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Jail Personnel Costs

Manage staffing levels and absences
March 2006





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MEMORANDUM

Date: March 9, 2006

To: Diane Linn, Multnomah County Chair
Maria Rojo de Steffey, Commissioner, District 1
Serena Cruz, Commissioner, District 2
Lisa Naito, Commissioner, District 3
Lonnie Roberts, Commissioner, District 4

From: Suzanne Flynn, Multnomah County Auditor

Subject: Jail Personnel Costs Audit

The attached report covers our audit of the Sheriff's Office management of jail staffing and personnel costs. This audit was included in our FY05-06 Audit Schedule.

It appears from our analysis that there were several contributing factors to the significant increase in overtime. The decision by the Sheriff's Office to reduce staffing to meet budget constraints resulted in higher levels of overtime and higher total personnel costs. Determining the optimal staffing level for a jail is not an easy task, but, it is possible to improve staffing and management decisions by better utilizing data. The Sheriff's Office would have been better positioned to respond to budget constraints if it had gathered and analyzed available staffing, absence and workload data.

We have discussed our findings and recommendations with the management team at the Sheriff's Office. A formal follow-up to this audit will be scheduled within 1-2 years.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the management and staff in the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office for the cooperation and assistance extended to us.

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Summary

Recently, there has been considerable study and discussion about the use of overtime in the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) jail operations. The Corrections Grand Jury in 2004 urged the Auditor's Office to conduct an audit after reviewing jail overtime and again in 2005 spent considerable time analyzing the use of overtime. The previous sheriff also was asked by County Commissioner Naito to review jail operations and the use of overtime. In July, 2005, this office began an audit with the goal of offering objective and independent analysis to assist in this policy discussion.

Determining the level of staffing needed for a jail is challenging because jail facilities must operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Based upon our independent analysis of workload and historical absence rates, and our review of current MCSO staffing, it appears that MCSO jails were understaffed in FY04 and FY05. However, since FY05, a number of program and facility closures occurred that may mean staffing is at a more appropriate level. Prior to making any future staffing decisions, the MCSO should further study current staffing levels and gain a better understanding of staffing needs in light of these changes.

Like other County programs, the MCSO responded to budgetary pressure by reducing jail staff and trimming the associated workload. The number of corrections officers working in the jails declined 13% and the number of jail beds was reduced by 18% from FY02 to FY05. Reducing staffing and a commensurate level of workload should have allowed the MCSO to control its level of overtime spending and reduce total personnel costs.

However, it does not appear that workload was reduced sufficiently to decrease total personnel costs. We found that the MCSO paid about the same amount in personnel costs in FY03, as it did in FY05, but received less work for this money. We estimate that the MCSO would have had to pay about \$1.08 million more in FY05 to get the same amount of work it got in FY03.

Typically, managers of jail operations can control personnel costs to some extent by managing absences. When the absence rate increases, it is necessary to hire more staff or incur overtime. We reviewed historical absence patterns of jail staff to determine if the MCSO could have compensated for understaffing more effectively by managing staff absences.

We found that total absences per jail staff FTE increased by 6% from FY03 to FY04 and by 7% from FY04 to FY05. The single largest contributor to this increase has been the rapid growth in comp time – time taken in lieu of overtime pay. Comp time grew more than 51% in FY04 and another 44% in FY05. Approximately 25% of corrections officers working in the jails were absent more than 11 weeks (the annual absence rate) in FY05. While most likely this was

allowed under the bargaining unit agreement, the high number of absences requires a significant effort to manage.

Having a very large amount of overtime in the system significantly blunts the effectiveness of absence management tools. For example, one way to minimize the amount of overtime needed to cover for staff members who take vacation is to manage the vacation schedule and shift vacation use to lower demanded times. But this is not possible if almost every day a shift is staffed with the use of overtime.

We followed up on our previous audit of overtime completed in 1994 and found that some of the recommendations had not been implemented. The MCSO has not successfully collected or monitored staffing, absence or workload data in the interim. We did find a study of all corrections facilities posts had been completed in 1997.

The audit recommends that the MCSO dedicate resources to maintain on-going analysis of staffing trends, conduct a study of staffing needs, and set a performance measure target for overtime in agreement with the Board of County Commissioners. We also recommend that the County Human Resources Division give more thought to personnel decisions that can significantly effect a 24/7 operation and plan for future contract negotiations that will assist the MCSO in better managing jail staffing.

Background

Multnomah County jails are administered by the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) Corrections Division. From FY02 to FY05, there were four operable jails: one in the Multnomah County Courthouse, the downtown Justice Center, and two jails on the east side of the County – the Inverness Jail and correctional facility in Troutdale. The Courthouse Jail was closed in FY04 and Wapato Jail in north Portland has not yet opened for operation. Corrections operations also included a Booking/Release Center, Classification Unit, Work Crews, the Work Release Center, Courthouse Services, and Inmate Transport.

Sheriff's Office
Organizational Chart

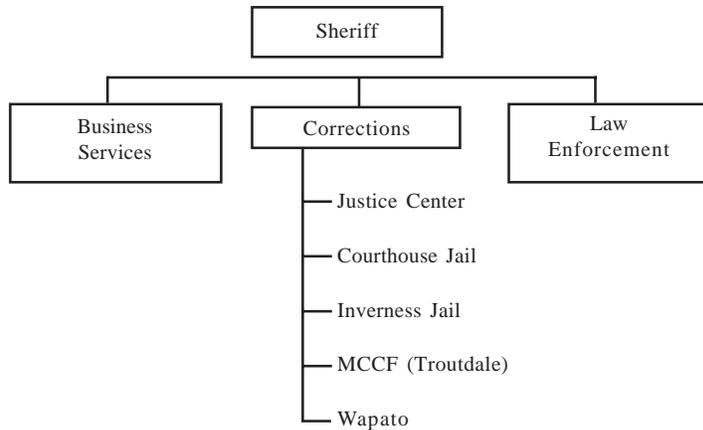


Exhibit 1

When adjusted for inflation, total MCSO spending decreased by 3% since FY01 – from \$100.4 million to \$97.2 million. In contrast, spending for Corrections Facilities has increased 6% or \$3.4 million in the same time period. The Executive Office and Enforcement Division had the largest decreases in the last five years.

MCSO
Spending FY01 to FY05
(adjusted for inflation)

	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	Change
Exec Office	\$6,610,313	\$5,558,722	\$4,045,698	\$3,485,559	\$3,376,441	-49%
Programs	\$15,690,080	\$15,698,103	\$17,284,060	\$16,187,389	\$17,338,168	11%
Facilities	\$60,451,324	\$58,881,069	\$57,019,838	\$59,927,429	\$63,823,715	6%
Enforcement	\$17,684,916	\$17,103,486	\$13,717,020	\$13,767,523	\$12,624,577	-29%
TOTAL	\$100,436,633	\$97,241,380	\$92,066,616	\$93,367,900	\$97,162,901	-3%

Exhibit 2

In FY05, Corrections Facilities expenditures were \$63.8 million – two-thirds of the total MCSO spending. The primary expenditure category for jails was personnel at 82% of the total. In FY05, \$52.1 million was spent on Corrections Facilities personnel costs, an increase of 12% from FY01.

Most corrections officers are assigned to a particular location or “post” such as a jail dorm. Most posts are fixed and are the same each day of the week while some posts vary by the time of day or week. For example, it is always necessary for an officer to be present at a facility control station, but it is only necessary to have officers available to escort inmates to meetings with attorneys on weekdays. Staff can also perform unanticipated “non-post” work, such as supervising an inmate in a hospital. The amount of non-post work that is necessary on any day is very difficult to predict.

MCSO management has worked with corrections consultants to determine how many fixed posts are necessary for a given facility. These managers also use historical information to estimate the need for staff to fill non-post activities and to account for absences. All of these factors contribute to the decision of how many officers to assign to each shift at each facility.

Scope and Methodology

The objectives of the audit were to assess:

- Whether the Sheriff’s Office was efficiently staffing its jails to minimize total personnel costs
- What factors, such as staffing levels, absence rates, training, and comp time, or change in workload contributed to increased levels of overtime
- Whether sufficient data were available and used to effectively manage corrections staffing

The scope of our work included all corrections officers and sergeants. We did not include lieutenants or captains in our study. In some analysis, we limited our scope to corrections officers and corrections sergeants assigned to work in jail facilities including Booking and Release and the courts. Jail facilities include the Booking and Release function and courts because they backfill one another for each shift when there is a shortage of staff to work. When analyzing the jails, we did not include other work units such as Classification, Transport, Work Crew, Close Street Supervision, and administrative positions because they do not backfill jails.

We obtained SAP daily payroll information for FY03 through FY05 for all sergeants and corrections officers and verified its reliability to analyze personnel work hours and costs. We used this data to develop a personnel cost trend, and to compute work and absence hours. Using these data, we were able to make significant progress towards conducting a net annual work hour analysis using the National Institute of Correction’s Staffing Analysis Workbook for Jails. However, we could not reliably estimate or obtain estimates from management for non-post activity because the information had not been tracked.

We obtained training records for all sergeants and corrections officers from FY03 through FY05 from the State and from several County sources. The training hours are likely to be slightly understated because they may not include

all on-site training in the jails. We used these data to see when training is taken by month of the year. We also estimated training hours per FTE.

We interviewed personnel in the Sheriff's Office and the SAP Support section. We read the 2004 – 2010 Multnomah County Corrections Deputy Association Agreement, the reports of the 2005 and 2004 Multnomah County Corrections Grand Juries, former Sheriff Noelle's Report reviewing the Sheriff's jail bed proposal (11-23-05) and the December 7, 2005 Agreement regarding the opening of 114 beds at the Inverness Jail Facility.

This audit was included in our FY06 audit schedule and was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

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Results

Jails were understaffed
in prior years

Determining the level of staffing needed for a jail is challenging because jail facilities must operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Based on our independent analysis of workload and historical absence rates, and our review of MCSO staffing, it appears that MCSO was understaffed in FY04 and FY05.

Staffing plans are built based on an analysis of historical data of the number of posts, the variation in workload, and estimated absences. The analysis yields a staffing or "post factor" that tells the jail managers how many corrections officers should be assigned in the aggregate to a particular shift or unit to ensure that it is continuously staffed. According to our analysis the MCSO uses a post factor of 1.82 for jails. This means that for any particular shift, managers should assign 1.82 staff for each post on that shift. The MCSO staffed below a 1.82 post factor. This analysis related staffing to workload and should not be confused with an analysis of the number of actual staff versus the number of staff that are authorized in the budget.

The most recent staffing analysis that we could find was completed in January, 1997. Because the MCSO staffing analysis was so old, we attempted to conduct an independent analysis to arrive at a more up-to-date post factor. Using daily payroll data, we were able to make significant progress toward conducting a net annual work hour analysis using the methodology outlined in the National Institute of Correction's Staffing Analysis Workbook for Jails. However, we could not reliably estimate or obtain estimates from management for non-post activity because the information had not been tracked.

Because we could not obtain complete, reliable data, we could not arrive at a definitive post factor figure and finish the net annual working hour analysis. However, because it is a relatively small portion of total jail workload, our analysis led us to conclude that it is likely the current post factor for jails is at least 1.82 once non-post activity is included. According to Corrections Division and individual facilities managers we talked to and based on a review of weekly activity summaries, staffing levels were well below the recommended post factor.

Since FY05, a number of program and facility closures occurred that may mean that staffing is now at a more appropriate level. Prior to making any future staffing decisions, the Sheriff's Office needs to further study current staffing levels and gain a better understanding of staffing needs.

Understaffing,
combined with
absences led to higher
personnel costs

The MCSO has faced significant budgetary pressure over the past few years. Like other County programs, it responded to this pressure by reducing staff and trimming some of the associated workload. The MCSO decided to meet its budget constraint in part by reducing jail staff and the number of available jail beds. As shown below in Exhibit 3, the number of corrections officers working

in the jails declined 13%, from 424 in FY02 to 369 in FY05. During the same time period the number of jail beds was reduced by 18% from 1,844 in FY02 to 1,519 in FY05.

Reducing staffing and a commensurate level of workload should have allowed MCSO to control its level of overtime spending and reduce total personnel costs. However, jail workload is more complicated than opening and closing jail beds and can be difficult to predict. Put simply, workload includes everything that must be done each day to operate the jails safely and securely. In addition to staffing jail posts, managing workload involves determining how many corrections officers are needed to accompany inmates to medical appointments or how many are needed to provide security at a trial. The decisions in these examples depend on the characteristics of the individual inmates or the type of trial.

Jail beds and staff
(equivalent of full-time)
FY02-FY05

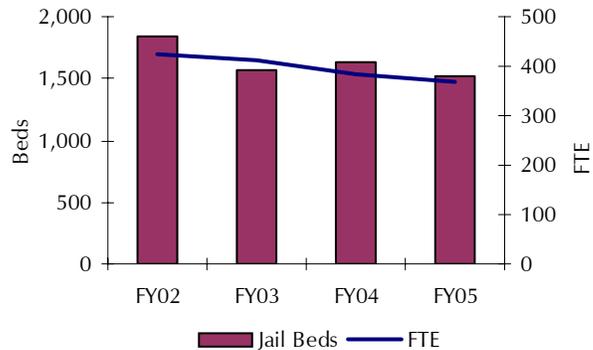


Exhibit 3

It does not appear that workload was reduced sufficiently to decrease total personnel costs. We found that the MCSO paid about the same amount in personnel costs for all corrections officers in FY05 as it did in FY03, when adjusted for cost of living and other rate changes, but it got less work for this money. From FY03 to FY05 after jail beds were cut by 4% and FTE was cut by 8%, total hours worked by all corrections officers decreased by about 26,000 hours. Put another way, the MCSO would have had to pay about \$1.08 million more in FY05 to get the same amount of work it got in FY03. Most of this increase in cost was the result of increased overtime. Because the cuts in corrections FTE did not decrease personnel costs as originally planned, it appears MCSO management had to make cuts in other areas to meet their budget targets.

Total personnel and
overtime costs
FY03-FY05

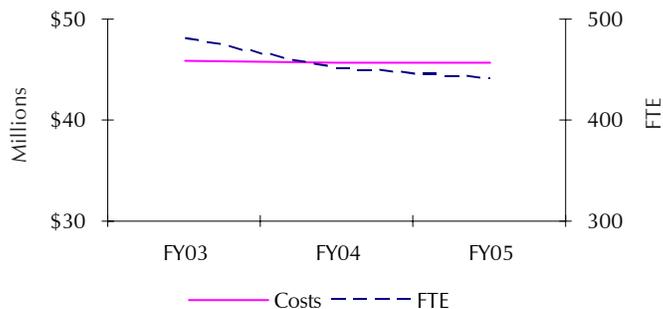


Exhibit 4

Absence rate
has increased

Absences occur when corrections officers cannot work their usual shifts. When the absence rate increases, it is necessary to either hire more staff or incur overtime to operate the jails. Generally speaking, absences can fall into one of two categories: those that require prior-approval and those that do not. The largest subcategories that require prior approval to use include personal holiday, vacation, and compensatory time. The largest subcategory that does not require prior-approval (with some limited exceptions) is sick leave. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) related absences are another large subcategory and fall somewhere in between – whether or not it requires pre-approval depends on the circumstances of the FMLA absence. Training is the last major category of absence that we discuss separately because MCSO management has the control over the amount and timing of training.

Total absences per jail staff FTE increased by 6% from FY03 to FY04 and by 7% between FY04 and FY05. The single largest contributor to this increase has been the rapid growth in comp time taken – comp time taken grew more than 51% in FY04 and another 44% in FY05. Approximately 25% of corrections officers and sergeants working in the jails were absent more than 11 weeks (the annual absence rate) in FY05. While most likely this was allowed under the bargaining unit agreement, the high number of absences requires a significant effort to manage.

Jail staff absences per FTE
(in hours)

Exhibit 5

	FY03	FY04	FY05	% Change
Vacation	118.73	122.95	131.87	11%
Sick	104.39	100.63	108.08	4%
Comp-Time Taken	25.41	38.50	55.55	119%
Training	30.2	40.1	35.7	18%
FMLA	32.09	43.76	41.64	30%

Vacation is one of the highest individual sources of absence. The amount of vacation corrections staff can accrue increases with seniority, with officers with at least 20 years of service accruing six weeks of vacation per year (240 hours). Because MSCO chose to reduce staff to meet budget constraints, MCSO corrections staff hiring was limited over the last three years. Despite this, there has not been a significant increase in the aggregate accrual of vacation. The average number of weeks of vacation accrued by corrections officers has remained steady over the last three fiscal years, at about four weeks per year. Average vacation use has grown in the past three years, but still lags behind average vacation accrual. When looked at individually, the vacation use varies from 1 day to 40 days in FY05.

The second largest group of absences is related to sick leave. Generally, sick leave does not require prior approval, and an officer's use of sick leave is not limited to his/her accrued sick leave balance. Corrections officers that call in sick can pay for the absence using several other paid leave categories such as vacation, personal holiday or comp time. For example, they can use vacation time in lieu of sick leave. In FY05, 16% of sick leave hours were charged to another leave category.

Sick leave can also be used in conjunction with the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and its companion the Oregon Family and Medical Leave Act (OFLA). These acts entitle County employees to take leave for the birth of a child, the placement of a child for adoption or foster care, and the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's spouse, parent, or child. In addition to the above, OFLA allows leave for the serious health condition of a parent-in-law, stepchildren, domestic partner, or child requiring home care who does not have a serious health condition.

Like sick leave, FMLA/OFLA leave can be taken using a variety of paid leave categories. There has been a 30% increase in use in this type of leave in the last three years. However, there is an important difference. When a corrections officer calls in sick, he/she cannot work a different shift for overtime on that same day. When an officer calls in sick with FMLA, he/she can work a shift for overtime later in that same day.

The single fastest growing category of absence is comp-time. Corrections officers may elect to receive comp-time instead of overtime pay, when they work overtime. Employees receive 1.5 hours of comp-time for every overtime hour they work, so long as the accumulated balance of comp-time does not exceed 80 hours. Theoretically, offering comp-time in lieu of overtime pay can save the County money; however, it can also have the effect of increasing absences and increasing overtime costs. By paying for overtime with additional time off, the MCSO is essentially exchanging one absence for 1.5 absences – which may only increase over time. In FY03, comp-time accounted for 7% of all absences, but rose to 13% of all absences in FY05. The number of hours taken in comp-time by the different staff time ranged from 0 to 665 in FY05.

The final category of absences we looked at was training. For most County workers, time spent in training would not be considered an absence. But with a jail operation, a corrections officer that is away from his/her regular shift in order to attend training is for all intents and purposes absent; any absence can create a need for overtime. While training hours per FTE declined from FY04 to FY05, the number of training hours in FY05 increased 18% from FY03. MCSO managers told us that they have increased mandatory training in response to a perceived lack of training in the past and to adjust to changes in the current corrections environment.

Absences need
to be better
managed

It is important to manage absences in such a way to minimize their impact on overtime costs. The nature of the absence determines how it can best be managed. For absences that must be pre-approved, such as vacation, scheduling is frequently the most effective management tool. Managers can use historical trends and other data to try and manage and adjust for more unpredictable absences like sick leave. MCSO management has not effectively used these tools to manage absences; however, their ability to reduce overtime using these tools alone has been limited by the general lack of adequate staffing in the system.

The collective bargaining agreement between the sworn correction staff and the County allows for limits to be placed on how many individuals may use their vacation, personal holidays, and comp time on any day, for a particular facility or shift. For example, only six officers can be on vacation, personal holiday, or

comp-time each day on the west-side day shift. These limits are designed to smooth out the number of absences over the course of a year so that fewer staff shortages occur and less overtime is needed. During fiscal year 2005, MCSO frequently approved vacation, personal holidays, and comp-time for corrections officers and sergeants at levels above the maximum number of slots allowed per shift. The most extreme example of this was on the west side day shift (for corrections officers) where not only did they exceed their daily vacation/personal holiday slots 170 times during the year; they also exceeded the total number of slots available for the year.

Training related absences can also be managed. MCSO managers have some latitude in determining how much training to require of their staffs and required training can be scheduled to minimize its impact on overtime. The MCSO operates under a variety of legal requirements regarding the level of training necessary for its corrections officers. The majority of these legal requirements are satisfied during the certification process that takes place before a new corrections officer works a regular shift. There are other professional training thresholds, such as professional accreditation, that are not legally binding and the MCSO has chosen not to pursue. However, MCSO managers told us that they have increased annual training requirements recently to help staff adjust to a changing corrections environment and to make up for what they believe to be a lack of training in previous years.

How training is scheduled can also have an impact on overtime costs. Ideally, managers would schedule training during the year at times when the absence rate is generally low and avoid times when absence rates are generally high – such as during the summer or in conjunction with other popular vacation times. However, recent MCSO training has not been scheduled this way. During the last three years, very little training has been scheduled during what are traditionally the lowest absence months of the year – January and February. Moreover, some of the highest training months have come during the summer and early fall – times that traditionally are associated with high absence rates.

High levels of overtime hindered absence management

Managing absences is a good practice for a jail organization in general and very important for controlling overtime, specifically. However, having a very large amount of overtime in the system significantly blunts the effectiveness of absence management tools. Having so much overtime in the system can also create the wrong incentives for individual staff members and makes it difficult for management to identify unusual use of leave and overtime.

Managing the vacation schedule should help minimize the amount of overtime needed to cover for staff members that take vacation because it helps to move vacation use out of high demand times of the year and into time with lower demand. However, with such a high percentage of days having overtime, it is very difficult to schedule vacation or training without adding to overtime. For example, there was overtime charged on all but four days in the year on the swing shift. This level of overtime essentially eliminated any possible benefit from moving vacation or training scheduling around on the calendar.

A high level of overtime in the system also creates unintended incentives for staff. With the availability of overtime a near certainty, it is possible for staff members to essentially replace their regular shift with an overtime shift – theoretically up to the point where they use all their available leave. For example, a staff member on swing shift could leave and be absent from his/her assigned shift and instead work overtime on the day shift for either comp-time (and accrue additional leave) or overtime pay. The large amount of overtime in the system, combined with the very complex scheduling process, make this type of activity very difficult to detect and manage.

Follow-up on
1994 audit

In 1994 the Auditor's Office recommended that the Sheriff's Office collect and monitor staffing, absence & workload data. It does not appear that the Sheriff's Office has developed or used data over the intervening years to manage personnel costs. For example, we found that a staffing study that helps determine proper staffing levels has not been conducted for over nine years.

Since the last audit, SAP, the County's automated financial system, has improved some of the payroll data available for analyzing corrections staffing costs. Many types of unpaid leave are now tracked. But SAP is not set up to provide all needed data to analyze correction's personnel costs. For example, SAP only tracks costs based on where staff is assigned. In a jail operation, corrections officers frequently work someplace other than where they are assigned. This causes many adjusting entries in an attempt to determine personnel costs for the jails.

Further, this information is not easily available in management reports. In this audit we used a custom-built program that relied on daily data from SAP. Although we were able to perform many useful analyses, they were time-consuming. This custom-made program is now available for the use by the MCSO. In order to use the program for analysis of aggregate staffing information as well as individual officers, MCSO must dedicate adequate resources to this task. Even using a custom-made program with daily data, some needed data will not be available or is currently tracked elsewhere in a way that would be useful for staffing analysis.

In 1994, we recommended that practices for scheduling vacation and personal holiday leave follow the bargaining unit agreement. Some progress was made when the bargaining unit agreement was changed to limit the number of officers by shift that could schedule vacation and personal holidays. However, as noted above, these limits were frequently not followed.

The Sheriff's Office did have a study done of all corrections facilities posts as recommended in the 1994 audit.

Recommendations

1. To assist the Sheriff's Office in controlling total personnel costs:
 - a. The County should evaluate how policies will affect a 24-hour per day 7 day per week operation like the jails when developing new or revising existing County personnel policies, and
 - b. The County should coordinate with the Sheriff and other County executives to establish long-term strategies and goals for future collective bargaining sessions.
2. To improve communication and accountability, the Sheriff's Office should work with the Board of County Commissioners to set a performance measure target for overtime as it relates to total personnel costs or hours.
3. To improve the Sheriff's Office ability to better manage staffing and overtime the Sheriff's Office should:
 - a. Commit resources to reviewing and analyzing personnel cost data on a regular basis.
 - b. Review staffing, absence and workload data at an aggregate level as well as at the individual staff level.
 - c. Begin tracking non-post activity and training data in a way that it can be more easily used for staffing analysis.
4. Prior to proposing any adjustment in staffing levels, the Sheriff's Office should evaluate current staffing levels taking into consideration recent changes and analyze staffing needs.

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Multnomah County Auditor's Office

Responses to the Audit



MULTNOMAH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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March 9, 2006

Suzanne Flynn
Multnomah County Auditor
501 SE Hawthorne, Room 601
Portland, Oregon 97214

Dear Auditor Flynn:

In response to our receipt of the Auditor's Report on the use of overtime in our office, let me first extend my thanks to you and your staff. Your efforts to bring an independent analysis to the issue of overtime in the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office are greatly appreciated. Given the complex relationship of overtime use to work load, available budget, staffing and the overlay of collective bargaining agreements your Office provided a clear and thoughtful assessment.

In response to the audit, I offer the following comments regarding the key findings:

Staffing – The audit found that MCSO jails were understaffed and indicates that because of program changes we should assess current staffing prior to making future staffing changes.

Historically the Sheriff's Office has used many strategies to retain delivery of direct services to the public. One strategy that has been used is to fund 24/7 post positions such as in the jails using a post factor of 5.46 FTE. However, other positions that may also require a fill behind are managed through overtime rather than staffing. For example, deputies in certain positions, such as Court Services or hospital security activities, are not budgeted using a post factor. Although these activities must be staffed during vacancies, the use of overtime for these types of positions is clearly the better choice. It is predictable that when MCSO does not have post staffing at 1.82 that overtime will be used to maintain minimum staffing; this is not just a one year impact, it is multi-year. It also creates the dynamic where fully staffed equals short-staffed.

During the FY 06-07 budget process, the Sheriff's Office has "mapped" every position to the activity it performs. While there have been program changes, the budget maps created for the FY 06-07 budget process when reconciled to the budget showed us that we are both understaffed in areas where we had historically eliminated the post relief factor and that we are understaffed in

our jail facilities. While it would be easy to reverse the changes of posts from 1.82 to 1 FTE or to add posts within the facilities, turning that from a paper exercise to a budget one is not as easy. The County has been experiencing declining resources for years. The sticker shock of adding the posts, even if it would bring overtime into a better balance, would likely prevent any success in rectifying this problem. With that said, your finding validates our recent analysis.

The workload reduction did not lead to an equal decrease in total personnel costs.

While MCSO has tried to explain the economies of scale and the amount of work to run a jail that is not in a dorm, the new budget maps will be more valuable in understanding this than any verbal explanation. When closing beds, we eliminate the costs and staff directly associated with those inmates. However, the costs of the control centers, administration and support staff do not scale at the same rate. Since I have been Sheriff, 75-100% of MCSO's correctional facilities have had vacant capacity; in these facilities we pay the majority of the infrastructure costs. The observation that the workload and personnel costs have scaled at different rates, is fact. The movement to two full facilities, MCIJ and MCDC, should bring us to an operational scale where our jails are running at their most efficient, from an economic and operational perspective.

Comp Time – Comp time has been the single largest contributor to the total absence per employee.

Compensatory time is allowed by the MCCDA collective bargaining agreement. The true cost of this change to the CBA was not well predicted, nor was the effect on schedule management. Combined with the available time for employees, the phenomena of year-round travel commitments for both family and leisure purposes are a permanent factor. We believe that this is a permanent part of our employment picture, as families are no longer settled in the same regions. In small part, the aggressive commercial marketing of "vacations" in what were traditionally very low activity months has also become a permanent part of the workplace. Your analysis highlighted the actual cost of compensatory time on the work place. We believe that are some constructive methods that managers can use to limit the impulsive use of compensatory time.

Data in/Data out – MCSO needs to dedicate more resources to data analysis and monitoring.

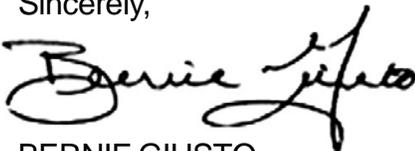
Since the 1994 Audit, the County implemented SAP. SAP has worked to improve the data entry process, but it is not set up to aid in the "data out" process. Because of the significant limitations in SAP, MCSO is working with the County to develop new reports and to purchase new scheduling and reporting software. The report that was developed by the Auditor is a new tool that can be used. But the effort to get that data and create the report, shows how unsuitable SAP is for non-object based reporting.

In past budget cycles, MCSO has cut its administration in support of direct services. The impact of these reductions has been felt in the ability to perform research and monitoring. While our research and evaluation staff is now fully staffed, it is still small for the agency (three FTE). I agree with the recommendation that more review of data and monitoring is needed. The scheduling software should help, but the shortfall of staff available for research and analysis will still limit the abilities to carry out the recommendation.

Your audit is very timely due to the Corrections Grand Jury reports and our internal overtime study. Through our overtime study, we have worked to create new reports in SAP, fully hire staff, monitor overtime more closely, move more staff to posts, move training to low overtime periods and limit vacation to planned-for levels. There are factors that will continue to drive overtime costs: the lack of access to a range, medical and suicide watch, uncontrolled absences such as FMLA/OFLA, training to mitigate risk and meet case law, and the amount of sick, vacation time, and comp time that our more senior workforce accrues. Our ongoing work, this audit, and work to access outside consultation on staffing will assist us in coming to a better balance of FTE costs and overtime expenses.

I thank you and commend your staff for the manner in which this audit was conducted in its approach, communication with my office, and in the data collected. The audit will be provided to all of the Sheriff's Office employees and will also be further considered as we evolve our business, staffing and analysis practices. Every day since becoming Sheriff, I have learned something new about jail management. As the audit states, "jail workload is more complicated than opening and closing jail beds and can be difficult to predict" (p. 7). What I once thought was rather simple, or as a police officer did not think of at all, is a highly complex and sophisticated system to assure the safety of employees and inmates and the adherence to many laws and rights. This audit has value because of its findings and in the way the data is presented. This audit will also increase understanding in what we do and will help us better serve the public.

Sincerely,



BERNIE GIUSTO
Sheriff