

**Law Enforcement & Public Safety Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes**

DATE & TIME: May 5, 2021 – 5:15 PM
LOCATION: Powered by Zoom Meeting by Dialing (646) 558-8656
Meeting ID: 960 4010 1651
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chairwoman Eve Walter
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Jay Mahler, Deputy Clerk
PRESENT: Legislators Fabiano, Haynes, Heppner & Parete
ABSENT: None
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislators Lopez & Petit, Legislative Counsel Cueva, Sheriff Figueroa & Col. Mallard – UC Sheriff’s Office, Deputy County Executive Milgrim

Chairwoman Walter called the meeting to order at 5:16 PM.

Motion No. 1: Moved to **APPROVE** the Minutes & Transcript of the April 7, 2021 Meeting

Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano

Discussion: None

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 5
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Minutes & Transcripts APPROVED**

Chairwoman Walter presented a Proclamation to the Sheriff in recognition of Correctional Officers Week, Police Week and Peace officer Memorial Day.

See attached transcript.

Resolutions for the May 18, 2021 Session of the Legislature

Resolution No. 198: Authorizing The Chair Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute An Agreement With The Ulster County Board Of Cooperative Educational Services To Provide A Deputy Sheriff As School Resource Officer – Ulster County Sheriff

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves the Chair to execute an agreement with the BOCES School District to provide a Deputy Sheriff to serve as a School Resource Officer for the term July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 in the amount of \$52,197.62.

Resolution No. 199: Authorizing The Chair Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute An Agreement With The Onteora Central School District To Provide A Deputy Sheriff As School Resource Officer – Ulster County Sheriff

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves the Chair to execute an agreement with the Onteora Central School District to provide a Deputy Sheriff to serve as a School Resource Officer for the term September 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 in the amount of \$105,162.08.

Resolution No. 200: Authorizing The Chair Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute An Agreement With The Rondout Valley Central School District To Provide A Deputy Sheriff As School Resource Officer – Ulster County Sheriff

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves the Chair to execute an agreement with the Rondout Valley Central School District to provide a Deputy Sheriff to serve as a School Resource Officer for the term April 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 in the amount of \$134,537.00.

Motion No. 2: **Moved To BLOCK RESOLUTION NOS. 198, 199, 200**
Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Parete

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 5
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolutions BLOCKED**

Motion No. 3: **Moved BLOCK FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Haynes
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Heppner

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: Legislator Walter
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 1
Disposition: **Resolutions ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 201: Authorizing The Chair Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute An Application For A Department Of Homeland Security – FEMA – Port Security Grant – Ulster County Sheriff

Resolution Summary: This resolution authorizes the Chair to execute the application for the Department of Homeland Security-FEMA-Port Security Grant in an amount up to \$138,233.00 to increase port-wide risk management and protect critical surface transportation infrastructure from acts of terrorism, major disaster, and other emergencies.

Motion No. 4: **Moved Resolution No. 201 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Haynes

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 5
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 202: Authorizing The Chair Of The Ulster County Legislature To Enter Into An Agreement With The Department Of Justice For Asset Forfeiture - Ulster County Sheriff

Resolution Summary: This resolution authorizes the Chair to enter into an agreement with the Department of Justice for the reporting of asset forfeitures through the Asset Forfeiture eShare Access.

Motion No. 5: **Moved Resolution No. 202 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Haynes

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 5
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 203: Amending The 2021 Ulster County Budget To Adjust The Annual Salary Of The Opioid Use Disorder Systems Specialist (COSSAP Grant) - Ulster County Sheriff

Resolution Summary: This resolution amends the 2021 Ulster County Budget in increase the Ulster County Opioid Use Disorder Systems Specialist 2021 annual salary to \$71,994.

Motion No. 6: **Moved Resolution No. 203 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Haynes

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 5
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 204: Amending The 2021 Ulster County Budget To Adjust The Annual Salary Of The Assistant Warden - Ulster County Sheriff

Resolution Summary: This resolution amends the 2021 Ulster County Budget in increase the Ulster County Assistant Warden annual salary to \$95,962.

Motion No. 7: **Moved Resolution No. 204 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Haynes

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 5
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 205: Approving The Execution Of A Contract Amendment For \$8,640.00, Causing The Aggregate Contract Plus Amendment Amount To Be In Excess Of \$50,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Touch Legal, Inc. – Ulster County Sheriff

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves the execution of a contract amendment with Touch Legal, Inc. in the amount of \$8,640 to extend the term of agreement for maintenance and support of mobile law library kiosks in the UC Jail through March 31, 2022.

Motion No. 8: **Moved Resolution No. 205 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Haynes

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 5
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 206: Establishing Capital Project No. 592 – Ulster County Law Enforcement Center Fire Alarm & Heating/Cooling Controls Upgrade — Department Of Public Works (Buildings & Grounds)

Resolution Summary: This resolution establishes Capital Project No. 592 in the amount of \$600,000 for Ulster County Law Enforcement Center Fire Alarm & Heating/Cooling Controls Upgrade.

Motion No. 9: **Moved Resolution No. 206 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Haynes

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 5

Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 208: Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$357,624.14 Entered Into By The County – ADT Commercial, LLC D/B/A Red Hawk Fire & Security (NY) – Department Of Public Works

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves the execution of a contract with ADT Commercial, LLC d/b/a Red Hawk Fire & Security (NY) in the amount of \$357,624.14 from June 1, 2021 through May 31, 2022 for the replacement of the fire alarm system at the Ulster County Law Enforcement Center.

Motion No. 10: **Moved Resolution No. 208 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 5
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 209: Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$208,300.00 Entered Into By The County – Eastern Heating & Cooling, Inc. – Department Of Public Works

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves the execution of a contract with Eastern Heating & Cooling, Inc. in the amount of \$208,300 to upgrade the autologic HVAC controls at the Ulster County Law Enforcement Center from June 1, 2021 through May 31, 2022.

Motion No. 11: **Moved Resolution No. 209 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Haynes
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Heppner

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 5
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 242: Setting A Public Hearing On Proposed Local Law No. 3 Of 2021, A Local Law Amending Local Law No. 7 of 2014, A Local Law Respecting the Outdoor Restraint of Companion Animals, To Be Held On Tuesday, June 15, 2021 At 7:15 PM

Resolution Summary: This resolution set a Public Hearing on Proposed Local Law No. 3 of 2021 on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 7:15 PM to provide an opportunity for comments to be heard.

Motion No. 12: **Moved Resolution No. 242 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Haynes

Discussion: See attached transcript

Motion No. 13: **Moved TO POSTPONE Resolution No. 242**
Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Haynes, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 5
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution POSTPONED**

Chairwoman Walter updated the members on the Criminal Justice Reform Task Force.

See attached transcript.

Chairwoman Walter moved on to New Business and advised the members that Chairman Donaldson requested each committee consider opportunities to utilize American Rescue Plan Funding for projects and/or programs She recognized Legislator Lopez to share a proposal.

See attached transcript.

Chairwoman Walter moved on to Old Business and led a discussion on committee's vote the previous month to hold a hearing on the increase in violent crime in Ulster County.

See attached transcript.

Motion No. 9: **Moved to postpone the Hearing to hold a Special Meeting within the next month to hear presentations from the Sheriff, District Attorney and officers responsible for responding to violence on the current county programs.**
Motion By: Chairwoman Walter
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Heppner

Discussion: See attached transcript

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Heppner & Walter
Voting Against: Legislators Haynes & Parete
Votes in Favor: 3
Votes Against: 2
Disposition: **Motion Adopted**

Chairwoman Walter asked the members if there was any other new or old business, and hearing none;

Adjournment

Motion Made By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano
No. of Votes in Favor: 5
No. of Votes Against: 0

TIME: 6:35 PM

Respectfully submitted: Deputy Clerk Mahler
Approved: June 2, 2021

**Law Enforcement & Public Safety Committee
Regular Meeting Transcript**

DATE & TIME: May 5, 2021 – 5:15 PM
LOCATION: Powered by Zoom Meeting by Dialing (646) 558-8656
Meeting ID: 960 4010 1651
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chairwoman Eve Walter
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Jay Mahler, Deputy Clerk
PRESENT: Legislators Fabiano, Haynes, Heppner & Parete
ABSENT: None
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislators Lopez & Petit, Legislative Counsel Cueva, Sheriff Figueroa & Col. Mallard – UC Sheriff's Office, Deputy County Executive Milgrim

Chairwoman Walter called the meeting to order at 5:16 PM.

Chairwoman Walter

We will call this meeting to order of the Law Enforcement Public Safety May 5th 2021. Yes, I did have to scroll the agenda to see what day it was today. I'll take a motion to approve the April 7th meeting minutes and transcripts.

Legislator Heppner

I'll second it I'll move it.

Legislator Fabiano

I'll second it

Chairwoman Walter

Okay, all in favor?

Committee Members

Aye.

Chairwoman Walter

Great, the next thing we have is a proclamation but unfortunately, I have to grab it. So, one second. Sorry about that. Okay. So, I have legislative a Ulster County Legislative Proclamation. We were, which Jay is holding right up there we will hand to the Sheriff whenever that is possible. This is sort of happening off cycle. So rather than make it at the full Legislature, we're going to do it here in Law Enforcement, Public Safety, you'll understand when we do it. Today marks one of the days and the other day is shortly in the future. So,

Whereas, May 15 of each year was first proclaimed as National Peace Officers Memorial Day, and the week within which the day falls as National Police Week, by a Joint Resolution of the 87th Congress, and signed into law by President John F. Kennedy on October 1, 1962, and

Whereas, on May 5, 1984 President Ronald Regan issued Proclamation 5187 declaring the first full week in May as National Correctional Officers Week, and

Whereas, law enforcement officers perform an essential public service under difficult circumstances, especially today with unprecedented challenges from increasing national unrest and the COVID pandemic, and

Whereas, Ulster County's Deputy Sheriffs and other police officers are selfless public servants who accept as part of their profession being exposed to great danger in order to protect the life and property others, and

Whereas, Ulster County's Correctional Officers and employees are tasked with securely, safely and humanely keeping those in the Ulster County Correctional Facility, while respecting the rights and dignity of all inmates, whether having been found guilty or awaiting adjudication, and

Whereas, the Ulster County Legislature is desirous of recognizing the difficulties faced by those in law enforcement and acknowledging the good work of these dedicated persons, and

Whereas, having demonstrated a steadfast commitment to community, and an unfaltering support of all who have served, those who continue to serve, and especially, those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty,

Now, therefore, I David B. Donaldson, but this is Eve Walter speaking on his behalf, Chairman of Ulster County Legislature, do hereby direct this honorable body to pause in its deliberations to recognize and honor Ulster County's law enforcement officers by declaring May 2 - 8 2021 as Correctional Officers Week, which is this week, May 9 - 15 2021 as Police Week and May 15 2021, as Peace Officer Memorial Day.

Thank you, and thank you, Sheriff, for all the work that you and everyone in your staff do for our county.

Sheriff Figueroa

May I speak?

Chairwoman Walter

Oh, yes, please do.

Sheriff Figueroa

I, first and foremost, I want to thank the Chairman of the Legislature, the Chairman and Law Enforcement Committee, and all the members of the Legislature, for acknowledging the tough work and the times that these men and women have been going through accepting the responsibilities and knowing our past and, and you know, making the changes that were needed and moving forward. And acknowledging the, the work that they do. I want to sincerely thank all the members of the Legislature for everything that you do for all of us as well. Thank you.

Chairwoman Walter

Thank you, Juan. All right. So, we will with that move on to the Resolutions for a

Deputy Clerk Mahler

Chairwoman Walter, if I can just beg a moment of your time? I'm going to let in a number I'm not familiar with and I just want to have the caller identify

Chairwoman Walter

Absolutely

Deputy Clerk Mahler

Good evening caller from XXX-XXX-XXXX. Could we please have your name for the record?

Col. Evelyn Mallard

Evelyn Mallard.

Deputy Clerk Mahler

Great. Thank you, Evelyn.

Chairwoman Walter

Okay. with that, I would like to take a motion to block Resolution 198, 199 and 200. They are all SRO requests.

Legislator Heppner

I'll move it.

Chairwoman Walter

Second.

Legislator Parete

I'll second it

Chairwoman Walter

All in favor of the Block?

Committee Members

Aye.

Chairwoman Walter

Okay, motion to discuss? The three Resolutions together?

Legislator Haynes

I'll make that motion, Haynes

Chairwoman Walter

Haynes. Second?

Legislator Heppner

I'll second.

Chairwoman Walter

Heppner, okay, any specific discussion? Just I'm going to just say so I can explain my vote I, I strongly support our law enforcement being engaged with our youth and creating a safe, comfortable environment for the, and relationship

between the two. And I support all of the work that I understand SRO officers do in the schools. I personally have difficulty with the idea that SRO officers carry weapons into the schools. I feel like it establishes an environment that either suggests that our kids themselves are unsafe, or that there is a risk which empirically is exceedingly low and has no, in my mind, support that an SRO with a gun actually would reduce that risk of an outsider coming in. So I also understand that it, this is not costing us anything, this is the money from, from BOCES to the school districts, but I just need to clarify why I won't be voting in favor of this personally. And it has nothing to do with my respect for the actual SRO officers. Any other comments or statements?

Legislator Parete

May I?

Legislator Walter

Yes, Legislator Parete.

Legislator Parete

Madam Chair, um, your concerns that you just expressed. When you relate them to the school board's what kind of response did you get?

Legislator Walter

So, thank you. I mean, the school board's make their own decisions. And for the same reason, some school boards have decided not to have SRO officers. I know that Rondout had decided it then brought it back. You know, I recognize the fear that parents have, whether founded or unfounded by empirical facts. but, you know, it's more of the what ifs that is very frightening to people. And I understand that. But yes, some I mean, the school district in the, where, in the municipality I represent, have stopped using SRO officers many years ago. So, I represent my voting constituents in my perspective.

Legislator Parete

Okay.

Chairwoman Walter

Any other comments? Go ahead Sheriff.

Sheriff Figueroa

And I respect your position Chairwoman Walter. Of course, being someone who's been in law enforcement for 30 years, I think the SROs aren't the old Tackleberry types that were put into schools because they were, had a chip on their shoulders. These SROs are different. They are respected by their schools. They're respected by the, the kids that are in the schools are actually [inaudible] themselves. I understand the concerns of the many inner city schools that have issues with SROs, but with these SROs are trained, there's a new program called C Pass that the states or associations put together to show best practices for SROs. And of course, the importance of having the layout and understanding of schools and the potential issues in the what if job that we have of protecting our youth in case of any potential school shootings. I know that they haven't happened here. But we are in that position that to make sure that we protect our children, but I do respect and understand the Chair's concerns.

Chairwoman Walter

Okay, so all in favor of the block of the Resolution 198 - 200.

Committee Members

Aye

Chairwoman Walter

Opposed? Abstained? Okay, it passes. Next we have Resolution Number 201 authorizing the Chair of the Ulster County. Nope. Yes. Of the Ulster County Legislature to execute an application for Department of Homeland Security FEMA port security grant with the Sheriff. And this is the boat grant? No? Sheriff. Oh, wait. A motion to discuss?

Legislator Heppner

I'll move it.

Legislator Haynes

I'll second it. Haynes.

Chairwoman Walter

Okay. Go ahead Sheriff.

Sheriff Figueroa

I wanted to correct what I stated earlier in the week. This is actually permission to put in for a grant. This particular grant is for upgrading of our drones that we use in the newly formed North Hudson Task Force. The drones are utilized to look at the choke points of the icing that occurs in the Hudson River that allows the United States Coast Guard to bring their ice breakers through our areas to have commercial vessels go through our area. The it's also upgrade of technologies in order for us to communicate not only with our, our boats, but those boats of the United States Coast Guard. 75% is fed granted, 25% will come from the county but half of that 25% will be also paid for by the Parks and Recreations of the State of New York.

Chairwoman Walter

Have we had these drones before?

Sheriff Figueroa

We presently have drones now. they're old that we have paid for out of our own taxpayer funds. But being that this grant was available we decided to put in for it. And this is strictly to get permission to put in for the grants. I think we have a pretty good shot at getting it we have a very good relationship with the United States Coast Guard. As a matter of fact, on Friday I'm going to their [inaudible] with the captain of the port in Staten Island

Chairwoman Walter

Is this shared with Dutchess since the Hudson River basically is there as well?

Sheriff Figueroa

This is strictly ours and it will be utilized to assist the United States Coast Guard. And that's what the grant is for.

Chairwoman Walter

Other Legislators? Any questions? Comments? Okay, all in favor of Resolution 201?

Committee Members

Aye

Chairwoman Walter

Opposed? Abstained? Okay. Next we have Resolution 202 authorizing the Chair of Ulster County Legislature to enter into an agreement with the Department of Justice for assets forfeiture. This is the new asset tracker. Correct? Motion to discuss?

Legislator Heppner

I'll move it

Legislator Haynes

Second Haynes.

Chairwoman Walter

Second hands. All right. Any discussion on this? Sheriff.

Sheriff Figueroa

So that this is the new E-Share program and it's an annual required report that tracks asset forfeiture funds between the federal government and local entities like our county.

Chairwoman Walter

Okay, any other discussion? All in favor of Resolution number 202?

Committee Members

Aye.

Legislator Walter

Any opposed? Abstentions? Okay. Next we have Resolution 203 amending the 2021 Ulster County budget to adjust the annual salary of the opioid use disorder system specialists in the COSSAP grant. Again, the Ulster County Sheriff. Motion to discuss?

Legislator Heppner

I'll move it.

Chairwoman Walter

Okay.

Legislator Haynes

Second

Chairwoman Walter

Second Haynes. Any discussion? Sheriff? Do you want to just fill us in about the budget change?

Sheriff Figueroa

So, this is an allocation of grant funds within the grant. Because it's less than 10%. We don't have to go to the federal government and get that amended. So, these are funds that are within the grant. And the issue that we were having was unable to locate someone that of hire someone that was qualified to work as a social worker. we had to adjust the salary in order to hire someone that not only is an expert in opioid use disorder, but also mental health. So, it was a tremendous find that we have in order to find someone with these qualifications in order to hire. We had the advisor that we would, and we did talk to the federal COSSAP folks, and they said we can do it because it's within the 10%. So, we're just asking for an allocation of reallocation of that within the grant funds of COSSAP to hire her, which we did hire her.

Chairwoman Walter

So, she's already, just to clarify. So, she's already been hired with the expectation of this higher salary?

Sheriff Figueroa

Yes, ma'am.

Chairwoman Walter

And if for some reason it didn't get approved by the Legislature, what would be the implication?

Sheriff Figueroa

Then we would have to tell her I wouldn't get approved. But we assume they would get approved because it was within the federal grants, and it's not going to be any taxpayer money.

Chairwoman Walter

And one of the things that had come up in the Chairs meeting and, John, I don't know if you found it was clarification in the agreement that this position was only for the time period of the grant? And that we were not necessarily supporting the position after the grant is done. Did you, were able to confirm that that was the language?

Deputy Executive Milgrim

I'm sorry were you speaking to me? I do not. I think Marc was going to look at the language. But that was typically with grants such as this that have a definite time period. That is the understanding. I mean, I I don't believe that this was handled any differently than we typically would. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think that was the understanding. This was a definite time period for the grant. If the grant runs out, that's it for this position. It's just limited to the actual grant.

Sheriff Figueroa

These grants, if they show success, we can reapply and get the grant.

Chairwoman Walter

Right, I guess the question is whether she under, that this person understands, and anyone else hired on the grant, that once the grant is over, unless there's other funding, there's not a guarantee of continuation?

Sheriff Figueroa

They were advised at that.

Chairwoman Walter

Legislator Fabiano you're on mute.

Deputy Clerk Mahler

If you hover over your face, Dean, hover over your own face, you should be able to see an unmute button. Just put the cursor right over your own face.

Deputy Executive Milgrim

Yeah, just move the cursor.

Deputy Clerk Mahler

And then you should see unmute.

Chairwoman Walter

I'm gonna let Legislator Heppner go while we're, while Legislator Fabiano figures it out. Legislator Heppner?

Legislator Heppner

Yes. Thank you. To the Sheriff, if I may. So, this additional salary increase? Was that already just available funds, like you mentioned in the grant, but it stopped being taking away from anything that was already committed programmatically?

Sheriff Figueroa

That's correct. First we, the federal fiscal year starts in October. We didn't hire anybody. And we hired her until April. So, the funding for her would be covered for three years based on that. And because it was less than 10%. We didn't have to go and do an amendment to the COSSAP grant itself.

Chairwoman Walter

Legislator Fabiano?

Legislator Fabiano

Can you hear me now? Okay. No, I was just wondering what the Sheriff has said that, that lady was informed. I know, we passed this a few years ago that when a grant money ran out, they were supposed to be told after they were hired or when they turned, turned in their application once the grant was over with and they would have to leave. So, but he said he she was told.

Chairwoman Walter

Yeah. And if Sheriff if perhaps, when this comes up for ways and means we could just get the make sure confirm that the language on the original agreement specifies that it's for the time period of the grant. It should I think it's boilerplate, but let's just confirm it.

Sheriff Figueroa

I will check.

Chairwoman Walter

Thanks. Legislator Petit.

Legislator Petit

Thank you. Yes, we have over the last couple of years been making sure that there is that language within the Resolution. I was just looking for it real quick. I don't know if I saw it, but it has that you know, essentially sunset clause that the position may be no longer be available if there's a question of the grant funding. But I don't know if Deputy County Executive Milgrim sees it in there. Like I said I was trying to pull just the Resolution part up but generally that's in so you know, and Amber's been keeping track of these grants. They are [inaudible]

Chairwoman Walter

Yeah, that's I mean we it's likely they are we just wanted confirmation So again, I think we don't need to hold up this unless you found it John? Milgrim. Okay. I think it just for the for the Ways and Means meeting if we could just have that so that I don't see any. You know, I don't know I personally feel okay, moving forward on it now and letting that you know, we can just confirm that then?

Legislator Heppner

Agreed.

Chairwoman Walter

Okay, so all in favor of Resolution number 204.

Committee Members

Aye

Chairwoman Walter

Okay, opposed? Abstained? All right. Next we have Resolution 205 approving the execution of a contract amendment for eight.

Deputy Clerk Mahler

That was 203, you are on 204.

Chairwoman Walter

Ah, thanks. Resolution Number 204 amending the 2021 Ulster County budget to adjust the annual salary of the Assistant Warden, Ulster County Sheriff. Motion to discuss?

Legislator Heppner

I'll move it

Chairwoman Walter

Second?

Legislator Haynes

I'll second

Chairwoman Walter

Second, Haynes. Okay, so Sheriff, you want to give us some background?

Sheriff Figueroa

So the, the Assistant Warden, just a little background. Once the Assistant Warden and Major retire, they will not get any overtime because they're in a specific union of management, which will be abolished once those, the individuals that are in the positions now leave. Right now they get overtime. Well, they will not get over time upon, upon retirement of the two individuals, the Warden and the assistant Warden. The Warden is not retiring until hopefully a couple of years. He's not retiring anytime soon. So we're focusing on the Assistant Warden because he is retiring and he's retiring this month.

The issue is that the Lieutenants that will be the positions that would, the experienced positions that will take the assistant Warden position and the next rank up is Captain make at least \$20,000 more than the Warden. and no individual in particular, a Lieutenant who has a family, a mortgage and kids is going to take a \$20,000 cut. And that's the case in a lot of our management positions. The difference with this particular management position though, including yours truly, the difference is that he's in charge of overseeing a facility of 147 correctional staff to include 10 civilians. He also handles all of the evaluations and inquiries involving the staff. He's the important records management person, but jail management and the state commission on corrections. He's also our accreditation manager. And he oversees the daily operations. And this right now we have 210 inmates. So he is the overseer of those day to day operations. He handles jail investigations and inmate time calculations. And he's the liaison with the county attorney when it comes [inaudible].

This an extremely important position that we cannot leave open. And the only position the only folks that are qualified to take those are those six lieutenants and none of them will take it when that is a \$20,000 pay cut. So we are asking that this position be amended to the request that's in the Resolution so that we can, when the captain does retire, that we can promote one of those Lieutenants and that, they will take that job.

Chairwoman Walter

Questions or comments? I have the question of when, how did this problem occur? Like it's is it that Lieutenant salaries just got inflated over time that it eventually got higher? Because you would think naturally a Lieutenant salary would be lowered. Like what happened last time the Assistant Warden left that you got you obviously had someone to fill that space. So, what occurred that there's this disparity now?

Sheriff Figueroa

The Lieutenants are part of the SEA collective bargaining unit. They are part of the union with the corrections officers where those two positions are management and are a separate union. So, they're not the same union and they're not, they don't have the same, you know, [inaudible]. And the other issue is that speaking of longevity, just add that into the mix. longevity gets paid off at the beginning of the year. So instead of longevity being broken out throughout the year, like most of the Lieutenants that Captain and Major in particular, the more important one is that of the Major because he's retiring. They put that in a lump sum at the beginning of the year. So he gets tax immediately. That sunsets once they retire because they're not part of that and they're not part of any union once those two retire. That's what why this is such a big issue.

Chairwoman Walter

Legislator Fabiano.

Legislator Fabiano

Yes, Sheriff now was this situation known that it was coming at the time of the budget process? This came, or this came after the fact?

Sheriff Figueroa

This has been going on for years, I brought it up the attention of our folks last year, but it wasn't put into the budget because of the COVID-19.

Legislator Fabiano

I just, I don't have a problem with it. I mean, I feel if you're, if you're receiving more responsibility on your job, you obviously should be compensated for that added responsibility. I was just wondering why the timing.

Sheriff Figueroa

This issue throughout the county as the Sheriff, regardless of my pension, because I earned that pension, as I make 101. The Undersheriff makes 103 the Captain makes about 130. And the same thing happens, and these are 24/7 operations. You get called out, you got to come out. And you're exactly right Legislator, nobody wants a job with more responsibilities and less pay, and particularly when you have a mortgage and children.

Legislator Fabiano

Right.

Chairwoman Walter

It's an interesting problem where as long as the Lieutenants union keeps upping their amount for us to have, you know, parity, we have to we have to keep upping our amount to make it seem fair, and it just it's, it's challenging scenario. Because I could just see them getting a 5-10,000 dollar raise, and we'll be back in this situation all over again. It's almost like that union is helping everybody get a raise, because of the effort to have this balance.

Legislator Fabiano

I just like to say

Chairwoman Walter

Go ahead Legislator Fabiano

Legislator Fabiano

Yeah, I just have one more thing. I know where I work, maybe it's time that the county starts looking at what I call entry level pay. you know, somebody has been in a position for 10 or 15 or 20 years. And it keeps rising, rising, rising, that doesn't mean when they retire, that the new individual comes in and starts right where they're leaving off. Sometimes if you do what they call entry level fee, and then work their way back up. might be a way to help the taxpayers and save a few dollars. We do that I know in our town with, with different positions and that.

Sheriff Figueroa

Just wanted to add that that that those that funding is actually coming out from within the Sheriff's budget. So it's not any additional funding that I'm asking the Legislature for. There are two part time corrections officers very difficult to hire part time corrections officers because you have to go through a three week Academy and most folks that have full time jobs aren't going to go full time three weeks, for a part time CO.

So we're going to read line two of those part time corrections officers positions to help offset the costs for the Assistant Warden and within the operational funds of the Sheriff's office.

Chairwoman Walter

Thank you. Any other questions or comments? Legislator Heppner?

Legislator Heppner

Yeah, I think I totally agree with what you're saying Chairwoman Walter. Just the process seems you know, eventually, I mean, already, it seems just out of line. And somehow, you know, we're gonna keep facing this problem. But I appreciate the Sheriff's creativity to find the funds within the existing Sheriff's budget, which gives me the comfort at this moment to support it.

Chairwoman Walter

Okay, any other comments or questions? All right. All. Sorry. All in favor of Resolution number 204.

Committee Members

Aye

Chairwoman Walter

Opposed? Abstentions? All right. Next, we have Resolution 205, approving the execution of a contract for \$8,640 causing the aggregate contract plus amendment amount to be in excess of \$50,000 entered into the county for touch legal incorporated by the Sheriff again. Motion to discuss?

Legislator Heppner

I'll move it.

Chairwoman Walter

Second?

Legislator Haynes

Haynes

Chairwoman Walter

Haynes. Sheriff, do you want to just quickly tell us what this one is?

Sheriff Figueroa

I got to look it up. I'm sorry

Chairwoman Walter

205. The law library at the jail.

Sheriff Figueroa

Yeah, it's just the law library. I'm sorry.

Chairwoman Walter

It's okay.

Deputy Executive Milgrim

The Mobile Law Library.

Chairwoman Walter

Yeah. Okay. Any other Any discussion? All right. I moved forward, all in favor of Resolution 205? Opposed? Abstained? Next we have Resolution 206 establishing Capital Project number 592 with the Ulster County law enforcement center, fire alarm, heating, cooling control upgrade. Department of Public Works. Motion to discuss?

Committee Members

Aye

Legislator Heppner

I'll move it

Chairwoman Walter

Second?

Legislator Haynes

Haynes

Chairwoman Walter

Okay, any discussion? Any questions about this one? Can I ask? I mean, since our Legislator Greene is not here, are there any efforts in these heating cooling upgrades that are green?

Deputy Executive Milgrim

Asking the Sheriff? Asking me, or?

Chairwoman Walter

whoever has the answer.

Deputy Executive Milgrim

I do know that there was the survey done at the LEC not too long ago, I believe last year. This is essentially what they're looking to purchase was the most efficient and clean that was able to handle them, the load essentially for, for the facility. Every single one of these purchases, we do try to find an alternative.

Chairwoman Walter

So is it, is it, is it, has it been determined that solar is not a possibility of the jail property?

Deputy Executive Milgrim

For heating system or cooling?

Chairwoman Walter

Yes

Sheriff Figueroa

I can answer some of that. So, the heating system's actually being transferred from fuel to gas through Central Hudson. We put a brand new line in last year, so one of the three systems have been upgraded, it's going to save the county in the long run, when all three are replaced. I would strongly recommend that the Legislature members at some point, come in and look at the infrastructure of this building. It truly is an amazing, it's a big building, and it costs a lot, we've been doing improvements. A lot of parts of the building, there were no light switches. And they're in the process of doing that they're also putting timers, in a lot of the areas that they were no timers in before to save money. I know that the county also replaced a lot of the lights are all LED lights now. So, 40% of the electric from this building, I was advised that from environment comes from the solar farm behind the Kingston mall. And that's something I found out when I first came into office.

Chairwoman Walter

That's true? 40% of this building is powered by solar? That's great.

Sheriff Figueroa

Well 40% of the money that's made from that solar farm behind the mall, cuts the cost for this building. I don't know if that number is 40%. That's what I was told. I don't know if that's 100% buildings or grounds would know that

Chairwoman Walter

I guess I would hope that now in 2021 and as we move our way out of focusing on COVID, that all of these capital projects always incorporate some element of a way to green even further. And even if even if it's not possible in the actual structure, then maybe it means adding, you know more trees to add, you know, reforestation. But there's, I feel like every each of these kinds of capital projects are so costly, that they should incorporate some kind of offset towards our environment. I don't know when we're going to start doing that. But it seems like we should have been. I just hope that that it would be great to know what all of those changes how that has helped reduce the footprint of the jail. Because I think it's time that we start working on that.

Sheriff Figueroa

Madam Chair, the reason why I know that the solar farm behind the mall is, pays off some of the electric here, is because I was I reached out to a company to put solar panels on our roof. And as you know, our roof has a lot of leaks even today. And the deal was to replace the roof and put solar panels to offset and because there's already a contract with a separate company, we couldn't do that. And that's why I know, maybe I may be wrong with that percentage, for whatever reason, 40% sticks in my mind, but that's why I know that there's a contract to offset the cost of this building with a solar farm that's behind the mall.

Chairwoman Walter

But also be you know, you're changing lightbulbs to lower energy. You know, there's a lot of ways to green a little bit, even if it's not completely. So there's hope that always stays in your mind. Other questions or comments? All right, on favor Resolution Number 206?

Committee Members

Aye

Chairwoman Walter

Opposed? Abstained? Okay. Resolution Number 208, approving the execution of a contract for \$357,624.14 entered into the county, ADP commercial, red hawk fire and security, and this is Department of Public Works. This is the replacement of the fire alarm system fire alarm system at the law enforcement center. Motion to discuss?

Legislator Heppner

I'll move it

Chairwoman Walter

Second?

Legislator Haynes

Haynes

Legislator Fabiano

Fabiano

Chairwoman Walter

Okay, you can figure it out Jay, who you want put. Any discussion on this? So the only thing I guess I have is we added to the 2021 budget the capital project of improving the locks in the jail. We were told that it was a very dangerous situation. I'm just wondering, Sheriff or John Milgrim, whether we would have a sense of when we're going to see that capital project get started?

Sheriff Figueroa

We are waiting on a quote from Black Creek and Black Creek is the system that oversees the entire security in this building. everything from our doors to the security cameras. And so we're just waiting to get that quote. And then we would submit that.

Chairwoman Walter

Thanks. Next we have Resolution Number 209. Wait, do we did we vote on this one?

Legislator Parete

No

Chairwoman Walter

Any other comments, questions? All right, all in favor of Resolution number 208?

Committee Members

Aye

Chairwoman Walter

Opposed? Abstentions? Alright, Resolution Number 209 approving the execution of a contract for \$208,300 entered into the county for Eastern cooling and heating Department of Public Works. And this is HVAC at the law enforcement center. The law enforcement center is getting a whole facelift here. Motion to discuss?

Legislator Haynes

I'll make that motion, Haynes

Chairwoman Walter

Haynes. Second?

Legislator Heppner

Second

Chairwoman Walter

Heppner. Any discussion on Resolution 209? I guess I'll just say everything I said for 206 I repeat for 209, for the record. Okay. Anyone else? All in favor of Resolution Number 209?

Committee Members

Aye

Chairwoman Walter

Opposed? Abstentions? All right. Next we have Resolution 242 Setting a public hearing on proposed local law number 3 of 2021 a local law amending local law number 7 of 2014. A local law respecting the outdoors restraint of companion, animals to be held Tuesday, June 15 2021. Motion to discuss?

Legislator Heppner

I'll move it

Legislator Haynes

Second, Haynes.

Chairwoman Walter

Okay. So Legislator Petit is here. Do you want to speak to this?

Legislator Petit

Sure. Thank you, Madam Chair. I forwarded revisions that I had received to you about half hour, 40 minutes ago, so you have not seen them. I had the executive director of the Ulster County SPCA, reach out. She thanked us because it is going to be important to tighten up some of the verbiage in this. So, she said it makes, it the, will make the tethering law more enforceable. And did ask that we pull the confinement definition out because she said that in and of itself is going to be a completely different law. So, with that, I would like you to entertain a motion to postpone it until next month. I will get you those revisions and we can discuss it a little bit further. She is available next month. She could not be here tonight because she's out in Marlborough with the, there's a hoarding case out there. It's taken three years and 79 cats but there's some forward movement.

Chairwoman Walter

Before I put that motion forward, does anyone else have a question or comments related to this? Legislator Heppner?

Legislator Heppner

Oh no, I was just going to offer the motion.

Chairwoman Walter

So, any other comments or questions regarding what this is before we make that motion? All right. So, go ahead, Legislator Heppner

Legislator Heppner

On behalf of Legislative Petit, I'll make the motion to postpone.

Chairwoman Walter

Okay, a second?

Legislator Fabiano

I'll second it.

Chairwoman Walter

Fabiano. Okay. All in favor of the postponement?

Committee Members

Aye

Chairwoman Walter

Opposed? abstained? Okay. Next we have the Criminal Justice Reform Task Force. It's moving along the, the end date is coming for July. So, working on a final report, including appendix with some suggested Resolutions for the Legislature to consider. The early draft of the Resolutions will be presented at the next Criminal Justice Reform Task Force meeting. So, if anyone wants to get, you know, pre pre look, an early look at it, feel free to come to that meeting, because we'll be talking about the language that group's been working very hard. And I guess that's it for that. Unless there's any questions about the taskforce?

Okay, so then next, under new business is the American Rescue Plan funding. So, you all saw the message from the Chair of the Legislature requesting that each committee consider from its own purview, potential uses for the American Rescue Plan funding? So what I would ask is that members of this committee consider in terms of law enforcement, public safety areas that perhaps, maybe were not able to be funded in 2021, or something innovative or new for us to discuss at our next meeting. I will say that, again, the Criminal Justice Reform Task Force does have a few elements to it that have a cost to it. So, they will be presented also. But please keep in mind, you know, any other thoughts that you have in the next meeting? What would be ideal is if you could share your ideas in some kind of brief draft with our committee prior, so that we each have a chance to kind of look it over and think about it and have questions beforehand would be great. If not, then we could just look, but we will add it to our agenda for the next meeting. Okay?

Legislator Lopez

I can just jump in for a second?

Chairwoman Walter

Absolutely

Legislator Lopez

Would you, because I, I came tonight with the understanding that, yeah, I would share my ideas. But if you would prefer that I put it, you know, together and introduce it to the committee next month, I don't have an issue with that either. So, whatever you would like is fine with me.

Chairwoman Walter

I guess what I would like I think, you know, I think it's fine to present it. But we'll all recognize that we need time to absorb it and think about it. So maybe we don't need to get down a whole rabbit hole about it, but at least hear it and have it in our minds moving forward. I think that that's fine. You know, I I don't know how, I prefer to have discussion when we had time to think about these ideas. But you know, deep discussion, but I unless anyone objects, I have no problem with Legislator Lopez just putting it forward his thoughts. Okay, go ahead, Legislator Lopez.

Legislator Lopez

Oh, yeah, no. It'll be brief. Yeah. As we're all aware, you know, we had some difficulty last year, and we had to make tough decisions as a Legislature with the anticipated budget shortfall as a result of the COVID shutdown and the loss of revenues. And that led to the Legislature cutting \$200,000 out of legislative programs, and part of those cuts also included \$5,000, from the \$10,000 that the county allocates annually to the Walker Valley Fire Department. So when I heard that the county was potentially but now that it's definitely going to receive this upwards of \$34 million, I couldn't pass up the opportunity to, you know, try to get these monies reallocated or back billed through this program, to the fire department.

And I was originally just going to introduce a Resolution but I wanted to go the way of how the Chairman suggested and that's, you know, come to the committee and have that discussion with you and, you know, bounce some thoughts off and if you had any questions on the best way to move forward to get this done, and, you know, I was open to any, any questions that you may have. So, but this is really important to the fire department, yeah. They don't have a large budget, and they count on these funds each year. So When they learned that, that \$10,000 was going to be cut in half, it was it was difficult for them. But if we have this opportunity where we can make them whole, with what I would guess these money should go to, I think that was kind of the idea was to make whole organizations, programs, municipalities, even some private businesses, if they qualify, that were affected, either directly or indirectly, as a result of the COVID shutdown.

So yeah, that's all if you want me to add some more detail in a written plan for it, I could submit that for next month, or if you have any questions for me tonight, and I'd be more than willing to answer them as well.

Chairwoman Walter

Thank you. Yeah. And thank you for also clarifying that the that there are some elements to what kinds of things we can fund, and it does need to have that they were impacted by COVID. So I guess what I would ask, and this is, creates a good example for whoever's providing something next month, it would be really great to have a sense of, I'm sure it came up in Legislative Programs, like what they said they would lose by losing that money. We had asked, I know, in the combined Legislative Program, Ways and Means each program to tell us sort of why, what was the impact of COVID? And what was the impact of losing that funding? So, I think it would be really helpful if you could just pull that together. It should be, already exist.

Legislator Lopez

Right. No, definitely I could speak to that now. But if you want, if you want me to put it in writing.

Chairwoman Walter

I think it would be nice to have, so that we can see all the ideas in front of us together, that everybody who's bringing up something can have a small preamble, sort of explaining why this is important, and how it's related to COVID. That would be great. And then then we could look at them all at you know, in, in one kind of law enforcement public safety package.

Legislator Lopez

Definitely. Yeah. No, I think that that's a good point.

Chairwoman Walter

Great. Thank you.

Legislator Lopez

Thank you

Chairwoman Walter

You're welcome. All right. So, anything else with the American Rescue Plan funding? Okay. So, in terms of old business, we had made a motion for a committee hearing on crime in the county. I don't know if that was exactly the formal title that we gave it? Slated for July. There, in the in the interim, between that meeting and this meeting. I know, I have done a bunch of research myself. I think Legislator Parete has perhaps done some research himself. I don't know if you want to speak first to this or whether you would like me to proceed, Legislator Parete?

Legislator Parete

Your choice. You're fine. You're the boss.

Chairwoman Walter

So, you know, I started by myself by trying to explore and understand the extent of the problem in our county, especially over the last year. being sensitive, not only to recognizing that there has been this gun related violence, for sure, in Kingston, but also respecting, like what Legislator Fabiano said, where is this something that's across the whole county? Or is this primarily a Kingston situation? And to understand how to respond. It's very challenging to get really up to date data. The Sheriff made some efforts, but most of the stuff that he was able to pull from DCJS does, it doesn't bring us to today, I mean, some of it just even into 2019 or 2020. And because I wanted to know by municipality so that we can identify like which municipalities were hard hit, so that we can identify if they're individuals within those municipalities that we would like to hear from.

So, it became a challenge to really have the answer to that question. So, and further exploration and speaking to individuals, like in the department of probation and others trying to understand. something that sort of came up to me was this idea that right now, we as a county, pass through state funding for two programs that are specifically two, more than two, but two specific programs related to violence, and that's our GIVE program, which is the Gun Involved Violence Elimination initiative. It's, it is targeted to Kingston because Kingston is one of the 17 municipalities in the state that has the highest level of violence overall. That's been since 2014, that GIVE money has come to Kingston. But if you know that that is our county seat. In addition to the GIVE initiative, we also have IPVI. when I spoke to Department of Probation, she was saying that when we expand the conversation, from guns to

assaults, it's really domestic violence and intimate partner violence that's really been a particular concern during COVID.

And the IPVI through the district attorney's office, is specifically focused on intimate partner violence. So what I'd like to propose for consideration is that we at this point, table this hearing, and have the next step be a request from the someone from who is managing the GIVE program, the gun violence program, someone who's managing the IPVI, and then I would also ask the Sheriff, if he would be willing too. So we'd have three, a special meeting with three presentations like PowerPoint data, like real presentations, one from GIVE, one from IPVI, and then if the Sheriff would be okay, to really break down the gun violence that occurred in the last year to help us to sort of understand what any kind of anything you're legally allowed to share with us about it. And then I feel confident that once we really hear from our programs that we already fund, like what's going on from their perspective, we would have a better sense of knowing what exact questions we would want in a hearing and who we would want to hear from.

So, I'm not suggesting we take the hearing off the table, I'm suggest, permanently but that once we really get a sense of the nature of what's happening in our county, and I would you know, including how they saw the last year change things, what they've been trying to do, maybe even efforts they've tried that they have not been able to do because they don't have the funding or support that we could help them do their jobs better. Can we help GIVE? Can we help IPVY? Can we help the Sheriff in any way? So, I'm suggesting that we start with that special meeting and really hear from those three groups. And, and then we can discuss what we've learned in terms of the data and decide together, whether we want to hear more from the public who are impacted by this, who we want to hear from next. After we actually know the extent of the problem across the whole county.

So that's what I'm suggesting. Any other thoughts or ...?

Legislator Parete

I'd like to weigh in on it a little bit. there's sort of two parts to this whole thing. Number one, Ulster County and City of Kingston were touted for, for the last 15 or 20 years as some of the safest and most pleasant communities to live in, not only in New York State, but across the nation. And somewhere that changed, and during this period of time, not to point fingers at our neighboring communities. But while Kingston was having incredibly success in in peacefulness, Newburgh was exploding. Poughkeepsie was having problems. So, part of my question is What changed? What went wrong? Somewhere around 2017 or 2018, to suddenly start to have this increase in violent crime. And it has nothing to do with a pandemic, because it wasn't even here then. And I'd like to hear, I personally would like to hear from the authorities, people in office, people who were in office, law enforcement people, not only what they think might have happened, but what do we do today? I noticed plenty of programs we just passed for the Sheriff and others, what 12-14 Resolutions. But I'd love to hear people come in and say, here's what I think's wrong.

Here's what I think we have to do. The people with the boots on the ground, not folks that have some philosophical position on, you don't understand, it's more complicated than you might think. So, I don't really agree with you, Madam Chair that I think we, we should invite folks in and say what happened. We're not looking to sandbag anybody. There's a period of time when we were very peaceful. I don't really care what's happening in New York City or in Albany or Minneapolis. I'm concerned about our community and there's people out there that I talked to, some would love to testify, some would be reluctant to because there could be repercussions. And I think those folks would have to be heard either through anonymous depositions or whatever. And maybe in the end it'll all dry up, and nobody's interested. And I can live with that, too.

But the fact of the matter is, we've had four or five or six homicides in the last year or so. Two years. Yep, that can be blamed on, on COVID. Well, maybe yes. And maybe no. So, I don't understand why we couldn't in July or August. Invite the, the professionals, not people that are getting paid to research it, but the people that are there who arrest people, who ferret out the problems, who are concerned with them with the opportunity to, to understand the community, the law enforcement people, former future law enforcement people, public defenders. The judges, maybe they have some thoughts. But I'm not really interested in this point, quite frankly, of listening to somebody on some philosophical job, because it's really not working right now. We got a problem.

Chairwoman Walter

So, I'll get to you in the second Heppner, I just want to respond. With all due respect, the people who are operating GIVE, IPVI, the Sheriff, are not philosophical, they're the people on the ground. They are the law enforcement and the prosecutors. And they I mean, they are very much they're not, they are those people that you're referring to the ones whose boots are on the ground. they are given the GIVE money is Department of Criminal Justice Services, provided through to the Sheriff's office and District Attorney's Office specifically to respond to violence. And IPVI is money that's given to the district attorney's office to respond to violence.

Legislator Parete

Well, let me

Chairwoman Walter

I just want to finish, I'll give you a turn, I just want to finish. It's also that it's not, your argument, with all due respect, is not empirically supported. I mean, I collected, and I went and got Ulster County data for violent crime, dating back to 2010. And while last year was an increase, it's there's two things that aren't true. One is there isn't a huge shift other than last year, they've remained relatively the same, the violent crimes that we've seen over a long period of time. And the second one is the very fact that the state provides GIVE money to Kingston is because it's one of the 17 highest rates since 2014. They started that in 2014. And so if Kingston was purely fell out of that it wouldn't have received the funding but for, for, you know, that's 6, 7, 8. That's a you know, in all those years, we've been getting that money because Kingston has been considered one of the 17th highest.

So my request is, is that rather than anecdotally saying it was such a peaceful place, and now it's so violent, let's go to the people with the boots on the ground who have been collecting this data specifically, because a lot of the data I have is GIVE data, and hear from them with the boots on the ground. What they see is happening not just in Kingston, but across the county, and what efforts they've been making and and what's been successful and what hasn't. And then having, if we felt the need for hearing further, but I just want to clarify it this is this is not inviting some philosopher, this is not inviting some PhD, it is inviting people who are doing these programs on the ground.

Legislator Parete

You know

Chairwoman Walter

Sorry Legislator Heppner had his hand up.

Legislator Heppner

Yeah, I mean, legislative Walter said a lot of what I was going to say and, and saying so in why I think this makes very logical sense for that initial special meeting. especially for us as policymakers to you know, bring in both these folks that have like she said, boots on the ground experts, and whose experience on the ground isn't gonna just cut us off in the last year, it's going to give us a much broader window over the last eight years plus. As well as you know, in addition to gun violence, we're also getting information on other types of physical violence, especially domestic violence, a more holistic view, as well as Kingston and outside the outside the county seat. I mean, To me, this seems like, again, she, I believe my interpretation of what the Chairwoman was saying is, how about this first step of this special meeting? That for us, it's policy of me personally, I'll say it and as a policymaker would be very beneficial.

Legislator Parete

If I may, first of all what is some of the money that went through for some of these are mainly because of, we have good lobbyists in Albany who get these fundings for us. You know, going back to early 2020, at the very one of the very first meetings I came to, there was a news release out of Kingston, that there was going to be this major group of, this major cooperative effort, by law enforcement agencies cooperating together to reduce the violence that seemed to be on the increase. And I remember asking the Sheriff, don't you folks already have bike patrols and and people in here, intelligence that are trying to ferret out these problems? just this week is another new program to bring more cooperation. And Ulster County was known publicly and privately as an area that there was the most successful cooperation between the police agencies, anywhere in the state, in the opinion of some of these law enforcement people. So, I don't buy it.

I don't know why we seem to be reluctant to find out what happened somewhere along the way. And we just keep repeating the same thing. Right now, there's more shootings, more gun violence. And we're having all this cooperation, what, what went wrong? What do the law enforcement people need to try to help them do their job to protect the public? So I don't see why putting anything off. You can always bring those folks in and say, well, if, we're trying to do it, but. I have no trouble asking the DA, asking the public defender asking the Sheriff for the former Sheriff, asking some of the police chiefs, asking some of the union leaders in the in the PBA. What do you think the problem is? Why do you think things have turned so sour?

Chairwoman Walter

Legislator Haynes

Legislator Haynes

I kind of, you know, I can agree actually, with all of my colleagues that spoke on this. I don't object to bringing in this extra, you know, information, quite honestly. I'd like to see the results from some of these studies. But I'll just caution everyone, as to what I've seen, you know, when I first came on scene in 2015, we had a huge issue with opioid overdoses that were grossly under reported. And the data is only as good as the information that's being collected. And back then there was a, you know, a major issue with the under reporting, you know, they would say, you know, we saw, you know, 11 overdoses in six months. I saw 11 in 30 days. So that's like sometimes with the data if things are going under reported, they're not making it into, you know, to the data.

With that being said, I can tell you, I don't really need to rely on data to tell you I've spent a majority of my time from 2015 up until 2020 on Broadway in the City of Kingston and I could sense a major change. I would be very hesitant to spend that much time on Broadway in the City of Kingston today. So clearly, there's been some type of a shift, and whatever, whatever is going on, if there's a criminal element, I'm not exactly sure. Some of these incidents have

happened right around the corner from my former office building. And again, it's very clear to me that there's been a shift. Perhaps it exploded during the past year. But there's been a shift in that leading up until this point, but I do not object to seeing the data from, from those two organizations, those agencies, what have you, but I think we could also do it in conjunction with some testimony from others in that field as well.

Chairwoman Walter

Thank you. And just to clarify, GIVE is not just data. GIVE is an entire program. If you go on there, DC, DCJS, I mean, this is arrest data. It's not them just choosing, you know, if there was an arrest, it has to go up through DCJS. But they also have four elements, which is people focusing on prevention and enforcement of offenders, places looking at hotspots scanning the hotspots, looking at areas that have had the most shooting and homicides, alignments, having strategies for coordinating with partners and to reduce shooting and homicides, and engagements where they're supposed to be working with the community at large, and community members to give them voice. So, having GIVE, tell us how it's been going, doesn't just say, here are the arrests that we've made. But also, what here are the efforts we've done, specifically related to gun violence in Ulster County. Well, specifically Kingston, but it's more than just data. I want to hear what how they've achieved all the initiatives that they're supposed to be funded for,

Legislator Heppner

And what and what hasn't worked. I would just add what hasn't worked?

Chairwoman Walter

Yeah. What do they, maybe they need more help? Sheriff?

Sheriff Figueroa

I just wanted to, if I can just a couple of comments here about the issues that have been going on the last couple of years in regards to, besides the pandemic, which we all know, it does play a role in all the overdoses that we have. I think crime has gone up because of the drug issue. And we have to look at the the, the issues of bail reform 1 and bail reform 2. Those are very important factors in what goes on. We just saw someone released from federal from our local court the other day, that that was accused of murder. And there is an uptick in crime, there's a there is an uptick, in, in, in the drugs in our, in our county, and my, our arrests have tripled in Ulster County, just URGENT numbers on how we do business. We now go after the higher, higher end, that collaboration with law enforcement is still going on, we have a meeting here once a month with local law enforcement.

Of course, each agency has different issues, you know, we've seen our PB, some of the PBAs have done not, no confidence votes of their leadership. And I'm not going to point fingers, but we all know what we're talking about. And that does have an effect when you beat a profession up, and you pant the brush of a profession, like that's been happening in law enforcement, just like it has with people of color. And I stress this point, because it's important that that feeling that law enforcement has right now. And I just use this because I want to put it into perspective of that of the broad brush. Nobody likes when a particular race gets picked on. Or if you go, for example, me going into a nice store where there's, you know, I get followed around because somebody that looked like me that, you know, committed a petit larceny. Nobody likes that broad brush.

Yet, that's exactly what's going on with law enforcement. And that, national things that are going on national, does have a role in how local law enforcement feels. And, and I think until we get past this phase, and, we all have responsibilities, when things go wrong, we have to stop, we can't have what happens in another part, whatever

happens in Minnesota in New York City, my job and our job as leaders is to make sure that doesn't happen here. But that does have an effect on the rank and file of law enforcement. They they're they some of them are afraid to do their jobs. And, and it's because of the national stigma that's going on. You know, it's a fact that there are leadership issues in different local municipalities. And that needs to be addressed by those local municipalities.

But we do have, you know, I read the paper too, and I saw, you know, how all of a sudden what we did with the blue and gray patrol to push back on the shootings and, and the homicides in the City of Kingston wasn't a good way of doing it. I disagree with that. There were no murders during that timeframe when the, the Sheriff's Office, the State Police and KPD worked together. Yet, they're saying that that didn't work. Well, that did work. Unfortunately, we're listening to the voices of the few and not the voices of the majority in our communities. And I think we are listening to the loudest people rather than listening to all of the people, which has an effect on how law enforcement does its job.

Chairwoman Walter

Thank you.

Legislator Parete

You know, may I just say one other thing. I mean, I had an eye opener last week, when, or last month, when we listened to the Sheriff's right hand guy on the URGENT and the plans they have in the successes they have and, and the cooperation they're getting. And then we found out there's a lot of major communities that aren't a part of it. It does seem like that would be a, almost a natural for the law enforcement, folks. It'd be interesting to find out. Is there a problem? Is it a funding problem? Is it a philosophical problem? I don't know. Maybe we'll never know. Some of the folks that I talked to say, to some degree, the actionable intelligence that they used to get is drying up? I don't know. We got to find out somewhere where we can answer the question. we might not get a straight answer. Or we may get a straight answer. I don't know if postponing questioning of elected leaders, people in law enforcement, you know, we have eight people in Albany, who represent sections of Ulster County. maybe they have an idea of what to do to work with the law enforcement people don't make our communities safe. That's what I'm interested in.

Chairwoman Walter

Thank you. Um, again, to reiterate, my, my suggestion of starting locally with the programs that are intended to do this and respond to these problems are an attempt to create a little bit more form. we do not want to hold a hearing that is just loosely organized, that's asking a large swath of people who many of whom will not potentially come to speak. It's a serious thing to hold the hearing. And that's why I feel like if we're doing it, we should be doing it correctly. And I do not feel at this point, that it has the kind of organization necessary to do it appropriately. So, the request to first hear from the programs that are doing this work on the ground, including the Sheriff, the district attorney, the officers who are responsible for specifically responding to violence. I feel like by hearing from them, hearing how it impacts not just Kingston, but the rest of our county will help inform us how to do this correctly. And so that is my request not to cancel it but to find to find a way to do it appropriately. Legislator Fabiano

Legislator Fabiano

I understand what you're saying. So, do you think that we can work our way in this process to a hearing?

Chairwoman Walter

That is my hope that but that [inaudible]

Legislator Fabiano

Can we make that a goal? That in the future or near future that we end up doing the hearing where some of these people couldn't be asked to come?

Chairwoman Walter

Absolutely. I think at that point, we would know, you know, beyond Kingston are there, how is this impacted? Or what communities are particularly impacted? We know the guns because that's in the newspaper in Kingston. But in terms of domestic violence or aggravated assault, we don't really know exactly which communities we specifically want to hear from that have had a heightened problem. So, it would allow us to really know whether we, you know, is it, do we need to hear from people and law enforcement in Ellenville, specifically? Are there specific places that we want to really target hearing from? not just the people who respond to crimes, but I would love to hear from the community members, what they're feeling. But I want to know, the right people to be asking and the right questions to be asking. So I just felt that, in the very least, if we understood the nature and extent of the problem that exists from these programs that are doing it for us right now, that then we could make that decision and do it in the future, yes.

Legislator Parete

You know, madam Chair a few minutes ago, when you were talking about bringing these programs in the acronyms for their, their objectives. You said when we listen to them, we can have these hearings and or we might not even need them. I don't know even where that came from. We could have these folks come in and we wouldn't need these other programs to come in. If we had testimony from professionals, the Sheriff, the DA, or the police, people, feet on the ground that are dealing with it. I don't see what the big problem is. What it's like we're deflecting it, make it go away.

Chairwoman Walter

So, with all due respect, I am absolutely not deflecting it or wishing it goes away. I want to understand it in a systematic way. Legislator Heppner

Legislator Heppner

Yeah, I would say, with all due respect, a lot of these entities, Legislator Parete, that you're literally listing are the ones that are involved in these programs, and who she's speaking about having this special meeting about. And again, has said nothing about removing the intention of a hearing down the road. But I believe the Chairwoman was given a very broad request with very few actionable items or goals. And has actually done a ton of research, has actually given us more accurate information in terms of different timelines. You know, I did not know that Kingston has been receiving that funding and been listed in the top 17, since going back to 2014, that wasn't even what the timeframe we're, was being referenced in the last meeting when this was first requested. You know, again, I think this has been, this is a broad request given to the Chairwoman, I think she's done an incredible job, starting to put pieces together to give us as committee members, resources, and to help guide us going forward. And, again, the entities that you just mentioned, are involved in the program she's trying to bring in for a special meeting, as part of this, you know, being respectful to this request. And, you know, I think, you know, has my support right now.

Legislator Parete

Well, I'm, I'm opposed to putting that ahead of bringing in the electeds, and the law enforcement people and their representatives to hear what they have to say.

Chairwoman Walter

Legislator Fabiano

Legislator Fabiano

Yes, I just want to remind the Chairwoman that there is another meeting at 6:30 scheduled. Public Works and Capital Projects.

Legislator Walter

Yes, I, okay. So, I believe in Robert's Rules, and correct me if I'm wrong, that because I was among the people voting in favor of this, that I am allowed to propose that we postpone the hearing. So I'm going to be making a motion that we postpone the hearing to allow time to gather enough information, however, that should look, to be able to have a more clear sense of who we're inviting and what we're asking.

Legislator Heppner

I'll move it

Chairwoman Walter

You're, you're on mute.

Legislative Counsel Cueva

You may make the motion, Madam Chair

Chairwoman Walter

Is there a second to that motion?

Legislator Heppner

I'll second it.

Chairwoman Walter

Thank you. So, all in favor of ...

Legislator Parete

I'm opposed

Chairwoman Walter

Okay. Well, let me, I'll get opposed, I promise. So, all in favor of postponing the public hearing while we gather more information?

Legislator Heppner

And this, and just before. Sorry, and this special meeting will be scheduled within? Do you have a timeframe?

Chairwoman Walter

We'll schedule it within the next month, if possible, depending on the people who we're asking to come to the meeting. For sure, and there'll be other research that will try to gather more information and get and I would hope to work with legislative Parete a little bit more on the specifics so that we really have a clear sense of what we're hoping to

achieve by this public hearing. You know, so all in favor of postponing the public hearing while we continue to gather information to understand the specifics of what we want to ask and who we want to ask?

Legislators Fabiano and Heppner

Aye

Chairwoman Walter

Okay. Opposed?

Legislator Parete

Aye

Chairwoman Walter

So, that's

Legislator Haynes

Haynes opposes.

Legislator Walter

Okay, so we have three in favor, two oppose.

Deputy Clerk Mahler

Your motion carries

Chairwoman Walter

Okay. So, we'll postpone it. And I promise to do due diligence to not let this idea go by the wayside, we will continue to get, move forward. And you know, it is I personally, would love, whether this was brought up or not, like to hear from GIVE and IPVI and understand how things are going in our county because we are funding those programs through the state. And I think that's important. And I do believe it'll be very insightful for us.

Legislator Fabiano

And we will be moving forward for a public hearing in the near future.

Chairwoman Walter

Absolutely. And yes, I never suggested we wouldn't, so. Okay. I'll take a motion to adjourn.

Legislator Heppner

So moved.

Chairwoman Walter

Second.

Legislator Fabiano

Second

Chairwoman Walter

Okay. All in favor.

Committee Members

Aye

Chairwoman Walter

All right. Thank you all