

Response to Questions on the FY 2014 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Hyland

Question: Please provide additional information on the proposed courtroom-related reductions in the Office of the Sheriff.

Response: As part of the FY 2014 Advertised Budget Plan, the following two proposed reductions were included:

- \$255,000 and 3/3.0 SYE positions were included that would eliminate Deputy presence from various classes of Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court (JDRC) and some Circuit Court less emotionally capricious civil hearings
- \$85,000 and 1/1.0 SYE position were included that would eliminate Deputy presence from JDRC status hearings

It should be noted that on April 10, 2013, Supervisor Hyland requested that consideration be given to restoring these two reductions. Accordingly, they have been added to the Consideration Item list.

Currently the Sheriff's Office provides courtroom security with the presence of a Deputy in all JDRC, General District, and Circuit courtrooms. There are 24 Deputies that provide security at all civil hearings; this proposal will remove three Deputies from less emotionally capricious civil hearings and one Deputy that provides security at JDRC status hearings. For perspective, there are currently 34 filled courtrooms, of which 8 are JDRC, 11 are General District Court, and 15 are Circuit Court, of these, 18 are reserved for civil hearings. Just under 100,000 civil cases are heard on an annual basis. Many cases are potentially volatile and require Deputy presence in the Courtroom; however, other cases are not as volatile. Currently one Deputy is assigned to be present during all of these hearings. It is proposed that Deputies only attend these hearings when there is credible concern for disruption. This proposal would remove three Deputies from those cases evaluated as less volatile. This would require three courtrooms to be covered by facility security staff. These courtrooms will continue to be video monitored from a central location and Judges will be able to confidentially contact security immediately should any issues arise. This would reduce the level of security for Judges and the public and increase the complexity of scheduling Deputies.

JDRC status hearings may be any type of hearing (child support, custody, etc.), generally the hearings last about 10 minutes, no evidence is heard, and the Judge asks the parties if they have resolved their differences so a judgment can be issued to bring the matter to closure, or a court date can be set.