

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 21, 2005
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 90 : SHERIFF OVERTIME

This memorandum is in response to Mayor Euille’s question about Office of Sheriff overtime expenditures, and whether there is a better way to manage this, such as hiring more personnel.

The budget worksession on March 29, 2005 included a presentation on public safety overtime costs. Of the \$775,836 in additional public safety overtime funding proposed for FY 2006, \$605,339 is for the Office of Sheriff. As was presented at the worksession, due to the shift schedules of 143 sworn personnel (the majority in the Security Division) deputies routinely work 84.0 or 87.5 hours per two-week pay period, which is more than the standard 80-hour pay period. Deputy Sheriffs’ salaries are based on an 80-hour pay schedule, therefore the pay they receive for hours worked in excess of 80 hours is budgeted as “overtime.” This overtime, however, is built into the shift schedule, and is not discretionary.

This “built-in overtime” is a direct result of the 12.5 hour shift at the detention center, which the department believes is the most secure, efficient, and effective use of staff resources. The 12.5 hour shift has become common practice in the corrections field. The Detention Center is a 24/7 operation. The Security Division has four teams, two days teams and two night teams. There is an overlap of one-half hour between shifts, which includes roll call and a briefing. Deputies work two days, are off two days, work three days, and then are off for two days. This schedule results in 87.5 hours of work within a two-week pay period.

With its current staffing level of 169 sworn personnel, 143 of whom work more than 80 hours each pay period, the Office of Sheriff needs \$934,000 in “built-in overtime” expenditures to meet regular shift requirements. Approximately \$150,000 of this is for holiday pay. The hiring of additional deputy sheriffs will not decrease the funds required to maintain the 12.5 hour shift structure. The department states that implementing a different shift structure, which would necessitate hiring additional staff, would end up being more costly to the City. For instance, each new employee would require additional City contributions for health insurance that are not triggered by overtime. Other benefits such as retirement also are less affected by overtime than additional employees for those Sheriff’s Deputies working in the Detention Center.

The Office of Sheriff makes every effort to control other types of overtime, which are not built into the shift schedule, such as overtime for Courthouse security, prisoner transports, prisoner hospital detail, honor guard, and training.