



Leana Kinley <leana@ci.stevenson.wa.us>

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## Provision of Police Services

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To: Leana Kinley <leana@ci.stevenson.wa.us>

With Robert's letter included in the packet, it provides some solid insights, but also includes some scare tactics, as well. I am not asking this be distributed to council early, but I want it included in the packet to add to the conversation that Robert started.

The scenario being painted is that the city council is in a bind as some are not necessarily in agreement with the quality of service in certain scenarios by the Skamania Sheriff's office, but that the city is limited in options to do anything. The sheriff can play king and set all terms, or reject the contract and set the city up for excessive and unmanageable expenditures. This creates an air of fear and compliance.

Based on consultation with MRSC's legal staff, there is more to this conversation that should be considered before retreating in fear or blindly pushing forward.

The county sheriff's duty of enforcing state law spans the whole county. While we are discussing "municipal add-ons" to enforce city ordinances, as noted in other letters it is the sheriff's option to reject the contract in whole, at which point we are required to appoint a chief law enforcement official to manage the municipal codes. However, the city also has the capability of determining the job scope, as well. This means (assuming the entire contract were to be rejected), the cost of salary and training is not excessive. The sheriff's office is obligated per the attorney general to provide emergency & state law enforcement if the city's "police department" is understaffed. This does not put an undue burden on other county residents, as city residents pay twice already (county taxes paid are the same as everyone else and pay for the county's sheriff contract like every other resident).

This means it is not an all-or-nothing scenario. IF the sheriff office were so dissatisfied with the municipal contract and chose to reject it, they ultimately will have to provide the bulk of the same services they do today. A municipal officer (or two) could potentially handle the city-level code violations, etc.

While it is true that the sheriff's office has the right to allocate resources and a certain level of service is not guaranteed, this is the same situation every other county neighborhood finds themselves in. Of course the added contract can help guarantee elevated service. However, one could argue that if (for example) 20% of the county taxpayers are in one place there is a natural expectation that 20% of resources should be expended in said location to avoid the potential appearance of (or actual) dereliction of duty. But the obligation vs. discretion complication should be noted.

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