LASSEN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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To: Lassen County Board of Supervisors

From: Dustin Russell #104, Captain
Lassen County Sheriff's Office

RE: Addition of Correctional Technician Positions

Agenda Date: April 22, 2025

Subject: The Sheriff's Office would like to add four (4) full-time equivalent (FTE) positions for the classification of Correctional Technician and freeze four (4) FTE positions for the classification of Correctional Deputy.

Discussion: The Lassen County Jail operates with several job classifications to facilitate the needs of the facility. The Correctional Deputy is a sworn peace officer pursuant to California Penal Code Section 830.1(c). The Correctional Deputies operate several posts in the facility including the Special Housing Unit, Central Control Room, Intake and Dormitory areas. The deputies have day to day contact with those incarcerated at the Lassen County Jail.

The Correctional Technician is a non-sworn position that is primarily assigned to the Receiving Office. Their duties include booking and release of inmates, distribution of Commissary. The Correctional Technician is trained in the operation of the Central Control Room. The Correctional Technician can perform pat-down searches under the supervision of a Correctional Deputy. This is commonly done when a deputy of the same gender is not available to conduct the search. This classification has limited inmate contact.

After the closure of the Lassen County Community Correctional Facility in June 2011, 25 FTE positions including 16 employees were lost with the ending of the contract. In 2014, the Board of State and Community Corrections conducted a staffing audit of the Lassen County Jail. They determined the staffing of the Lassen County Jail was inadequate. BSCC determined that we were understaffed by 12 FTE positions if all allocated Correctional Deputy Positions are filled.

The Lassen County Sheriff's Office has been under continuous recruitment for Correctional Deputy since that time. We have tried recruitment in newspapers, social media, online recruiting agencies and community advertising. In 2016, we started with an average vacancy of three to four positions. Since January 2019, we have averaged anywhere from six to eighteen positions vacant. The process to hire a Correctional Deputy must comply with regulations from both BSCC and the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). We currently have fourteen vacancies, with three Correctional Deputies on training. When combined with the study by BSCC, that would place us at 26 FTE positions below their recommendations.

Because of the requirements of BSCC and POST, we have to complete written testing and a full peace officer background pursuant to California Penal Code Section 13510 and POST Commission Regulations 1950-1955 before they can be hired. This requires several steps to completion that take a month to two months to complete depending on the candidate. After completion of this process there are still the requirements for medical, psychological and drug screenings. This could mean three months or more before the applicant applies and is hired if they successfully complete the process. For every candidate that completes the process, at least two will be disqualified for various reasons.

All of these compound the staffing shortages being experienced in the Correctional Deputy classification. Shifts are running below minimum staffing on a continual basis. This results in less personnel to respond to emergencies. Over the past seven months, two Patrol Deputies have been assigned, on a rotating basis, to work 12-hour swing shifts in the Jail. Once resources are exhausted in the Jail, we contact Dispatch to ask for additional personnel. Unless Patrol Deputies are already at the Sheriff's Office, the response time is extremely extended.

The requirements to hire a Correctional Technician are less stringent. It requires a non-peace officer (NPO) background be completed and a drug screening. This process takes a fraction of the time from application to start date and can be filled more quickly. Once training is completed, we can use the Correctional Technician in roles that do not require inmate contact traditionally done by a Correctional Deputy.

The purpose of this request is to place Correctional Technicians in the Central Control Room full-time. The addition of four more Correctional Technicians would allow for an additional one to be assigned to each of the four shifts. This change will allow for the Correctional Deputy currently posted in the Central Control Room to assist with jail operations that require inmate contact. This allows for another Correctional Deputy to respond to anything from an incident in progress or to assist with general movement in the facility.

This is an exigent request to try and augment staffing at the Lassen County Jail as soon as possible.

Fiscal Impact: An approximate cost savings of $45,000 per year and will be approximately $3,700 in cost savings for the rest of this fiscal year to budget 130-0525. There will be no impact to the general fund. This will also create a reduction in overtime hours.

Recommendation: Approve the addition of Correctional Technician FTE positions and freeze four Correctional Deputy positions.