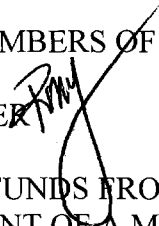


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 2, 2012

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF RELEASE OF FUNDS FROM FY 2012 CONTINGENT RESERVES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MENTAL HEALTH PROBATION OFFICER WITHIN THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE

ISSUE: Consideration of release of funds in the amount of \$60,000 from FY 2012 Contingent Reserves to establish a Mental Health Probation Officer within the Sheriff's Office/Alexandria Criminal Justice Services (ACJS) to provide intensive supervision and support to local probationers and persons on pretrial services who have a serious mental illness and/or substance abuse problem.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- 1) Allocate \$60,000 from the FY 2012 Contingent Reserves (including carryover from previous years) that was previously set aside to fund the creation of an additional sober living unit in the Sheriff's Office; and
- 2) Authorize the addition of a Mental Health Probation Officer (1.0 FTE) in the Sheriff's Office.

DISCUSSION: During the FY 2010 budget process, City Council set aside \$60,000 to be used to "fund the creation of an additional sober living unit in the Office of the Sheriff." These funds have not been spent and have been carried over to FY 2012. Since that time, the behavioral health needs within the Sheriff's Office have changed and the highest unmet need at this time is the lack of a dedicated Mental Health Probation Officer within Alexandria Criminal Justice Services. As such, staff request that the \$60,000 in contingent reserves be used to support this new position. The position would be funded jointly by the Sheriff's Office and the Alexandria Community Services Board (ACSB).

To support the FY 2013 costs of the position beyond the \$60,000 in contingent reserve, the Alexandria Community Services Board (ACSB) can redirect \$27,624 in existing state restricted funds from its Jail Diversion (CORE) grant. In 2009, the Alexandria Community Services Board (ACSB) was awarded annual ongoing funding (\$242,000) to support the creation of Collaboration of Recovery and Re-Entry (CORE) from the Department of Behavioral Health and

Developmental Services. CORE funding supports three primary deliverables: a Jail Diversion Coordinator at the ACSB; a Mental Health Probation Officer at State Probation and Parole; and funding needed to purchase individualized services for mentally ill persons involved in the criminal justice system. The portion of the grant funds targeted to purchase individualized services has been consistently underutilized and can be reprogrammed to support the Mental Health Probation Officer.

BACKGROUND: CORE is one of a number of Jail Diversion activities in Alexandria aimed at helping mentally ill persons live law abiding lives in the community. The CORE program provides intensive supervision and support to mentally ill persons supervised by the State Office of Probation and Parole, helping them succeed with the conditions of their probation and remain out of jail. After two years, the program's outcome data indicate significant success: CORE participants spend on average 65% fewer days in Jail one year after CORE involvement versus one year prior to CORE involvement. CORE is regularly recognized by the State Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services as a model for the State and was recently recognized by Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli as a program that should be replicated across Virginia.

In November 2010, Alexandria hosted a Cross Systems Mapping workshop. Over two days, more than 50 participants from Alexandria's Courts, Commonwealth's Attorney, Public Defender, Police, Sheriff's Office, ACSB, and other human services and criminal justice agencies came together to review the status of Alexandria's efforts to help divert mentally ill persons away from the criminal justice system. The result of the Mapping event was an Action Plan that identified five community priorities. One of these priorities was to support ACJS in developing a program similar to CORE to help address the many needs of mentally ill persons served by this office.

Data indicate that currently, about 50 of the approximate 500 persons under ACJS supervision have a serious mental illness. Current ACJS staffing does not allow for the individualized and intensive supervision and support needed to help these clients succeed.

The new ACJS Mental Health Probation Officer (MHPO) would carry a caseload of approximately 40-50 seriously mentally ill persons. This caseload is roughly one-half to one-third that of other ACJS Probation Officers, allowing the MHPO the time needed to provide intensive support and supervision to help mentally ill clients succeed with the conditions of their supervision. The MHPO would have frequent contact with clients, provide individual and groups support and case management, coordinate closely with the ACSB and other human service providers, and be an active member of the CCJB's Jail Diversion Subcommittee. As with the CORE program at State Probation and Parole, data would be maintained and analyzed to demonstrate the success of the program.

FISCAL IMPACT: Approval of the Contingent Reserve allocation and position allows the Sheriff's Office to begin recruitment of the position in FY 2012, with an anticipated hire date in FY 2013. Unspent funds from the Contingent Reserve allocation can be carried over to FY 2013. The FY 2013 cost for the position is estimated at \$87,624, which includes a salary of \$61,706 (Grade 19, Step D) and benefits of \$25,918.

In FY 2010, City Council approved setting aside \$60,000 in contingent reserves to fund the creation of an additional sober living unit in the Sheriff's Office. It is proposed that these funds be repurposed to support the Mental Health Probation Officer. In addition, the restricted State funds used to support CORE are consistently underutilized. As such, approximately \$27,624 is available through the ACSB to help support the creation of the Mental Health Probation Officer position. As the expenses for the position increase in future years due to higher salary and benefit costs, the ACSB will continue to fund a consistent portion of the position (i.e., 31%) with special revenue funds. Should the Jail Diversion grant decrease or be eliminated in future years, the position may be eliminated if no ongoing special revenue funds can be identified to provide continued support.

The \$60,000 from contingent reserves is a one-time funding source. To continue to fund the other 69% of the cost of this position past FY 2013 requires additional funding. The increase in the general fund budget in FY 2014 to fund this position will be considered through the development of the FY 2014 Proposed Operating Budget and, if proposed by the City Manager for inclusion, will be presented as an increase in funding in the budget document.

ATTACHMENTS: None.

STAFF:

Dana Lawhorne, Sheriff

Michael Gilmore, PhD, Director, Department of Community and Community Services (DCHS)

Cindy Catlett, Fiscal Officer, Sheriff's Office

Liz Wixson, Director of Clinical and Emergency Services, DCHS

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5-8-12

Jackie Henderson

From: Desha Hall-Winstead
Sent: Monday, May 07, 2012 4:02 PM
To: Jackie Henderson
Cc: Michele Evans; Dana Lawhorne; Liz Wixson
Subject: ACCJB Letter of Support
Attachments: Letter[1].pdf

Hi Jackie:

The Alexandria Community Criminal Justice Board wanted City Council Members to have this letter of support for the proposed establishment of a new Mental Health Probation Officer within the Sheriff's Office/Alexandria Criminal Justice Services (ACJS).

If possible, can this letter be forwarded to Council Members prior to tomorrow night's meeting?

thank you,

Desha Hall-Winstead, MSW

Director - Alexandria Criminal Justice Services

Local Probation & Pretrial Services

(703) 746-4547 -Main Line

(703) 838-3898 -Fax

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Alexandria Criminal Justice Services
Local Probation & Pretrial Services



DANA LAWHORNE
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Program Coordinator

Shennell M. Coit
Project Director

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Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 746-4547
Fax (703) 838-3898

May 7, 2012

Dear City Council Members:

I send this letter representing the Alexandria Community Criminal Justice Board's unanimous support, as voted on May 3, 2012, for the establishment of a new Mental Health Probation Officer within the Sheriff's Office/Alexandria Criminal Justice Services (ACJS). This position is needed to provide intensive supervision and support to local probationers and persons on pretrial services who have a serious mental illness and/or substance use disorder, in order to help decrease their recidivism and help them live law abiding lives in the community.

Currently, a similar Mental Health Probation Officer position exists within the State Office of Probation and Parole. Recognizing the positive outcomes of this position in helping individuals succeed with the conditions of their probation and remain out of jail, ACCJB supports a replication of this model of service within ACJS.

Establishment of a MHPO for ACJS will advance the objective in City Council's strategic plan around full implementation of Jail Diversion activities in the City. An interagency workshop on "Cross-Systems Mapping" in November 2010 prioritized needs for Alexandria's criminal justice and behavioral health community. One of these priorities was to advocate for resources for Local Probation/ACJS.

The proposed MHPO position in ACJS would carry a substantially smaller caseload than that of other ACJS Probation Officers, allowing the MHPO the time needed to provide intensive support and supervision of clients as well as close coordination of services with the Alexandria Community Services Board and other human service providers, and to participate as an active member of the ACCJB's Jail Diversion Subcommittee. As with the CORE program at State Probation and Parole, data would be maintained and analyzed to demonstrate the success of the program.

The ACCJB appreciates your support in establishing this much needed community service.

Sincerely,

Raighne Delaney / mvd

Raighne Delaney
ACCJB Chairman