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El Paso County Agenda Item Details

Item Title: County Administration - TCJS Temporary Request
Submitted By: Betsy C. Keller, Chief Administrator
Department: County Administration
Department Phone Number: 915-273-3600
Subject: Approve and authorize the County Judge to sign the updated letter to request temporary housing from the State for Operation Lonestar (OLS) detainees to reflect Sheriff Oscar Ugarte's support of the request. (#7578-OP)

Background: Due to a policy decision by the State known as Operation Lonestar (OLS), DPS has surged resources to our region that results in a higher number of arrests for charges like smuggling, drug trafficking, and more. This impacts County jail operations and costs, which has also impacted the ability to provide jail beds to the US Marshals which has reduced County revenues significantly. The County Sheriff is required to house persons arrested with state charges and presented to his office for detention. Over the past year, we have seen over 400 detainees on a daily count under Operation Lonestar and numbers remain above 150 currently. The impact of this is the costs for these detainees are now paid by the County and local taxpayers. Additionally, we no longer have these beds to generate revenue from the US Marshal.

In Fall 2024, the Court authorized the County Judge to sign a letter requesting temporary housing from Texas Commission on Jail Standards (TCJS). TCJS has agreed and we are continuing with the process, but need an updated form due to the change in the Sheriff's Office. The attached letter now reflects Sheriff Oscar Ugarte as the office holder and he has agreed to the request as he understands the impact this has on the County and our community.

We are seeking your approval to have the County Judge sign this updated letter to request temporary housing from the State for OLS detainees.

Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal Impact Historical

Fiscal Impact Projected

Long Account Number: Amount:

Long Account Number: None Amount: \$0.00

Budget or Unbudgeted Match:

Recommendation:

Approve the County Judge signing the updated letter reflecting the change to Sheriff Oscar Ugarte to request temporary housing from the State for OLS detainees.

Prior Action:

In Fall 2024, the Court authorized the County Judge to sign a letter requesting temporary housing from Texas Commission on Jail Standards.

Strategic Plan:

Goal:

null

Objective:

Strategic Plan Information:

**Estimated Time Needed
For This Item:**



**Ricardo Samaniego
El Paso County Judge**

March 10, 2025

Mr. Brandon Wood, Executive Director
Texas Commission on Jail Standards
P.O. Box 12985
Austin, TX 78711

Executive Director Wood,

Due to Operation Lone Star and the number of inmates that are expected to be arrested and booked at the El Paso County Jail, we will need to utilize repurposed Texas Department of Criminal Justice facilities approved for temporary housing. These temporary facilities will be utilized to house inmates arrested in conjunction with Operation Lone Star.

I would greatly appreciate your consideration of our request. If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Oscar Ugarte
El Paso County Sheriff

Ricardo A. Samaniego
El Paso County Judge