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OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
ALCOVY JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

October 3, 2022

Re: Joint Funding for Gang/Violent Crime Prosecutor

To: Newton and Walton County Commission Chairmen  
Newton and Walton County Commissioners  
Newton and Walton County Managers  
City of Covington and Monroe Mayors  
City of Covington and Monroe Council Members  
City of Covington and Monroe Managers

At some point over the last year or so, every member of local government has been concerned with violent crime. Some of you have addressed this at your Commission or Council Meetings. I have spoken about the rise in violent crime with some of you as well. Our communities do not have the same level of violent crime that Atlanta has nor the level of gang activity. However, we are not strangers to either of those things.

I am asking that our communities jointly address this. Many of you may not know that the law enforcement agencies within the Alcovy Judicial Circuit (Newton and Walton) have been taking strides address gang and gun violence together. This includes recently obtaining almost \$100,000 in grant funding through GEMA to obtain software for ALL law enforcement agencies within the Circuit for the purpose of investigating and prosecuting gangs, gang members, and other organized crime. This software is used by local and state agencies across Georgia. To fully utilize this software and the joint efforts of law enforcement and the DA's office, it is important to have a one prosecutor who specializes in handling these cases and prosecutes cases in both counties.

Below, I lay out my proposal for Newton County, Walton County, the City of Covington, and the City of Monroe to jointly fund an additional prosecutor and what that prosecutor will need. But first, some reasons for this need. Sharing the costs is one benefit, but the main benefit is a prosecutor who is not bogged down by an additional large caseload. Courtroom prosecutors in my office have between 150 and 320 active cases at any given moment. Most are in the range of 150-200; however, there are still 2 courtrooms in Walton with only 1 prosecutor. Prosecutors not assigned a courtroom, which are 4 of my

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more senior prosecutors, have a caseload between 50 and 80 cases. They typically handle the more serious violent and sex crimes, but also are responsible for training and supervising less experienced prosecutors as well as other duties.

These are only CASES, not defendants. One case typically has a single defendant, but we often have codefendant in violent crimes. As an example, in Walton County, we currently have a 9 codefendant case involving 85 total charges. We are assisting another county and the GBI in a larger gang investigation involving many of these defendants. A case like this can slow a prosecutor's ability to handle the 100s of other cases they must handle at the same time.

Regarding gangs, in August, 10 individuals who have been validated as gang members while in prison were paroled to Newton County and 6 were paroled to Walton County. This includes individuals who have committed violent crimes and/or have shown over and over again that they will stop committing crimes while on probation or parole. Robbery, False Imprisonment, Armed Robbery, Selling and Trafficking Methamphetamine, Residential Burglary, and Firearm Offenses are just some of the crimes that sent these individuals to prison. Going back the rest of his year, there are typically between 7 and 10 validated gang members paroled to addressing in Newton or Walton.

Some violent crime in each county is gang activity. Some of it is also groups of individuals who are not exactly organized into a gang, but are violent enough nonetheless. In Newton, just last week, we had an individual enter a guilty plea to violating the Street Gang Terrorism and Prevention Act (the Gang Act). He still has pending charges in a large scale RICO Indictment from Fulton County. This is the same case that has had a lot of media attention because it involves a well-known rapper, Yung Thug, and his alleged involvement in the YSL street gang, which is a hybrid Blood subset gang.

In Walton, the pending Death Penalty case is a double murder with numerous charges of gang activity. Additionally, there are currently members of a gang from Monroe that are wanted for a murder that occurred in DeKalb County.

Violent crime, including the number of shootings, has risen over the last 2 years. I have pointed this out with prior numbers to many of you. Even with the increase in violent crime cases in my office, my office's statistics do not yet account for the large number of outstanding warrants. Newton County alone had 2985 outstanding warrants as of late August; approximately 2000 of those are from 2019 through the present.

I am asking that the cities of Monroe and Covington each contribute 25% of the costs I outline below. This proposal is not unique in Georgia. The DA in the Coweta Judicial Circuit (Carroll, Coweta, Heard, Meriwether, and Troup counties) received funding from 3 of the cities as well as counties for a gang prosecutor.

The Proposal:

I intend on shifting one of my State paid ADAs to be a gang/gun crime prosecutor. This ADA will handle gang and violent gun crimes in both counties and will work closely with law enforcement in both counties. Due to the nature of the position, this individual will require a vehicle.

Because this ADA is currently in a courtroom in Newton County, I will need to replace that ADA with a new position. Therefore, I am requesting funding for a new ADA position in Newton County, under their Grade 24, Step 3 as the initial max salary. This option will be significantly cheaper than funding the gang/gun prosecutor directly because the necessary experience and skills required for that job will require a significantly high salary than someone placed at Step 3 or below.

Numbers:

Grade 24, Step 3 with Newton County has a salary of \$64,827 annually. Per the Newton County Finance Department, the overall cost to the county for someone in that position after all employment costs (insurance, etc) would be \$91,604 per year. I would aim to move the State ADA into this role November 1<sup>st</sup> and then be able to advertise to fill her position with the newly funded ADA. Because that newly funded position would be in Newton, that person would be a Newton employee, with the other entities paying Newton County their 25% of the cost.

I believe Newton, Walton, and Covington are on July 1 – June 30 fiscal years, so I will base this proposal on that.

Current year:

Vehicle Cost: \$50,000

Equipment/Supplies/Training: \$8,000

Employee Cost: November, 2022 through June, 2023 (8 months): \$61,069.33 ( $\$91,604 * 8/12$ )

Total for FY23: 119,069.33

Proposal of \$120,000

Per County/City: \$30,000

Future years:

Training/Supplies: \$6000

Employee Cost: \$91,604

Total: \$97,604;

Per County/City: \$24,401; or \$25,000 per entity

\*\*This position should still receive any approved step increases, COLAs, or other salary adjustments that other Newton County employees receive but that increase should be split 4 ways and added to the yearly cost of each entity\*\*

Summary of costs for current fiscal year:

- Each entity (Newton County, Walton County, Covington, Monroe) contribute an additional \$30,000 to the DA's Office Budget in Newton County for the DA's FY23 Budget.
- This will fund the purchase of a vehicle, equipment and supplies, and 8 months worth of salary for the newly funded position.

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