



Patrick W. Polky
Sheriff

KNOX COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



Curt R. Andrick
Chief Deputy

Sheriff's Update to the Knox County Commission

August 2, 2023

Greetings Commissioners,

I know it has been some time since I have provided you with a written report; things have been busy for us, especially around personnel matters. I hope that the communications we have had over the last few months have been enough to keep you informed.

As I hope you are aware, it remains a struggle to recruit and retain personnel within our corrections and law enforcement divisions. We have been working very closely with HR, Admin., and Finance to try and come up with solutions of any kind that may help see us to the other side of this problem. Many of those solutions, that we can hopefully implement sooner rather than later, are geared toward recruitment but not necessarily retention. Though recruitment is important, I personally feel our efforts are best served when focused on the retention of our current staff; a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Investing in our current staff will help be broadcast to the community and it will also work as a recruitment tool.

If you are not aware, these are very competitive times for public safety, which is unprecedented. There seems to be an extreme reduction in new interest in the professions and every agency that I am aware of is focusing their efforts on pulling existing employees away from their current employers. Unfortunately pay and benefits that others are offering are quickly out-pacing our offerings, it also does not help that we are tied to only being able to solve the issue every 12 months. Most of the Sheriffs and Chiefs have become reluctant to share with each other what they are doing to recruit and retain people. We have made written requests for information and it is often very generic and not always the exact current practice, I do not blame them though. I too fear that if I share too much that someone will get their leadership team to do something that gives them a leg up and we will start losing people.

Below is a snapshot comparison of our budget approved positions and current staffing. The goal is to try and keep you updated on the staffing levels. This includes our full-time (FT), part-time (PT) and per diem (PD) positions, PD positions I am not including in the total count.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Authorized #</u>	<u>Current #</u>
ADMINISTRATION (4 of 4)		

Main Office
 301 Park St.
 Rockland, ME 04841

Correctional Facility
 327 Park St.
 Rockland, ME 04841

Airport Security
 23 Terminal Ln.
 Owls Head, ME 04854

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Sheriff	1	1
Chief Deputy	1	1
Administrative Assistant	2	2
CIVIL PROCESS (2 of 2, w/ 1 PD)		
Civil Process Supervisor	1	1
Civil Deputy	1 PT & Unlimited PD	1 PT & 1 PD
CORRECTIONS (27 of 40, w/ 2 PD)		
Corrections Administrator	1	1
Security & Operations Coordinator	1	1
Corrections Supervisor	4	4
Corrections Assistant Supervisor	4	4
Corrections Officer	22	10
Transport Supervisor	1	1
Transport Officer	1	1
Diversion Deputy	1	0
Food Service Manager	1	1
Cook	1 FT, 1 PT & Unlimited PD	1 FT, 1 PT & 2 PD
Programs & Services Coordinator	1	1
Assistant Programs Coordinator	1	1
LAW ENFORCEMENT (21 of 23)		
Patrol Administrator	1	1
Patrol Supervisor	3	3
Patrol Deputy	9	9
Contract Patrol Deputy - Vinalhaven	2	0
Contract Patrol Deputy - North Haven	1	1

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Airport Security	1 FT & 1 PT	1 FT & 1 PT
Criminal Investigations Supervisor	1	1
Criminal Investigator (Detective)	3	3
MDEA Special Agent	1	1
<u>TOTAL STAFFING</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>54</u>

CIVIL PROCESS DIVISION

Civil process is still fully staffed. In my discussions with the supervisor, there are no real issues for us to address at this time. There seems to be an increase in recent requests for service but, especially because of the per diem program, we have been able to keep up with the volume, especially those that have time constraints.

Below you will see the numbers that compare the past month and the year to date (YTD) to those of the past two years. You will see a trend that appears to be a reduction in this month and YTD. In researching, this is due to changes in the law last year that now have in-person service and electronic service counting as a single service compared to previous years where they were treated as separate services. I am confident that we are actually doing the same or more work today and that our revenue will be the same or increased.

	<u>July 2023</u>	<u>July 2022</u>	<u>July 2021</u>	<u>Jan - July 2023</u>	<u>Jan - July 2022</u>	<u>Jan - July 2021</u>
<u>Total Papers In</u>	115	142	126	759	973	968
<u>Total Papers Served</u>	61	113	82	610	796	694
<u>Total Papers Returned</u>	6	29	44	87	174	266
<u>Total Active Papers</u>	48	0	0	62	3	8

NOTES:

Total Papers In: The amount brought to us for service.

Total Papers Served: The amount delivered successfully.

Total Papers Returned: The amount that we attempted service on but did not deliver successfully; however, these are most often considered diligent attempts and the plaintiff is able to continue the process.

Total Active Papers: The amount of papers that we are still attempting service on.

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CORRECTIONS DIVISION

Recruiting and retention are the equal priority at this time, along with emergent facility issues that seem to keep popping up (i.e. boiler plant, HVAC, video system, control board). HR has been working with us very closely to try and help us keep from losing more staff, it does seem to be helping for now. The major theme is a desire to have more time off, line staff is working an estimated average of 72 hours per week (six 12 hour shifts a week). We have been doing a deep dive into corrections to assess if there are things that need to be or can be changed, we will be presenting you with short solutions in the very near future. We are also working on long term solutions but not sure when they will be developed enough to present to you. Recruiting has been fruitful but we seem to lose people as fast as we gain them.

We are also experiencing a shortage of available workers due to family medical leave act (FMLA) reasons, 6 employees at this current time. Though this is no one's fault, the loss of the person to be able to work daily has a huge impact on daily activities, work is shifted onto individuals who already are overworked. This situation has forced me to make tough decisions on what tasks will no longer get accomplished. These could potentially have some ramifications when it comes to this year's MDOC Jail Standards review but rest assured, I am focused on ensuring that critical tasks, safety, and security are the priority. With these individuals added to the current vacancies, we have 21 of the 40 employees actually physically working.

We lost our Diversion Deputy and Canine to private sector work. We have solicited inhouse to fill the position but there has been no interest at this time. We are experiencing some losses in law enforcement and so we are focusing on those vacancies at the moment.

We did have two promotions/transfers during this period; CO Anne Orne to Assistant Shift Supervisor (Corporal) and CO Ben Raven to Transport Officer. I am pleased to report that though Cook Anderson did retire she decided to remain with us as a PD Cook!

If you are not aware, we are still attempting to make a case to convince the Governor not to flat fund the County Jail Operations Fund (T34-A, §1210-E) for 2024 and 2025. Several Sheriffs, through the MSA, and Commissioners have provided testimony and evidence, to no avail, that the same costs driving the MDOC budget up are driving the jail budgets up and that without state support, jails will not be able to keep pace with increases. If you have not already, please help in this endeavor by reaching out to state level decision makers on the matter. I do believe that MCCA has been working on this matter as well.

We had our first District 6 Corrections Collaborative meeting. We are working on the establishment of governing rules and hope to be working on collaborative items this budget season. We did reach out to TBRJ recently to see if they could assist us by taking a portion of our

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incarcerated people because of our staffing concerns. The Jail Administrator there was very accommodating and agreed to assist us. He did boast a little, not that I blame him, that he was almost at full staffing, due to a significant raise in pay and benefits, and that is why he could assist us.

Numerical data sheets are still a matter of concern and we have been unable to invest the time in getting these refined to my liking for you, I am choosing to provide you something. Even though I feel it is only about 90% accurate it is better than anecdotal information.

	<u>July 2023</u>	<u>July 2022</u>	<u>July 2021</u>	<u>Jan - July 2023</u>	<u>Jan - July 2022</u>	<u>Jan - July 2021</u>
Total Intakes	76	63	115	523	478	733
Total Releases	59	45	102	360	283	539
Average Daily Population	107	124	116	128	119	121

	<u>In Custody Unsentenced</u>	<u>In Custody Sentenced</u>	<u>Community Confinement</u>	<u>Community Supervision</u>	<u>Community Monitoring</u>	<u>Total Supervised</u>
Currently Supervising	28	4	1	169	24	202

NOTES:

Total Intakes: indicates the total number of individuals who were processed into the criminal justice system via physical arrest.

Total Releases: indicates the total number of individuals who were processed out of incarcerations for various reasons (i.e. bail, transfer, time served).

Average Daily Population: indicates the average number people who are physically incarcerated per day for the period indicated.

In-Custody Unsentenced: indicates the number of people that are currently in-custody and unsentenced at our facility (i.e. held by court, unable to pay bail, held by probation).

In-Custody Sentenced: indicates the number of people that are currently in-custody on a sentence for criminal convictions at our facility.

Community Confinement: number of people that are released to the community under house arrest.

Community Supervision: number of people that are released to the community not under house arrest.

Community Monitoring: number of people that are released to community with a stipulation of enhanced supervision (i.e. ankle monitor, breath testing etc.).

Total Supervised: indicates the total number of people that we are supervising or monitoring for all categories.

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LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Though we were close to being fully staffed, we will not be soon, we have recently received several resignations:

- The only Vinalhaven Deputy we had left for a Thomaston patrol position,
- 2 Patrol Supervisors (Sergeants) will be leaving us, 1 for a Thomaston patrol position and 1 for a Rockland patrol position,
- 1 Detective will be leaving us for a Rockland Detective Sergeant position.

My general understanding is that these individuals were no longer willing to wait for us to bring pay and benefits to a competitive level and wanted to get into these agencies now before there were no longer any openings. Though I do not like rumors, there does seem to be some concern that these are just the first of more resignations to come. I have asked HR to assist by trying to conduct exit interviews as well as employee satisfaction interviews. I will highlight that many of these agencies are on a July 1 fiscal year and were able to see our offerings, that came out January 1, and build budgets and operations that have severely handicapped us.

We still have a temporary vacancy with Dep. Landers remaining on military deployment. I am still giving consideration to temporarily filling this position as there is an indication from the military that they would like to keep him on military order for yet another year. Lt. Walker is still on leave pending the outcome of his legal matter. With the pending losses and these two, we have 16 of the 23 employees actually physically working.

Vehicles continue to be a challenge for us. Though we are finally getting vehicles upfitted and into the fleet, maintenance and repair is still significantly higher than anticipated.

Airport Security is still running well and I consider us lucky to have two experienced full-time certified law enforcement officers working in these positions.

Criminal Investigations, which includes our deputy assigned to the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, is functioning as well as possible at the moment. Det. Twitchell has been temporarily assigned to the supervisory role. Though this helps with directing work it does not help with workload when we are short a person, which will become two in the coming weeks with our loss to Rockland PD.

The spreadsheet below is provided to give you an idea of general service trends as they appear for the month of June and the year to date for June compared to the previous two years. I do not have the July report yet because we are training someone new to complete this report.

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	<u>June</u> <u>2023</u>	<u>June</u> <u>2022</u>	<u>June</u> <u>2021</u>	<u>Jan - June</u> <u>2023</u>	<u>Jan - June</u> <u>2022</u>	<u>Jan - June</u> <u>2021</u>
<u>Calls for Service</u>	787	930	963	4748	4978	5739
<u>Felony/Violent Crimes</u>	18	10	9	86	73	71
<u>Property Crimes</u>	8	17	16	69	80	82
<u>Adult Arrests</u>	29	43	36	195	227	227
<u>Traffic Complaints</u>	48	48	60	23	168	231
<u>Traffic Stops</u>	91	200	188	657	951	1294
<u>Traffic Crashes</u>	42	54	59	256	291	218
<u>Traffic Fatalities</u>	0	2	0	1	3	0
<u>Overdoses</u>	0	2	3	6	12	7
<u>Overdose Fatalities</u>	0	9	1	0	9	2

NOTES:

Calls for Service: indicates the number of service calls handled by the Sheriff's Office; this does include calls for assistance by other agencies law enforcement agencies but does not include the service calls handled by other law enforcement agencies (i.e. Rockland PD, Thomaston PD).

Felony/Violent Crimes: indicates the number of Calls for Service that involved physical violence or the potential of the suspected party being incarcerated for 1 year or more.

Property Crimes: indicates the number of Calls for Service that were against property (i.e. theft, motor vehicle burglary, residential burglary)

Adult Arrests: indicates the number of adults who were charged with a crime and filed with the District Attorney, it does not necessarily indicate incarceration.

Traffic Complaints: indicates the number of Calls for Service that were related to motor vehicles or highways.

Traffic Crashes: indicates the number of Calls for Service that involved a motor vehicle crash with property damage or injury.

Traffic Fatalities: indicates the number of deaths related to traffic crashes.

Overdoses: indicates the number of Calls for Service that involved a person in medical emergency due to exposure to a substance (i.e. drugs, medication, chemicals).

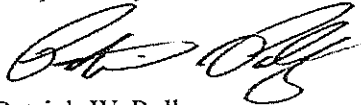
Overdose Fatalities: indicates the number of deaths related to overdoses.

I am working daily with my command staff as well as HR, Finance and the County Administrator on ways that we can best serve our employees so that they can best serve our citizens. Though not everyone of us agrees with some of the solutions provided, we all agree that something needs to be done sooner than later to keep us from reaching the point of catastrophe (i.e. workplace injuries, civil litigation, mass exodus).

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Please feel free to reach out to me anytime, especially if you have questions. I am always available to discuss any matter that you may have.

Respectfully submitted,



Patrick W. Polky
Sheriff, Knox County