
CITY COUNCIL REPORT

TO: Alton Washington
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FROM: Jeff Barton
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Director

SUBJECT: POLICE DEPARTMENT PRISONER INTAKE (BOOKING) PROCESS

The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Public Safety and Veteran's Subcommittee on alternatives for coordinating the Police Department's prisoner intake (booking) process.

THE ISSUE

Currently, City of Phoenix Police Officers are responsible for prisoner intake. Upon arrest, individuals are taken by sworn police officers to the Maricopa County 4th Avenue Jail and processed for intake. The intake process includes a medical examination, fingerprinting, body search, and an evaluation of immigration status. Maricopa County charges the city \$199.35 for each misdemeanor booked into the county jail. The intake process can take as little as ten minutes to as long as two hours depending on a variety of factors including but not limited to immigration status, medical conditions and the intake backlog. The longer the process takes the longer Police Officers are away from their respective patrol-related duties.

OTHER INFORMATION

In late 2007, the Phoenix Police Department examined the possibility of staffing a centralized booking facility to process arrestees more quickly. The department wanted to create a single location in which officers could "drop off" arrestees to a group of sworn and civilian staff who could coordinate the booking process allowing patrol officers to immediately return to service. Due to budget constraints during fiscal year 2007-08 the proposal was abandoned.

In late 2008, the Phoenix Police Department once again began researching the feasibility of a central booking facility. The department identified the Southern Command Station as a potential location. The department wanted to use a combination of civilian and sworn staff to supplement the booking process and improve response times by allowing officers to immediately return to service. In this model, officers would drop off their prisoners at a central location and the assigned sworn and civilian staff would be responsible for transporting them to the county jail for intake. The announcement of a General Fund shortfall for the current year once again forced the department to hold off on their plans for a central booking facility.

Based on recent concerns expressed by the Phoenix Law Enforcement Association (P.L.E.A.), the Budget and Research Department was asked to analyze alternatives for coordinating the booking process.

ALTERNATIVES

Based on our research, there is no industry standard or best practice for prisoner intake. Instead each of the jurisdictions contacted make their decision on how to process prisoners based on a combination of cost and operational efficiency. Some of the jurisdictions contacted use police officers to coordinate the booking process while others rely on civilian detention clerks. The alternatives listed below were developed based on conversations with staff and from similar models identified in our research.

Alternative A: Continue the Existing Jail Services Detail (One Shift Only)

The Police Department currently operates a Jail Services Detail consisting of four Police Officers between the hours of 6:00 P.M. and 4:00 A.M., seven days a week at the 4th Avenue Jail. This detail is operationally managed by the Administrative Sergeant for Central City Precinct, but receives no direct supervision while on duty at the jail. Between the hours of 6:00 P.M. and 4:00 A.M, the detail can assume custody of any City of Phoenix detainees brought to the jail. Currently, the department rotates the most "junior" officers to this detail every two months. In addition, officers transport detainees held at each precinct to the Jail Services Detail several times between the hours of 6:00 P.M. and 4:00 A.M. The Jail Services Detail has had a positive impact on the department's ability to return officers to duty faster during the most active periods of the day. There is no additional cost for continuing the existing Jail Services Detail.

Alternative B: Work With Maricopa County to Establish Full Service Booking

The City currently pays Maricopa County for the booking of each misdemeanant booked into the Maricopa County Jail. The booking fee of \$199.35 is a full cost fee that recovers the costs Maricopa County incurs for providing booking and detention services. Currently, the transfer of custody for all detainees from City of Phoenix Police Officers to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office happens at the end of the booking process despite the booking fee. Police representatives could engage the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office to determine if the transfer of custody could occur earlier in the booking process. This change would allow officers to immediately return to duty and eliminate the need for the existing Jail Services Detail. This change would likely result in an increased booking fee.

Alternative C: Civilianize the Existing Jail Services Detail (One Shift Only)

Instead of using sworn positions, we could create civilian detention clerks. The civilian detention clerks would be responsible for transporting detainees to and from the precincts and for intake at the county jail. A detention clerk supervisor would be responsible for onsite management. In order for this alternative to work, we would need to establish new position classifications. The estimated cost of adding eight civilian detention clerks and one supervisor is approximately \$750,000. Additionally, these

positions would require specialized training to ensure their safety while transporting and booking arrestees.

Alternative D: Civilianize the Current Jail Services Detail and Expand to all Three Shifts

Like Alternative C, Alternative D would civilianize the existing Jail Services Detail. In addition, this alternative would add the staff needed to expand the Jail Services Detail to all three work shifts. A total of twenty-four civilian detention clerks and five supervisors would be needed to staff this alternative. The estimated cost of this alternative is approximately \$2,200,000.

CONCLUSION

Based on our research, the Jail Services Detail has had a positive impact on the department's ability to return officers to duty faster. Alternatives B, C, and D would also have positive impacts on operational efficiency and allow officers to return to duty faster. Alternative B requires that staff work with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office to change the current booking process. This change may result in an increase to the booking fee. Alternatives C and D require additional General Fund resources and the creation of new position classifications. Civilian detention clerks would also require specialized training to ensure their safety while transporting and booking detainees. Neither alternative would reduce the fees paid to Maricopa County for booking.

RECOMMENDATION

None.