

John Galusha, Chairman
Arica Andreatta, Commissioner
Karl Sporleder, Commissioner



Board of County Commissioners

Gaye Davis
City Administrator
City of Walsenburg
525 South Albert Ave
Walsenburg, CO 81089

March 28, 2023

RE: Law Enforcement Services

Dear Ms. Davis,

Thank you for your letter of March 14, 2023. We believe that we have made clear, on many occasions, that a month to month arrangement is not an option. This is a competitive labor market for law enforcement officers. The County does not have any expectation that we can hire deputies without some form of long term or short term agreement that guarantees these deputies will continue to have employment.

We find it regrettable that the City has waited until now to make the public decision to explore re-establishing their own police force. We have repeatedly offered to enter into a short term arrangement that would allow the City the time to conduct this exploration and stand up a department. Consider that your expectation of 3 to 8 months to conduct this study does not include the time to hire command staff or officers. Further, the 2017 agreement was entered into because of an ordinance passed by the voters of the City of Walsenburg. We encourage the City to take this issue back to the voters and not override the will of the people.

We can also see the current state of the City and recognize that waiting until things settle down would be in everyone's best interests. Therefore, we are willing to extend our previous agreement to the end of 2023 provided that Council acknowledges the current staffing levels of the Sheriff's Office and agrees that the County is not expected to return to previous staffing levels during the term of this contract. This takes into account both the competitive labor market and the short-term nature of this extension. This extension gives the City time to finish the study and take this issue back to the voters. We continue to advise you that this will not address the time it will take to stand up the department.

The County remains willing to provide this service for the City, however we cannot continue to subsidize City services at the expense of taxpayers throughout the County.

The Sheriff has continued to enforce the laws of the State of Colorado across all of Huerfano County, including the City of Walsenburg. Even while severely understaffed for their current workload including covering the City.

It is our understanding that the Sheriff's Office delivered an inventory to the City last fall. We would encourage you to coordinate with the Sheriff's Office on this matter. If the City is ready to resume this service we will deliver the evidence, equipment, and any other items required to be returned.

Sincerely,

John Galusha, Chairman

Arica Andreatta, Commissioner

Karl Sporleder, Commissioner