

**FY 2020 BUDGET TESTIMONY
SHERIFF JEWELL WILLIAMS
OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF**

MAY 7, 2019

President Clarke and Members of City Council, I am Jewell Williams, Sheriff of the City and County of Philadelphia.

The City and the Sheriff are proposing a FY 2020 budget of \$27 million; essentially the same as our current budget. This is a prudent investment for you to make. We provide the City more than two times the cost of operating the department. In the current fiscal year, we are on track to provide the City over \$60 million in delinquencies and fees.

In fiscal year 2018, we also delivered the City more than \$20 million in escheat money from dormant accounts.

Our five court-ordered monthly Sheriff Sales are not solely to produce city revenue. They return delinquent property, particularly lower cost properties to productive use. Last year, 20,409 Philadelphia properties were brought to sale. 7,263 were sold. The time in which a purchaser of a foreclosed property receives a deed has been reduced from 120 days in 2013 to 21 days today.

A study showed that over 70% of the properties sold at foreclosure are tax compliant two years later.

It is in everyone's interest to increase the number of people bidding on foreclosed properties. First, this keeps the process from being the province of a few people. Second, increasing the number of bidders,

increases the prices paid and the revenue to the City. Third, higher sale prices the better the opportunity to give excess sales revenue to those who lost their property to foreclosure. In 2018 we distributed \$3.7 million in excess proceeds to 132 people who lost their property. Since taking office in 2012, we have paid out over \$18 million in excess proceeds to people who lost their property.

To increase participation in our sales we hold thirty-six free “how to buy” seminars in both English and Spanish. Last year we also held our first Asian languages seminar employing five interpreters. Over 300 citizens attended. We advertise each property with maps, data, and photos on our website. We had 180,000 unique visitors to our website last year.

Our primary job is to protect Philadelphia’s court system. We now guard nine court facilities and have increased patrol duties in City Hall.

Over 71,900 prisoners were transported between area jails and courts. Another 1,196 trips were made transporting prisoners to Philadelphia from across the Country.

Our warrant unit arrested over 4,300 felons and served over 8,500 warrants.

In seven years, we have not had anyone escape while in our custody.

Due to the high number of vacancies in our Deputy Sheriff Officer ranks our biggest challenge is managing our Class 100 funds.

Of 294 budgeted positions we have had as many as fifty vacancies. Because we have no discretion to what Courts to secure, or prisoners to transport, we must rely on overtime until the vacancies are filled. In addition, each year we are asked to guard more courts and take on new

duties such as securing Traffic Court and taking on the warrant unit from the Courts. While use of overtime results in savings in the salary level 100 allocation; It is expensive and wears out the Deputy base.

The City Personnel Office, the Office of Human Workforce, controls the civil service lists from which we can hire new deputies. We have not had a Deputy Sheriff Officer test or list since 2009. For years we have relied on civil service lists from other departments, which has not been satisfactory. This year City Personnel and the Sheriff secured a list for Deputy Sheriffs Officers. We now have a list of almost 1,500 Deputy Sheriff Candidates and will begin to fill vacancies and reduce overtime.

Thank you for your attention. I would be happy answer any questions.