
Sponsor: Sheriff's Office

Meeting Date: 10/26/2021

Title: Reimbursement of Personnel Costs for Civil Unrest Response

File Number: 2021-501

Background and Rationale:

Since the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 in Minneapolis, there have been peaceful demonstrations interspersed with civil unrest, including violence, rioting, arson, theft and property damage in Ramsey County and some of its cities including Saint Paul, Maplewood, North Saint Paul and Roseville. In addition, following the presidential election and the storming of the United States Capitol, there have been additional demonstrations and threats made against government institutions, buildings and officials. The Sheriff's Office continually receives information from state and federal agencies, including a surge of incidents related to racially-motivated violent extremists and the potential for targeted attacks.

As the state's second largest sheriff's office, the Sheriff's Office is a regional partner and provides comprehensive public safety response services during periods of civil unrest, potential civil unrest and demonstrations. As Ramsey County is home to the State Capitol, the Governor's Mansion and many government buildings, the county is a frequent location for protests and demonstrations. This creates a significant demand on the Sheriff's Office staffing and budget.

During periods of civil unrest or the potential for civil unrest, the Sheriff's Office:

- Ensures the safety of the community and staff.
- Preserves the ability to peacefully protest and exercise First Amendment rights.
- Protects public and private property.
- Maintains continuity of government and county operations.
- Supports citizens affected by civil unrest, including looting and damage to property.

Additionally, the Sheriff's Office provides security services at various county government and court locations: State Capitol, Law Enforcement Center, Adult Detention Center, Emergency Communication Center, 402 Mental Health Building, Metro Square Building, Plato Building (Elections), Governor's Mansion. The Sheriff's Office also supports other law enforcement agencies, including Saint Paul Police Department and Minnesota State Patrol.

The primary purpose of these security services is to protect life and property while ensuring First Amendment activities are protected. The Sheriff's Office works closely with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Minnesota State Patrol, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Enforcement Division, Saint Paul Police Department, Minneapolis Police Department, Minnesota National Guard and federal agencies when planning, preparing and responding to civil unrest or potential civil unrest situations across Ramsey County and the region.

While the majority of protests and demonstrations have been peaceful, there is always the potential for outside actors to engage peaceful groups and incite violence and property damage. This requires public safety resources to be mobilized and ready to respond when or if the safety of Ramsey County is threatened.

With the presidential inauguration taking place in January 2021, there was a mobilization of public safety resources for potential civil unrest and demonstrations. In addition, there were mobilizations of public safety resources during the trial of Derek Chauvin and following the officer-involved shooting in Brooklyn Center. Services provided included security details at various county locations as well as security for government officials (e.g., judges and others) who have received threats.

From January 1, 2021 to July 9, 2021, the Sheriff's Office incurred approximately \$1.48 million in personnel costs related to civil unrest. This total includes regular time, overtime, differentials, and benefits. Of that amount, \$868,530 is requested for reimbursement. The requested amount includes overtime costs and excludes costs incurred by the Contract Cities for civil unrest. The Sheriff's Office and Finance discussed civil unrest costs several times, including reviewing detailed and supporting information.

The Sheriff's Office and Finance also continue to monitor the State Legislature and related funding bills and hope funds are provided to Ramsey County through that effort. The State of Minnesota has not provided any funding assistance to Ramsey County for civil unrest costs. The State has provided reimbursement to the State Patrol and Department of Natural Resources - Enforcement Division in the amount of \$6.3 million

The Sheriff's Office may continue to incur costs related to civil unrest throughout this year. Civil unrest costs were not included in the Sheriff's Office 2021 budget. As a result, the Sheriff's Office may return to the Ramsey County Board to ask for contingency funding to offset any additional civil unrest costs occurred for 2021.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

Authorize the County Manager to transfer \$868,530 from the 2021 General Contingent Account to the Sheriff's Office 2021 budget for reimbursement of unanticipated civil unrest personnel costs from January 1, 2021 through July 9, 2021.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Reinhardt, seconded by Commissioner Ortega. Motion passed.

Aye: - 4: Carter, Frethem, Ortega, and Reinhardt

Nay: - 3: MatasCastillo, McDonough, and McGuire

By: 

Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board