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Subject: Budget Committee
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Budget Committee Members,

I want to thank you for taking time in your upcoming meeting to consider three issues that are important to the Sheriff's Office and important to public safety in Davis County. The three issues we would like to present in anticipation of a budget opening in February are:

1. Incorporating current differential pay for paramedic certification into the paramedic base pay;
2. Temporarily providing incentive pay for working additional or unscheduled paramedic shifts; and
3. Adding one FTE to continue a custodial position originally filled with CARES funds in the latter half of 2020.

For your consideration, I would like to provide some rationale for these requests. For nearly two years we have been engaged in county-wide discussions about how paramedic service should be provided for Davis County in the future. These conversations have been productive and we anticipate that within the next two years the Sheriff's Office will transition out of providing paramedic service. I do believe this is the right thing to do, but I also realize such a monumental change will not come without challenges, especially during the transition.

The most critical concern right now, and for the next two years, is ensuring we are able to field a full complement of paramedics. Literally, people's lives depend on it. When our citizens call 911 and need a paramedic we must be sure paramedics are available.

Recruiting and retaining paramedics who can also function effectively as law enforcement officers has always been difficult. We should expect this difficulty will only increase as we talk about ending our paramedic service. As a result we must count on our current paramedics to carry us through. Davis County has some wonderfully dedicated paramedics who care about our office and our community, but these individuals are also obliged to care for their families and their futures.

I believe a number of things are needed to keep our current paramedics engaged. First, they need to be informed. We have worked on this from day one, sharing with them information at every step of this process.

Second, they need to feel secure in their future. We have tried to provide a vision of what the Sheriff's Office looks like after paramedics. The reality is a lot of law enforcement priorities have necessarily been subjugated in order to provide the required level of paramedic response.

After the transition the Sheriff's Office will be better positioned to provide effective law enforcement to unincorporated county, contract cities and recreational areas in the county. This level of service will require nearly the number of full-time personnel we have now. A few positions may be reduced through attrition, but we should not anticipate any significant reductions in force.

A third issue is these paramedics need to know they are not facing a pay cut. Currently all of our paramedics receive a 15% adjustment for being a certified paramedic. This pay is given as a differential and is not included in the base pay. The 15% helps keep our wages competitive with other law enforcement agencies, but the loss of this pay would be very stressful and demoralizing to these employees. We are requesting the 15% adjustment be factored into the base pay for our certified paramedics. Doing this right away, or at least committing to this plan, will send a positive message to these paramedics and alleviate this major concern. This request does not require any additional money; funds required for this change are already programed into our budget.

Regarding our second request, we currently have three full-time and six part-time vacancies for deputy sheriff/paramedic positions and two part-time vacancies for paramedic only positions. Not only do we have a moral obligation to staff our paramedic response, we have a legal obligation to have eight paramedics on duty at all times. Vacancies have required us to resort to mandatory overtime shifts. Many of our paramedics are reluctant to sign-up for these extra shifts for a number of reasons. In an effort to ensure we are able to fill these shifts we propose offering an incentive for working extra shifts.

This would be similar to what we currently do to compensate our field training officers. We provide a stipend of $37 for each training shift. We would simply use the same process and rate for volunteering to work an extra paramedic shift. Funding for this request will be more than adequately offset by the vacant positions we have. If the vacant positions are filled the need for the extra shifts will be ameliorated.

Although it is not part of our request currently before the Budget Committee, I would encourage the County to consider a couple of other changes that I feel would significantly help in this and possibly other situations. Most County employees are paid regular wages for 40 hours a week, and any time worked in excess of 40 hours is paid at time-and-a-half. Deputies in the Sheriff's Office are treated differently. Deputy pay is calculated on a two-week basis, with a regular schedule being 80 hours in two weeks. However, instead of receiving time-and-a-half for anything worked over 80 hours, as other employees would be, our deputies do not receive time-and-a-half until they have worked in excess of 86 hours in a two week period. Although FLSA rules allow public safety employees to be treated this way, many, perhaps most, cities and counties have discontinued this practice; I believe we should too.

I would also encourage a conversation about stopping the practice of denying an employee compensation for sick leave if that employee subsequently volunteers, or is assigned, to work extra hours. In other words, the current practice is, if a deputy is ill the first week of a pay period and takes a sick

day, but then is required to work an extra shift in the second week, the county will not pay the sick leave hours. The deputy ends up working on a day that she/he was scheduled to be off with their family but does not get any consideration as far as pay. The deputy simply gets 80 hours of straight-time pay and the sick leave is not paid.

I understand that FLSA rules allow for both of these procedures, but I think there may be an issue of fundamental fairness and we should consider if this is the way we want to treat the good employees of Davis County.

Our third request before the budget committee is unrelated to the paramedic program. Last year in large measure due to the pandemic, the Sheriff's Office found we were unable to continue using inmate labor to clean our building. We sought, and were approved, funds from the CARES Act to hire a janitor. As you know that funding ended at the conclusion of 2020. Ongoing funding for that janitorial position was requested as part of our regular 2021 budget. After some discussion, the position was tentatively approved; however, it appears it was inadvertently omitted from the final budget. We are requesting this one janitorial position be reinstated in the Building and Grounds West budget during the next budget opening.

I look forward to meeting with you next Monday at the budget committee meeting to discuss these requests. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have in that meeting. If you have questions, comments or concerns you would like to discuss in the meantime, please reach out to me.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sheriff Sparks

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Davis County Sheriff
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