

Response to Questions on the FY 2016 Budget

Request By: Supervisor McKay

Question: Please provide details on how pay equity for the Sheriff could be achieved with cost neutrality.

Response: The full-year cost of providing pay parity between uniformed employees in the Office of the Sheriff and the Police Department is estimated at \$2.49 million. Reinstating parity would result in increases of 4.0% for most ranks, with increases of 17.4% for those in the Deputy Sheriff Major and Chief Deputy Sheriff classes. The Pay Equity Proposal presented by the Sheriff's Office in September 2014 proposed that the costs could be offset by utilizing churning funds, eliminating environmental pay, and increasing State Court Security Fees. However, some of these funds are one-time in nature and others require action from the Virginia General Assembly; thus, no recurring source of existing revenue has been identified to completely offset the increased costs.

The Sheriff's Office has a balance of \$1.15 million in churning funds. These funds were accumulated over several years through proceeds generated from undercover operations. However, these funds are one-time in nature and, thus, are not recommended to be used to offset recurring expenses of increased compensation.

Environmental pay is a recurring expense and elimination of this stipend would save the County approximately \$969,000 annually. The \$2,500 annual stipend was added in FY 2009 as an incentive to attract and retain staff assigned to the Adult Detention Center. The increased costs in FY 2009 were offset with additional revenues generated when the County implemented a State-approved increase in the Courthouse Security fee from \$5 to \$10. The fee is charged for each criminal or traffic case in the Fairfax district or circuit courts where the defendant is convicted of a violation of any statute or ordinance. Where elimination of the stipend would provide savings, there would be no differential in pay for employees assigned to work in the jail and those assigned to work in the courthouse.

To help offset the costs associated with pay parity, the Sheriff's Office recommends pursuing legislation in the Virginia General Assembly to increase the maximum Courthouse Security Fee from \$10 to \$20. Upon approval at the state level, the County would then have to take action to increase the fee in the County. Because of the timing related to these changes, it is not feasible that increased revenues could be realized to offset costs in FY 2016. If the fees were doubled, it is estimated that they would bring in an additional \$1.89 million.