

▶ July 2010

# The Community Advisor

## Changes in the Sheriff's Office

As so many other institutions the Sheriff's Office had to endure budget cuts for the fiscal year 2011, in the amount of \$1,040,000. The biggest portion of the budget cut to the agency came from the City of Portsmouth, which was about 3/4 of the total amount, the remaining amount of \$208,000 was imposed by the State Compensation Board. The City will say that it really was a State Budget Cut, but it depends how you look at it. The State of Virginia reduced funding for the City of Portsmouth, in other words the State cut the City's budget by reducing the State Aid to Localities fund.

When it comes to the operating cost of the Sheriff's Office, the City of Portsmouth receives funds from the State for the salary of Deputies.

In addition to that, the State Compensation Board reimburses the City through the State Aid to Localities Fund for the operational cost of the Sheriff's Office. So, statements that the City provides half of the Sheriff's Office operational budget are not correct, the State provides most of it, and the locality contributes. The City also receives payments from the earnings of the Sheriff's Office from housing local and state inmates, and serving papers. The Sheriff's Office also houses federal inmates at a higher cost and the federal government pays the City of Portsmouth for their keep. Last but not least the Sheriff's Office Inmate Work Crews save the City approximately \$1,000,000 in labor costs each year.

The State Aid to Localities supports several departments, including financial assistance for the police department, and the constitutional officers in this City. However, the City chose to take the entire amount of the budget reduction out of the Sheriff's Office operational budget, while they restored the cuts to others.

We were told by the State Compensation Board that we are the only locality in the **ENTIRE** Commonwealth of Virginia, where the City passed on 100% of their budget reduction onto the Sheriff's Office. Remember Governor McDonnell restored cuts to Law Enforcement and especially to Sheriff's. The Sheriff's Office is mandated by law to provide certain services to the locality (citizens) and bound by contract to the medical and food service providers, at the

same time has to have money to operate, such as office supplies and equipment to assist us with our daily duties

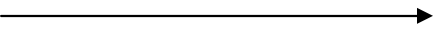
Former Sheriff Waters agreed to take over certain functions from the City in order to save the locality money and to free up additional police officers to work the streets of our Community. For many years the City government has funded and provided extra positions to the Sheriff's Office to man functions which would otherwise be staffed by city personnel at higher compensation. Such as the Intake function of the jail, the Warrant Bureau, Maintenance, and two deputies at the Work Center, who work with inmate work crews on city details. On June 7, the Sheriff's Office administration received the final paperwork on the City's Budget 2011 in the late afternoon and had to make some tough decisions. Due to a State imposed hiring freeze (90 day waiting period before a position could be filled again), which will be lifted on July 1, the PSO had some vacant positions. Our administration was also conscious of upcoming City budget cuts to the Sheriff's budget, because of comments by City Council Members during regular televised sessions and business meetings.

One council member stated that she would rather give one million dollars to the police department and it seems she has kept her promise! With this knowledge our administration had not filled the vacant positions and still had to lay off personnel. The impact of this cut was tremendous and resulted in the loss of 18 positions. We no longer have enough personnel to staff some City functions or positions and had to turn over the responsibilities for Intake and the Warrant Bureau to the Portsmouth Police Department. Sheriff Watson, Col. Gomoke, Chief Hargis and Lt. Jackson met two days later to discuss the change.

Although Chief Hargis seemed surprised by this issue, we know that other City officials knew the Sheriff would have no other option than turning over those duties, because they already ordered equipment for the Police Department to take over the Intake area several months ago.

We have a Sheriff who will not be controlled by the City government, so the City government is shaping the Sheriff's Office, by their control of State funds. All money which is received from the State Compensation Board, except for the salary, is under the control of the locality and the State Compensation Board's instruction of distributing the funds, regardless of their intended purpose, it is up to the City to distribute these funds.

In a recent Virginian Pilot article another council member made the statement that if it would mean extra cost to the police department to operate Intake, Council would then reduce the Sheriff's Office budget further. I hope not, because the Sheriff's Office could not function properly and the Commonwealth of Virginia mandates a Sheriff's Office, not a police department. However, the City has the power to reduce the Sheriff's Office budget even more and it would effect the vehicle fleet, or the salary of the already lowest paid deputies in our region and create a mass exodus of deputies in our department. Portsmouth Citizens would lose a lot of services the Sheriff's Office provides for seniors, and the community at large. Is this what the citizens want?



The constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia calls for Constitutional Officers in each locality with one thing in mind, that is to prevent a **ONE-SIDED** government body. We need people with different backgrounds, new innovative ideas, dedicated leaders, and not people who will run in packs like wolves. This is what our City official's dislike about the Sheriff's Office Administration and our outspoken Sheriff. Sheriff Watson has a reputation of going against the stream and is often called childish or a bully. Nevertheless, he is keeping a balance and is asking individuals in City Government to step up to the plate.

I believe that most residents in our City know that it is the City's desire to close the City Jail. The Jail is on prime property and it has been in discussion for a long time. However, the HRRJ is not prepared for such an influx of inmates as of yet. They would have to add on to the facility and this could take years. Why can't the City of Portsmouth take over Hampton Roads Regional Jail and it's staff to make money from the other cities. It would be a great source of revenue! If the City's wish comes true and Hampton Roads Regional Jail will be the only correctional facility in our area, charging higher (almost twice as much) cost per inmate and a \$5 million dollar (per city) per diem increase they have just received through a vote of the board. Thanks to Stephen Heretick and Kenneth Chandler of our City who voted for it at a Hampton Roads Regional Jail Authority meeting a few months ago. Sheriff Watson was the only one who voted "**NO**" on this issue, because of the outrageous cost to the City (citizens) over next few years. Will this be another SPSA for Portsmouth? We can only wait and see!

Tax payers will have to foot the bill for the City's decisions and their vengeance on the Sheriff.

The only sad part is that nobody seems to be concerned with the staff or the effect this will have on the citizens in the long run.

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## Special Olympics LEO Torch Run

The Special Olympics Virginia is a year-round program of sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. The program, however, is about more than just sports, it tends to transform communities. When people encounter individuals with intellectual disabilities in the positive arena of sports, stereotypes are dispelled. By overcoming initial barriers through interaction with these athletes, we can make valuable friends, role models, and we will learn that we all share the same dreams! The Law Enforcement Torch Run was the idea of Police Chief Richard LaMuyon, who started the Torch Run in Wichita, Kansas in 1981. He saw this as a great opportunity for his officers to raise funds for the Special Olympics and to get involved in their community.

Three years later he presented the Torch Run to the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which endorsed the Special Olympics International as its official charity through the

Torch Run. Now 25 years later the Torch Run has spread through the USA and takes place in more than 35 countries.

The Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriff's Association, the Virginia Sheriff's Association, the Virginia Association of Regional Jails, the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, the Virginia Department of Corrections and the National Association of School Resource Officers all endorse this program and agencies around the nation participate. In Virginia the final leg of the Torch Run is Richmond with the lighting of the cauldron to officially open the Special Olympics Virginia Summer Games. The 1,900 mile, 8-day Torch Run involves more than 2,000 law enforcement officers and personnel representing over 200 law enforcement agencies across our State. The Torch Run has raised more than \$11 million since the beginning in 1981 and takes place in the beginning of June every year. It came through our City on June 10, and the Sheriff's Office, as well as the Police Department, shared the common goal to raise awareness in our community by participating in the event.



Portsmouth Sheriff's Office  
Torch Run Team

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## Memorial Day Parade

Sheriff Watson's decision to pull the Honor Guard out of the oldest Memorial Day Parade in the Country, has stirred up some controversy and he feels like he owes an explanation to the people of Portsmouth.

The Sheriff's Office Honor Guard is comprised of eight men and women. These deputies volunteer their time and five of them work in the Jail, while the others work in Classification, Court Security, and Civil Process. Out of the five deputies from the jail, three work on the same team (shift, D-Team) and another on C-Team (following shift). Both teams were working 12 hour shifts, one starting at eight o'clock in the morning, working to 8 o'clock in the evening and the following shift from 8 o'clock in the evening until 8 o'clock in the morning. If anyone is familiar with the staging of parades, they will know that if you participate in a parade, you will have to be at the staging area at least 1 1/2 to 2 hours prior to the start. Traffic will be blocked off in the area and you will be given instructions and your assignment in the parade. If you are riding motorcycles you can be there as late as 30 minutes before the start of the parade, but all other vehicles and people have to be there early.

The deputies which got off from work at 8:00 a.m. would have gone straight to the parade staging area and changed into their gear at the Jail. They would have been in the heat in full

gear with overcoat waiting for three hours for the parade to start, then wait for another hour before they could march in the parade, and walk the entire parade in the scorching heat. By the end of all that, they would have been in the heat for 4 to 5 hours before they would have gone home. However, those deputies had to report back to work at 7:45 p.m. that very evening, for another 12 hour shift. They would have been exhausted after getting off a 12 hour work day, standing in gear in the hot sun most of the day and then reporting for another 12 hours. Working in the Jail is not an easy job and you have to stay alert, or you will pose a risk for other deputies, yourself, or inmates under you custody.

Secondly, Deputies work at the pleasure of the Sheriff; however, even the Sheriff has to follow federal labor laws. Even though the Honor Guard Deputies volunteer and will not be compensated for that, as soon as they put on a uniform, they are considered on duty. Labor laws are very specific on the amount of hours deputies/officers can work. They are not to exceed a 16 hour work day within a 24 hour period, which they would have.

When the Sheriff found out about the lineup (40th in the parade) for the Honor Guard he called the City and ask for the Honor Guard to be moved up in the parade. He informed the City Clerk that he didn't care where the Sheriff's antique car, or the Sheriff's motorcycles would be in the parade. He was told there would not be a change in the lineup and he could take it or leave it. He chose to leave it for the welfare of his staff and the federal labor law, instead of playing politics.

Sheriff Watson did not throw a temper tantrum, or is not un-patriotic. He made a sound business decision on behalf of his office and staff.

I know the Honor Guard wanted to participate, but are grateful the Sheriff thought of them, and spoke up for them.

We know U.S. soldiers are serving the country in worse conditions than hot weather and we are extremely appreciative for their sacrifice. Sheriff Watson has the utmost respect for all of our heroes who have given their all for our rights and freedom!

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## Parker Field

The old Parker Field at Mt. Hermon is in full swing with little leaguers. The City abandoned the ballfield about 20 years ago and told Tyrone Hines, a community activist, that the field was is too bad of shape to restore. Mr. Hines and Church and Community in Action asked the Sheriff for help and in less than two weeks the PSO inmate work crews had the ballfield ready to play on, repaired the plumbing in the restrooms, and restored the concession stand. The only thing missing was the use of the announcer box. Sheriff Watson made numerous calls to different City departments and Mr. Hines visited all of those departments. Finally, after many months of inquiries, city officials agreed to open the announcer box. However, the City had used that



room for storage and told Tyrone Hines, that he would have to provide storage (shed) for those items. Mr. Hines went out and solicited donations for a shed. Tyrone is an extremely caring individual, dedicated and he was able to find a donor. With the shed in place the inmate work crews moved all the items from the room into the shed. Now they had the use of the announcer box, but they still needed a decent P.A. system with speakers. The Sheriff's Office is always

looking for ways to improve the way of life in neighborhoods and help in the community. With this in mind Sheriff Watson donated the P.A. system with speakers to the children and their ball field. On June 19th their league had a ceremony, followed by a cookout for all the children playing ball. They also rewarded their players with trophies and the Sheriff was invited to hand them out. The kids playing on this field, come from London Oaks and Mt. Hermon. They finally have a place to play ball and have a lot of fun doing it.

## Basic Jailor Graduation Class 2010-1

Congratulations to the Portsmouth Sheriff's Office deputies graduating from the Chesapeake Sheriff's Office Training Academy Basic Jailor Class 2010-1.

The PSO had four deputies enrolled in this Class for training. Deputies Robert Falls, Jeffery Fisher, William Sugg, and Brian White. They have completed the Basic Jailor Class on April 9th with their fellow students. During the training Deputy White served as Vice President of the class and Deputy Fisher as Sergeant of Arms. Our deputies did very well, Dep. J. Fisher was received the Top Gun Award for the demonstration of his outstanding master marksmanship skills and Dep. W. Sugg was presented with a Combat Speed Challenge Award for outstanding speed and accuracy. Sheriff Watson was still out on medical leave and was not able to attend the ceremony, so Col. J. Gomoke had the honor to hand over the Certificates of Completion to our graduates. We are glad those deputies are back at work with their teams. They were missed!



# Portsmouth Fallen Heroes

Each May during National Police Week the nation pauses to recognize the service and sacrifice of U.S. law enforcement.

Established in 1962 by President John F. Kennedy and a joint resolution of Congress, National Police Week pays special tribute to those law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty for the safety and protection of others. Ceremonies are held in Washington, DC, and in communities across the country.



The memorial service for the City of Portsmouth fallen officers was on May 12, 2010 at the Edmonds Center on Frederick Boulevard. Police officers and deputies came together at this somber ceremony to pay their respect to the fallen officers and to make sure that they will not be forgotten.

## REMEMBER THOSE

John Wilson	11- 11- 1871	William S. Winnindger	8-11-1908
Eldridge R. Story	11-30- 1936	John J. Nobrega, Jr.	1-29-1958
Vernon L. Davis	3-5-1963	Richard C. Journee, Jr.	1-20-1966
David E. Carpenter	2-7-1967	Earl P. Wilkins	4-9-1968
William H. Austin	6-18-1969	Joseph M. Weth, Sr.	5-28-1982
Joyce Hawkins	12-12-1991	Richard L. Spaulding	11-23-2005
Charles A. Fisher	7-8-2006		

## WHO MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE !

## Employee of the Quarter

Congratulations to Deputy Colleen McCormick! She was nominated by her supervisor to be the Employee of the second Quarter of 2010. McCormick is an excellent deputy with great work ethics and has gained experience working in numerous divisions of the Sheriff's Office. She is also a frequent volunteer in many events and fundraisers the Sheriff's Office takes part in.

Her commanding officer submitted this letter to the Sheriff.

*Sheriff Watson,*

*It is with great pleasure and a sense of pride that I fashion this letter of recommendation to have Deputy C. McCormick nominated and potentially selected as the Employee of the Quarter.*

*Deputy C. McCormick continually volunteers for early morning transportations to assist with accomplishing the mission of this division on a daily basis. She assisted with the internal transportation of some 502 inmates this quarter. While working her own court room during the quarter she also served 591 subpoenas to notify persons of their pending court dates. Deputy McCormick is quick to assist each and every deputy in this division and it is because of this eagerness to accomplish the task at hand that makes her an invaluable asset to this division as well as the entire department. Deputy McCormick recently volunteered for and completed the Special Olympics Torch Run and represented the Department extremely well. She also gave a great deal of her time to assist with the Breast Cancer Fund Raiser that the Sheriff's Department headed up recently. Deputy C. McCormick always passes her inspections in reference to uniform appearance and firearm cleanliness. Her professional appearance and courteousness to the public is an outstanding reflection on this Department. Deputy C. McCormick is to be commended for her continued efforts and as her immediate supervisor I feel that being selected, as Deputy of the Quarter would be a small token of that appreciation. Thanking you in advance for your consideration in this matter.*

*Sincerely,*

*Sergeant J.S. Lilley, Court Security Division*



## Fundraisers by the PSO

Throughout the year we participate in fundraisers and support different organizations, which in turn may benefit the people in our community. In the recent months we have generated money for the Special Olympics and we were able to raise \$4,000.24 for the March of Dimes. Soon we will take part in the fight of breast cancer again and some of us will be "locked up" for Jerry's Kid's in an Muscular Dystrophy event on July 15. The event will take place at the Governor Dinwiddie towndown Portsmouth! The March of Dimes however, is always a challenge for our agency, because the Sheriff gives the divisions an incentive. He creates a contest throughout the department to see which division and the staff raises the most funds. Please know, that this is not a must and some divisions chose not to participate in this, but some do! The winner of this year's contest is the same as last year and they will have a cook out at the

PSO A-Team



Sheriff's house. Sheriff Watson agreed to provide the food and entertainment for all the staff and their spouses. The Sheriff will also cook on the grill, which is a lot of fun for the personnel. They remember last years burned offerings in the shape of hamburgers and hot dogs. A-Team under the command of Lt. E. Branch won the contest again by collecting an astounding \$1,101.01. The Community Service Unit came in as a close second and will be rewarded too. Thanks to great people like that, we are able to help others.

THANK YOU!

## Work Crews

The inmate work crews will continue to work at the request of our citizens and this service was not effected by the City's budget cut. Sheriff Watson hopes to keep providing all programs and support the PSO offers to our community. The work crews are out on several projects and one of the most recent ones is the ditch along the Newport property and Summers Place. They are out there cutting back brush and after they complete that, they will dig a deeper ditch to prevent some of the flooding the residents of Summers Place experience after every heavy rain fall. Auxiliary Deputy Vick has been building ramps for the elderly and handicapped in Portsmouth and is out in the heat on Saturdays with some inmates. They have just finished a ramp on California Avenue for a resident, who paid for all materials. If you need assistance with ramps, please call Ramps across America. You can also get in touch with your church or civic league and asked them to contact the Sheriff's Office at 393-5280 (Capt. Ashberry). The Sheriff's Office can supply labor but not materials, please keep that in mind.

