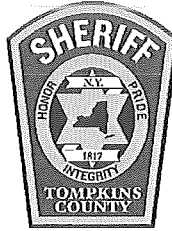


OFFICE OF
THE SHERIFF OF TOMPKINS COUNTY

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KENNETH W. LANSING
SHERIFF



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BRIAN P. ROBISON
UNDERSHERIFF

September 3, 2015

Joe Mareane, County Administrator
Tompkins County

Joe,

Please consider the following to be the Sheriff's Office official response to the questions forwarded by the TCCOG task force charged with evaluating our local court system(s).

Although this information is being submitted by the TCSO administration, the thoughts contained in this writing are a compilation of information and ideas obtained from many members of our department; particularly the "front line" staff that actually deal with the local courts on a daily basis. Additionally, our response remains silent on the philosophical questions regarding who would be best to preside over these courts, as well as the issues revolving around town vs. village vs. city court; we would rather focus on ideas of possible efficiencies for the courts.

That being said, the Tompkins County Sheriff's Office has long been a proponent of the idea of having centralized booking for the county. Tompkins County is fortunate that Ithaca is the county hub and is geographically situated in the center of the county. While criminal arrests are made on a daily basis throughout the county, the aggregate numbers could certainly be supported by one or two "full-time" courts. This concept may not appear to be advantageous for outlining areas with small village police departments at first; however, the time savings of having centralized booking will ultimately save these departments' resources as their patrols will be able to return to duty much quicker than what currently exists.

This same concept is also advantageous to the larger law enforcement agencies in the county, namely the IPD, NYSB and TCSO. Budgets being what they are, the thought of hiring more law enforcement officers is not practical, but if officers can get back on the street quicker instead of being hampered with hours of paperwork following an arrest, then it serves the same purpose as additional personnel. This same logic applies to the transport of arrestees to court for arraignment and, at times, to the TC Jail if remanded.

With that said, our suggestion for improving the local court system would be to establish and house centralized booking and (rural and/or night) Arraignment Court at the Public Safety Building on Warren Road. It is conceivable that the City of Ithaca Court would continue to operate as is during the day, due to the large volume of cases handled by that court; however, all evening and nighttime arraignments would take place at the court located at the PSB. A judge will preside over that court via whatever arrangement is desirable. Should an arrestee be remanded to county jail, they can simply be walked to the jail. This court could also be utilized as a Felony Preliminary Hearing Court and easily facilitated by jail personnel. This arrangement should significantly reduce costly transports. Thought could be given for this court to retain jurisdiction of all misdemeanor level offenses through completion of trial. Local courts could retain all traffic infractions, municipal law infractions, and small claims (i.e. matters that do not generally involve incarcerated people in need of transport to and from court).

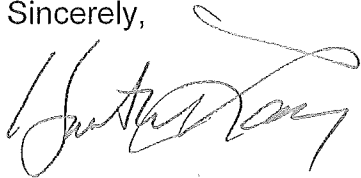
This idea would necessitate one of two options:

Option #1 - The PSB space currently used by the TCSO non-Corrections functions (Administration, Patrol, Investigations, Civil Office) would need to be vacated, and the above mentioned court utilizing that space. It is conceivable that some of the space could be utilized for much needed program space at the jail and/or additional beds... A separate facility would need to be found or built for the Administrative, Patrol, Investigative and Civil Offices.

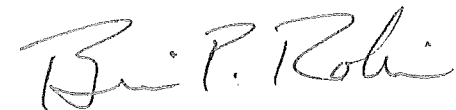
Option #2 - Keep the PSB as is and build an annex to house the new court.

We believe these ideas produce efficiencies in both local courts and law enforcement efforts. Our office would be happy to discuss these ideas in more detail should the task force desire. Thank you for your considerations. We look forward to the feedback and progress as we discuss these options in the future.

Sincerely,



Sheriff Kenneth W. Lansing



Undersheriff Brian P. Robison