

July 2023

Sheriff Fletcher:

We continue working with your office to comply with the County Board action from earlier this year regarding budget and staffing to ensure full transparency and consistency in our collective work. This is the second monthly memo with regard to that work. Thank you to Undersheriff Mestad for his response to the first memo in an email dated 07/14/23. I have had a chance to review all aspects of that email and, in addition to my review this month with our third party auditor, I have the following questions and issues regarding additional information from your Office.

As a reminder, you can expect that I will be sending a memo to you with key topics and questions that remain unanswered that I want to make sure you are getting a chance to address. The goal of these questions is to allow you a chance to see where I want to better understand your work and you can help clarify areas so that we may work together from a place of common understanding. This information should be straightforward for you to provide and therefore should not require significant effort. Finally, I want to let you know that I will be posting these memos on our website every month so that they are available to all interested parties. I believe transparency and accountability to be important in how we approach this work, and I believe that publicly posting the memos will build public confidence in how we are working to address budget, staffing and programmatic issues with your office. If you have other ideas for how you would like to ensure we are working collaboratively together on this important work, please let me know.

Follow-up Topics/Questions for July 2023

- 1) You wrote a letter to the Board of Commissioners dated 07/27/23 making an appeal regarding ongoing issues that you perceive to be occurring in your work with Human Resources. You did not cc: me or the Chief Human Resources Officer on the email, even though that is where the issues you raise are managed, directed and addressed in this organization. Moreover, you have yet to ask for a meeting with the CHRO to review the ongoing issues you raised with the Board. As the leader of your Office, this is standard protocol for a department head working through issues of serious import that impact one's administrative work. CHRO Annie Porbeni can be reached at annie.porbeni@ramseycounty.us. I strongly suggest you send her a message immediately and set a time for you to meet with her if you feel issues remain unresolved from your perspective.
- 2) I am not going to repeatedly acknowledge inflationary costs associated with food and body camera costs in future memos as there was general agreement on these issues requiring resolution before year's end and in next year's budget. I will continue to track all inflationary costs closely with the third party auditor to ensure that monthly spend and projections remain aligned.
- 3) There are a series of Human Resources Issues the RCSO continues to raise that require additional understanding and discussion. The following outlines the current issues that require clarity for the situation to be placed on a positive footing moving forward:

- a) There have been multiple communications from the RCSO that it is understaffed at the Adult Detention Center, yet the jail continues to see a license restriction that brings the total daily population to a cap of 325 individuals. The jail was budgeted to be staffed at 400 individuals, meaning that the current population cap represents a reduction of 18.75%. While I understand that there are additional boarding costs being incurred due to having to house individuals in other locations, that is not a personnel-related spending issue. The reduced capacity should result in an alleviation to the RCSO's staffing demands. I and the rest of the Ramsey County administrative team stand ready to understand the specific staffing numbers the RCSO is citing in its need to fill its complement, but no numbers have been provided nor meetings requested to clarify this ask in any quantifiable way. It is unclear what the specific ask of "fully staffed" at the ADC even means during this reduced population period. Please remedy this lack of clarity.
- b) Human Resources (HR) paperwork issues remain. The RCSO provided HR staff with two boxes of HR paperwork on April 26, 2023. HR staff have repeatedly requested a date from the RCSO to pick up the remaining paperwork, the latest request being Thursday, July 13th. Those requests have gone unanswered, and the RCSO continues to ask what paperwork is needed. To be clear again in this letter, HR requires that all personnel and medical files are needed and have yet to be provided to HR. Absent that information being provided by the department, things will remain in a state of hold. If this is unclear or incongruent with you and your department, set a meeting in HR with the HR team to address uncertainties to get this issue resolved. There is an expectation that business areas will comply with HR policy to ensure fair and transparent processes for all employees, and I will not deviate from that approach now or in the future.
- c) Staffing complement clean-up issues remain. HR has been working with the Safety and Justice Controller since March to clean up the complement report and provide approval to fill or move positions. HR is responsive when the Controller gives the financial approval that funds are available within the department's budget and the RCSO provides the correct paperwork. Both accurate paperwork and available budget remain an issue, and it is on the business area to address these issues with the Controller and HR if it believes all information has been appropriately submitted. If this is unclear or incongruent with you and your department, set a meeting in HR with the HR team and the Controller to address uncertainties to get these issues resolved.
- d) ADC staffing issues remain ongoing due to a lack of clear information from the RCSO. The Safety and Justice Controller approved a request to fill one grant funded Community Services Officer position, but the RCSO reported back that it would not fill the position until approval was also received to fill a Correctional Officer position in the ADC. The Controller and RCSO continue to work on the complement report but there remains significant cleanup needs, and without a clear complement report, the business area can expect issues. It is on the RCSO to produce and maintain a clear, transparent and consistent complement report. Absent that or budget space to hire positions, HR cannot move forward with filling position. If this is unclear or incongruent with you and your department, set a meeting in HR with the HR team and the Controller to address uncertainties to get these issues resolved.
- e) The RCSO cited 32 individuals whose scheduled are impacted or would be impacted at the ADC by various forms of leave or separation. It will help if the RCSO could provide HR with the

employees' names so they can research and respond to specific concerns. At that time those dialogues have not occurred, and it is on the business unit to bring clarity to situations like this so that the organization may support it. If this is unclear or incongruent with you and your department, set a meeting in HR with the HR team to address uncertainties to get this issue resolved.

- 4) The County Board has previously requested workshops with you on a variety of topics, and the RCSO has yet to offer any dates of availability for those conversations. While I read your issues in your response, the Sheriff and his leadership team should be able to be conversant if simply willing to show up for a conversation on most or all of these important topics. These do not require significant staff preparation, and without them, the RCSO should continue to expect that questions will arise at every opportunity for me and the County Board to ask them.
- Contract Cities Policing
 - Drone Use Policy
 - High Speed Chase Policy
 - General Training, Employee Wellbeing and Culture
 - Bail reform implementation efforts and projected impact on population levels at the adult detention center.
- 5) Budget projections and spending. I want to point out that as I review your monthly budget projections, I am confused by some of the trends and need additional information from you. For example, we agree that food costs have inflated, but the RCSO projections provided to the third-party auditor are virtually the same as in 2022. Yet as stated above in 3a, the ADC population is down approximately 18.75% since last year. Is the RCSO suggesting that food has inflated an additional 18.75% this year? Otherwise, while boarding costs (which also pay for food when an individual is boarded elsewhere) will be up for the reasons previously cited, but it does not make logical sense why food spending projections are flat with a year ago. There are other costs within the ADC spending that follow the same logic, without any areas showing proportional decreases that reflect how the RCSO budget should look different this year. Please explain this issue as the money in these areas that should be down because of a decreased population would be a part of addressing the inflationary and unexpected cost pressures, and this lack of clarity gets to the heart of active management that is expected of all departments and offices in Ramsey County.

I look forward to your help in addressing these topics so that I can remove them from next month's list and I can better understand the ongoing work of your office. Thank you in advance for working to help me answer questions that require your insight and expertise.

Sincerely,



Ryan T. O'Connor
County Manager
Ramsey County

Update: There are three instances in the letter referencing our "third party auditor" please note that it should state "independent financial consultant." (8/4/2023)