



***BROWARD COUNTY PBA
DAILY CLIPS***

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MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Broward sheriff, commissioners get closer on budget

BYLINE: Larry Barszewski

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/fl-reg-broward-sheriff-budget-dispute-20170828-story.html>

STORY: Broward Sheriff Scott Israel and county commissioners came closer to bridging their \$10.5 million budget differences Tuesday, with Israel agreeing to meet them more than half way.

After a lengthy commission discussion, Israel offered to accept a 5.6 percent increase, a \$25.8 million jump that would bring the Sheriff's Office budget to \$486.6 million. The new proposal is now only \$3.3 million higher than county administrators originally recommended.

"I came here today to compromise," Israel told commissioners.

However, on courthouse security and staffing of the county's consolidated emergency dispatch system — both of which are provided by the Sheriff's Office but paid for out of the commission's own budget — there was still work to be done.

Israel said he was not willing to back off the level of increased security he says is needed at the new 20-story courthouse in downtown Fort Lauderdale, where he is seeking 54 additional deputy positions and the county has offered only 14.

"I have to have — we have to have — \$9 million [more] for starting out the first year of the courthouse," he said. "We all need to keep the courthouse safe."

Courthouse security garnered new attention after a jail inmate last year was able to flee a courtroom and be on the loose for six days before being captured at a Riviera Beach motel. Then, in January, the new \$197 million courthouse tower opened with double the floors of the old courthouse.

Besides suggesting the courthouse could be secured with fewer positions than Israel has requested, County Administrator Bertha Henry was also concerned that the average cost per position of about \$160,000 that Israel was using seemed very high.

Israel assured commissioners he would do everything possible to keep costs down, including using detention deputies wherever possible. They would be less costly than law enforcement deputies because union rules don't require them to be given a car. But he said he could not stop deputies with higher salaries from applying for and receiving other positions at the courthouse based on their seniority.

"The deputies we place in positions will be the least expensive to the county as possible," Israel said. "If we can put a detention deputy without a vehicle in a position, we will do that."

Commissioners could not vote at the workshop but seemed willing to work with Israel.

"We're not quite there, but we're getting there," Vice Mayor Beam Furr said. "There's a desire to get there."

Israel's initial budget request included \$6.4 million to pay for 59 new positions, including 23 new fire-rescue positions near the airport and Port Everglades. While Israel said he would have to reduce the positions to make his new budget offer work, he said he planned to keep the 23 new fire-rescue posts.

The two sides have not reached agreement on the staffing level of the county's consolidated emergency dispatch system. The sheriff has requested 38 more employees, bringing the total to 485. The county has proposed a cut of 26 employees, lowering the total to 421.

Commissioners said they would like to see more information about how each side's request fits in with a consultant's review completed last year of the dispatch system.

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Palm Beach County pushing for clean-needle program

BYLINE: Skyler Swisher

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/palm-beach/fl-pn-palm-legislative-priorities-20170829-story.html>

STORY: Palm Beach County wants the state to allow heroin users to swap dirty needles for clean ones.

The county plans to push for an expansion of a clean-needle exchange program started in Miami into Palm Beach County.

The county has seen a dramatic rise in opioid and heroin deaths in recent years, and officials fear intravenous drug use associated with the epidemic could spread disease.

"The next wave we may be seeing is hepatitis as well as an increase in HIV," said Rebecca De La Rosa, the county's legislative affairs director.

South Florida led the nation in new HIV cases in 2015, according to the most recent data available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

Last year, Florida state legislators approved the first needle-exchange pilot program for Miami-Dade County. The University of Miami runs the program.

The state authorized a five-year test and did not provide any public dollars for the program, which is funded through private grants and donations.

While public health officials widely support access to clean needles, opponents argue clean-needle programs support illegal drug use. The programs typically offer education and disease testing, along with providing syringes.

Commissioner Melissa McKinlay said she would like to see a program similar to Miami's operating in Palm Beach County because it would reduce harm to people struggling with addiction.

"We would be replicating it up here," she said. "It's a public health issue."

Commissioners also want more money to fund drug treatment programs and mental health services, along with dollars to purchase the overdose reversal drug Narcan. The county has 24 publicly funded detox beds to serve a population of nearly 1.4 million people.

On Monday, Gov. Rick Scott extended a public health emergency for the opioid epidemic in Florida. Scott will unveil a proposal that will include "significant increases in funding," spokeswoman Lauren Schenone wrote in an email. She did not specify how much funding would be increased under the plan.

County commissioners approved their other lobbying priorities Tuesday, including:

-- Allocating more dollars to combat homelessness and offer housing assistance to low and moderate-income renters and buyers;

- Prohibiting the use of drones around jails, law enforcement facilities, courthouses and other county buildings;
- Requiring city elected officials to live within the districts they represent;
- Strengthening oversight of public housing authorities; and
- Funding several environmental projects, including \$22.1 million for beach and shore protection projects.