

# Washington County Sheriff's Office

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To the State of Maine Board of Corrections:

RE: Funding Impact Statement

The Washington County Jail is asking for approval of our budget for the FY2014 in the amount of \$2,503,664. This is an increase of \$129,414 over the FY2013 budget.

There are several reasons for this increase. Food, electricity, and heat, have all risen in cost over the past year. Additionally, a new labor contract was recently negotiated between the County and correctional officers. The State is asking us to run on a flat-funded budget, but increases in wages were included in the new labor contract, and the State Board of Corrections does not have authority to limit wages that have been negotiated in a contract. Flat funding is not a realistic option to maintain the jail operations. Also, flat funding does not take into account the much needed capital improvements in addition to rising operational costs.

While the Washington County Jail is sensitive to the fact that budgets are being scrutinized across the state, we also expect that the Board will not be surprised by the requested increase for funding. While I have identified areas for cost savings – including re-structuring jail duties, eliminating one staff position, and cost-sharing with other departments – costs have continued to rise. The responsibility of raising funds for corrections, beyond the \$2,000,525 which is to be raised by the County, must then statutorily fall to the State of Maine. Title 34-A §1803, subsection 5, paragraph E, charges the Board with the biennial preparation and submission to the Governor a budget “that clearly identifies the financial contribution required by the State to support the actual costs of corrections in addition to the capped property tax contribution under Title 30-A, section 701, subsection 2-A.”

In the event that additional funding is not approved, Washington County Jail will be forced to decrease expenditures by reducing staff as of January 1, 2014. A staff reduction needed to meet the budget shortfall would change the operational capabilities of Washington County Jail. Staff laid off could include administrative, kitchen, and correctional personnel. The change in operational capabilities would be required for the safety and security of inmates, staff, and the facility.

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Because of these impacts (which not only affect the jail, but affect the families living in our communities), I respectfully request that our funding be approved. Should regular monies not be available, I would ask the Board to consider these to be emergency funds and made available from the State Board of Corrections Investment Fund program.

Title 30-A identifies the Sheriff's statutory obligation as keeper of the jail, and I am meeting this legal obligation. I respectfully request that the State of Maine meet their statutory obligation and provide the Washington County Jail with the actual cost of corrections, as submitted.

Respectfully submitted,

Donnie Smith, Sheriff

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