



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff Scott Mittelstadt Chief Deputy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: November 12, 2019

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2020 Dodge County Budget Amendments impact on Sheriff Operations

Today the Dodge County Board met to discuss and approve the 2020 Dodge County Budget, which includes the budget of the Dodge County Sheriff's Office. To set the stage, since taking office as your Sheriff, the sheriff's office has been significantly under budget each year, except for one year, 2018. The reason for that shortfall was due to a drive by some, but certainly not all, county board supervisors to close the old section of our jail in a fashion that was unbudgeted and was predicted by sheriff's office staff to have negative fiscal consequences. During that discussion, I shared my prediction that the unbudgeted closure would cause a significant budget shortfall in 2018 and I provided a solution to prevent that shortfall which was ignored. That prediction came true, as there was no way to cover for a shortfall of that size without significant cuts to services and risk to your safety.

Despite being forced to cut our already lean budget by an additional \$500,000 late in the budget process last year, an effort led by these same county board supervisors, we have been able to stay within our budget and are hopeful to finish 2019 with another surplus. We achieved the mandate given to us in 2018 on the backs of our patrol division and drug task force as the only place in the budget left to cut was 3 patrol positions, including 1 assigned to the drug task force. This has significantly hampered our drug investigations and patrol operations during the year, but we have a professional staff that always rises to the call and we do our best to keep the public safe.

Today those same county board supervisors, who frequently fail to consider the advice of full time elected officials and department heads, presented and attempted to pass several amendments totaling approximately another \$500,000, that would have significant impact on the public safety services provided to you. Fortunately, all but one of those resolutions failed due to other well-informed county board supervisors who voted them down. What is more concerning is that none of those county board supervisors pushing these amendments ever picked up a phone, stopped by to talk, or even sent an email asking questions of how the amendments they were supporting would impact operations and your safety. In fact, these supervisors had opportunities to ask questions at an October 29, 2019 Finance Committee meeting but very few questions were asked.

Following the October 29 meeting, the sheriff's office learned that several county board supervisors did not attend that meeting because they knew in advance that none of the resolutions would be coming forward at that meeting. The budget process was laid out so that appropriate discussions could occur prior to a final budget vote that took place today. It is apparent that the plan was to wait for the county board meeting to present the resolutions when very limited input could be

considered as in the past couple of years, very limited input is taken from other elected officials or department heads. This tactic clearly indicates that these county board supervisors who brought forward and supported amendments on the floor today never wanted to have meaningful discussion regarding their amendments but wanted to pass these amendments based on information that is flawed as occurred today. It shows that they did not want opposition or facts getting in their way. In fact, no questions were asked of sheriff's office personnel before votes were cast to find out what impact those decisions would have on operations or the safety of the public.

The one amendment that did pass today will significant impact your safety and it passed by 1 vote. That amendment, which passed, cuts \$74,327 from the patrol division. That is essentially cutting another full time position, which will impact staffing limiting the ability of our staff to properly respond to calls for service and conduct proper drug investigations.

Finally, this same group of county board supervisors asked to spend \$85,000 this past year on a study that has shown the sheriff's office is operating well and needs all it's positions to be funded, even recommending several additional positions. It answered many questions supervisors had and supported the vast majority of decisions made by sheriff's office administration. Unfortunately, the results of that study do not support the radical agendas of these supervisors who are focusing so hard to slash the services that the sheriff is required to provide to you. The county board authorized expenditure of \$85,000 provided an answer these supervisors did not like and now these supervisors are disregarding that study, which in essence is a waste of your money, and they are continuing with their own personal agenda, which is hurting the citizens of Dodge County.

I urge you to become involved in knowing what is going on with your Dodge County Board. Make no mistake, there are good supervisors who are asking questions and making educated decisions. The sheriff's office accepts and understands decisions that are made that might be contrary to the budgetary requests of the sheriff's office. What we are concerned with is when decisions are made without the facts being taken into consideration, especially when this group refuses to ask questions of the people who have the answers to ensure proper decisions are made. Even more, we are concerned when the county taxpayers are forced to pay \$85,000 to have a study done and then those recommendations are ignored in efforts to advance political agendas rather than doing what is right for the taxpayers of Dodge County.

I ask you to reach out to Supervisor David Guckenberger of Ashippun, Supervisor Kira Sheahan Malloy of Waupun, Supervisor Kathy Houchin of Waupun, and Supervisor Jeff Berres of Watertown among others and ask why they have no desire to appropriately communicate with county department heads or elected officials, as is their responsibility. The offer has been extended many times by sheriff administration to answer questions and provide information to all county board supervisors in person or on the phone. This offer has not been accepted by this group of supervisors.

The sheriff's office is here to serve the public and makes decisions in the best interest of the county. We will continue to do our best to do so, as it is our mission to safeguard the lives, property, and constitutional rights of our citizens through honest, ethical and professional service to the community. We would like to thank those on the county board who stood up today to assist us by doing their part in accomplishing that mission.

Respectfully,

Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt

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