

Sheriff's Update

January 13, 2021

11 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Pollock, County Manager Erik Martin, Sheriff Snaza, Undersheriff Wes Rethwill, Chief Dusty Breen, Chief Chris Sweet, Chief Kevin Engelbertson, Becky Butler, Tammy Martin, Commissioner Swope (sometime after 11:28 a.m.)

Guests: Frank Corbin, Nic Scott, Former Commissioner Edna J. Fund

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Chief Chris Sweet said corrections has four vacancies. He said the jail has created isolation cells to mitigate COVID-19 outbreaks. He said the HVAC system also has been upgraded to provide preventive measures. Chief Sweet outlined the medical screenings that take place during inmate intakes. He also outlined quarantine measures in place for intakes.

Services Chief Kevin Engelbertson said Services has two vacancies. He said the office processed more than 1,700 more gun permits in 2020 over the previous year. He said the Evidence Division processed more than 6,700 items in 2020. He discussed a child porn crackdown the Detectives Division recently successfully completed.

Operations Chief Dusty Breen said Operations is fully staffed. He said two deputies are completing training at the end of the month and that two individuals will graduate soon from the training academy. He said Operations fielded more than 16,000 calls in 2020.

Sheriff Snaza said there have been increases in mental health issues, suicides, overdoses, domestic abuse, child abuse, and sexual abuse in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sheriff Snaza discussed possible changes at the state level that would affect staffing and budgeting.

Sheriff Snaza said he will be asking for two additional hires for Operations, noting that he is at 1985 staffing levels. He said the up-front cost would be about \$250,000, which includes two additional vehicles. Sheriff Snaza said the county is handling calls for smaller agencies, such as the town of Pe Ell and the city of Vader. He said he has asked the mayor of Pe Ell for an interlocal agreement.

Chief Breen said calls can be mapped by zone but that response time would have to be calculated separately. He said the county has been billing Pe Ell for calls for service, including call times.

The group discussed concerns regarding state-level talks about shifting funds away from law enforcement and instead toward mental health.

Sheriff Snaza said the Sheriff's Office has learned of possible protests planned for Jan. 20. He said the protests are expected to take place at state capitols. Sheriff Snaza said other events may take place locally Jan. 19.

Undersheriff Rethwill urged for help coordinating a rollout of vaccines for the Sheriff's front-line workers. He noted that Lewis County appears to be lagging behind many other counties in distribution to deputies.

Meeting ended at 11:59 a.m.