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DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Special Forest Preserve Committee Minutes
November 15, 2017**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve Committee met in special session on Wednesday, November 15, 2017 at 6:00 p.m., in the Legislative Center's Freedom Room in Sycamore, Illinois. Chairman Brown called the meeting to order. Those Members present were Mr. Bagby, Mrs. Haji-Sheikh, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Porterfield, Mr. Roman, and Chairman Brown. Ms. Little was absent. A quorum was established with six Members present and one absent.

Others present were Terry Hannan, Gary Hanson, Sheriff Scott, Tracy Jones, Dianne Leifheit, Laurie Emmer, Jerry Osland, Pete Stefan, Steve Faivre, John Frieders, and David Berault.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Mr. Porterfield, seconded by Mr. Hughes, and it was carried unanimously to approve the meeting agenda as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

FY 2018 ANNUAL APPROPRIATION AND LEVY & RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT AND THE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Chairman Brown shared that this special meeting was a continuation of what was discussed at the last Committee's special meeting. He indicated that additional concerns and outstanding questions still existed regarding the Forest Preserve Levy change that was adopted by the Committee last meeting.

Mr. Roman commented that this property tax levy change made no sense to him and it appeared that it was being pushed through with little to no information being passed on to the Committee. There was no description of said Officer or duties as prescribed within this levy. Administrator Hanson has said that if they do not get the \$75,000 that has been taken away from the Forest Preserve for the next three years from the Landfill Host Agreement, than this is a way that they as the Forest Preserve could get that money back. He asked everyone if these funds are to be paid to the Sheriff's Department, then how would these funds replace the \$75,000. After the budgetary cuts of \$300,000 from the Sheriff's Department and \$75,000 from the Forest Preserve, they are now being asked to raise their Forest Preserve Levy to 3.7% to cover the costs of an officer. Mr. Roman continued that this does not sound like the most fiscally responsible move this Commission can make. With no detailed provided with the use of this levy, he cannot in good faith support this amendment and he asked that everyone vote to repeal this levy increase and go back to original levy that was approved unanimously at the October 24th Forest Preserve Committee. Mr. Roman additionally addressed the time the deputies would have within the forest preserves factoring the drive times and requested that they all have an open and honest conversation about this levy increase and to table any decisions this evening.

Mrs. Haji-Sheikh agreed with Mr. Roman's comments and didn't feel that the Committee was given a lot of good information at their last Special Meeting to go on. To date, she noted that she is unaware that there was a need for additional patrolling within the forest preserves because no issues have been brought to the Committee's attention. She shared that she would like to see some numbers and dollars and cents laid out and what the patrolling needs are for the forest preserves. She additionally noted that she has some additional creative ideas on how they can patrol the forest preserves if it is necessary.

Sheriff Scott addressed the coverage that his deputies currently provides for the forest preserves and explained that this proposed program is to provide a consistent law enforcement presence within and around the forest preserves to improve public safety and be readily available for calls of services that happen within the forest preserves. Also, the Sheriff's Office wants to be proactive and engaging with the citizens that utilize the forest preserves each night and be available to assist when the need arises. The Sheriff's Office in connection with the Forest Preserve District believes in fostering positive relationships with the folks that benefit from the use of the preserves. The goal is to provide a safe and family-friendly environment to everyone and to act as a deterrent to any potential criminal activity. He additionally outlines some of the responsibilities of the assigned deputies.

Mr. Hannan also shared that in his 40 plus years with the Forest Preserve District, the Sheriff's Department has patrolled the forest preserves year-round, day and night for safety and security at no cost to the Forest Preserve District. Only recently there has been a fee of about \$10,000 per year as officers patrol preserves Friday and Saturday evenings from April through October.

He added that he has seen Forest Preserve District police patrols in surrounding County Forest Preserve and Conservation Districts. He has thought it could benefit our forest preserves to have more safety and security patrols. He reiterated that currently the Sheriff patrols forest preserves day and night at no cost to the District. So when this recommendation was made, he had never thought about increasing our forest preserve patrols or that someday we would need to pay for the forest preserve patrols. In his many years working in forest preserves, it has always been a welcome sight to see a County Deputies drive through a preserve, stop and park for a while, or take a walk along trails and other areas. It is a comforting sight for visitors as well. The officer and patrol car "presence" also sends a message to those who may be in these public spaces with not law abiding intentions. Other Forest Preserve and Conservation Districts have their own police officers, patrol cars, fuel expense, and bike patrols. Mr. Hannan added that he thought the proposed increase would be a good investment for DeKalb County.

The Committee and Sheriff Scott reviewed the amount of coverage that would be provided by the deputy/deputies and ensured that there would be 24/7 coverage when needed in addition to more focus coverage with the additional deputy.

Mrs. Haji-Sheikh suggested that Part-Time Security Officers could be utilized and wanted to ensure the Committee explores all their options. Sheriff Scott stressed that you pay for what you get and that the quality they would get from a Sheriff's Deputy is professional policing.

Board Chairman Mark Pietrowski clarified that when the full Board of Commissioners meet that evening they will be voting solely on the Forest Preserve District's Levy and not what they intended to do with the funds. The Forest Preserve Committee can then at a later date determine what they wish to do with the increased levy funds.

Chairman Brown shared that he believes that there has been some confusion that by making this decision, all future tax levy increases would go to the Sheriff's Department and that is not the case. On the other hand, when you try to balance a budget and you don't have the dollars in income to match the dollars of expenditures, they start looking for creative ways to pay for things. Chairman Brown additionally praised the Sheriff's Department for working so well with the Forest Preserve District.

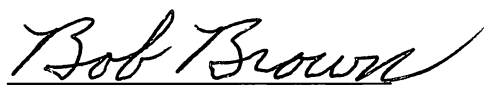
Mr. Hanson clarified that the Forest Preserve Committee has all of 2018 to make a decision on how they would like to structure these funds. He continued that what they don't have through 2018 is to decide to levy the money. That opportunity goes away. If they levy the money, now they have the option to decide to spend it or not to spend it and they have the whole year to make a decision. He also reiterated that under this proposal it would take two years to build up enough money to fund an additional officer, but they didn't have to do that. Mr. Hanson additionally briefly clarified the property tax cap process for the Committee and how it works and how the funds are accumulated.

The Committee had some additional deliberations regarding the increased levy that the full Board of Commissioners would be voting on that evening and there was a consensus that the additional information was helpful in their decision-making process.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Roman, seconded by Mr. Bagby and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Chairman Bob Brown



Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary



DeKalb County Sheriff's Office

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"TO SERVE AND PROTECT"

ROGER A. SCOTT, SHERIFF

ANDREW SULLIVAN, CHIEF DEPUTY

Date: November 15, 2017
To: Forest Preserve Committee
From: Sheriff Scott
Ref: Sheriff Patrols

The purpose of this writing is to illustrate the services provided and the benefit received to both the Forest Preserve District and the citizens with the increase in patrols provided by deputies.

Currently, the Sheriff's Office contracts with the Forest Preserve District during the months of April thru October to provide 8 hours of concentrated patrol to the forest preserves on Friday and Saturday nights from 7 PM- 11 PM, 4-hour blocks each night. The areas of coverage span the entire County consisting of 18 forest preserves. The first night emphasis is provided to the northern preserves and the following night the emphasis is provided to the southern preserves. The deputy is required to visit each preserve within the 4-hour time period and conduct routine patrol, take any reports that come into the preserve and be visible, talk with citizens and responsive to the needs of the forest preserves.

The vision of the program is to provide a consistent law enforcement presence within and around the forest preserves to improve public safety and be readily available for calls of service that happen within the forest preserves. Also, we want to be proactive and engaging with the citizens that utilize the forest preserves each night and be available to assist when the need arises. The Sheriff's Office in concert with the Forest Preserve District believes in fostering positive relationships with the folks that benefit from the use of the preserves. The goal is to provide a safe and family-friendly environment to everyone and to act as a deterrent to any potential criminal activity. Some of the responsibilities of the assigned deputies include:

- Demonstrate high visibility patrol within the forest preserves
- Extensive foot patrol
- Friendly interaction with citizens
- Verifying camping permits when applicable
- Reminding people not to litter

- Enforcing no alcohol rules and related laws
- Reminding individuals to keep dogs on leash and enforce this and other forest preserve rules as needed
- General law and traffic enforcement
- Additional duties as assigned

From the beginning of 2016 to present the Sheriff's Office handled 6,120 calls for service in the forest preserves that include the following:

- Foot patrol
- Investigating reports of suspicious vehicles/persons
- Taking reports for lost/stolen items
- 911 calls
- Drug investigations
- Disorderly subjects/conduct
- DUI enforcement
- Keys locked in vehicles
- Missing juvenile reports
- Criminal damage to property reports
- Checking status on individuals
- Suicidal subjects
- Ambulance requests
- Traffic enforcement
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Business checks (Russel's Woods)
- Reports of stolen vehicles
- Conservation violations
- Directed extra patrols within forest preserves
- Several other miscellaneous calls

The recommended change in the taxing levy would allow for future expansion of this program to include an increase in coverage determined with the implementation of a schedule agreed upon by Superintendent Hannan and Sheriff Scott. The Sheriff's Office along with the Forest Preserve strive to provide a safe and secure place for citizens to engage in recreational activities.

Approximate Costing Analysis

Fully Equipped Squad Car	\$56,000 approx. once every 7 years
Fuel	\$2,000 approx. annually
Deputy	\$125,000 Salary and Benefits
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Total	\$183,000

Sheriff Scott