

Sheriff's Update

February 9, 2021

10:00 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, County Manager Erik Martin, Dusty Breen, Wes Rethwill, Kevin Engelbertson, Chris Sweet, Rob Snaza, Lara McRea, Erik Martin

Guests: Edna Fund, Nic Scott KELA

Recorder: Tammy Martin

Chief Kevin Engelbertson said there are two support tech positions open and the Sheriff's Office is trying to fill them. They are waiting for the Civil Service Commission to certify the results. The region 3 team responded to an officer shooting. Chief Kevin Engelbertson said the Sheriff's Office responded to a child pornography case and an extradition from Mississippi. There are currently 544 registered sex offenders in Lewis County. Detective McGinty is involved with individuals registering and he ensures they are sought out when they don't register or follow the rules they are mandated to. Lewis County is involved in a state program that provides some funding to monitor registered offenders.

Undersheriff Wes Rethwill said the extradition case was a Napavine Police Department case that was required by the Prosecuting attorney.

Corrections Chief Chris Sweet said they have 4 vacancies in the jail and they are still going through the applicant process. COVID's impact on the jail last year included enacting protocols to keep COVID out of the facility. This included restricted bookings for major offenders. The 2019 daily population average was 219, 2020 was 149 which was a 32% in reduction of inmates. There was an 11.5 % medical need increase. The jail had 129% increase to transport to Western State Hospital. The jail has started a tele-health program with Cascade Mental Health. There is staff and a tele-site doctor. There has been an increase in mental health appointments, but a decrease in mental health drugs being prescribed. Sheriff Snaza said there is at least a five-month wait for people to be transferred from the jail to Western State Hospital. He said there has been a direct correlation between illegal drug use and mental health problems. Outside agency contracts had a 62% reduction from inmates coming from other counties being housed at the Lewis County jail due to the other agencies enacting their own COVID policies as well as following Lewis County Sheriff's Office restriction policies. The jail had restrictions on the amount of inmates being in jail on a daily basis.

Chief Sweet gave a huge thank you to Doug Carey. The current remodel of the jail has had some setbacks. They are about three weeks behind schedule, but there has been a large amount of work completed.

Commissioner Stamper inquired if there was a way of reclaiming increased medical costs due to COVID. Undersheriff Rethwill said the jail and the Sheriff's Office were able to utilize as much funding as possible with help from Becky Butler and Erik Martin. Erik Martin did say that all the broad funding has been used. Current federal funding is being mainly directed toward Public Health.

Chief Breen said the Involuntary Treatment Act (ITA) treatment process has been difficult because of hospital bed availability. The hospital is the first step to getting treatment. Most cases have to be transported to St. Peter Hospital in Olympia.

Chief Breen said there are three deputies out on medical leave. Two deputies are on field training, and the Sheriff's Office is five people short for road side. There have two deputies that have successfully completed FTO program and currently on the road. The Sheriff's Office received 46 more calls for the month of January compared to January last year. There was an attempted murder in the east end of Lewis County that required many personnel hours. Pe Ell still does not have a marshal. Lewis County is still providing coverage and billing for services provided. The Lewis County Sheriff's Office respond to Vader and the United States Forest Service (USFS). The city of Vader has a contract that allocates 20 hours dedicated service a week and the response to emergency calls. There are dedicated shifts for active patrols seasonally working the USFS lands. The Sheriff's Office received a donation from Country Financial Insurance of \$15,000 to have Cradle Point installed in the patrol vehicles. These are modems for reception and can track the vehicles. This has been a long-term goal to have each patrol vehicle outfitted. This allows the officer to instant message through their computer. This enables the deputy to not lose service. This also helps support officer safety. This donation will enable about half the fleet to have Cradle Point.

Sheriff Snaza said the Sheriff's Office is recruiting. He has been working with Centralia College as well as other media outlets. He said there are costs that go up when staffing is an issue. His goal is to provide the best service to the community. There are several bills being presented to the Legislature. They are in the process of drafting a letter with the support from local area agencies asking for legislative support and input when they consider new bills. These new bills bring challenges to providing the needed support for local communities.

Meeting adjourned at 10:59 a.m.