblazer (all white) for \$20,850 before trade or \$19,900 without trade.

In consideration of purchase Stobbs has made the following offers:

2001 Chevy Tahoe: I have had this vehicle appraised by Dave Peterman at Stobbs. His assessment and offer \$6,000 in retail trade value. Net purchase price is \$14,850.

2002 Chevy 1500 pickup: I also had this vehicle appraised by Dave Peterman at Stobbs. His assessment and offer is \$11,000 in retail trade value. Net purchase price is \$9,850.

If both vehicles are traded to Stobbs, the \$20,850 price minus \$17,000 in trade is a net cost of \$3,850. This would leave \$16,150 to purchase a replacement vehicle for the Emergency Manager, ideally something more fuel efficient and appropriate to the task, like another compact SUV / Trailblazer.

There was no provision in the EM budget for a vehicle of any type that would have been an issue for next year's request.

The negatives aspects of trading in the 2002 Chevy EM pickup:

- There is a 30' camper which needs a heavy vehicle to pull it.
- There is a 20+' enclosed trailer which needs a heavy vehicle to pull it.
- There are about 2 times a years when a heavy vehicle is needed.

The positives aspects of trading to a smaller, more efficient vehicle are:

- Improved fuel economy. 9 mpg compared to 18 mpg.
- Lower maintenance costs on an aging vehicle.
- The large camper might be traded down to a smaller vehicle for "on scene" work.
- The large enclosed trailer may need another agency to pull it. It is a bumper hitched unit.

My immediate recommendation is to declare the 2001 Chevy Tahoe surplus and use it as a trade-in toward the purchase of the 2008 Chevy Trailblazer Stobbs has found.

My secondary recommendation is to have Stobbs locate another 2008 or 2009 Trailblazer and use the 2002 Chevy pickup as trade-in on that vehicle. Then, using unused funds from my budget, pay for the vehicle since the EM-SLA does not cover vehicle purchases but does cover repairs and accessories.

GRANTS

Hospital Construction Project: I successfully resolved the issues surrounding the hospitals “DUNS” number, the number used by the Federal Government in their grant programming. An “update” of the DUNS information resulted in a modification of the agencies (Auditor, Sheriff and Library) become subordinate to the “Hand County Clerk of Courts”, thus all programming was directed to the Clerk attaching to their DUNS.

2010-2011 Highway Safety Grant Program: In December I reported that I was waiting for the last two months (September and October of 2011) to arrive. It arrived on 12-13-11 in the amount of \$1178.32. The total recovery from this program for that FFY was \$5,756.58. This is the same amount which was supplemented back into the sheriff's budget on December 27, 2011.

The current FFY (2011-2012) has an award amount of \$8,751 which is about \$729.25 per month. This program pays the direct and indirect wage expenses for the officer who participates. Part of the program is based on NATIONAL MOBILIZATIONS, or periods of time where special activities are planned. One such mobilization ran from December 16 to January 2.

Through this program we have been able to put, in effect, another part-time officer on duty to provide for increased Highway Safety. The activity reports show that a combination of tickets and warning tickets was written (425 in 2011 and 245 in 2010), nearly all for traffic violations. In 2012 our “war on drunk driving” will continue and hopefully we will continue to enjoy another year without a serious or fatal alcohol related crash.

2009-2014 COPS GRANT program: The last reimbursement has not arrived from Washington. As of the end of December, we received reimbursement of \$24,518.26, the same amount which was supplemented back into the sheriff's budget at your December 27, 2011 meeting.

2011 Homeland Security Grant program: I received an email from June Snyder at the Homeland Security Office in the Department of Public Safety. The email said that my request (on behalf of the County Commission and Hand County Ambulance Association) had been approved as follows:

- Hand County Commission – Courthouse Generator project: \$15,682.00
- Hand County Ambulance Association – Personal Protective Equipment: \$ 5,890.00
- Total grant funds awarded: **\$21,572.00**

I need permission to proceed with these projects. I request a series of motions to this effect:

- A motion to grant authority to the Emergency Manager to enter into agreements, pledges or contracts with the Department of Public Safety or Office of Homeland Security to receive \$21,572.00 in homeland security grant funds to be used for the purchase of equipment and goods.
- A motion to grant authority to the Emergency Manager until June 30, 2012 to purchase personal protective equipment in an amount not to exceed \$5,890 which will “pass through” to the Hand County Ambulance Association or Hand County Memorial Hospital.
- A motion to grant authority to the Emergency Manager until June 30, 2012 to initiate construction, placement and infrastructural changes necessary to place a electrical generator on the north side of the courthouse.

- A motion to grant authority to the Emergency Manager until June 30, 2012 to initiate the procurement of a diesel powered generator sufficient to power the courthouse in an amount not to exceed \$15,682.00.

Not all of this project may be covered by the grant. It is important to note that the county, either via the Building & Grounds or Contingency Budget will need to cover the cost not covered by this grant.

2010 Homeland Security Grant program: The City of Miller Police Department was approved to purchase a “FLIR” device. I read in the Miller Press that the city council had approved the department’s request to purchase the device through the program. I expect that will occur shortly. This was previously approved and will also be a “pass through” purchase.

ACTIVITY:

My YEAR TO DATE activity report is attached to this newsletter. This information is also uploaded to the sheriff’s page on the Hand County Website. It can be reviewed at any time.

Of note, there continues to be thefts and burglaries in rural areas. We have seen scrap metal thefts and now the theft of car exhaust components.

Executions, distress warrants and domestic violence were other "hot" topics this past month.

I currently have 80 signed up for the NIXLE alert system. I would prefer to have several thousand members receiving our alerts. In the coming months I am going to approach the commission through the Emergency Management side of things to discuss our “communications plan” or the lack thereof. Please encourage people to join the NIXLE alert system by logging onto www.nixle.com and following the sign up procedure. It works for both email and text messages.

I put a “site meter” on the county’s website. I was pleasantly surprised to see that we have about 180 visitors a week to the site. Once I understand the data more I should be able to tell what the visitors are doing and what they are looking at. This was an idea presented by Joe Fiala after discussing their website and who is looking at it. The county’s facebook profile is well traveled and serves as a great, constructive media tool to get messages to members. I really underestimated the power of “social media” and how powerful it can be in providing information to the public.

NECOG

I attended the “end of the year” NECOG executive board meeting. At the next meeting there will be nominations from the council to the executive board. I will move from Chairman to “member at large” if nominated and elected back to the board. I have been the county’s NECOG representative since 2001 and associated with NECOG since I was mayor of Miller in 1997.

I continue to serve on the NECOG Revolving Loan Fund board of directors.

More information can be found at www.necog.org. I encourage you to visit the NECOG website.

We are currently planning the annual meeting which was postponed from last fall to this spring.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

In December the big project was the “table top exercise”. The exercise was planned by me with the assistance of Commissioners Wernsmann and Waring. The exercise was a great success (as reported by others in attendance).

The event, a prolonged power outage during a blizzard, provided great opportunities to “prepare, respond, plan and mitigate” events and conditions which exist during such events. The Miller Press (Ruth Ann) provided “superior” coverage of the exercise which helped us reach our residents better than they ever have in the past.

I devoted considerable time to the planning and creation of this event, almost all of which I did while setting my sheriff’s duties aside. It is worth noting that while I was playing emergency manager my staff had to pull extra duty covering my absence.

In the coming weeks there are again many reports and projects which must be done to remain compliant with the SLA and 50% funding mechanism.

On the topic of salaries for the E.M. position, I want you to consider the following. The present, post probationary pay for the E.M. is \$25,000 per year or roughly \$12.01/hour, 2,088.33 / week, \$480/week or \$96/day. In a recent conversation with two local farmer / ranchers I discovered this is what they pay their non-professional ranch hands. A trained mechanic at Titan makes \$25/hour plus commission on sales. Since the county’s investment in this position is 50%, that means the county pays \$6.005 per hour for this position plus 50% of benefits. Even if county’s portion was raised to minimum wage or \$7.25 per hour, this would pay this “professional” position at \$14.50 per hour or \$30,160 / year plus 50% of benefits. This might attract a better field of applicants. This is a little over a 20% increase in pay.

I suggest that we (you and I) have a serious conversation about increasing the pay for this position to a more marketable rate where we can start an employee at the this base and work them up to the \$30,160 range over the course of 2 years like I do with my staff.

On Wednesday January 4, 2012 I need to attend a regional Emergency Managers meeting in Pierre. This will, most likely, focus on the restructuring of Emergency Management and Homeland Security into one unified agency with a division and reassignment of staff.