

**Additional Information
For Agenda Item #33
for
Meeting of Tuesday,
December 14, 2021**

GENERAL BUSINESS:

33. Consideration of Policy Options to Address Public Health and Safety Issues
Related to Homelessness
(County Administrator/ County Attorney/ County Administration)



Leon County Government

INTEROFFICE MEMO

TO: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

FROM: Vincent S. Long, County Administrator

DATE: December 13, 2021

SUBJECT: December 14, 2021 Board Meeting
Additional Information Regarding Agenda Item #33

This memorandum provides additional information regarding Agenda Item #33, "Consideration of Policy Options to Address Public Health and Safety Issues Related to Homelessness," scheduled for the December 14, 2021 Board of County Commissioners Meeting. While the County has been working closely with the Sheriff's Office in the development of this item, the Sheriff has requested that an additional policy option be presented to the Board for consideration.

Agenda Item #33 provides a report on public health and safety issues related to homelessness as well as a series of policy options the Board may wish to consider to address them. The item recommends the Board direct staff to develop a draft ordinance to repeal the County's existing Ordinance regarding solicitation to be consistent with recent Federal cases. In addition, the item seeks policy direction as to whether the Board wishes to consider a draft ordinance addressing any or all of the following activities, as reflected in Option #2:

- a. Camping or sleeping in certain public areas, or constructing or maintaining any tent, structure, or other objects intended to be used for camping or sleeping in certain public areas (including whether such an ordinance should apply countywide or only in the unincorporated area);
- b. Soliciting of any kind in medians or otherwise with anyone in a vehicle on a vehicular travel lane, including bicycle lanes (in the unincorporated area only, as the City currently has an ordinance that addresses this within City limits); and/or
- c. Urinating or defecating in certain public areas (including whether such an ordinance should apply countywide or only in the unincorporated area).

Finally, the item seeks the Board's consideration of a funding request from the Leon County Sheriff's Office to support two Homeless Outreach Street Team (HOST) deputies which would provide enhanced law enforcement outreach to the homeless population in partnership with the Big Bend Continuum of Care (BBCoC) street outreach program.

The Sheriff has requested the Board's consideration to approve the funding request for the two HOST deputies and to defer action at this time on developing a draft ordinance as discussed in the agenda item. The County has been working closely with the



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Sheriff's Office to coordinate the potential development and implementation of an ordinance as described in the item, should the Board provide the policy direction to do so. As we continue coordinating with the Sheriff's Office in this regard, the Sheriff has expressed preliminary concerns regarding the potential impact of such an ordinance on the inmate population at the Leon County Detention Facility. However, he is confident that the Sheriff's Office will be able to adequately address issues related to homelessness in the community with the Board's support of funding for the two HOST deputies, including connecting homeless individuals and families with affordable housing and social services in partnership with the BBCoC street outreach teams. The Sheriff's request seeks to enhance enforcement as well as outreach to the homeless community without potentially introducing these individuals to the criminal justice system. The HOST deputies would be assigned to provide law enforcement and outreach services within the Tallahassee city limits as well as the unincorporated area.

As such, the Board may wish to approve the Sheriff's funding request for the HOST deputies and defer the development of a draft ordinance. If so, the Sheriff would provide a report to the Board six months after the HOST deputies have been deployed on the effectiveness of the implementation of these deputies working with BBCoC street teams. To effectuate this option, an additional Option #5 is provided below for Agenda Item #33, which would approve the funding request for HOST deputies, defer the development of an ordinance to address public health and safety issues related to homelessness at this time, and direct staff to provide a status report on the effectiveness of the implementation of Leon County Sheriff's Office HOST deputies in summer 2022.

<<Revised Board Options for Agenda Item #33 provided on the following page>>



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Options:

1. Direct staff to develop a draft ordinance to repeal Chapter 11, Article VIII of the Code of Laws of Leon County.
2. Direct staff to develop a draft ordinance to address any or all of the following:
 - a. Camping or sleeping in certain public areas, or constructing or maintaining any tent, structure, or other objects intended to be used for camping or sleeping in certain public areas (including whether such an ordinance should apply countywide or only in the unincorporated area);
 - b. Soliciting of any kind in medians or otherwise with anyone in a vehicle on a vehicular travel lane, including bicycle lanes (in the unincorporated area only, as the City currently has an ordinance that addresses this within City limits); and/or
 - c. Urinating or defecating in certain public areas (including whether such an ordinance should apply countywide or only in the unincorporated area).
3. Approve the reallocation of \$490,817 in funding from the County's allocation of Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds under the American Rescue Plan Act to the Leon County Sheriff's Office budget to support two additional deputies dedicated to homelessness response and approve the associated Budget Amendment and Resolution (Attachment #5).
4. Accept the report on public health and safety issues related to homelessness and take no further action.
5. Approve the options outlined in the additional information memo including:
 - a. Approve the reallocation of \$490,817 in funding from the County's allocation of Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds under the American Rescue Plan Act to the Leon County Sheriff's Office budget to support two additional deputies dedicated to homelessness response and approve the associated Budget Amendment and Resolution (Attachment #5);
 - b. Defer action on the development of an ordinance to address public health and safety issues related to homelessness at this time; and
 - c. Direct staff to provide a status report on the effectiveness of the implementation of Leon County Sheriff's Office HOST deputies in summer 2022 and consider the development of an ordinance at that time.
6. Board direction.

Recommendations:

Options #1 and *direction for Options #2 through #5.*

cc: Chasity H. O'Steen, County Attorney