



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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SACHI A. HAMAI
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors
HILDA L. SOLIS
First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Second District

SHEILA KUEHL
Third District

JANICE HAHN
Fourth District

KATHRYN BARGER
Fifth District

May 7, 2020

Brian K. Williams, Executive Director
and Patti Giggans, Chair
County of Los Angeles
Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission
350 S. Figueroa Street, Suite 288
Los Angeles, CA 90071

Dear Mr. Williams and Ms. Giggans:

Thank you for the opportunity to reply to your questions regarding the Sheriff's Department budget and the County budget process in general.

It is particularly important for the public to have accurate information about the budget process as we navigate unprecedented economic upheaval due to COVID-19. My responses to your questions are attached.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can provide additional information about the budget process and our efforts to safeguard vital services to the public to the greatest extent possible during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sachi A. Hamai".

SACHI A. HAMAI
Chief Executive Officer

SAH:md

Attachment

c: Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Chair, Fifth District
Supervisor Hilda Solis, First District
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Second District
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Third District
Supervisor Janice Hahn, Fourth District
Celia Zavala, Executive Officer of the Board
Mary Wickham, County Counsel

Responses from Chief Executive Officer Sachi A. Hamai
to Questions from the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission

May 7, 2020

1. Has there been a request from the CEO's office for all County departments to submit potential budget cuts as part of a curtailment exercise? **Yes, all department heads have been asked to submit potential budget cuts of 10%, 15% and 20%.**
2. Did the Sheriff's Department provide you with proposed budget cuts? **Yes.**
3. Can you describe what those cuts were? **The department submitted a range of potential cuts, including reductions in unincorporated area patrol, Parks Bureau, Major Crimes Bureau, Fraud & Cyber Crimes, and custody-related operations.**
4. Did those cuts include the closing of Sheriff stations? **No.**
5. For the current and previous 5-year budget cycles, has the Sheriff's Department received their entire budget request? Why or why not? **No. The Sheriff's Department, like all County departments, begins the budget process by submitting an extensive list of all programs and expansions it would like to have funded, with the understanding that all of its proposals will be weighed against other priorities and available funding during a rigorous review process.**
6. How does this compare to other County Departments? **It would be very rare for a department to receive its entire budget request. In the six budgets that I have put together as the Chief Executive Officer, I have never known this to happen.**
7. Why is this year's budget \$400M less than what the Sheriff requested? **This is a budget *process* and every department head submits aspirational requests—basically, wish lists—that far exceed the County's resources. If all of those requests from every County department were combined, they would total more \$2 billion—and clearly that is money the County does not receive in revenues.**
8. Do you see it as a necessity to close the Parks Bureau and the two patrol stations? **No. It is premature to cite those specific curtailment scenarios because we are still putting together a curtailment package for the County as a whole for fiscal year 2020-21. We will have a better picture of the budget by the end of June, when we return to the Board of Supervisors for approval. The County is facing severe budgetary impacts due to COVID-19, but we also have the potential of stimulus assistance or reimbursements from the federal and state government. Given the high levels of uncertainty, it's important to consider the big picture and the needs of the County as a whole, rather than calling out individual programs or services for cutbacks that ultimately may be minimized or avoided altogether.**

9. What about the disbanding or curtailment of units which handle sexual abuse, child abuse and sexual trafficking crimes? Those scenarios are also premature because of the rigorous review process now underway, which is based on the big picture of all potential program cuts, curtailments and efficiencies.
10. In the past where the Sheriff's budget has not been fully funded has the Sheriff made up for the shortfall? How? The Department absorbed any shortfall within its existing budget.
11. Do you see any true savings by shutting the various patrol stations and bureaus? Do you believe that there will be a diminution in service as a result of these proposed closures? It is the Sheriff's responsibility to maintain appropriate service levels to ensure public safety, including in unincorporated areas. With appropriate budgetary discipline and a willingness to accept guidance on best fiscal practices, the department should be able to achieve necessary savings without jeopardizing service to our communities. Especially in these times of unprecedented economic challenges, we need a collaborative partnership on the budget that puts the interests of our residents first.
12. Has the Sheriff's Department been singled out for any special budget cuts or requests? No, all departments have been asked to prepare the same range of curtailment scenarios.
13. To your knowledge, are there other budgetary cuts that can be curtailed/eliminated instead of closing sheriff stations? The closure of patrol stations was not part of the plan that the Sheriff's Department submitted and there are other ways to achieve the needed cost savings without shortchanging public safety, such as reducing the number of academy classes to the budgeted level of four, as recommended by the Chief Executive Office.
14. Do we know for a fact that the savings claimed by the Sheriff are accurate? For example: curtailment of Special Victims Bureau \$23.5M, closing the Altadena station \$6.3M, closing the Marina del Rey station \$5.9M... No information has been shared with the CEO's office that would enable us to validate those claims.
15. Could the \$6.3M savings claimed by the Sheriff for closing the Altadena station be curtailed in overtime or elsewhere? Same for the \$5.9M saving for the Marina del Rey station. It seems likely that these savings could be achieved, especially if the Sheriff's Department would undertake an in-depth analysis of its overtime, as requested by my office. This analysis would enable the department to make sound operational decisions about where it could eliminate or reduce overtime.
16. Can the LASD operate without compromising public safety with the \$3.5B recommended budget? Yes. The Board of Supervisors and Chief Executive Office are strongly supportive of the Sheriff's Department and intend to ensure, through the budget process, that the resources are there to support its vital public safety mission. The Sheriff's Department receives by far the largest share of locally generated revenues in the County budget. This means the Board is providing the Sheriff the largest portion of the discretionary money that is available to be allocated to departments.

17. Is the amount of overtime claimed by the Sheriff necessary to maintain public safety? No. Our analysis shows that a significant portion of the department's overtime costs are caused by running more training academy classes than its budgeted level of four annually. These additional training academy classes require the department to shift sworn staff from their regular duties and redirect them to support the training academy classes. The work of the redeployed staff is addressed by other sworn staff working overtime—hence the increase in the overtime budget relating to the training classes. Just by returning to its budgeted number of training classes, the Department would realize an annual savings of approximately \$49 million.
18. The Sheriff claims that reducing the number of academy classes increases the amount of overtime. Is this statement accurate? No, as previously stated, conducting more training classes than the budgeted number contributes to more overtime, not less. What's more, the department's overtime continues to rise even as its vacancy rate declines. There has been a 38% decline in the number of deputy vacancies since December 2018. Yet the department is currently projected to exceed its overtime budget by \$144 million this fiscal year, spending a projected total of \$287 million in overtime in fiscal year 2019-20.
19. How is it that closing the Altadena station saves \$6.3M if the deputies will still be on patrol and the station personnel will be placed in other LASD vacancies? That is a good question and should be addressed by the Sheriff. It does not make sense from a budgetary perspective.