



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

February 9, 2017

The Honorable Chairman and Board Members
Hernando County Board of County Commissioners
20 North Main Street, Room 460
Brooksville, FL 34601

Dear Chairman and Commissioners:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board for holding, at the request of Commissioner Champion, Tuesday's workshop to discuss the budget needs of the Sheriff's Office. I regret that I was unable to attend, but I had complete confidence in my command staff's ability to address your concerns. I believe the information presented by my staff will help you understand both the challenges we face and our dedication to fiscal responsibility. I appreciate your positive response and the discussion of potential solutions to our current budget impasse.

One of the topics receiving much attention at the workshop was the idea of allowing me to spend the revenue generated by my Office on an ongoing basis. In practical terms, that has been the working arrangement between the BOCC and the Sheriff's Office for at least the past several years—my excess funds and generated revenue were returned to the Board at the end of the year and were usually returned to me to offset my budget needs for the next fiscal year. This process not only reduces the amount of additional funding the BOCC must provide to meet our needs, but it also allows County staff to plan your budget more accurately by anticipating an annual total of excess funds and returned revenue. As indicated by both your staff and mine, this practice has worked very well in most years but for some reason, the returned funds were not credited to my budget this year.

Fortunately, I believe the annual return of excess funds and generated revenue can once again help meet the current budget needs of the Sheriff's Office. As you are aware, for fiscal year 2016 my Office returned **\$385,162 in unspent funds** and **\$418,404 in revenue**. At the Board workshop on Tuesday, Budget Manager Pam Lee indicated that these funds were "sitting in Balance Forward Cash," meaning that the funds had not yet been spent or allocated. Therefore, in accordance with past practice and the recent and publicly stated intent of the Board, if these funds were simply returned to the Sheriff's Office, an initial portion of my requested 2017 budget could be met.

Additionally, it appears another funding opportunity exists to quickly and **completely resolve the current situation**. At the Board meeting of January 10, 2017, a budget resolution was approved regarding purchase orders carried over from last fiscal year. As part of that action, **\$452,992 was transferred into reserves**. This money was apparently not needed for pending purchase orders and is therefore available for use. Furthermore, I think you will find that current reserves exceed the required 18.5%, even prior to this additional increase, thereby freeing up this money for alternate allocation.

Combining all of the above available funding sources results in **a total of over \$1.2 million**. In my continuing effort to resolve the budget impasse and get the needs of the Sheriff's Office met, I would amend my prior written settlement proposals and ***I would be willing to officially accept this entire amount as resolution of my FY2017 request***. I hope you will immediately verify this information with your budget staff and put forth a motion at the upcoming regular BOCC meeting to provide this funding and end this unfortunate saga.

I hope by way of this opportunity to resolve our budget issues **without raising taxes and using currently available funding**, that the board sees that I stand ready to meet and discuss solutions at any time. I hope the Board will take this opportunity to ask probing questions of staff, obtain facts, and allocate available funds to provide the hard-working men and women of the Sheriff's Office with the resources they need and deserve.

Respectfully,



Al Nienhuis

Sheriff

cc: Katie Cunningham, Policy Coordinator for Governor Scott
Matt Dunagan, FSA Deputy Executive Director of Operations