



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: Sheriff Submits Budget Proposal to Board of County Commissioners

Date: June 1, 2017

Sheriff Al Nienhuis submitted his Fiscal Year 2017-2018 budget request to the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners today.

The Sheriff's letter to the Board of County Commissioners is as follows:

Enclosed you will find my budget request for Fiscal Year 2017-2018, submitted in compliance with Florida Statute 30.49. These proposed expenditures are reasonable and necessary for the proper and efficient operation of the office for the next fiscal year.

In light of our many discussions during the past year, I thought it might be helpful to summarize the annual process used to identify the budget needs of the Sheriff's Office. Over the past few years the steps involved in that process have been increased in an effort to better identify the challenges facing our agency and to ensure we are prioritizing well and providing taxpayers the most cost effective service possible.

In March of each year, our Comptroller meets with Sheriff's Office commanders to review budget procedures and begin the process of analyzing current trends and identifying both needs *and* opportunities to reduce or shift spending. The commanders are responsible for overseeing this process in their respective divisions to ensure the most accurate and practical planning possible. When new personnel, capital items, or additional operational funds are requested, commanders are held responsible for thorough vetting of the requests based upon statistical and operational analysis. This information is continuously evaluated and updated throughout the process and alternative funding sources are explored whenever possible.

During the month of April, our combined Finance and Budget Section reviews budget submissions from all areas of the agency, provides additional analysis, and compiles a summary for presentation to executive staff. Bureau commanders review all final submissions for their respective areas and provide recommendations and rankings to help prioritize the many competing needs. Upon completion, the Comptroller meets with the Chief Deputy and myself to review all original submissions and identified priorities. This step also involves

input of various mandated cost estimates (retirement rates, worker's compensation costs, etc.) and may require additional justification from staff before final decisions are made. Once all remaining information is gathered, decisions are made on which priorities must be pursued to address the many needs and operational challenges the agency is facing for the coming year.

We take this process very seriously and work hard to ensure that only legitimate needs are presented. We also recognize the challenges the Board faces in balancing many competing interests and we strive to never impose unrealistic expectations on Commissioners. However, the demands of providing round-the-clock law enforcement, detention, and dispatching services are great, as is the burden I feel for the protection of Hernando County's citizens.

As we have repeatedly demonstrated over the last several years, the Sheriff's Office is committed to providing the most effective and efficient law enforcement, detention, courthouse security, animal enforcement, and 9-1-1 emergency and non-emergency services possible. To illustrate these commitments, I am proud to share a few of our many accomplishments this year:

- Inmate labor continues to save the County and our citizens substantial tax dollars. Jail inmates provide skilled and unskilled labor that assists a variety of County departments and community organizations. **So far this fiscal year, inmates have provided nearly 70,000 hours of labor, worth over \$650,000 to taxpayers.**
- The Sheriff's Office has partnered with Career Source in a federal grant to provide training for pre-release inmates. Instruction includes life skills, employability skills, and the opportunity for certification in basic business and manufacturing processes. The program then seeks to place inmates with local employers upon release to provide gainful employment and prevent recidivism.
- To enhance the health and fitness of employees, reduce absences, and minimize medical insurance claims the Sheriff's Office opened an employee wellness center. This initiative is projected to markedly reduce future insurance costs and required less than \$100,000 in startup expenses.
- Using internal resources, this year the Sheriff's Office fully implemented the electronic processing of purchase requisitions, check requests, and credit card payments, minimizing the paperwork burden and maximizing rebate totals. Likewise, the agency converted to fully-electronic payroll submission, saving hundreds of hours of processing and approval time—time better spent providing priority services to the public. While these are not headline-grabbing activities, they reflect our commitment to efficiency and lean management.

These examples illustrate only a few of our efforts on behalf of taxpayers and my commitment to truly "reasonable and necessary" budgets. As has been demonstrated, I will continue to ensure we get the absolute most from every current resource. However, the Hernando County Sheriff's Office cannot get by indefinitely with existing resources and must address legitimate needs and challenges. For instance, the cost of meeting the medical needs of jail inmates continues to climb. Prescription drug costs increased **over 32%** from 2015 to 2016. If current trends continue, we will see **an additional 56% increase** for this year. In addition, just like County government, the Sheriff's Office will bear a 10.5% mandated increase in retirement contributions, an 11.8% increase in worker's compensation costs, and rising insurance costs for next year. In fact, I begin

my budget request with over \$1.5 million of non-discretionary costs—costs that do not add resources.

This year's budget request must include some additional positions to allow the Sheriff's Office to keep pace with the county's growth and emerging crime and public service challenges. Ten (10) additional **patrol deputies** will help ensure adequate coverage and reasonable response times for our citizens. While comparison data indicates our staffing is well below reasonable levels, we seek only a small increase to begin addressing these deficiencies. In addition, at the request of the School Board, we plan on adding an additional School Resource Officer to provide service at Winding Waters K-8 School.

In regard to remaining competitive and retaining the experienced, trained, and hard-working men and women of the Sheriff's Office, I included a one-step pay increase only for qualified employees. With a salary study currently underway, I also plan on using some funds to start addressing anticipated pay inequities to ensure we can attract and keep the best possible employees by paying them fairly.

As noted last year, the Sheriff's Office has done without an adequate capital budget for several years and has been forced to stretch existing operating funds to meet capital needs. Through good management and utilizing alternative funding sources, the Sheriff's Office is requesting \$452,000 from the BOCC to meet only a portion of our most urgent capital needs.

Worth noting is the fact that this year's request for operating funds is actually a **decrease of over \$105,000** from last year. Through good management of things like maintenance agreements, fuel cost-saving measures, and use of other funding sources for required training, we focus on actual needs, thereby lessening the burden on the BOCC and the taxpayers.

It is my hope that you will take the time to review my proposed budget in detail and consider the facts and reasoning behind it. As always, I welcome discussions surrounding our budget needs and even additional future projects of mutual interest. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at any time in the furtherance of our mutual responsibilities to the citizens of Hernando County. I thank you in advance for your support.

The budget proposal can be found by clicking on the link provided below.

<http://www.hernadosheriff.org/pdfs/2018Budget/FY2018ProposedBudgetBook.pdf>

The Office of Sheriff:

The Office of the Sheriff is established by the Florida Constitution. As a constitutional officer, the Sheriff has the exclusive authority to administer his or her agency and is responsible for preserving the peace throughout the entire county, carrying out the laws of the state, the orders of Florida courts, and the ordinances of the Board of County Commissioners. The Sheriff is the chief law enforcement and correctional officer of the county.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis was initially appointed as the Sheriff of Hernando County by the Governor in January of 2011. He was then elected by the people of Hernando County in 2012, and remains accountable to them.