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November 8, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
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From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT CUSTODY'S DIVISION CENTRAL HOUSING UNIT OPERATIONAL COSTS (ITEM NO. S-1, AGENDA OF NOVEMBER 8, 2006)

On October 17, 2006, your Board instructed the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) to report back in one week on cost of the Central Housing Unit (CHU) within the Sheriff's Custody Operation.

CENTRAL HOUSING UNIT/CLASSIFICATION AND HOUSING UNIT (CHU)

In Special Counsel Bob Merrick's annual report, he recommends the Sheriff's Department create a centralized classification and housing bureau to assist them in managing their daily inmate population. He recommends that this unit assume all decision-making authority regarding inmate security classification and housing assignments. By doing so, the Department will minimize risks to staff, other inmates and the County.

In May of 2006, the Department created a CHU. CHU has three (3) divisions: CHU Main, CHU South and CHU North. CHU Main and South are located at the Inmate Reception Center (IRC) while CHU North is located at Pitchess Detention Center (PDC). CHU Main is responsible for assigning inmates their security level designations, administering the special handling codes, and generating inmate transfers between the south facilities (Men's Central Jail (MCJ), Twin Towers Correctional Facility (TTCF) and Century Regional Detention Facility) and PDC facilities. CHU North is responsible for the initial placement of inmates arriving at the PDC facilities from IRC. Ultimately, the unit will also coordinate all transfers from PDC facilities to south facilities. If accomplished, additional staff may be required and requested by the Department at that time. CHU South is responsible for initial placement of inmates entering MCJ and

TTCF. CHU is assigned to IRC and is under the supervision of the IRC Classification and Housing Lieutenant. Attached (Attachment I) is the organization chart for CHU.

CHU is currently assigned 2.0 Sergeants, 2.0 Bonus I Deputies, 11.0 Deputy Sheriff Generalists, and 10.0 Custody Assistants for a total of 25.0 positions with an annual cost of $2,249,000. Twelve staff positions at Men's Central Jail that had the responsibility of assigning inmate housing locations were reassigned to CHU. The 13 remaining positions have been loaned to CHU North and CHU South. Prior to the formation of CHU, the assignment of inmate housing locations had been a collateral assignment for staff at the Pitchess Detention Center. Those personnel were not reassigned and continue to function in their original assignments, which consisted primarily of inmate movement and security. The Department is requesting funding for 2.0 Sergeants, 2.0 Bonus I Deputies, 5.0 Deputy Sheriff Generalists, and 4.0 Custody Assistants for a total of 13.0 positions with an annual cost of $1,253,000.

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION/LEVEL

Assignment of an inmate security level, based on an intake interview, is currently handled by CHU Main. No additional staff or funding is being requested at this time by the Department.

HOUSING ASSIGNMENT

Assigning inmate housing location has three (3) components: assignment to a jail facility, cell, dorm or module; assignment to an individual bunk; and movement between cells/dorms/modules for any reason (i.e., harmony moves). Currently CHU has the responsibilities for the initial placement of an inmate in a jail facility, cell, dorm or module and making "harmony moves". However, the responsibility of assigning an inmate to an individual bunk remains with deputies at the individual jail facilities. Staff assigned to perform these tasks at the jails do so on a collateral basis and therefore cannot be reassigned to CHU. The Department is currently reviewing this recommendation and will report later with their findings and the costs, if any, associated with implementing this recommendation.

Gang Members

Identifying gang members within the jails is another aspect of the classification system and may impact inmate housing assignment, as noted by Special Counsel. This function is currently handled by the Department's Operation Safe Jails (OSJ) unit. OJS is responsible for identifying members of street gangs, developing intelligence on gang activities, weapons, and drugs in the jails, and

recommending housing moves based on that intelligence. There are 2.0 sergeants and 22.0 OSJ deputies assigned to North County Correctional Facility and MCJ at an annual cost of $2,541,000. This unit is not a formal part of the classification system; however, Special Counsel believes they should be identified because they do recommend housing moves.

The Department, on the other hand, has yet to determine how important gang membership is when assigning an inmate's security level/classification, but they are nonetheless reviewing this recommendation. In the interim, the duties of and staff assigned to OSJ will remain a separate unit from CHU. No additional funding is being requested at this time.

Gang members also divide along racial and ethnic lines, thus to discourage fighting between these groups, jail facilities attempt to keep a racial balance of inmates in each dorm. Currently, each jail facility is responsible for balancing its housing locations. Special Counsel believes that CHU should be responsible for all housing moves, inclusive of gang-related moves. While OSJ expertise should be respected, Special Counsel believes that CHU staff should be required to review and approve these moves. The Department is currently reviewing this recommendation and will report later with their findings and the costs, if any, associated with implementing this recommendation.

Special Handling Codes

An inmate may be assigned a special handle code at the time of intake by CHU Main or later, following a request from any officer at any time during an inmate's incarceration. While special handle classification requests are subject to the review of CHU, it is Special Counsel's opinion that the deputies working the unit have "functional control over the system."

He, therefore, recommends that the role of assigning inmates their special handling codes be completely assumed by CHU. The Department indicates that CHU Main is currently responsible for all special handle designations before, during and after intake. No additional staff or funding is being requested at this time.

RECLASSIFICATION

Special Counsel also recommends that CHU not only perform the initial classification of an inmate, but also complete a periodic review of an inmate's classification within 30 to 45 days after their arrival at the jail. He further recommends that thereafter,

reclassification reviews for medium and low security inmates occur every 90 days and inmates classified at security level eight (8) and nine (9) have a periodic review at least every 30 days.

Currently, each jail facility is responsible for reclassifying its inmates, whenever one of the following occurs: a period of 90 days, a major disciplinary action, escape or criminal activity. The classification officer is to complete this disciplinary review within 10 days of the incident. CHU Main personnel are currently responsible for post-sentencing reclassifications only.

The Department has amended their policies to meet the reclassification review standards suggested by Special Counsel for level eight (8) and nine (9); however, not on a centralized basis. In addition, the Department indicate they will maintain the 90-day interval review standard for medium and low security level inmates. The Department further indicates that to fully implement this recommendation additional staff will be required. Staff assigned to perform these tasks at the jails do so on a collateral basis and therefore cannot be reassigned to CHU. To implement this program for seven (7) months, effective December 1, 2006 through June 30, 2006, additional funding of $386,000 will be required for 1.0 Sergeant, 2.0 Deputy Sheriff Generalists and 3.0 Custody Assistants. To staff this unit on an annual basis, $526,000 in funding is being requested by the Department. In addition, the JICS system has an audit function to assist staff with their daily reclassification audit reviews; however, this functionality was not purchased by the Department. The Department is in contact with Northpointe to determine audit functionality and associated costs.

JAIL INMATE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM (JICS)

Evaluation

Special Counsel also recommends the Department engage the services of a consultant to evaluate the JICS classification system. He is of the opinion that a review is needed to determine how effective the system is in classifying Los Angeles County jail inmates. While the Department concurs with this recommendation, they are awaiting the results of the jail and security audit, which will also include a review of the JICS system. The Department will review those recommendations and will report later with their findings and the costs, if any, associated with implementing those recommendations.

Customization

The Department currently uses special handle codes to identify specific needs, (e.g., housing, movement, or medical) of an individual inmate. However, these special handling codes pre-date JICS. As a result, Special Counsel is recommending the Department eliminate the codes, where feasible, and customize JICS to include those which may be absent from the JICS software. The Department does not support this recommendation and as a result are not requesting any additional funding at this time. The Department indicates that customizing JICS to include special handling codes will not result in more accurate classification of inmates.

Female Inmates

The Department currently classifies women using the same JICS classification system it uses for its male population. Special Counsel believes that the system may be systematically over-classifying female inmates because the system was designed specifically for a male population. He, therefore, recommends that CHU assess the effectiveness of the JICS system in classifying women and make modifications to ensure females are being fairly and consistently classified. While the Department concurs with this recommendation, they are awaiting the results of the jail and security audit, which will also include a review of the JICS system. The costs associated with creating a separate system or modifying the existing system for female inmates is not known at this time.

AUTOMATED JUSTICE INFORMATION SYSTEM (AJIS)

Special Counsel recommends that AJIS be modernized or replaced so that CHU has the capability to coordinate all security and housing assignments among all of the County's jail facilities. AJIS, which tracks all inmate movement in the jail, from booking through court date to release, is approximately 20 years old and does not interface well with modern technology. It therefore limits the use of the Department's Jail Information Management System (JIMS). JIMS determines where there are open beds. Unfortunately, JIMS, however, does not completely interface with AJIS. By merging JIMS with AJIS, the Department will have the capability to more efficiently and accurately assign beds to inmates, based upon their security level. The risk of error, such as a low security inmate being assigned to a housing location with high security inmates, is significantly reduced. Special Counsel believes that CHU's ability to be a truly centralized housing authority will be hampered until AJIS is replaced.

The Department indicates that in 2003 they began a three-phased approached to replacing AJIS with JIMS. A detailed breakdown of the phases may be found in the Department's report dated September 28, 2006 titled Response to Special Counsel's Reports. The Department also indicates that phase one has been funded. The Department is currently studying phase two (2) and three (3) and are unable to provide a cost estimate at this time.

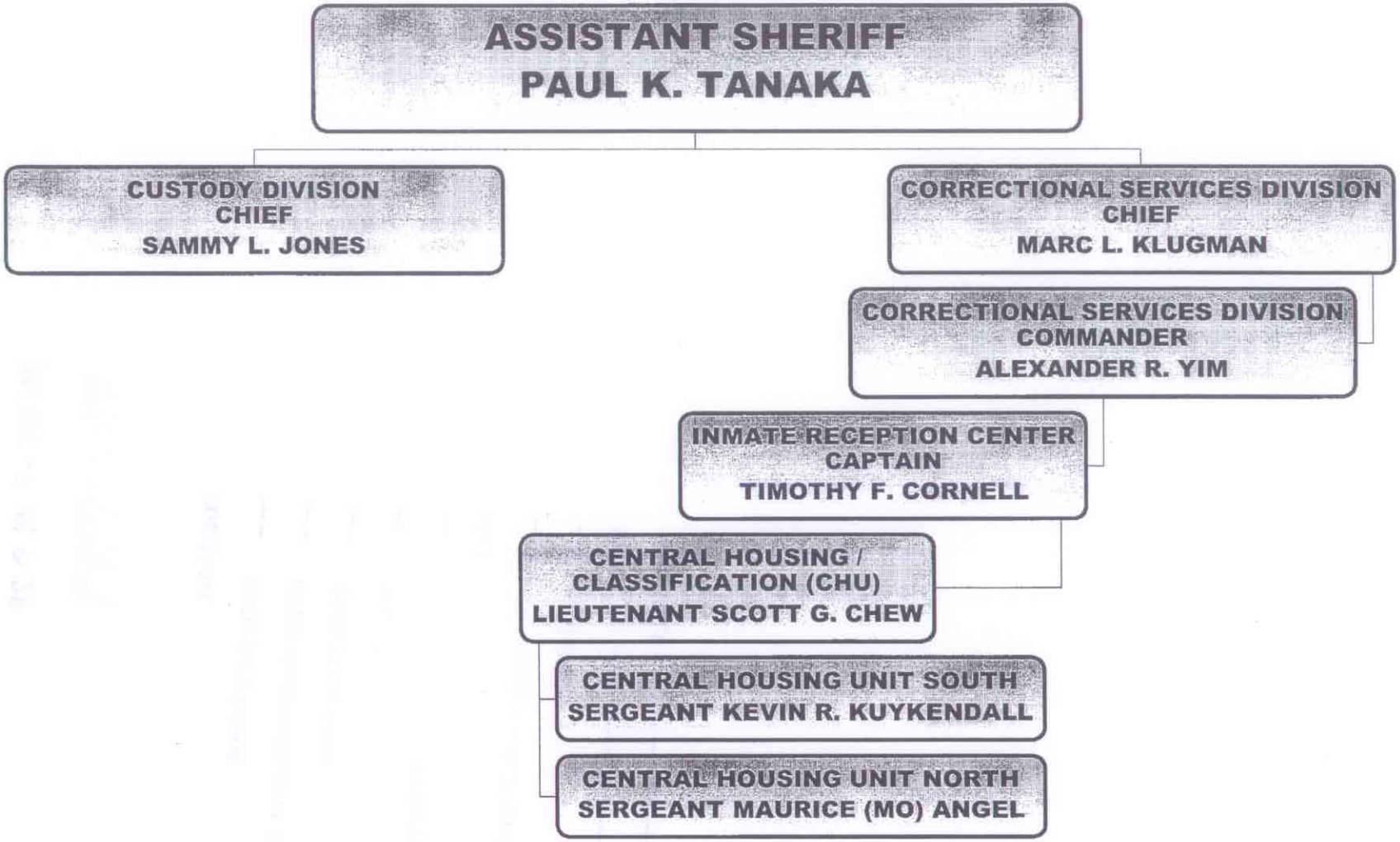
CONCLUSION

To implement Special Counsel's recommendations with respect to CHU, at this time, will require additional funding of $1,779,000. Recommendations currently under review by the Department and their associated costs, if any, will be provided to the Board at a later date.

Please let me know if you have any questions or your staff may contact Debbie Lizzari, at (213) 974-6872.

DEJ:SRH:DL
RG:SW:GY:yf

Attachment



REVISED 10-23-2006