

Law Enforcement & Public Safety Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes

DATE & TIME: August 4, 2022 – 5:15 PM
LOCATION: Powered by Zoom Meetings, Meeting ID: 813 2023 5985
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chair Abe Uchitelle
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Nettie Tomshaw, Legislative Employee
PRESENT: Legislators Hansut, Heppner (arrived 5:18 PM), Hewitt, Lopez
ABSENT: None
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Director Nancy Schmidt, Deputy Director Valerie Naccarato Probation, Dir. Everett Erichsen Dept. Emergency Services, Sheriff Figueroa & Chief Investigator John Luke Mason, Deputy County Executive Chris Kelly, Mid-Hudson News Hank Gross

Chair Uchitelle called the meeting to order at 5:16 PM.

Motion No. 1: **Moved to APPROVE the Minutes of the July 7, 2022 Meeting of the Law Enforcement & Public Safety Committee**

Motion By: Legislator Lopez
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Hansut

Discussion: None.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Hansut, Hewitt, Lopez, Uchitelle
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Minutes APPROVED**

Resolutions for the August 16, 2022 Session of the Legislature

Resolution No. 189: Establishing A Policy Prohibiting The Housing Of Incarcerated Individuals Transferred From Facilities Outside Of Ulster County, The “No More Incarceration For Profit Policy”

Resolution Summary: This resolution establishes a policy, “No More Incarceration For Profit Policy” prohibiting the housing of incarcerated individuals transferred from facilities outside of Ulster County. Financial Impact TBD.

Motion No. 2: **Moved Resolution No. 189 FOR Discussion**
Motion By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Hewitt

Discussion: See attached transcript.

Motion No. 3: Moved Resolution No. 189 To Postpone

Motion By: Legislator Heppner

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Hewitt

Voting In Favor: Legislators Hansut, Heppner, Hewitt, Lopez, Uchitelle

Voting Against: None

Votes in Favor: 5

Votes Against: 0

Disposition: **Postponed**

Resolution No. 424: Authorizing The Chair Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute A Grant Contract With The New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault – Department Of Probation

Resolution Summary: This resolution authorizes the Chair of the UC Legislature to execute a grant contract with the NYS Coalition Against Sexual Assault. Anticipated Revenue \$9.5K for the period 7/1/22 – 6/30/23.

Motion No. 4: Moved Resolution No. 424 FOR Discussion

Motion By: Legislator Heppner

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Hansut

Discussion: See attached transcript.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Hansut, Heppner, Hewitt, Lopez, Uchitelle

Voting Against: None

Votes in Favor: 5

Votes Against: 0

Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 425: Authorizing The Chair Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute An Agreement With The New York State Office Of Emergency Management To Develop A Multi-Jurisdictional Multi- Hazard Mitigation Plan - Department Of Emergency Communications / Emergency Management

Resolution Summary: This resolution authorizes the Chair of the UC Legislature to execute an agreement with the NYS Office of Emergency Mgmt. to develop a multi-jurisdictional, multi-hazard mitigation plan. Anticipated 2023 Federal revenue dollars (state pass through), \$20K county (in-kind services)

Motion No. 5: Moved Resolution No. 425 FOR Discussion

Motion By: Legislator Hansut

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Heppner

Discussion: See attached transcript.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Hansut, Heppner, Hewitt, Lopez, Uchitelle

Voting Against: None

Votes in Favor: 5

Votes Against: 0

Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 426: Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$120,284.00 Entered Into By The County – New York State Sheriff’s Association – Ulster County Sheriff

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves the execution of a contract for \$120.3K entered into by the County – NYS Sheriff’s Association for confinement facility COVID-19 detection and mitigation grant. 100% other, contract dates 8/1/21-7/31/24.

Motion No. 6: **Moved Resolution No. 426 FOR Discussion**

Motion By: Legislator Hansut

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Lopez

Discussion: See attached transcript.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Hansut, Heppner, Hewitt, Lopez, Uchitelle

Voting Against: None

Votes in Favor: 5

Votes Against: 0

Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 427: Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$60,333.00 Entered Into By The County – VirTra, Inc. – Ulster County Sheriff

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves the execution of a contract for \$60.3K with VirTra Inc. for a firearms training simulator. 100% County, contract dates 8/1/22-7/31/23.

Motion No. 7: **Moved Resolution No. 427 FOR Discussion**

Motion By: Legislator Hansut

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Hewitt

Discussion: See attached transcript.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Hansut, Heppner, Hewitt, Lopez, Uchitelle

Voting Against: None

Votes in Favor: 5

Votes Against: 0

Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

New Business (see attached transcript)

Adjournment

Chair Uchitelle asked the members if there was any other business and hearing none.

Motion Made By: Legislator Hansut

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Heppner

No. of Votes in Favor: 5

No. of Votes Against: 0

TIME: 6:14 PM

Respectfully submitted: Legislative Staff, Nettie Tomshaw
Meeting audio available on Legislative website.

Approved: September 8, 2022

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Chair Uchitelle

All right. I'd like to call the August meeting of the Law Enforcement and Public Safety Committee to order. And to begin with, I would like to entertain a motion for approval of the July 7, 2022 Meeting Minutes. Do I have a motion to approve?

Chair Uchitelle

I'll move it.

Chair Uchitelle

Alright, so moved. Was that Lopez seconded by Hansut? Any discussion on the minutes? All right, all those in favor of approving the July, 7 2022. Meeting Minutes?

Committee Members

Aye. Aye.

Chair Uchitelle

Any opposed? Any abstentions? is unanimous. All right. Before we get into resolutions, Sheriff Figueroa has asked to introduce or to share an update on our chief investigator. And I thought that would be a great way to get things rolling. So Sheriff Figueroa if you want to take it from there.

Sheriff Figueroa

Thank you, Mr. Chair. And good afternoon, everyone. One of the things that we worked on the last two years regarding to professional policing, and the Criminal Justice Task Force, was looking at a way of showing more transparency within an organization like the sheriff's office. And one of the recommendations that were submitted by the Criminal Justice Task Force was that of getting a Chief Investigator of professional standards. So what we did here this year, with the help of the legislature and the county, was established an entirely new division. And shortly I'm going to introduce you to that new

chief investigator. And he's going to let you know what it is his responsibilities are in this office. This is the first time in the history of the sheriff's office, that we will have a professional standards division that's stand alone, and not associated or affiliated unions. And I think it's a it's a great segue into the future of policing. So without further ado, I'd like to introduce the Ulster County Sheriff's first Chief Investigator of professional standards. Some of you may know him, but if you're not, if you don't know he's going to introduce himself. To you, John Luke Mason was over my left shoulder. Chief, come on up.

Luke Mason

Good afternoon, everybody. Nancy, I remember you from the DA's office. I'm Luke Mason. And just to tell you what my responsibilities are, as in this new position, as chief investigator is investigating internal and external investigations, complaints from civilians and internal complaints from officers and deputies, correction officers within the sheriff's office, in charge of foil requests, (inaudible) material substance abuse, testing, background checks, training into the areas of that we find trends in these complaints and misconduct that we are investigating. Let's see recruitment and retention. Believe am I missing anything else here?

Sheriff Figueroa

EEOC.

Sheriff Figueroa

EEOC and equal assistance programs for employment assistance programs, excuse me, for people within the office and the county.

Sheriff Figueroa

So those last two for a second, if I made those were actually not just and I'm glad that he said that not just for the Sheriff's Office, but all first responders in the in the county. So equal employment and opportunity and compliance. Mediation will be done by a certified individual from our office for those that require or needed. It's also in compliance with the county's policy, as well as employee assistance and Officer wellness. And we know how many times hurt people hurt people and the things that law enforcement sees is not the normal thing that most people see. So Luke is going to be in charge of that-those individuals that are going to be trained up to go out and get folks help.

Luke Mason

And we part of that is with a team we have two part time employees that have been trained in equal opportunity training certify within the county to look into that. We have another part time, former New York State Police officer who will also conduct these IA investigations. We believe we'll have a detective sergeant supervising these individuals. So we have a pretty good team built up to conduct these investigations and complaints that come into the county. But who I am Nancy knows a little bit. I am a former ADA here and Ulster County. I was an assistant district attorney for two year approximately two years here working in the narco unit. Before that I was in Queens for approximately seven years as an ADA, I was part of the organized crime and rackets Bureau, I do have experience in investigations of organized crime families and street gangs and wiretap investigations. Before that, I am a veteran, I was a Navy veteran for approximately seven years a corpsman seal medic. So I believe I hold or have a kind

of a good perspective of the different things out there to look at in an objective view. Maybe what this office was so lucky to have conduct these investigations.

Chair Uchitelle

Great, thank you so much for being here. Does anyone on the committee- we have a couple of minutes we can ask some questions. Anyone on the committee have any questions?

Legislator Hansut

Just welcome.

Luke Mason

Thank you very much.

Chair Uchitelle

I'll ask the question, what is the best way for folks that might want to discuss any of those topics? Whether it's a member of the public or even someone internal, you know, in the in the Ulster County first responder world. How is the best - what is the best way to reach out to you?

Luke Mason

Sure, you can reach me directly at my line, as soon as that frankly gets set up and can reach me or the office of confidential secretary. The sheriff as well, he's I know his doors always open. But my doors always open as well.

Sheriff Figueroa

The sheriff's app, there's a section there for compliance and complaints. And they will go directly to this guy back to here. He's going to get them directly. So if you download the sheriff's app, there's a section that says compliments and concerns, you can easily reach out that way. There's also a contact list contact us that we're going to update to the app for the new division. He started a little over a week ago. So we got to get them trained up, send them to school, and hopefully it'll be ready to roll and our office will be up and running by January 1.

Chair Uchitelle

Okay, great. And this information will be also publicized on the website. And in general will be available and maybe some social media just so that we can introduce them to the community.

Sheriff Figueroa

Absolutely. Thank you.

Chair Uchitelle

Great. Thank you. Awesome. Thank you. Anyone else have anything they want to add or ask? Okay, well with that we can jump into resolutions.

Chair Uchitelle

Our first resolution tonight is Resolution No. 189. Establishing a policy prohibiting the housing of incarcerated individuals transferred from facilities outside of Ulster County, the no more incarceration for profit policy. Can I have a motion to discuss.

Legislator Heppner

I'll move it?

Chair Uchitelle

I've got a motion from Heppner, can I have a second? Second from Hewitt? I have not heard from the sponsor. I don't know, Sheriff Figueroa if you've had any further conversations.

Sheriff Figueroa

Yes, I had a conversation with Legislator Maloney. And we discuss more of a reporting nature to an oversight the Public Safety Committee regarding how many board-ins are at the jail. We're still talking to figure out how that's going to get written out. At some point, we're going to have another meeting and I think we're obviously going to have you there, Mr. Chair, and then we'll discuss the best route forward. As you know, I have some reservations regarding the operational control of this office. So that still has to be retained by the elected sheriff. But I'm not opposed to advising the oversight regarding how many board-ins we have? We don't take any Federal Board ins. We don't have the staffing levels to do that. This facility was initially built to do that. But our issues right now are more of a staffing level issues with so many open positions and the lack of folks. We are now which provisionally hiring folks, because we've exhausted the list. And for the last two to three years no one's taken or has interest in this line of work. So it's why John Mason's also on board because he's going to put a plan together along with the Under Sheriff for retention and recruitment to members in this office.

Chair Uchitelle

Okay, great. I think I would love to - I'll follow up with you about this. But if we can schedule that meeting before the next resolution deadline, I think it would be great. Legislator Heppner.

Legislator Heppner

Yeah, I want to thank the sheriff for engaging the legislature in this discussion, but also, I'll make a motion to postpone.

Chair Uchitelle

Anyone would like to second that? Any discussion on the motion to postpone? So that was a motion from Heppner, second by Hewitt. We'll call the question all those in favor of postponing Resolution No. 189. Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right. Resolution 189 is postponed.

Chair Uchitelle

Our next resolution, Resolution 424, Authorizing the chair of the Ulster County Legislature to execute a grant contract with the New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault through the Department of Probation. Can I have a motion to discuss? So I've got a motion from Heppner. And second, I heard but I couldn't catch who it was. Great second from Handsut. All right, before we go into discussion, I would

like to let Director Schmidt give us some background on this. I know this is a very small amount of money, if it's the one that I'm thinking of, but still makes an impact. And we'd love to hear about that.

Director Nancy Schmidt

Sure. Um, so the New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault had put out an offer of additional funding, they're recognizing that there needs to be some additional funding to partly for some of the agencies who needed to increase salaries to meet the need. We applied for the funds and are using it just to supplement the salary of our enough is enough counselor who is at the colleges at the two colleges providing response to sexual assaults on the campuses and prevention work at the campuses. And that the other grant had almost fully funded the program, but was you know, with the CSEA increases, they're starting to be a gap. So this helps us fulfill that gap so that there's less county funding, you know, there's a minimal amount.

Chair Uchitelle

Great. Anyone have any questions? All right, if there's no questions or further discussion, I'll call the question and Resolution No. 424. All those in favor? Any opposed? Any abstaining? It is unanimous. Thank you so much.

Director Nancy Schmidt

Thank you.

Chair Uchitelle

All right, Resolution No. 425. Authorizing the chair of the Ulster County Legislature to execute an agreement with the New York State Office of Emergency Management to develop a multi-jurisdictional multi hazard mitigation plan. Department of Emergency Communications, emergency management. Can I have a motion to discuss?

Chair Uchitelle

Motion from Hansut, second from Heppner. All right. And before we jump into discussion, I would love to give Director Erickson an opportunity to frame the background of where we're at with us.

Legislator Hansut

Motion.

Director Erickson

Thank you, sir. So currently, we do have a hazard multi jurisdiction hazard mitigation plan in place. It's been in place since 2009. We update this every five years. We are required to have this plan in place. Towns and villages are required to have them have them as well. What most of those localities do is they adopt into our plan. And they're allowed to do that. And basically what it does, it's there to identify and reduce the vulnerability to hazards - helps us we work together to recognize them, put a plan in place to mitigate them. And then as part of the plan, you're eligible for federal funding, and it's usually passed through the state. So every five years since 2009, we've been able to get a grant to help us put together this plan. It's currently on our site, last updated in 2017. It's almost a 300 page document, 17 other localities are currently part of the 17 of 24 totalities are part of the county plan. So we're in the update

process. You know, we've been doing the background. Because no matter what we have to have the plan in place. So, you know, we're working through the process, you know, as we put this resolution forward to you, as we go through the budget process, RFP process, you know what we started those conversations with the jurisdiction to, say, start identifying, you know, the hazards within your Township, your villages and so on. You know, have you addressed any of the hazards that you identified in the last plan? Have you made any advancements on those projects and programs? So this grant would help us hire a firm to help us work on this plan, do a lot of the coordination and the writing of the plan itself.

Chair Uchitelle

Great. Thank you. Any questions from the committee?

Deputy Executive Kelly

Legislator Hansut?

Legislator Hansut

Um, it just says in here - so this is for the 2023 budget correct?

Director Erickson

So we were awarded the grant this year. We didn't have the funding in the budget for this year. We did budget it for 2023. So that's why it's written that way in the resume.

Legislator Hansut

Thank you.

Chair Uchitelle

That was gonna be my question as well. If it's possible, I would be curious to see prior iterations of the plan, is that something that's publicly available?

Director Erickson

Yes, it's on our website. I can send you the link.

Chair Uchitelle

That'd be great. If you could send that and then Nettie if you could share that with the committee, I think that would be really good. I do really want us to think about these types of hazards holistically, particularly because we become advocates for any projects that might flow through other committees to help with to help deal with some of these issues. You know, if there's a culvert that needs to be replaced, that's going to be going through DPW, it's going to be going through Ways and Means. I really want us on this committee to take responsibility for understanding the kinds of hazards that this county faces.

Director Erickson

So what I actually do is, we put together an informational update sheet that we're going to be sending out to all the jurisdictions. I'll send that, that has the link for the plan in it. And it has just a couple of questions about like, just like question and answer of what the plan is, what does it mean for the municipality, what the municipality needs to know, it asks them to complete a quick one-minute survey. And then a couple

different links like FEMA links and stuff like that. So I'll send that PDF. And that should have more than what you're asking for.

Chair Uchitelle

Great. I appreciate that. Thank you. Any other questions from the committee or points of discussion? All right. If there's no further questions, I will call the question on resolution 425. All those in favor? Any opposed? All right, resolution 425 is adopted unanimously.

Chair Uchitelle

Resolution No. 426. Approving the execution of a contract for \$120,284 entered into by the county with the New York State Sheriffs Association, through the Ulster County Sheriff. Can I have a motion to discuss? All right motion from Deputy Chair Hansut. Can I have a second?

Legislator Lopez

Second.

Chair Uchitelle

All right, second from Legislator Lopez. All right. And I would love to hand it off to Sheriff Figueroa before we discuss to give us some background on these funds flowing in for COVID.

Sheriff Figueroa

So this was a federal grant. At first it only targeted state facilities and the New York State Sheriffs Association, went to Albany and says, Hey, what about the county jail? So we've been dealing with COVID just like everybody else has. So this was the deal that was made with the state and the federal government that the local sheriff's and the county jails would also get part of that grant. So the portion for Ulster County is about 120,000 It's a reimbursable and it's really for equipment to detect you know COVID - the clean and sanitize by equipment to sanitize a confined location like the jail. Even in the middle of the wintertime here when this flu one person gets it and it just spreads so quickly. So this is really it's great for us it's money that we can definitely use to purchase the equipment to detect you know, bacteria, and of course, presently we have an issue regarding COVID We got a small outbreak by last week, and so we're still, you know, when you have visitations, again that are open, you're gonna have run into this. So I'm looking forward to getting this equipment.

Chair Uchitelle

Great, thank you. Any questions from the committee? I have a question. How did they determine the allocation between all the counties?

Sheriff Figueroa

It was based on the number of individuals that you had in your facility and your protocols that were in place. We were the first jail in the Hudson Valley, one of the first to shut down. When there was one per one case here in Ulster County, we decided to immediately shut down visits and shut down programs, and we did the mask, we got the temperature, meters throughout in it coming in and out of the jail. And we went out and got equipment, the spray and clean and disinfect, you know, the different areas of the facility. So it's based on the number of inmates or incarcerated individuals that you have in your facility,

and how many cases you had, we were lucky the first year and a half, we didn't have anything. And then the second phase of that, that's when it started the hit. So either way, I'm happy to get 120,000 from the state to basically combat the spread of the virus.

Chair Uchitelle

So the purchases that you made previously, are those Can you reimburse for those are is only going forward?

Committee Members

Now only going forward?

Chair Uchitelle

Sorry, to just jump in there. Does anyone have any questions? Is there like a list of things that you can buy that, you know,

Sheriff Figueroa

There is. And then you have to, and they have to certify that it's part of a overall program that a lot of correctional facilities in the state are using.

Chair Uchitelle

And do you, considering that we already bought a lot of this equipment do you anticipate us needing you know, this is being able to spend the full amount basically?

Sheriff Figueroa

So everyone uses different equipment. The equipment that they have were the ones that were really proven to work. For example, there was a meter that they had to detect the cleanliness of a toilet, for example. And ironically, the toilet facilities that the incarcerated individuals were using were actually cleaner than the folks the correction staff was using. So we had to make sure that we cleaned that facility in those areas a little bit more. So it's detection equipment about the HEPA filters in our system here. And so those are the things that this is going to focus on.

Chair Uchitelle

Great. Any further discussion from folks on the committee? All right. Well, if there's no further discussion, I'll call the question on Resolution No. 426. All those in favor?

Committee Members

Aye. Aye.

Chair Uchitelle

Any opposed? Any abstaining. Motion 426 is approved.

Chair Uchitelle

Resolution No. 427. Approving the execution of a contract for \$60,333 entered into by the county with ViTra, Inc., to the Ulster County Sheriff's Office. Can I have a motion to discuss? Motion from Deputy Chair Hansut. Can I have a second.

Legislator Hewitt

Second.

Chair Uchitelle

Second from Legislator Hewitt. All right. So again, I will pass it to you Sheriff Figueroa. And I know that we also have a video which Nettie has queued up which we will play whenever you give us the signal.

Sheriff Figueroa

Nettie whenever you're ready. And I'll talk afterwards, it's three minutes and 53 seconds, but I think you could move it up a little bit because the introduction is like maybe 10 seconds or something like that. Thank you.

Video

Brand new training that all of our law enforcement officers - cutting edge training. This gives them the full encompassing training that they're going to need, advanced training simulators in the country called the fortress system. They're a company focused on virtual judgmental and de-escalation training for law enforcement. De-escalation will be a top priority. Protesting police involved shootings was not reducing tensions between cops and communities. Anytime we can use a tool like this, to get better outcomes for our community and ultimately keep people safer. That's the ultimate goal. You have community or communities, you have law enforcement and I see companies like ViTra as a linking element between here and there a lot of times are bridge of sorts. It's about the officers feeling based on current events and what's going on in the country over the last three to four to five years with all the shootings, a lot of the departments are put under a lot of political pressure and so the officers came to their representative was, which are their union reps saying, Hey, we chose this position, we chose this job, but we need better training. Because if you have an insecure, untrained officer, he or she is going to make a lot more mistakes. We're just trying to go, well, what's the best course I should take here. Whereas once you've experienced this, you can pull this out now, right. And by providing these kinds of things, now we have something that we can recall from our memory. Police officers have to be jacks of all trades. That's what the societal expectations are with cops. And they want police officers to be able to respond accurately and appropriately to give them scenarios. It's a tall order. But that's what the expectations are. Legislators can do a lot of things in their states. Certainly they can heighten the awareness of our products, making it known that this capability is now available. Legislators can support adding the equipment necessary to train police officers to the very highest standards. We are not training our officers enough. We hold our officers at a very high standard, which we should. But if we're going to hold these officers at a very high standard, we need to provide them the tools and the training. We're now trying to get some continuity across the board and saying, Look, we're all trying to work together to kind of solve a problem here and kind of make things and relations a little bit better between law enforcement in the various communities they serve. I think what it takes is a person saying enough is enough, I will only approved the highest quality training for officers because the public expects it and the officers deserve it. I think it takes

someone of courage to say what we have done to date is not enough in especially in the day and age we live in. In law enforcement nowadays. Everything is hypercritical and we are looked at so heavily by the press, the police bras, the politicians in the city, the media, the activist groups that are out there, cops are getting scrutinized on five different levels all the time now put under the microscope. So if you can give them a tool that will help them be more successful. I really don't know how you could sit there even his rank and file guy or young girl? Well, I don't think we should be doing this purchase mission is to improve and save lives through the development deployment in support of the world's finest, judge-mental use of force and marksmanship training simulator.

Sheriff Figueroa

Thank you, Nettie, I really appreciate that. I wanted to put that out there, because it's extremely important for folks to understand. I actually budgeted \$15,000 this year to lease the simulator, but it's a minimum three-year lease. And because of that it was just cheaper to purchase it. So we had it within our operating budget to do that. And I spoke to the county and this is what we came up with, and is to purchase one. And what's unique about this particular program is that depending on what the officer says, it changes scenarios as it goes. And that's a great way to learn. So if you say the wrong thing, because you're not understanding the actual situation, then you get the learn then in a program like this use of force we train twice a year. But to have this tool is even better. It really puts it in the forefront of these officers, these young officers thinking what they need to do to deescalate a situation and also identify folks that have mental health issues. And there's numerous scenarios for that.

Sheriff Figueroa

We've seen shootings and houses of worship throughout our nation. We see school shootings, mall shootings, all these scenarios can be played out using this simulator. And the most important thing out of this is that we're starting a citizen officer interaction similar to the citizen officer training that we did last year after the murder of George Floyd with all the members of our office. What's great about the citizen officer Academy is that there's going to be a board of six members, three law enforcement and three of the folks throughout our county that have had issues with law enforcement. To sit down and put a program and a curriculum together, hopefully this fall because that's what the target date is, and then again next year, and we actually put money in the budget for next year. So they can have a budget to do this. But this tool right here is also part of that. So not only can the civilians out there that don't understand the work that we do, can see what we do and the reactions that we have and why we do the things that we do. But at the same time, we can listen to the way they feel about us and what they bring to the table, whether it's a different instructor or a different way they want us to train or a specific topic that we need to discuss. It's local, to us. And that's why I believe that this is a an extremely important tool.

Sheriff Figueroa

Again, it's within our operating budget I did have I, like I said earlier about the \$15,000 that I put in the budget for this year that was approved last year. And so that's why this is in front of you today. And I hope that you're with me on this, of this important tool that we need.

Chair Uchitelle

Thank you, Sheriff, if it's alright, I'd like to put you on the spot a little bit further to talk about the different levels and why this is the right level for us. Because I know there are a couple of different products. And we had a couple of legislators have googled the company and I've seen some pretty impressive things. But I know there's different levels for what we're getting.

Sheriff Figueroa

So we got the cheapest model, because that's all I could afford in my operating budget. And, and obviously, if we can get the middle one, which I emailed the, the Chair and the Vice Chair earlier today, so they can look at the numbers, that would be great. Remember, this is not just for the members of this office, but it's for the civilians that want to partake in this program, and every local law enforcement entity and first responder in this county, and I invite members of the of the legislature. And of course, of course Nancy. Probation and parole because they have a very dangerous job. They have to go in and knock on the doors and check on folks. But this is for every first responder, law enforcement at the (inaudible) county. And the first folks that I want to sit through the demonstration, obviously, are members from the legislature. So you can see for yourself how these different scenarios depending on what the officer says that situation changes. The person that's sitting behind that laptop computer with the scenarios can actually change the outcome depending on what the officers say and do. And so it's a simulated weapons simulated taser. And there are different techniques that you've learned as you go through. And it's a progressive program that they put together. It's really something that you have to see.

Chair Uchitelle

So I'd like to see if anyone has any questions. And then I do want to get into more of a conversation about the product itself. But does anyone have any general questions about the program? So I'll just say, I think this is very important. And I think we can see, in our society, the larger society around us, so many instances where this type of training comes into play. So protecting, you know, protecting civilians that are experiencing an active shooter, obviously, that's a huge, huge, huge priority. And I think every community that has faced that horrible experience probably was not much different than our community, prior to that experience, thinking it could never happen there. And so anything that we can do to prevent that, and then on the other side, you know, to be able to train our officers to engage with folks that are handling a lot of (inaudible) themselves, dealing with, you know, whatever pressures and challenges and being able to de-escalate things. We've also seen in our communities, larger communities, how significant those events can unfold, and how important de-escalation is. Those two things are so, so, so, so critical. And I'm really excited that we're talking about this. I'm curious if you can describe the different levels, right where we've got the lowest one that we're looking at here. There's a step up, and then there's a higher step up from there. And I'll just share candidly that a few of us have discussed whether we should be investing in this further because it's such a critical, it's such a critical training area.

Sheriff Figueroa

And thank you again, Chairman. Yes, there are three levels we bought the smallest version because of the costs. The middle version, which I emailed is actually great. It's actually walking into a room it's completely surround. The first one is more portable, so we can take that for example, to a house of worship and be able to train anyone that has an issue when they're training in their house of worship or a school or a mall. And what's unique about this, you can actually videotape any building and put that

scenario in - put those actors into that building. So you're familiar with the surroundings. You see what's going on.

Sheriff Figueroa

The higher end model obviously makes it even more realistic. And that's why it costs more money but think about the liabilities that we're going to save, if officers make the right decisions versus the wrong decision, because they weren't trained properly. That's gonna save the taxpayer in the long run so much more money. I knock on wood every day that we don't have any major issues like happen around the country. It's up to us to make sure that what happens in the rest of the country that's negative, that's bad as a, you know, a bad result doesn't happen here. And every time that happens, we talk about it the very next day, with the rank and file to make sure that that doesn't happen here. This tool will be so valuable for the members of law enforcement, probation, and of course, are any first responder in the county because they all train here at the law enforcement center. But to me, the other important thing is our civilian, the people that we work for, and how they can understand the training that you do. And the last second decisions that you have to make. It's not like being an accountant where you can erase a number and change the number to get the numbers that you want. You know, once you pull that trigger, that it's gone, it's downrange, and there's not much that you can do. You have to be able to make that right decision in that split second time. That's why this is such a valuable tool.

Chair Uchitelle

Can you share what the price difference and I'll just to be really direct that, you know, this is this is a single screen, the version, you know, one of the features, I think that that kind of caught the eye of the some of my colleagues of the higher end version is that it's actually a three, it's you know, it's a multi screen thing that has you in really in three dimensions in space, right, your screens all around you and you're able to handle things coming at you from all directions. That is quite a bit more.

Sheriff Figueroa

So the second medium levels \$195,000. And a very high end, which you can't really move around has to kind of stay in one area, that one is close to \$300,000. But that's not anything compared to the multi-million dollar lawsuits that we're going to get if we don't train our officers the right way. And I think it's a tremendously important investment. It's great to have the portability of the smaller one to go into different areas when we have to train. But ultimately, I wish that we can get that middle, the middle one, if possible. We can live with what we have right now. But definitely the middle version would be great. If that's something that we can think about in the future getting.

Chair Uchitelle

If we were to purchase this, would that be - are we purchasing some of the things that would be used on the middle version, so that we would actually not be having to purchase everything all over again? Maybe that cost would come down a little bit?

Sheriff Figueroa

The cost would come down, but I think it's just like a car what you buy it the price goes down the minute it comes out the - but yes, there is a bit of a rebate when we if we trade it in and I'll find what that number is.

Chair Uchitelle

Okay. Any questions? First, I'll take from the committee, and then we'll go to Deputy Exec. Kelly. Any questions or points of discussion from the committee? Yes, Deputy Chair Hansut.

Legislator Hansut

So before I open it and ask our committee, Sheriff Figueroa at this point, would you want the one that is portable? Because that would meet your needs right now? Or do you think we should have the discussion of going to the next level.

Sheriff Figueroa

Obviously, if we can afford the next level one, I'd love to have that. But I know that within my operating budget this year, that's not tenable. What is interesting is that if we do get the bigger model, we can still use that smaller model. When we go out to schools and houses of worship. And either other entities like probation or parole or even, you know, at the mall, for example, we need to train more security that's portable. The ultimate goal here is to get all of our folks trained and of course, get the citizen officer Academy up and up and running. Because that's really a huge part of this as well. And it was part of our criminal justice reform task force. Some of the things that was on there that we wanted to accomplish this year. Again, I budgeted 15,000 but the price went up from last year to this year for obvious reasons, with unable to get certain components throughout the world these days. And it takes a long time. For our process to purchase something like this it takes time it went out for bid. Initially we go to a sole source but the county said no, we have to go out for bid so we did and they were the only ones that submitted a bit Go ahead.

Legislator Hansut

Um, I don't know if we can discuss it or want to discuss it but um, I don't think that we should do the minimum for our first responders. I think we can do better than that. And the difference in the price isn't that much. That could make a huge difference to our employees and to the public. So I don't know if we can talk about it, or how we should move forward with it.

Chair Uchitelle

Oh, this might be a good segway to pull in Deputy Executive Kelly, who does come from a budget background.

Sheriff Figueroa

Yes, he does.

Deputy Executive Kelly

I was hoping to come in on the tech side today, Chair. But uh, alright, so I guess a few points here is how much is more? Like that, to me, that's just the fundamental question is whatever we're going to appropriate is going to have to be pulled from fund balance, which is robust. I'm not gonna say anything different than that. But I think we just have to have that understanding is and is that going to be an increased ongoing? Or is it a one time and the support services would be the same? So those are just a few of the technical, budgetary questions. I think still the sheriff's talking about the portable system, I just

keep going back to we're currently working between emergency services and the sheriff's office on coordinating a kind of a panel and effort on domestic terrorism. This is from Governor's executive order. And a lot of this has to do with reaching out to the exact organizations and community groups, including religious organizations, or those that have experienced an inordinate amount of threats. And that includes active shooter situations and exactly the type of training that the sheriff would engage in, when he talks about going in with this portable system into a house of worship, whether it's a synagogue, a mosque, or a church like, that is exactly the type of conversation we've been having. Surrounding the domestic terror EO, so I guess like, there's part of me, which, yeah, of course, like, the better models, the better model and you can get more out of it. And then the other part is that portability, could be super useful in a county like this, as well. So not understanding both of the price points. But also, if we can do road shows, I just feel like we're going to reach a lot of people to go into all parts of this county where they don't always have to just come to us in Kingston, which is always a constant refrain from a lot of the different outlying districts and areas. I just find that there's value in both sides of that part of it. So I hope we would play some, I guess, higher emphasis on the portability and the ability to go into organizations and meet them, where they are practicing their faith or whatever else they're doing, I think is an important value. There. So the budget stuff, it's fun balance, guys. So let's figure that part of it out too. Thank you.

Deputy Executive Kelly

Go ahead, Sheriff.

Sheriff Figueroa

I just wanted to follow up that is a one-time price. But there is a maintenance fee every year, of course, like most of these programs and platforms.

Chair Uchitelle

So if I may, you know, I agree with Deputy Executive Kelly on the portability component of it. I'm also a little bit uncomfortable. And Gina and I have discussed this about you know, the kind of making the adjustment at this stage. I wonder if also now, your point, I think is something I hadn't considered that this is a long procurement process as well. I wouldn't want to delay this. I think that I mean, considering that we see the value of it, even alongside the other product. And also that this is you know, this is rolling and we don't want to delay it. I wonder if a compromise here could be if you would consider Sheriff Figueroa including and you know, the county executive's team as well and including this in the 2023 budget, and we can really go to bat for it through the budget process.

Sheriff Figueroa

It obviously depends on Chris Kelly there but sure.

Sheriff Figueroa

No pressure. I'll put it in the budget, and we'll see if we can make it work.

Chair Uchitelle

Well, and I'll say this this, it could be a budget amendment from the legislature. And that would certainly highlight it for the debate that a product of this importance would merit.

Deputy Executive Kelly

Chair, if I may, I think I'm clearly reading the room. It's not hard. So definitely engaging the sheriff in a discussion and seeing the best way to finance efforts like this. I mean, I think Everett can tell you and I can tell you from personal and professional experience in operations and security, the more you train, the better you'll be at your duties. And the more you train and more realistic scenarios, the better your staff will be. So there's no question as to the value. It's just the how. So whether it's capitalizing it and doing it that way, if it's that expensive, that's typically how we do it.

Deputy Executive Kelly

But let's have that discussion. Absolutely.

Chair Uchitelle

Thank you. Great. Legislator Hewitt.

Legislator Hewitt

I just wanted to re ask, Sheriff Figueroa, the medium range price comes with a mobile unit also. Right.

Sheriff Figueroa

I have to look into that. I'm not 100% Sure. I think the medium one is the three screens, that and then the really high end one, it's like completely 360 all the way around, like walking into a room. But I'll get back to you on that. I don't have the answer on that right now.

Legislator Hewitt

Well, if we purchased this one this year, and put it in the budget for next year, we'll have both.

Sheriff Figueroa

Absolutely. And we can accomplish both things. Thank you.

Chair Uchitelle

Yep, and I'll just add, if I may, that there's you know, there's one other aspect to this, that I think should not be overlooked, which is that, you know, I think we all recognize that, you know, folks in law enforcement, that are on the road patrol that are in, you know, in, you know, going out on patrol, have a really hard job. And one of the things that we, you know, that benefits the entire community is improving the relationship between law enforcement and the community. And, you know, you'll see some of the ways that some of the bad things that have happened in other communities, and that hurts us here, too, even if we, you know, even if our folks and law enforcement, you know, aren't individually guilty of that, but it does impact the relationship.

Chair Uchitelle

And I think it's the responsibility of all of us to try and improve that relationship. So in addition to all the points that we've also made, by showing the public that we're really investing in de-escalation, we're investing in protecting them in an active shooter situation. I think that those are all steps that have the knock-on effect of improving that relationship, which I think is something that universally we agree, is a worthy endeavor. So I hope that we can continue having this conversation. And I feel the best in my

opinion, not to insert myself as chair but in my opinion, the best decision tonight is for us to advance this. And then to know that as this goes to other committees, where we should be having - we absolutely should be having the conversation about the other products and how to round out, you know, this program so that we're doing everything that we can do in these areas, because they're really, you know, really, really critical areas. Any further questions or discussion? Yep, Legislator Hewitt please.

Legislator Hewitt

I don't want to criticize the video too much. But it said this all came about because officers required better training. I just want to point out that the Black Lives Matter movement also inspired this which the video did touch upon. Thank you - for the record.

Chair Uchitelle

Thank you, Legislator Hewitt I agree completely. All right. Any further discussion or questions? Otherwise, I'll call the question on Resolution No. 427. All those in favor? Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right, Resolution No. 427 is approved.

Chair Uchitelle

And that brings us to the end of our resolution agenda. Does anyone have any new business that they'd like to bring forward? Otherwise, I will entertain a motion to adjourn. Legislator Hansut.

Legislator Hansut

I have some - old business new business not really sure where this falls. But as chair, have you heard anything on the appraisal for the

Chair Uchitelle

I have not heard anything? I have heard that we're optimistic that so obviously what Deputy Chair Hansut is referring to is the appraisal of the property that is identified as a potential site for the emergency operation government Operation Center in New Paltz. That did pass this committee unanimously. And is in my, you know, biased opinion because I'm biased towards the safety of the residents of our county is the, in my opinion, the best location because there's no other location that has the redundancies that we have there, but I do not know what the statuses of the um, of the appraisal.

Chair Uchitelle

I understand that we're still optimistic that it will be available before Ways and Means. And the first ways that means is next week. So. And it's definitely supposed to be completed before session, which of course is the second Ways and Means so. Yeah, go ahead Gina.

Legislator Hansut

For Deputy Kelly, does it usually take this long? I mean, I know that you don't have the answer, but I'm just for my own reference, because it's going into, like 60 days, right? Does it usually take this long for us to get something back?

Deputy Executive Kelly

So thank you for the question. I would say that we also ran into difficulty hiring firms in order to do appraisals on properties. It was not an easy thing for either doing the Enterprise West Tech City one, or when we ordered one for this property, or for the other ones that we purchased. So I believe that we're on our way, this is the second firm that I think the legislature has engaged. So I don't know. I mean, it's, it has been difficult. I know that much. I think, are we on 60 or 30 days? When did we postpone this?

Chair Uchitelle

Postponed twice? I believe now.

Deputy Executive Kelly

Okay. So that's a long time. Yeah. Yeah. So yeah,

Chair Uchitelle

I mean, we're still on the timeline that I was given most recently. As you know, the timeline hasn't changed since our July session. And I was told that night that it would be hopefully before Ways and Means and my understanding is that still the hope. Sheriff Figueroa.

Sheriff Figueroa

Thank you, Chairman. And I know it's not the area of the sheriff's office. But I will say this, that the emergency management is the responsibility of, of all of us, including the sheriff. And I will tell you that being in the military, that young guy over my shoulder there that the logistics and operations for many, many years, within the military throughout the world, you never want to have all your apples in one basket. It's astonishing to me that you want to have everything in Kingston, where everything's centrally located. It's like, and I hate to say it and forgive me and other people that passed away in the past, like Pearl Harbor, we have everything centralized in one area. It's just not good tactfully for the people of this county and safety for the people here. And I wish the folks would consider that when they make a determination on what's going on to put the emergency management? You know, I think New Paltz. I don't know all the particulars about it. All I know is it's not all in the same area. And as we all know, with the storms that we had, and the powers that go down, I'm in the southern part of the county. I don't have as many power issues that the folks up here do. And I think that's important to note and know. So I just wanted to add my point that.

Committee Members

Thank you. Thank you. Legislator Heppner.

Legislator Heppner

Yeah, thank you. Um, so I definitely appreciate the comments. I think also, you know, from this committee, I'm someone that voted for the EEOC. I think now we're calling it a GOC. Not an EOC? GOC right Chris?

Deputy Executive Kelly

Government Operations Center.

Director Erickson

Encompasses everything.

Legislator Heppner

So no, again, and I think, you know, it's not about I don't think we're politically divided on this. I've toured the 911 center. I've been there Everett. You know, I've been with you to the Fire Training Center. I'm on the EMS taskforce with you. Very supportive. I don't think this is a political argument. I think we're doing our work to make sure that we purchase the best property on behalf of the taxpayers as well, because it's significant. And make sure that public safety is a priority. So it's not a political thing. We can (inaudible) political footballs all we want. You know, no offense, Legislator Hansut, but you can call us out, but you know, we're doing,

Legislator Hansut

I didn't.

Legislator Heppner

But we're doing our best work on behalf of the taxpayers for Ulster County, which you know, would call us out on and trying to make sure that we're doing the work that is necessary to make sure that public safety is a priority. And the taxpayers in Ulster County are protected. So I just want to make that comment.

Chair Uchitelle

I don't think anyone I mean, just if I can jump in. I don't think anyone is accusing anyone else of making it political. And I don't I don't I don't necessarily take your comment Legislator Heppner to be accusatory either. I just I think we all recognize the balance of public safety and public funds. And I certainly appreciate the candor here. Because you were mentioned, Deputy Chair Hansut, I'll let you go next. And then we'll pull in Deputy Exec Kelly.

Legislator Hansut

I only - I asked because as a new legislator, I didn't know how long appraisals usually takes up. I was just looking for a reference.

Chair Uchitelle

Yep, and I to eagerly await the appraisal. So I don't - it's certainly not a partisan issue. I think that that's clear. Deputy Executive Kelly.

Deputy Executive Kelly

So I do want to be careful in terms of how we describe value for taxpayers, because it cannot always be just about lowest price, or cutting a million or increasing a million, whatever it is. Best Value means best value for longevity, for public safety, there's a lot more value that has to be ascribed to projects such as this, rather than let's just get the lowest possible price point.

Deputy Executive Kelly

I think the sheriff made an excellent point in terms of locating something. So if Kingston get whacked, again, by an ice storm, then we have the ability to be somewhere else more resilient, or have some

redundancy built in geographically. So you know, best value, when we're talking about, I've been engaged with the sheriff's office on best value and lowest bid for his food contract with Trinity food services. And honestly, we've seen where that's gotten us. So if we're just looking at that bottom line, we're gonna miss the forest for the trees, like it becomes an issue where that isn't the best value for the services we're providing.

Deputy Executive Kelly

So as a budget person who's done lean times, and now other times, I get it, you know, that's always the primary focus of all of us is to make sure we guard the dollars that are given to us, but that value has to be looked at in different ways. I think especially on the tails of the conversation we just had regarding training for public safety and first responders that shouldn't be applied any different to where we're locating our 911 and emergency operations center. There is value just in the inherent location, the redundancies, the different parts that come with a property such as that. It may cost us a million more, it may not. So I just think we have to keep that in mind too.

Deputy Executive Kelly

Thank you.

Chair Uchitelle

Thank you. Anyone else want to discuss this further? Otherwise, I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

Chair Uchitelle

Yep, Deputy Chair Hansut.

Legislator Hansut

No, I was motioning to adjourn.

Chair Uchitelle

Okay. Okay. So then let's, let's I'll pass it to you to make that motion.

Legislator Heppner

I'll second it.

Chair Uchitelle

All right. We've got a motion to adjourn on the table. All those in favor?

Committee Members

Aye. Aye.

Chair Uchitelle

Any opposed? All right, we are adjourned. Thank you all. I really appreciate it. Good conversations tonight. All right.