

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

DATE & TIME: October 15, 2020 – 5:00 PM
LOCATION: Powered by Zoom Meeting by Dialing (646) 558-8656
Meeting ID: 951 9862 6566
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chairwoman Eve Walter
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Jay Mahler, Deputy Clerk
PRESENT: Legislators Haynes, Heppner & Parete
ABSENT: Legislator Fabiano
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislator Petit, Sheriff Figueroa, Officer Chris Howe, Frank Dart, Jr. – UC Sheriff’s Office, District Attorney Clegg – UC District Attorney’s Office, Safety Officer Beitel – UC Safety Office, Ms. Stephanie Kaplan, Esq. – UC Public Defender’s Office, Budget Director/Finance Commissioner Gulnick, Deputy County Executive Milgrim – UC Executive’s Office, Ms. Ruth Boyer, Esq.

Chairwoman Walter called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM.

Chairwoman Walter recognized Safety Officer Beitel to discuss the County Executive’s Proposed 2021 Budget as it pertains to the Safety Office. See attached transcript.

Chairwoman Walter recognized District Attorney Clegg to discuss the County Executive’s Proposed 2021 Budget as it pertains to the District Attorney’s Office. See attached transcript.

Chairwoman Walter recognized Ms. Stephanie Kaplan, Esq. to discuss the County Executive’s Proposed 2021 Budget as it pertains to the Public Defender’s Office. See attached transcript.

Chairwoman Walter recognized Sheriff Figueroa to discuss the County Executive’s Proposed 2021 Budget as it pertains to the Sheriff’s Office. See attached transcript.

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

Adjournment

Motion Made By: Legislator Haynes
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Walter
No. of Votes in Favor: 4
No. of Votes Against: 0

TIME: 6:20 PM

Respectfully submitted: Deputy Clerk Mahler & Confidential Secretary Lichtenstein (transcript)
Approved: November 4, 2020

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<https://otter.ai/s/pDtLz3hrRDOhXDdDINRdEQ>

Chairwoman Walter: Call the meeting to order. So, today we're going to talk about the budgets for Safety, District Attorney, Public Defender and Sheriff's Office, in that order.

So, for Safety, we have Diane, who I believe, yes, your inside. So, basically, the way we've been doing it is to ask you to first start with 2020 and talk to us about any impacts on your department from COVID. And any items that were budgeted in 2020, that were not extended or were halted, or somehow impacted, that that didn't go through that you thought was, you know, you're hoping in 2019, what's happening in 2020? And then for 2021, if you could tell us if there were any elements that you had originally hoped to budget for, or budgeted for, requested, that did not make it into the final budget. Okay.

Diane Beitel: Okay. So, for 2020, the COVID, that effect, I mean, we continue to the whole COVID, because of the nature of our business being safety, it really didn't stop what we actually do. It did delay like fire drills, we put them on hold, our inspection slowed down a little bit, but we continued them. We've now since have restarted the fire drills little by little trying to, you know, along with the COVID regulations, trying to fit that in to get everybody comfortable with it.

We've continued with all our badge issuing. All our building codes that continued through it. Drug and alcohol is a federal program, that continued through the whole thing. The county policy ones, we delayed them a little bit.

So, we didn't have anything that was taken out of our budget, or that we weren't able to do in 2020. And we've since started up at all our training programs that we do, that are required by state and federal guidelines. We're doing it differently. Obviously, with the COVID. We're doing it in different ways and adapting to new ways of doing it. But taking a little bit longer because we have smaller groups.

We haven't we didn't have anything taken out of our 2021 budget that we asked for. We ourselves had delayed a little bit of stuff that we tried to push off, we'll push off till 2021, as far as testing equipment, but nothing that we couldn't adapt to for next year to try to help with the funding issues that we've had.

But we've tried to cover all the mandated programs and services, including, you know, we've did a lot more with respiratory programs, of course, doing that type of stuff this year that increased. We've dealt a lot with cleaning supplies and chemicals. But other than that, nothing has really changed as far as what we do. Or was impacted.

Chairwoman Walter: Thanks. So, the federal, are any of your federal funding, none of that was reduced? You were able to have...

Diane Beitzl: We don't get federal funding or state funding. We're total county funded.

Chairwoman Walter: Okay. Okay. I thought you said there was some federal programs that went through.

Diane Beitzl: We do drug and alcohol, which is a federal regulated program, but they didn't pay for it, we do.

Chairwoman Walter: And anyone take the early retirement?

Diane Beitzl: No.

Chairwoman Walter: I wrote a note to myself, and I don't know what I meant. I don't remember. Oh, and maybe this is a for John, or... but are any elements and, you know, a lot of hand sanitizers and other things like that. Is any of that potentially FEMA reimbursable?

Diane Beitzl: That's not out of my budget. So, John, I'll refer that to you.

Deputy Executive Milgrim: For most of the FEMA reimbursable items that we've been using the county have gone to Emergency Services. And Steve he's been managing.

Chairwoman Walter: For... I'm just wondering if any of the items that go through Safety are potentially FEMA reimbursable?

Diane Beitzl: No, because our programs are, we're on the infrastructure. So, we do employee safety. So there really wasn't anything that went through my budget that we supplied. It was all supplied through Emergency Management.

Chairwoman Walter: I see. So, you got the hand sanitizer from Emergency Management, you just help distribute them.

Diane Beitzl: Right. We got it from them.

Chairwoman Walter: I see. I didn't realize that.

Diane Beitzl: Yeah.

Chairwoman Walter: I thought you were perhaps getting them. Right. Other Legislators, do you have any questions for Safety.

Legislator Parete: Just, I have a question. Your budget is I suppose a collaborative effort between you and the Executive's Office. Is that correct?

Diane Beitzl: What do you mean a collaborative effort? Well,

Legislator Parete: You, you present to the Executive people what you think you need to operate your office, your job, and they develop it, and come back to you. And so, you're not here at this meeting asking for something that's been eviscerated or taken out of your budget or asking for more money, anything like that?

Diane Beitzl: No.

Legislator Parete: Okay. Thank you.

Diane Beitzl: Thank you.

Chairwoman Walter: Thanks John. Any other questions? Or just check with the chat? Oh, the chat is about... okay. Terrific. Well, thank you. Good to hear from you.

Diane Beitzl: Thank you.

Chairwoman Walter: And next, we have the District Attorney's Office. So, David, again, the same parameters. How COVID impacted you. Elements that were supposed to be funded in 2020 that had been approved, that didn't come to be. And then anything that you had presented to the Executive's Office and you would hope to have for 2021, maybe they have decided to exclude from your budget that you might want to advocate for us to consider.

District Attorney Clegg: Sure. So, the COVID did have a tremendous effect on my office, starting in January. We were understaffed significantly, we had six different ADA positions, that were unfilled.

District Attorney Clegg: Can you folks hear me all right?

Committee members: Yep. Yes

District Attorney Clegg: So, that we were not able to fill all those positions before the COVID hit. And there was a freeze on hiring. So, we continued to be understaffed. We had two secretaries, excuse me, one receptionist and a secretary that left the office during COVID and retired. We also had one person resign during that period of time. And another person who did not come back from maternity leave.

So, throughout the year, we've not spent a good deal of what had been budgeted for my office. And a good part of the reasoning for that is that the courts have been closed since March. And so, we have been unable to have jury trials, we've been unable to move cases. We have a backlog of over 1,000 cases right now, due to COVID.

We didn't expend money this year on things like appeals, transcripts, and professionals, trial costs, and things of that nature. Whereas next year, it's all going to double up assuming at some point, we have the ability to do jury trials. So, what we didn't do this year is going to hit us hard next year.

So, when we submitted our budget, we did our best to hold off on some personnel positions that we desperately need. But nevertheless, we're trying to, to work with the budgetary constraints of the county. We right now still do not have a receptionist. We are still down a secretary. We're still down a paralegal. And those are positions that were needed in order to comply with the new discovery law.

One of the things I want you all to know is with a new Discovery Law we've added about 15% to 20% to the workload of every ADA here. Dutchess County got an extra \$640,000 to deal with Discovery. We've gotten something in the area of \$60,000. So, we're about one 10th of what they got to deal with the same problem.

With COVID hitting, obviously, I understand ... [audio dropped] overworked and overstressed right now.

So, one of the things going forward, at some point, we need to get a receptionist for our office. It's really unwieldy for that to be the case, that we have to shift, answering phones between the three different secretaries that we have available to us right now.

But beyond that, for next year, we have, you know, we're thankfully about to be fully staffed, at least in terms of what we're supposed to start with in January for ADAs, and that's going to be a help.

Chairwoman Walter: So, I'm sorry, that when you said the money, compared the money, that Dutchess just got to deal with Discovery and Ulster to deal with Discovery, that's county money, or otherwise?

District Attorney Clegg: It's county money. Yeah. And the state has not provided... it's not been funded through the state that I know of. But yes, they had county money of \$640,000 for a request to deal with their Discovery demands. And we got one paralegal position filled, with an investigator, by the way.

Chairwoman Walter: So, what was... how much should we get for towards discovery? I'm sorry.

District Attorney Clegg: I think that Discovery was \$52,000. That was the amount of money allotted to it.

Chairwoman Walter: And are you saying that having this... so, there's one administrative support person who did not show up on the 2021 budget that you're saying you need?

District Attorney Clegg: The one thing is fairly urgent, and I know I said, I would wait, and I will wait. But it is very difficult to work without a receptionist for our office. And it's just inconvenient at every level. And makes our professional exposure to the public more difficult because we have different people covering the phones at different times. So, that's just something that as I'm working through it, as we have no receptionist, I'm looking at the consequences of that.

Chairwoman Walter: And then how about the managing the Discovery? Will you feel like, you'll be set up in 2021, to fully manage the discovery needs of the department? Sorry, you froze. So...

District Attorney Clegg: You know, we only manage it by asking everybody to work [inaudible]. We manage it by asking everybody to work, you know, an extra 20 hours a week, above and beyond the 35 hours, they're supposed to work. Right now. That's the only way we manage it. When we get the other paralegal position that was supposed to aid us for dealing with discovery, that will be a help.

Honestly, as I said, in my report to the, on the budget, it was underfunded to begin with. Getting only two paralegals for the extra work was not enough. We actually should have gotten two more ADAs, a secretary, and a paralegal. But the request was only for two paralegals. And that's what was in the budget for 2020. Even though those are needs, we have, we're going to try and work with what we have. But there is, at some point in time, you're going to need more help in this office.

Chairwoman Walter: Legislator Haynes.

Legislator Haynes: Forgive me, because I would just like to start by saying this budget is hard to follow because I have nothing to base off of last year's numbers without actually picking up the book and looking through it. Well, kind of, that's actually not totally true, but kind of. But nonetheless, I see, there is a receptionist line in here. Did you request it this year? I'm a little bit confused. Did you request one because there's nothing allocated. But where... I'm confused about that.

District Attorney Clegg: Okay, so we agreed to hold off on hiring, replacing our receptionist, and hiring the paralegal that we never got to hire to help us with discovery. That was that was our discussion with the County Executive.

You're asking me now, is there anything that we could use desperately? Yes, there is. And so that's the answer that those positions, the receptionist right now, is something as you can imagine, is a difficulty not having one. And so, as I'm working through it without a receptionist for the last month, I'm seeing how difficult that is for the office.

Legislator Haynes: Okay, I understand. Thank you.

District Attorney Clegg: Sure.

Chairwoman Walter: Other legislators?

Legislator Parete: Well, I just like to ask the DA, I mean, I understand it's difficult. Are you asking us for \$20K or \$50K or \$75,000 to get the receptionist now or are you going to try to figure out what to do with that.

District Attorney Clegg: I would ask you to do that. I don't think it's... I think the receptionist... I forget what the starting salary is. The one thing is...

Legislator Haynes: \$38K

District Attorney Clegg: What is it?

Legislator Haynes: \$38,679, unless I'm looking at the wrong part... that's what it looks like on the line unless I'm looking at the wrong number.

Chairwoman Walter: I think he's frozen.

District Attorney Clegg: Right?

Legislator Haynes: Either that, or he's shocked

District Attorney Clegg: Plus, whatever the cost of benefits and retirement might be.

Legislator Parete: I honestly, what I mean is you work with the, with the Executive and his folks to present this and it's as published pretty much, you're not asking for anything right this this minute. You'll do what you can.

Chairwoman Walter: Well, it sounds like he does want. He does need this.

Legislator Parete: Go ahead.

Chairwoman Walter: I think he froze...

District Attorney Clegg: John, you're breaking up on my end.

Legislator Parete: That's the problem out here and hillbilly heaven there Mr. DA. I said in other words, you created this budget with the Executive's Office, he understands you may need this position filled somewhere down the road.

District Attorney Clegg: Yes.

Legislator Parete: And you'll do with it what you, what you have to until you can.

District Attorney Clegg: That's right.

Legislator Parete: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, sir.

District Attorney Clegg: Thank you.

Chairwoman Walter: But I'm sorry, just to clarify, but you suggested it's a hardship to manage without this position.

District Attorney Clegg: It is definitely a hardship, it would definitely make my office operate more efficiently, both in our contact with the public, and professionally with other attorneys if we could have receptionist. And would aid in the secretaries that we do have, who have to do the additional work also with Discovery, that they would not have to sit on the phone one day a week to cover the phones. It's an inefficiency at every level, I have to say.

Chairwoman Walter: Other legislators, any questions? All right, anything else you'd like to add?

District Attorney Clegg: No, thank you very much.

Chairwoman Walter: Thank you. Thank you for everything you do. Okay, next we have the Public Defender's Office.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: Hi, can you hear me?

Chairwoman Walter: Yeah. Can you just clarify? What's your position at that office?

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: I'm a full-time felony staff attorney at the office. So, I do want to say Mr. Owens, last minute couldn't make this and asked me to sit in. I was unaware this was a budget meeting. And so, I have no particular information I was asked to give to you. But there are at least three areas I can talk about, just from being in the office. So, I can't... I'm not fluid in the budget itself. I can talk to you in areas where we are very much impacted by COVID. And by the Discovery issues, and I and about certain positions that we really need to have filled immediately.

So, I would agree with the District Attorney that we were obviously tremendously impacted by COVID. Our office is on staggered schedules, which is... So, we're trying to do everything we can to deal with this dramatic increase in cases that we've recently encountered. And we are fairly, we have a fairly small office for a Public Defender's office, I have to say. I will say with COVID, I don't know when we're going to start up with trials again. So, obviously, whatever was budgeted for 2020, with regard to trial work, investigation work, expert witnesses anything of the like, obviously, that was put on hold for COVID and is going to probably triple or quadruple once we start again.

I know Chief Judge DiFiore seems to be pushing for us to start trials again. But I will say there are some problems with that because COVID is obviously still rampant. From an ethical perspective, it's hard for us to do investigations, which are critical for us to do in order to supply meaningful represent, representation of counsel, because obviously it puts us in danger, and investigator in danger to go to people's homes. And more importantly, no witness really wants to have contact with us, because of COVID. So, this has put us at a serious disadvantage with being able to adequately prepare cases.

About a month ago, the grand jury started up. And things have gone from about zero to 180 almost overnight for us. Because we're trying to deal with not just cases as they would normally flow into the Public Defender's Office. But now, I think, us and the District Attorney's Office alike, are trying to deal with this entire backlog of cases that have just been building up since the pandemic began. And that has caused an enormous amount of stress for the lawyers who are in the office, the full-time lawyers to handle these ongoing cases.

And the criminal side, we basically have, I think, it's five lawyers, who are full time. I would say most of the lawyers have a caseload that so far exceeds what the Appellate Division case cap recommends. That is very, very, very troubling. And that's again, because really in the past month, that we've gone again from zero to about 180 with trying to get through this entire backlog of cases. But of course not all of them will be disposed of and many of them will be heading towards trial, oh my goodness, be heading towards trial, so, I mean, honestly, some of the lawyers full time lawyers have probably three times maybe even four times the recommended caseload cap that the Appellate Division would get for lawyers.

As far as lawyers that have come and go, we obviously lost our Chief Public Defender, just at the time, just before the pandemic started. And, obviously, we're in the process waiting for to see about the confirmation of the new candidate. And that will be very helpful once we get somebody who's in charge.

As far as I'm aware, we've had some... we have had approval for some assistance, which we really need right now, since the caseloads again, have started up in such a major way. And I think whether it's through HH (Hurrell-Harring), or through the county funding, there's at least I think, two felony lawyers that, I think have been approved. But because we're in the position without a Chief Public Defender. It's sort of just been, it's just stagnated, and nothing has been moved on.

We did get one replacement lawyer, we did lose a lawyer who was our lawyer who did arraignments in all of the local courts Monday through Friday, nine to five. Not the lawyer for the nighttime. But this is the daytime weekday lawyer, and she had to leave, it was unforeseen, it was very quick. And we did get approval to fill her position. That just happened, I think two weeks ago. The other position we got approved is a new appeals lawyer, because we were being assigned appeals, and there was no one to do them. So, that was very welcome that that person got approved.

But again, we have this enormous increase in cases all of a sudden, to a much greater level than we normally would have had cases coming to the office. And we are desperately in need of I would say at least two other felony lawyers that I believe have been approved, probably, we could use three. And we're sort of in limbo with that. That's caused, I think, significant problem for our office.

The other issue is Discovery. We're all aware that the Discovery laws have greatly increased the amount of Discovery that we are getting on cases and that we are getting early on cases. And we do not have a proper computerized system in order to help us deal with that. So, we've been trying with the aid of one of our paralegals, who has been enormously helpful. She, she's sort of creating a system for us to help us deal with this. But she absolutely... she's already doing that job plus her own job. She cannot also input all of the Discovery.

We are beyond desperate for the need of, whether it's a paralegal or a legal aid, however it's characterized here, we are desperately in need of people to come in, not today, not tomorrow, but months ago, in order to help with the inputting of the Discovery material that we are getting. It's almost impossible to keep track of it. I would note that this same paralegal is creating and helping us create a system that will track our cases better as they come into the office and as they are reassigned. So, she's really doing three jobs. And that's Cathy Schuetz.

But that is a problem, as well. Because for some reason we're not connected, in Ulster County, but for Kingston City Court, we are not connected to the OCA web crim system, which virtually all of the State is connected to. If we had that connection, we could easily find out, not just adjourn dates, but just an enormous amount of information that we need in order to track our cases. And so much more that we can do with it. So, we're trying to create this system, through a paralegal that is just, she's somebody who we absolutely could not do without in our office, but she needs help. She needs help with one or two people. And she needs that yesterday. So, I guess that's what I can add to our budgetary issues at the moment. And thank you for hearing me.

Chairwoman Walter: So, we may have some follow up questions. I'm... So, sorry, you talked about that there were two felony lawyers that were approved, and it was stagnated. And then you also... sorry, what?

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: Sorry. So, I may have been unclear. So, no. Our office is staggered in our appearances. So, in the office, in other words, we don't all come in full time, we were directed to come in...

Chairwoman Walter: Sorry, I didn't mean staggered... That there were two lawyers that had been approved but never filled.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: That I believe that's correct. I believe one is through HH, the Hurrell-Harring funding. And I think there was one for county, as well, I could be wrong about that. Because again, I was just asked to step

into this meeting really unaware what it was. But I am aware at least one of those is approved. And I think there might be two positions for this year. But things have been held off because we don't have... but we haven't had a person approved yet in the confirmation process. I guess, thought to leave it until potentially she comes in as our Public Defender.

Chairwoman Walter: I'll ask another question related to that, though, before you get the... you said that you were approved to fill an arraignment lawyer and an appeals lawyer, when you said...

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: Yes.

Chairwoman Walter: ... that does that mean, those were actually filled. Like there are people in those...

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: Those positions were allowed to be filled, that was urgently needed.

Chairwoman Walter: Okay

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: We needed an appeals person; we needed the person to substitute for the person who had to leave the office unexpectedly.

Chairwoman Walter: Right. I want to clarify, approved but not filled versus approved and filled.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: Yeah. So, those two positions are approved and filled the appeals and the person who does the daytime arraignments throughout Ulster County. But I do believe there was financial approval, I think, one at least through HH. And I don't know the funding source for the other person. I think there was funding for two, I could be wrong about that. But certainly, one and I think two. And because of the increase of cases right now, we are desperately in need of them. As I said, a significant amount... I'm aware of from where I came from before, I was from New York City, at the Legal Aid Society. So, I am aware of the conversation around case cap. And most, not all, but many of the permanent felony attorneys in our office. And again, there's I think four or five of us total, who are permanent, are significantly beyond what the case cap requirement would be.

I'm not suggesting that the Ulster County Public Defender has a contract that includes case cap. But I am familiar with what the general case cap numbers should be. And a lot of the lawyers here have far in excess of that, because again, all of a sudden, a month ago, the entire backlog for a year of cases is sort of coming due.

Chairwoman Walter: So, do you think that that will level off? Or do you expect this to be continuous for the year?

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: For this year? Certainly, it's going to continue like this. I mean, there's a lot of cases. I don't have the number for you. But there's an extreme amount of cases. And I don't believe it's going to level off this year. And I'm not convinced it's going to level off by the end of next year. But probably by the end of next year, it will level off.

Chairwoman Walter: Okay.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: Yeah.

Chairwoman Walter: So, Burt, for these felony attorneys, especially, at least one of them is covered through Hurrell-Harring, if not both of them, can you help us understand why these positions, because they're fully reimbursable, why they weren't filled?

Finance Commissioner Gulnick: Eve, can you hear me? I don't know if I'm mute.

Chairwoman Walter: We can hear you.

Finance Commissioner Gulnick: Okay. Um, I don't... I'm looking at any requests-to-fills I have, I don't have any for any Assistant Public Defenders.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: Okay.

Finance Commissioner Gulnick: The only request to fill I have is for a legal aid. That's the only request I have to fill.

Chairwoman Walter: All right.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: Well, that was the other thing I was talking about regarding somebody to do inputing discovery which is...

Chairwoman Walter: But we're hearing that there is the need for two felony attorneys, and wouldn't, Burt wouldn't both of them be able to be reimbursable through Hurrell-Herring?

Finance Commissioner Gulnick: You know, Eve, I'd have to check to see. You know, everything was done by position numbers to see what positions and position numbers match with the Hurrell-Harring. Obviously, we can claim for it. It's just, I don't have the request, in terms of the process, the request-to-fills to approve these positions to move forward.

Chairwoman Walter: Okay. Yeah, I understand. I guess Stephanie was, under understood that they were requested and approved already, but maybe that's not correct. Do you know if in the sense Stephanie can't speak to it, is it in the 2021 budget, this gap of especially the felony attorneys, especially who are reimbursable by Hurrell-Harring, whether they show up in the 2021?

Finance Commissioner Gulnick: Just give me one second, Eve. Because I know, I know in the 2020 budget, we did have a couple of... added a couple of Public Defender positions. They were to start, like staggered. One with a July date and one with, I think, a September, those positions have carried over into the 2021 budget.

Chairwoman Walter: But they have... so, you have, you did have two positions approved that just didn't get filled in July and September.

Finance Commissioner Gulnick: Yeah, you know, and that's what I'm just double checking. I have a list right in front of me. And this is as of October 1, in terms of vacant positions in the PD's (Public Defender) office. One is a Chief Assistant PD, which I believe is Hurrell-Herring funded. It's just bear with me here. I just joined this meeting late. I'm just trying to bring up.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: And I apologize. No, I'm sorry.

Chairwoman Walter: Why don't...Burt, why don't you while you look at it...

Finance Commissioner Gulnick: I think I have it now, Eve. I just needed to bring up what positions are in the Hurrell-Herring. And like I said, I'm just trying to match the position numbers. So, the one is a Chief Assistant Public Defender that is vacant. That is 100% funded by Hurrell-Harring. That is one that is vacant as of, it's been vacant almost all year, since February. I do not have a request-to-fill to the fill that.

Let's see. There's also another Assistant Public Defender which was vacant as of July 1, which that is also 100% funded by Hurrell-Harring. I don't have a request-to-fill from the Public Defender's Office to approve.

Chairwoman Walter: So, Cliff needs to just say, please fill?

Finance Commissioner Gulnick: They just need to fill out the paperwork to get to myself, and then it would go to the County Exec's Office.

Chairwoman Walter: All right, Stephanie, can you pass it on?

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: I can. Let me just... yeah.

Chairwoman Walter: They're both 100% reimbursable.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: Yeah. Okay. I absolutely will. Let me just say that the Chief Assistant Public Defender, obviously, we're waiting for a Chief Public Defender to be approved.

Finance Commissioner Gulnick: Yeah.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: Cliff, obviously, was the Assistant Chief Public Defender, and has been doing double duty on everything.

Finance Commissioner Gulnick: And I think he'd fall back to that position, Stephanie.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: I think he'd fall back into that position. Exactly. So, that's why I wasn't referring to that. I didn't know, technically...

Finance Commissioner Gulnick: And there is a, there is another. It's called a Deputy Chief Assistant Public Defender that we did fund for a part of, it looks like half of this year, that is vacant as well. So, again, Cliff would fill, you know, if the Chief Public Defender's filled, Cliff would fill in one of these. And then there's still an Assistant PD as well as this Deputy Chief PD.

Chairwoman Walter: And Burt... Since we were able to get Office of Indigent Legal Services reimbursement on their other grants for office space, would the computer system that Stephanie talked about, our connection to OCA, or some kind of Discovery computer system with that, being Public Defenders and their capacities to meet the needs of indigenous people... would that be potentially?

Finance Commissioner Gulnick: I think it could, Eve. I just don't, I'd have to go back and look at the plan that was approved by the State to see if we have it in there. Obviously, if we don't, we could always amend that plan to get approval for it.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: Okay, let me just clarify that the OCA system is a very different system than what we would internally need to process Discovery. Yeah.

Chairwoman Walter: Yeah, I understand. I was wondering if both or either of them would be, potentially, fully reimbursable. It seems like there's a lot of potential State money that we could be using in our Public Defender's Office that we're not using.

Finance Commissioner Gulnick: There is. It would just be you know, Eve, I'd have to check to see if we... I don't think we have it in there to kind of purchase. But it is one of those we can definitely amend it with the State to get reimbursed.

Chairwoman Walter: Legislator Haynes, did you want to ask a question? Any other Legislator?

Legislator Parete: Yeah, I do. Just over and above the litany on the operation of the Office, and in the efficiencies, is the budget that has been presented that I was looking at... the budget for next year, or the conversations we're

having right now, going to be in addition to that money? I get the impression from listening to Burt that most of these things are already in the budget.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: Well, so... I'm really sorry. I'm not really able to address that. Maybe Burt is more aware.

Finance Commissioner Gulnick: I will say, John, as they are for, you know, they are carried over into 2021. And actually, there is one other new position in the Public Defender's Office for a legal aid to help on the secretarial side of things. And that was covered by Hurrell-Harring, as well.

Legislator Parete: Okay, that's great.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: I don't know if this is appropriate at all. Could I raise, since I have all of you, and it's a budgetary issue, and it has to do with... Can I read something that's not about the Public Defender's Office that has to do with one of the police reform committees that I'm on. And it's something that I think that all of the local police reform committees may be dealing with? Or is that inappropriate to do right here?

Chairwoman Walter: Yeah, sure, go ahead, assuming it's not going to take a very long time, because we need to get to the Sheriff's budget.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: No, it's not going to take a long time at all. But there are two things that I know that our committee in Marlborough and I'm sure all the other local committees are having problems with financially because they're small police departments. And the most important thing is number one, the money that it costs for a body cam, not just the equipment to have body cams, but the storage. It's an excessive amount for most of the local police departments. But it's critical that they get funded for having full body cams, audio and video. I know some of the police departments have audio and their videos tied to a dash cam. And that's kind of really somewhat useless. But I know something like Marlborough, they can't even do the body cams, it's just cost prohibitive.

And the other thing is for some training, obviously, the implicit bias training is an enormous thing that we're looking at. And we have to get funding for all of the police departments really to be able to have all of their officers attend that.

But the real the real financial crusher is the body cams storage. So, I didn't know if there's something that the county could do en masse for all of the local police departments since I'm sure everyone is encountering the same problem.

Chairwoman Walter: I appreciate you bringing that up. I mean, obviously, the equipment themselves would be coming from the individual town budgets, but there might be some kind of shared storage system that could be explored. So, Legislator Haynes and I are both co-chairs of this committee. So, we'll make sure that that comes up. It's not necessarily going to be tied into this budget, but that we will have that conversation and we'll try to figure out. And I think if, you know, a conversation letting the Sheriff know. They do run implicit bias through the Sheriff's Office for Sheriff's Office Law Enforcement. Maybe there's another kind of shared process that could be explored as well, at another time. But thank you for bringing it.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: I appreciate that. Thank you.

Chairwoman Walter: Okay, Sheriff... So, you know, the list: COVID, stuff that you are hoping for in 2020 that never got followed through with, and requests for 2021 that were not in the budget that you feel need. You know...

Sheriff Figueroa: So, good evening, everyone, and hope all is well. So, our COVID expenditures were about \$52,825 for the office. It's been a unique year, as you know, this is a 24/7 operation. And we've given back because of the budget constraints that COVID has caused the county, \$487,194.10, and majority of that are equipment expenditures, that are actually 65% of our equipment for this year. And again, these are things that we really didn't have a lot of, we all had to take a bite out of the budget crunch that the county was looking at.

On the positive side, we'd had board-ins, and to date, we've with the Marshals and Greene County is back, our numbers are pretty close to almost \$454,000. And it's estimated that if this continues, to almost \$800,000, that are revenues that we're bringing into the county from the board-ins.

Chairwoman Walter: For the year? Sorry, you're saying that's your projection for a full 12 months.

Sheriff Figueroa: By the end of this year, we should be, the revenue should be for the board-ins is around \$800,000.

But I did want to talk about the personnel issues for this year. Again, the county put out a retirement incentive. And a lot of folks did retire. And we saved the county just to share about \$1.2 million in salaries. A lot of these positions, I'm in coordination with the county to get some of these back. They're in the budget and budgeted for 2021.

And, as you know, we made an agreement with the county in regard to the County Jail. And our numbers were 157. And the agreement is to go to 147. And it takes four months for backgrounds and another couple months for the Academy. So, it takes an individual on the correction side, about six months before they're actually deployed. So, we agreed with the county, we agreed with the county to lower our numbers from 157 to 147.

Our numbers from the jail, when I took office were about 240 for the population. When Bail Reform passed, Bail Reform 1, in April, those numbers went down to about 190. And in January, they went down to about 110. We went as low as 99 at one point.

Presently, we have about 180 in the facility. About 50 of those are board-ins. And 130 or so are our own inmates. So, those numbers have been slowly going up. The courts are finally beginning to open; I don't think they're fully opened to have sentencing, everything was on hold, because of COVID-19.

Again, this is a 24/7 operation. And we gave back a lot of money because of the budget issue. But we've also anticipated some of those costs, that are still included in the 2021 budget.

We did have a hiring freeze like everybody else, even though we are essential. Again, because of the budget issues, and the sales tax issues for the county, and COVID-19. But we overall are 10% of the overall county budget. So, I'm happy to say that we're going to, we are going to have some revenues coming in. And the Finance Department did add some of that for next year's budget. Which we didn't we weren't sure what the numbers were going to be. But I know that Burt went in and adjusted that. So, thanks, Burt.

Personnel wise, we're down about 28 for the Jail, but we're going to bring that back up to like I said to 147 at some point next year. We're allowed to hire two people this year and do some promotions which helps with the supervising of the facility, which is very important.

On the Criminal Division side, we're going to be down about 14 on that side. That's going to include the security folks that are retiring, folks like Pat Carroll that work at the county building, and Dave Meade who was the senior security guard.

There is one request for next year that I wanted to add. And I don't know, Burt, you know, but I did talk to Sheree and I briefly talk to the County Executive's Office about it today. And as long as we can stay within our budget by giving up, or moving monies from part time security guards and a clerk, we want to bring in what's called a Discovery Coordinator.

Interestingly enough, we are all under the constraints of discovery, including the Sheriff's Office. To the earlier question that the Public Defender's Office stated about law enforcement. We had to actually pay or purchase computers that were about \$8,000 for the purposes of Discovery. And that is your body cam. Your cameras on the

on the vehicles, 911 calls. It's a huge undertaking, and to utilize uniformed personnel for the purposes of that type of clerical work, to me is a disservice to the taxpayer and public safety, itself.

So, we're requesting a Discovery Coordinator for next year's budget. And again, Burt, I don't know if you knew about that. It was something I put the specs together and sent it over to Sheree just earlier this week. And I spoke to John Milgrim as early as today about it, but...

Deputy Clerk Mahler: We lost Burt, he had to scoot.

Sheriff Figueroa: Say again?

Deputy Clerk Mahler: We lost Burt, he had to scoot.

Sheriff Figueroa: I know John is still on, but we did talk to him about. That as far as things that we that were removed from the Capital Budget, the Capital Projects Budget. Our number one thing is Black Creek. And Chris Howe, if you're still on, I want you to brief how old Black Creek is. And the issues that we've been having. Black Creek is our entire security program, at the jail and in the facility. Chris, are you on?

Chris Howe: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Chris Howe, from the Sheriff's Office. One of my main responsibilities with the Sheriff's Office is to maintain the electronic security system surrounding the Law Enforcement Center to include all the doors, all the intercoms, all the cameras, lighting, telephones, televisions, all the security, that has to do with a correctional facility.

A lot of that was installed when we built the facility 2005-2007. Marshall Systems upgraded computer systems in 2011. And we're about do to have that done again. What we're, what I'm dealing with is when something does go down, I'm finding that the people that produce the parts, don't produce them anymore, and don't have any more on the shelf to replace with. So, I'm losing parts of this electronic security system, which causes a security concern for not only the staff, but the population of inmates within the facility. I fear that the longer we delay a partial upgrade, the more costly it's going to be.

We're still dealing with some Windows 7, Windows Vista, older operating systems. There are some analog solid-state rack systems that are just so antiquated, that I can't find parts for it anymore. And you know, I would love to be able to just do some little bitty partial systems upgrades here and there, but it doesn't work that way, because the system is, or part of that system is so antiquated.

We're just to that point where, you know, we've got to get over the bridge and get some of this back into, you know, the 2020 technology, versus what we're working with, you know, some of this stuff. Again, as you know, some of the cameras, intercom security systems have been, you know, up and running 24 hours a day, seven days a week, since 2006, just before we open the facility.

Sheriff Figueroa: And this is two years in a row that we put in for an upgrade to the Black Creek system and program. It was initially put in place in 2006. It was last upgraded in 2011.

I was just walking through the jail yesterday. And there's cameras that are constantly going off. And there are a lot of issues, every weekend, where Chris has to come in and patch it and fix it with what we have. And just like a lot of the things in this building. The infrastructure needs replacement. You know, and I'm going to let Chris finish up on Black Creek and the importance of Black Creek.

But I also want to talk about the kitchen that was also taken off of, of the budget. I believe, if you listen to what Chris is saying what I'm saying, either you pay now, or you're going to pay later, and you're going to pay later, it's going to cost you more. And I think identifying these issues and getting them fixed and upgraded now is going to save the taxpayer money in the future. But Chris, finish up with what you were saying.

Chris Howe: Yeah, I just... I'm concerned only, you know, I'm pretty good at what I do when it comes to fixing stuff in there. And I've cannibalized a bunch of different older parts to make one-part work partially for a little while. I'm running into the issues now where I don't have parts to cannibalize. I can't get things to work only because the newer stuff that would be provided to take that equipment's place is not compatible with the older systems, the analog and the solid-state rack systems that we have. It's, you know, more of an engineering thing that, you know, one system doesn't talk to the other because it's a little too old to do that.

I guess, you know, the analogy is if you bought a computer in 2007, put it on the living room table, turned it on and left it on and played games on it every other day or so, how long would that computer last? Would you expect it to last the 14 years that the facility has been up and running, and still be running on the technology of today versus 2007? That's the issue we're sort of run into.

And it's again, it's a security concern, we've got a, you know, an inmate population that we're, we're deemed to keep inside the facility and safe and secure. And, of course, our staff is in there also. You know, I guess, you know, we could use keys, but in an emergency, that's, that's definitely a security issue.

Sheriff Figueroa: And we're talking about the opening and closing all the doors in the facility, we're talking about the cameras being able to zoom in, when there's an assault, which occurs, you know, once in a blue moon around here. And also, you're talking about one corrections officer that's watching about 38 individuals in a pod with our direct supervision system. Every single camera, every single gate, the controls. When the local police departments, bring in folks into the sally port, and the camera systems.

Every single one of those systems is what we're talking about here. And we're talking about potential liabilities if these systems shut down, as well, if something were to happen within the facility, and it's not up and running, It's our responsibility, not only to the population inside the jail, but to their families that are out there. They're in the care of the Sheriff. And the Sheriff works for the people in the County and Ulster County,

Chairwoman Walter: Black Creek, the... What is Black Creek? I'm not clear, Chris, what that is?

Chris Howe: Black Creek is the systems integrator, they are the company that furnish the original electronic security system for the facility.

Chairwoman Walter: And do you have an estimate of what this... to get it... Well, questions is, so, you have like the perfect... if you were to fix it as perfectly as you'd love to and is there anything in the middle?

Chris Howe: I think what was put in the budget, as a proposal was in the middle, enough to get us over the hump and, you know, upgrade enough of the systems to keep us in a pretty good spot. So, that again, we could look in another four years, or another five years, to know do another partial upgrade. I think at this point it was in the \$630,000 range was the estimate, or the proposal from the Black Creek folks.

Legislator Parete: Is that still in the budget, Sheriff?

Sheriff Figueroa: It was taken out...

Legislator Parete: it was taken out.

Sheriff Figueroa: ... of capital projects, two years in a row.

Legislator Parete: So, it's...

Sheriff Figueroa: To let you know the annual cost to keep this up the band-aide going it's about \$57,000 a year. If we do the upgrade, we're talking about \$20,000 a year for maintenance, rather than the \$56,000 that we've been putting in every year here.

Legislator Parete: So, if I might, Madam Chair, so this would be your wish list. It's not in your budget right now.

Sheriff Figueroa: That is correct.

Legislator Parete: Okay, so. So that's interesting, and I know your sidekick here, Chris Howe, is right on with his numbers. So, alright, so you're talking \$630,000. Alright, great. Thank you, sir.

Sheriff Figueroa: Any questions on Black Creek?

Chairwoman Walter: So, I do, actually and I, I don't... I think I know the answer. But, you know, we just had a... there was all of those desktop computers.

Sheriff Figueroa: That is a separate issue.

Chairwoman Walter: Does that have anything to do with this?

Sheriff Figueroa: It does have a small amount to do... I'll have my expert, you know, talk about that in a minute. But it does have something to do with that as well.

Chairwoman Walter: So, it's some of that \$630,000 going to be covered in those desktop computers?

Sheriff Figueroa: Not really, but some of the program upgrades will be.

Chairwoman Walter: Okay.

Sheriff Figueroa: I'll kind of spell that out to you when I switch over to that in a minute.

And the next issue, of course, is the is the kitchen. We have a dishwasher, that sanitizes a lot of the stuff that's being utilized, so there's no spread of germs within the facility and that we make sure that everything's clean. That particular piece of equipment, though, is obsolete and it was like \$250,000 when initially they purchased it.

Every year they're spending about \$20,000 to fix something wrong with it. But it just today, it broke down again. And when they come in to look at it, it's a minimum of \$2,000 to \$3,000 just to get somebody out to look at that. And the you know, again, this stuff's been in service for over 14 years and you're talking about a kitchen that's running 24/7, three meals a day. And some instances, right now, it's 180 meals, per, you know, per breakfast, lunch and dinner.

So, at some point, and I realize that the budget isn't going to be able to do that. My priority would obviously be Black Creek. But I want to make you aware about the issues that we're having with the infrastructure in the building to include the kitchen.

And I want to shift over to, I know that there was a conversation yesterday about the computers, how can the Sheriff's office have 125 computers, and that's actually part of the IS budget, they're responsible for the county's upgrade of computers. But we actually have 217 computers here at our facility. We're only upgrading 125. And I'm going to turn this over now to our IS representative, Frank Dart, who will explain to you about the issues of our computers and the upgrade problems that we're looking at.

Frank Dart: And that's Junior for some of yous that have been around for a while, just in case. Yeah, so, out of those ones, that we are, you know, looking to have replaced a good portion of our desktops are very, very old. I mean, as

far as things go. I mean, now generally, I know IS tends to, with the county, tries to keep them, you know, with PCs that are still under warranty. And they traditionally get a five-year warranty under those PCs.

Right now, out of the approximately 217 PCs that we have, we've got 106 of them are already out of warranty, because they are, you know, more than five years old. We've got another 36 that are, you know, either out of warranty this year, or will be probably by the end of the year. About another 20 or so that are with the Black Creek system. And then we have about 53 PCs that are still under warranty.

And as far as those PCs that are out of warranty, I mean, just to give you an idea how old some of them are... the bulk of what we have are HP 800 G1s, which we have 54 of. The release date on those words, back in the first quarter of 2014. So, these PCs are already over six years old. So, as far as technology wise goes, I mean, those things are really ancient history. And that's the bulk of it. And we have PCs that are older than that.

Like I said, I mean, as far as keeping them up to date, though. I mean, we try to keep things as much as possible. We don't actually dispose of PCs when we don't have to because again, just like Chris Howe does, we try to cannibalize things and try to make them all last as long as they can.

Sheriff Figueroa: Explain Windows 7 and the costs for that. So, keeping us up to speed.

Frank Dart: Yes. Okay. So, there is also, the other issue with a lot of the older PCs, a lot of those are Windows 7 PCs. Windows 7, I don't know how well some of you follow technology, but support for Windows seven ended back in January 2020, this year. There is a cost to do extended support for it, which is this one of the reasons why IS, you know, wanted to do the replacements.

For every PC this this year, it would be \$50 per device to keep security updates on it. And I'm sure you guys are aware of you know how important security updates are, especially in this day and age. Next year, that price goes up to \$100 per device. And the following year, it would go up to \$200 per device. So, I mean that the price goes just insane in a quick amount of time.

Sheriff Figueroa: And again, we're talking about 125. Right now, we have 217 here. This is a 24/7 operation. Those computers are running, the majority of them working 24 hours a day. I have seven substations, and 13 jail housing units, plus intake and classification. So, these computers need upgrading. It's in the budget. I just wanted to let you know, I know there was a question about them yesterday, and why does the Sheriff's Office have so many. I also sent a breakdown of where all these desktops are located and their purposes.

Chairwoman Walter: Right. I appreciate that. And it wasn't so much that it was fully questioned. It was more of where were they going because, it just, we just had a bulk amount. And I don't think it was really a major concern. There's a trust that IT knows when computers need to be replaced. So, but thank you for providing just a little bit more background detail.

So, besides so those are your two priority areas, but with Black Creek being the top one, in terms of things that weren't funded, that you really feel you need.

Do any other legislators have questions for the Sheriff?

Chairwoman Walter: Legislator Haynes.

Legislator Haynes: You know, quite honestly, I disagree. I do think the computers had definitely drew a lot of attention. That's just my opinion. And with that being said, can you explain to me or to anyone that might be listening, I know you sent the list out. But in this meeting, I can visualize myself walking through the Law Enforcement building and seeing these computers everywhere, I mean, what typically, like those control rooms have what how many in each control room? Several?

Sheriff Figueroa: Yes. And I'll let Frank talk about that. But just to give you an idea of what some of the computers are used for, is you know, in the pistol permit section, when we issue pistol permits, those pictures and cards are made on some of those computers. The same thing when you come into this building, you need access into this building, there are certain computers that are used for that. You know, two of these computers that we just bought this year, for the Discovery had to be, we're talking two computers at \$8,000, because of the storage and how quick, you know, to move a, you know, how long it takes to move that.. we had to get a game size, or game type PCs, for that. I don't know what the term is.

Frank Dart: More of a workstation.

Sheriff Figueroa: Right. It's more of a, you know, of a workstation for that. But those computers, you know, you would have, obviously, the bosses all have computers. Myself, not only do I have the my, like desktop, I also have a laptop that I take when I when I go anywhere because I have to pay the bills and answer emails on a regular basis.

But... what was that? But I'm going to let Frank talk a little bit about where all these pieces are and what why they're so many.

Frank Dart: Sure. Again, I mean, we do have a lot of different systems. I mean, as far as, again, like, like, for example, with pistol, you do have, you know, the person's application, you got stuff that interfaces with the State. You also have, you know, our law enforcement record system. We've got Live Scan...

Sheriff Figueroa: Intake.

Frank Dart: Yeah, you know, and some of those have different modules. And they need certain things. So, plus, we've also got our vehicle tracking system. We've got stuff for the arbitrator for the video, you know, for the body cams, for the dash cams, license plate readers, things like that. And a lot of these we need systems, you know, that are dedicated strictly for some of these, just to begin with, on top of, what we have for the personnel to be able to do their normal duties.

Chairwoman Walter: Yeah, I have one question. Oh, that just going to say I appreciate, and we have the whole list, and we'll make sure that the people on the other committee, Ways and Means, gets a copy of that list of where they're all going.

Legislator Haynes: One other point, point of clarification, do any of the inmates have access to desktop computers? Are there areas, common areas, workstations that they, or is it strictly tablets.

Sheriff Figueroa: We, we do have tablets, but they also have access to, you know, the library. They have computers that are assigned in the pods. And I believe it's two per pod, that they have access to, in the law library. And other specialized training, we get the folks that come in, well, when they were able to come in, from Ulster Literacy, and we have computers that they use for that. Any type of special programs that come in, we utilize those computers that are in those pods for that purpose.

Chairwoman Walter: All right, thank you. Any other questions for the Sheriff?

Legislator Parete: To the sheriff, if I might, Sheriff, if we had to bite the bullet instead of repairing Black Creek, it appears like on a regular basis, what would it cost to move into the 21st century?

Sheriff Figueroa: Chris, are you still on?

Chris Howe: Sure, yeah.

Legislator Parete: Hey, Chris.

Chris Howe: I'm going... you know, a rough estimate on a full systems upgrade is probably \$1.5 million. We're, we're probably going to double what the proposal for the partial systems upgrade is at this point.

Legislator Parete: Okay, thank you, Chris.

Chris Howe: Yes, sir.

Chairwoman Walter: And how long would that type of full upgrade last versus the partial upgrade.

Chris Howe: We're still looking at, you know, four to five-year range, before we had to start taking out the upgrade again. So, I mean, this one, we did a partial upgraded 2011 and we've been requesting it for a couple of years. So, probably, you know, 6-7-8 years before the equipment starts to get to the point where it's just, you know, we can't keep fixing.

Sheriff Figueroa: And if you, you know, if you look at that number for maintenance, update up, you know, to keep the upkeep it's about \$25,000. You know, I mean, \$50,000 a year. And if we get that upgrade done, that number gets reduced to about \$20,000 in maintenance fees a year. That's a huge number, if you add the years up that the system hasn't been upgraded.

Chairwoman Walter: Any other questions?

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: May I just interrupt one minute? It's Stephanie, from the Public Defender.

Chairwoman Walter: Sure.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: Sure, just another thing to take into account with regards to computers in the jail, is that actually the Public Defender's Office needs to have, there has to be computers, where the inmates are able to review their digital evidence, their digital discovery. So, we were able to do that when we were able to go into the pods with them. I don't know how old those are. I don't know if they need to be upgraded. But that's critical for us to be able to work with our clients in the prison.

Chairwoman Walter: Sheriff, do you know if any of those are included in that list?

Sheriff Figueroa: Yes, I believe that, when we talked about the 125 is to upgrade a lot of those systems. I'm not sure those are specifically for those, more toward the operational side of it. But I'm sure we can look into that.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: Right. And I apologize, I actually have to leave the meeting. I just wanted to know if there's any other questions for me from the Public Defense.

Chairwoman Walter: No. Thank you. Thanks for your time.

Stephanie Kaplan, Esq.: Okay. Thank you so much.

Chairwoman Walter: So, anything else for the sheriff, or for the District Attorney while he's here that you might have thought of that you hadn't thought of before? And, Laura, you're welcome to if you have any questions, or Jonathan. Heidi, did you have another question? I'm sorry, Sheriff, did you have something else to add?

Sheriff Figueroa: I just wanted to add, my question, is being in office here for a year and nine months, I've ran budgets before in the, in the Marine Corps for many, many years. And my question is about the process. And forgive my naiveté, perhaps I can learn a little bit more.

As an elected official, once the budget is passed from the Legislature, I find it quite interesting that I have to, again, go through the process of getting approvals through the county, after the budget was already passed. To include asset forfeitures that are not taxpayer money. And I'm not complaining about it, I just find it the extra step is just a little much. Is that the usual process? Is there a way we could streamline that process?

Because I find that once I, you know, when I was in the military, once the, once I got approved for the funds for the following year, and I attach the receipts and covered why they were there. Going through a second process again, through another elected office, to me is a little much.

Chairwoman Walter: I'm going to defer to one of the more senior legislators if they have anything... either John or John or, or Laura or Heidi. Heidi is shaking her head "no" already. So...

Legislator Parete: Well, I kind of think that when they're sure its budget approved, he administers it. It's sort of money in the bank, unless it's something extremely extraordinary. I don't exactly know what you're talking about, Sheriff. But if you know if you wanted to buy five cars, you have to go through the process of the bid process. But pretty much it's your call.

Sheriff Figueroa: Thank you.

Chairwoman Walter: Legislator Haynes.

Legislator Haynes: I'm just a little bit confused on where on the Sheriff's having his issue. But he wants to talk about this in more detail.

Sheriff Figueroa: I gave back three quarters of you know, half a million dollars in equipment. And I find myself even though that it's already approved in the budget, constantly walking sometimes, and it's just a process, I'm sure, that it takes such a long time. And I have to get approvals through the County Executive's Office, even though the budget was approved by the Legislature. And it's the Sheriff's budget.

Chairwoman Walter: I mean, I think that if you are experiencing these delays on the Executive level of things that are approved in the budget, you should certainly let us know. I don't know if Legislator Heppner or Legislator Petit, do you have anything to add?

Legislator Petit: Yeah, generally, I mean, you do need to go through the budget approval process, which is what we're doing right now. But there's checks and balances in government. So even though you been provided a budget, when you do go out to make a purchase over a certain amount, there is the procurement process. And that's where you would need to go and get signatures or further approval from the Legislature. Does that make sense? So, it's more of a State procurement policy than anything else.

Sheriff Figueroa: And I realize that. That's not really my question. I would, you know, and this is a unique year, so maybe I should hold off and direct this to the county. It is a unique year because of COVID-19. But, you know, it just seems to me, there seems to be an extra step that I seem to be going through. And as an elected official, getting a budget from the Legislature, going through, and I know that the County Exec is the chief financial officer of the county, and he has to, he has his role. And there is a checks and balances.

But it just seems to me that sometimes it's a... again, going back to my military days, there's an extra process here. And I'm not saying that that's always the norm. It's not always the norm. But I seem to feel sometimes a pinch, coming from the County Executive's Office, at some point. We do work these things out. I just find it, you know, this is a big, big job here. And there's a lot of things that go on. And having the extra step. I believe, in some instances, when I approve it, then that should be enough, if you give me the authority, from the Legislature, to run my budget.

Chairwoman Walter: So, I mean, I'll say, I mean, I and I have heard this from other departments of elements that that they expected were approved that are not moving forward, as they would expect in terms in terms of implementation in that given year. And I think that that's something that is worth, you know, we can bring it back to our, to the Legislature to talk about how that process works. I think what I'm hearing, and you can correct me if I'm wrong, is, is there a way if an approved item doesn't seem to be moving forward through the Executive's Office, to the Legislature, that a department could take other steps to ensure that the Legislature knows that there is this, this stalemate, or this lack of movement? And is that what you're basically asking?

Legislator Haynes: With all due respect, I think he's, he's a duly elected official, with a budget to operate for operations. And I don't want to speak out of line for the Sheriff because he's done a good job explaining it for himself. But I think he feels as though once he's approved for these budget, budgetary items, he should be able to execute it as he finds necessary.

Chairwoman Walter: No, I agree. I... but there, yes, we are absolutely agreeing. That's what I understand it too. I guess the next step was so what does... what is the process if that's not what's happening? What is the process if it's feeling like it's being held up in the Executive's Office? And so that what he should be able to do, as a duly elected official, if it's not the reality doesn't match the process as it should be... what is the step? What next step would that... would the Sheriff do, or the DA do, or or something like that? I think is what I'm hearing you want to know, like from the Legislative perspective, is that correct?

Sheriff Figueroa: That's right.

Chairwoman Walter: So, I think we need to have that conversation.

Sheriff Figueroa: And the only reason why I bring it up. My own fiscal people have never seen it like this before. I can also say, though, that it is a unique year, you know, we had COVID-19 in the county, and I realized, and I understand that. And look, you know, saving taxpayers money, if there's something unnecessary, and it has come up in the past, and I'd look at him like, you know what, you're right. We're going to relook at that. And I don't have a problem with that. I just feel that I have to explain myself over and over again, for certain things that are needed at this office with the you know, the public safety of this county. That's what I'm concerned about.

Chairwoman Walter: Thank you.

Sheriff Figueroa: Thank you.

Chairwoman Walter: All right. Any other questions from anyone? I really appreciate you all giving this extra time for this conversation. I think we learned a lot of important things that we should regroup on. Heidi, I don't know, if some point offline you and I should just connect and talk about this a little bit. But yes, thank you all. And I know that there's another meeting at 6:30. So you have 10 minutes to get up and stretch. Bye. Thank you.

Deputy Clerk Mahler: Can I get a motion to adjourn?

Chairwoman Walter: Motion to adjourn.

Legislator Haynes: I'll second that. Haynes.

Chairwoman Walter: Okay. All in favor?

Committee Members: Aye.

Chairwoman Walter: All right. Thanks, everyone. Thank you. Bye.