

**WHITE PAPER**

**CONSOLIDATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES BETWEEN BLECKLEY COUNTY AND THE CITY OF COCHRAN**

**DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES**

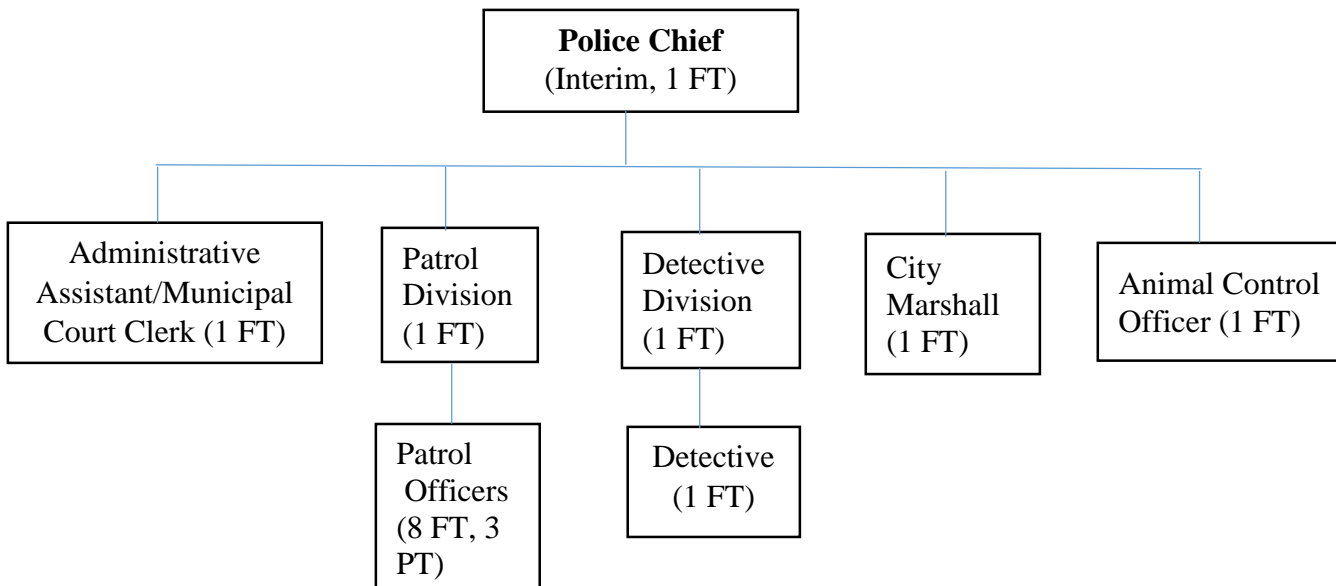
This White Paper is designed to begin a data driven discussion of possible scenarios the City of Cochran and Bleckley County may wish to consider as they investigate the feasibility of consolidating their law enforcement agencies. The first part of this paper will focus on the current structure and budget and recent/proposed enhancements to the Cochran Police Department to improve efficiency. The second part of the paper will focus on a possible consolidation scenario and the budget implications the City may wish to consider with the County. The third part of the paper will provide information on the status of current City-County Police Department consolidations of similar size to Cochran and issues the City will need to consider in any consolidation.

**Current Structure and Budget for the Cochran Police Department**

*Structure*

With the recent retirement of the Police Chief, Key McGuire, the City has eliminated the Assistant Police Chief position and appointed an Interim Police Chief and eliminated an Administrative Assistant position. The current organizational chart for the Police Department is presented below.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR THE COCHRAN POLICE DEPARTMENT**



The largest Division is the Patrol Division that is composed of eight full-time and three part-time officers that provide public safety services to the City. The part-time officers are used on an as-needed basis to assist with special events and to fill temporary full-time vacancies due to illness and vacations. The Administrative Assistant provides clerical services to the Police Department and Municipal Court and manages the Department Office. The Detective Division investigates crimes committed within the city limits. The City Marshall is responsible for enforcing City Ordinances and collecting delinquent business licenses and property taxes. The Animal Control Officer's position is a city employee shared with Bleckley County that manages the local abandoned animal population. The County provides matching funding for this position.

### ***Recent and Evolving Operations Modifications to Improve Efficiency***

A summary of the cost saving measures and operational modifications to improve efficiency are presented below. Each of these items are designed to provide the citizens of Cochran with quality service and protection at a reasonable price.

- A fleet replacement policy has been adopted. This will result in an immediate fleet reduction of two vehicles. Plans are to implement an additional reduction of one vehicle later in the year. This will result in lower insurance, maintenance, and fuel costs.
- Vendor choices are being evaluated for cost savings.
- The uniform replacement schedule has been modified from annually to an as needed basis.
- An energy audit is being conducted to achieve greater HVAC efficiency which will lower energy costs.
- Two eligible officers have been shifted to salaried status (FLSA Exempt) to reduce overtime expenses.
- A greater emphasis has been placed on cash and property seizures to help reduce the operational cost of the Department from general budget funds.
- A greater emphasis has been placed on searching for grant funding to reduce the operational cost of the Department from general budget funds.
- Procedures are now in place to ensure the Bleckley County Commissioners Office is invoiced for one half of all expenses for Animal Control operations as per agreement.
- A proposal has been submitted for the Department to assume responsibility for administering probation services for Cochran Municipal Court. This will generate significant new revenue for the general fund (approximately \$75,000) with virtually no increase in cost to the Department budget.
- The Department is investing in License Plate Recognition technology that will improve traffic enforcement and criminal investigative abilities. A side effect of this is increased revenue to the general fund (approximately \$48,000).
- Agreements have been reached with Bleckley Memorial Hospital to decrease cost for inmate health care services by an average of 55 percent.
- An Accident Review Board has been created to review, evaluate, and provide accountability of accidents involving Department vehicles.
- A Use of Force Review Board has been created to review, evaluate, and provide accountability of incidents involving Department personnel.
- The Department policy manual is under review for updates and modifications.
- The Department is developing a 5 year Capital Improvement Plan.
- The Department is providing state certification for the Internal Affairs Officer and Field Training Officers to ensure professional standards and training are in place for these positions.

- The Department has contracted with Oconee Drug Task Force on drug enforcement to share resources and increase effectiveness of reducing the sale and use of illegal narcotics in the city.
- The Department has committed to improving public awareness of its activities through regular and consistent articles in the Cochran Journal and through social networks such as Facebook.
- The Department has modified its firearms qualification policy and increased firearms training to twice per year to maintain weapon proficiency and officer safety.
- The Department has implemented a bicycle registration program to improve the ability to identify and return stolen bicycles to their owners.
- The Department has established a business partner program with Dairy Queen. This allows an estimated \$2,000 per year to be used by the Department to provide Christmas gifts to a needy family, provide Thanksgiving meals to needy families, establish a college scholarship gift, and help individuals and families with emergency disaster relief.
- The Department is developing a Neighborhood Watch Program throughout the City.
- The Department is developing a Business Watch Program for businesses located within the City.
- The Department is establishing a Chaplain Program to aid the officers and assist them in performing certain duties.
- The Department is shifting to a federally recognized Community Oriented policing concept.

**Budget**

Account Number	Fund Type and Line Item	2012/13 Actual	2012/13 Budget	2013/14 YTD Actual	2013/14 Budget	2014 Budget	Percentage Change
<b>300</b>	<b>PUBLIC SAFETY</b>						
<b>03200</b>	<b>POLICE</b>						
<b>00051</b>	<b>PERSONAL SERVICE/EMPLOYEE BEN</b>						
511100	SALARIES	\$575,274.23	\$581,400.00	\$298,387.41	\$590,000.00	\$522,000.00	-11.53%
511200	TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE SALARIES	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	\$7,500.00	50.00%
511300	OVERTIME SALARIES	\$6,385.24	\$7,500.00	\$7,936.29	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	0.00%
512100	GROUP INSURANCE	\$88,055.83	\$66,000.00	\$15,520.70	\$67,000.00	\$62,500.00	-6.72%
512200	SOCIAL SECURITY (FICA) CONTRIB	\$31,766.42	\$44,477.10	\$23,433.73	\$31,500.00	\$40,500.00	28.57%
512600	UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
<b>00052</b>	<b>PURCHASED/CONTRACTED SERVICES</b>						
521100	OFFICE/ADMIN PURCHASED SERVICE	\$72.75	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
521200	PROFESSIONAL PURCHASED SERV.	\$2,260.01	\$2,800.00	\$633.79	\$2,000.00	\$12,000.00	500.00%
521300	TECHNICAL PURCHASED SERVICES	\$23,140.31	\$20,000.00	\$6,491.13	\$25,000.00	\$20,000.00	-20.00%
522200	REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE	\$7,874.59	\$10,000.00	\$2,098.86	\$10,000.00	\$7,500.00	-25.00%
522300	RENTALS	\$4,247.27	\$5,000.00	\$1,436.66	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	0.00%
523100	INSURANCE OTHER THAN EMP BEN.	\$173.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$28,000.00	100.00%
523200	COMMUNICATIONS	\$15,211.31	\$13,000.00	\$1,767.68	\$7,000.00	\$6,000.00	-14.29%
523300	ADVERTISING	\$147.00	\$500.00	\$317.00	\$250.00	\$500.00	100.00%
523400	PRINTING AND BINDING	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
523500	TRAVEL	\$904.86	\$2,000.00	\$774.60	\$3,000.00	\$2,500.00	-16.67%

523600	DUES AND FEES	\$44,618.58	\$52,000.00	\$27,344.23	\$55,000.00	\$50,000.00	-9.09%
523700	EDUCATION AND TRAINING	\$345.00	\$4,000.00	\$452.66	\$3,500.00	\$2,500.00	-28.57%
523800	LICENSES	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
523850	CONTRACT LABOR	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
523900	OTHER PURCHASED SERVICES	\$1,793.15	\$1,000.00	\$944.41	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	0.00%
<b>00053</b>	<b>SUPPLIES</b>						
531100	GENERAL SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS	\$1,912.43	\$1,000.00	\$24.50	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	0.00%
531200	ENERGY	\$10,950.32	\$10,000.00	\$6,714.60	\$12,000.00	\$10,000.00	-16.67%
531205	POLICE DRUG K-9	\$273.68	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	-100.00%
531210	ANIMAL CONTROL	\$12,251.88	\$15,000.00	\$3,505.93	\$13,000.00	\$10,000.00	-23.08%
531215	CONSTRUCTION-ANIMAL SHELTER	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
531300	FOOD	\$476.25	\$750.00	\$178.71	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	-50.00%
531400	BOOKS AND PERIODICALS	\$665.07	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	0.00%
531500	SUPPLIES/INVEN PURCHASE	\$3,359.57	\$6,000.00	\$1,818.95	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	0.00%
531600	SMALL EQUIPMENT	\$4,122.73	\$3,500.00	\$0.00	\$7,000.00	\$5,000.00	-28.57%
531601	DRUG FUND EXPENDITURES	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$7,500.00	400.00%
531700	OTHER SUPPLIES	\$11,026.57	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$7,500.00	\$5,000.00	-33.33%
563000	FUEL	\$29,187.56	\$36,000.00	\$11,976.06	\$36,000.00	\$36,000.00	0.00%
<b>00054</b>	<b>CAPITAL OUTLAYS</b>						
541000	PROPERTY	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
542000	MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT	\$88,717.20	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$20,000.00	\$4,000.00	-80.00%

Account Number	Fund Type and Line Item	2012/13 Actual	2012/13 Budget	2013/14 YTD Actual	2013/14 Budget	2014 Budget	Percentage Change
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**00058 DEBT SERVICE**

581200	CAPITAL LEASE PRINCIPAL	\$14,678.22	\$0.00	\$4,961.64	\$9,500.00	\$20,400.00	114.74%
582100	CAPITAL LEASE INTEREST	\$1,624.86	\$0.00	\$472.72	\$1,700.00	\$1,400.00	-17.65%

<b>03200</b>	<b>POLICE</b>	<b>\$981,515.89</b>	<b>\$913,927.10</b>	<b>\$417,192.26</b>	<b>\$928,950.00</b>	<b>\$880,300.00</b>	<b>-5.24%</b>
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**03226 CUSTODY OF PRISONERS**

**00052 PURCHASED/CONTRACTED SERVICES**

523900	OTHER PURCHASED SERVICES	\$8,522.00	\$20,000.00	\$2,990.00	\$11,000.00	\$8,000.00	-27.27%
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<b>03226</b>	<b>CUSTODY OF PRISONERS</b>	<b>\$8,522.00</b>	<b>\$20,000.00</b>	<b>\$2,990.00</b>	<b>\$11,000.00</b>	<b>\$8,000.00</b>	<b>-27.27%</b>
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The overall 2014 budget for the Police Department has decreased by 5.24% from the previous budget year. The primary portion of their budget (\$637,500) is associated with personnel salaries and benefits (71.8%). The remaining 28.2% is primarily tied to items with fixed costs that individually have limited impact on the total budget.

**Revenue**

The Police Department generates a revenue stream to support city operations. The revenues from the Police Department include:

- **Municipal fines and forfeitures:** These funds are collected by the City through Municipal Court operations and are deposited in the general fund to support city operations. The table below shows the amount of revenue generated by the Police Department since 2011.

Year	Amount
2011	\$219,500
2012	\$210,800
2013	\$219,900
2014	\$275,000 (Projected)

- **Seizures:** When the City Police make certain types of arrests, the city is entitled to seize the assets of the perpetrator. These assets commonly include money, vehicles, and weapons. After the courts release the assets to the Police Department (state law), the Department can use these items, or the proceeds from their sale, to support Police Department activities. Prior to 2013 these funds/items were merged with Department funds creating a system that made tracking difficult. During 2013 the City instituted new accounting practices that allows for the effective tracking of assets/proceeds and expenditures. In 2014 seizures are projected to generate a revenue stream of approximately \$15,000 to \$20,000.
- **Grants.** The Police Department is actively involved with securing external funds from federal and state agencies to support its operation. The table below shows the grant applications the Department has filed since 2010.

<b>GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS</b>				
Year	Grant	Activity	Amount Requested	Status
2010	\$2k	Live Scan Fingerprint	\$2k	Approved
2011	\$10k	New Officer	\$10k	Approved
2011	\$2k	Ballistic Vests	\$2k	Approved
2012	\$70K	Technology	\$70k	Approved
2012	\$2k	Ballistic Vests	\$2k	Approved
2013	\$3k	Ballistic Vests	\$3k	Approved
2013	\$150k	School Resource Officer	\$150k	Not Approved

## **Possible Consolidation Scenario**

### ***Merge Cochran Police Department with Bleckley County Sheriff's Department***

Under our current structure, the Bleckley County Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement services to county residents living outside the city limits of Cochran and the Cochran Police Department provides services to those residents living within the Cochran city limits. The county, city, and College have a cooperative policing Memorandum of Understanding that provides for mutual assistance in times of emergencies or special events/activities. The City and County each try to provide two officers to patrol their respective territories at all times of the day. If the Cochran Police Department was merged with the County Sheriff's Office, all law enforcement services for county and city residents would be provided by the County Sheriff. Anticipated changes to the City Police Department and the City would include the following:

- Elimination of Police Chief, Administrative Assistant, Patrol Division and Officers, and Detective Division and Detective
- Transfer of the City Marshall position to the Administrative Department for City Code enforcement
- Transfer of the Animal Control Officer to the General Maintenance Department for all animal complaints
- Transfer of all vehicles and equipment to the Sheriff's Department
- Transfer of all law enforcement responsibilities within the incorporated areas of the City to the County
- Drastic reductions in fines and forfeitures to City general fund from Municipal Court due to reduced enforcement within city limits and rerouting of offenses to Probate Court
- Transfer of revenues from seizures to the Sheriff's Department
- Transfer of initiative to secure grants to Sheriff's Department with awards going to that entity

Municipalities that consolidate their law enforcement with the county sheriff maintain a separate contract with the county to provide additional personnel (i.e. patrol officers, detectives) and equipment (i.e. vehicles) to ensure adequate protection for city residents. The cost for these services are determined by the County Commissioner and Sheriff and annual increases are at the sole discretion of the county. At this time, the City has not approached the Bleckley County Sheriff to determine the actual expenses associated with consolidating our respective law enforcement agencies. It is anticipated that the expense of providing enforcement services to Cochran would be similar to those expenses incurred by other cities that have consolidated. As an example for this paper, the 2010 contract between Hawkinsville and Pulaski County will be used. A copy of this contract is provided in Appendix I.

Officials from Hawkinsville and Pulaski County indicated that the primary reason for consolidation was to improve the delivery of services. The City did project an initial saving of \$120,000 during the first year. This agreement was based on the following provisions.

- The City would pay the County \$519,999.96 annually

- The City would pay the County \$5,000 annually from SPLOST
- The City would pass an ordinance giving the Sheriff sole responsibility for law enforcement within the City subject to no interference or supervision by the City Commission
- Fine revenue from citations issued within the City would first go to pay all Municipal Court expenses. All additional revenue would go to the County. If Municipal Court was discontinued, all citations would go to Probate Court with all fine revenue going to the County.
- The County would hire all police officers for at least a six month probationary period.
- The County would enforce all city ordinances.
- The County would provide law enforcement services within the limits of City

During the past year the County increased the amount provided for service by \$50,000 to an annual rate of \$570,000. The City has the choice to either accept the increases from the County or to decline the increase and reinstate an independent City Police Department.

### ***Estimated Cost Comparison for Cochran***

For purposes of this paper, it is assumed that any contract between the City of Cochran and the Bleckley County Sheriff's Office would reflect similar expenses that were incurred by the City of Hawkinsville and the Pulaski County Sheriff's Office. The funds (\$570,000 + \$5,000 SPLOST) that Hawkinsville pays the county annually are used for personnel (officers), equipment (i.e. vehicles), supplies, and annual salary adjustments for the Sheriff (\$5,000). Based on our 2014 budget, it is estimated that Cochran would pay approximately \$600,000 for similar services. This would provide the City with a cost saving of \$288,300. This cost saving would be offset by the loss of revenue (fines, forfeitures and seizures minus cost of Municipal Court) from Municipal Court of approximately \$280,000 which currently goes to the general fund. The adjusted cost saving to the City from consolidating the Police Department would be approximately \$8,300. If the additional funds generated by the Police Department through their proposed installation of a License Plate Recognition and administering probation for Municipal Court are considered, the City would lose an additional \$123,000 in revenue for the general fund. This would eliminate any cost savings from consolidation and eliminate approximately \$114,700 in additional revenue from the general fund annually.

### **Status of Consolidated Police Forces of Similar Size to Cochran and Consolidation Issues**

Several Georgia cities similar in size to Cochran have consolidated their Police Departments with their County Sheriff. The status of those cities are presented in the table below. Of the five consolidations presented, three of those have abandoned their merger and reestablished independent City police forces.

<b>STATUS OF CITIES THAT CONSOLIDATED THEIR POLICE FORCE WITH THEIR COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT*</b>			
<b>City</b>	<b>Date of Consolidation</b>	<b>Date of Reestablishment of Independent Services</b>	<b>Primary Reasons for Reverting to Independent Status</b>
Social Circle	Mid to late 1990's	2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unreliable service from sheriff</li> <li>• Lack of cooperation from sheriff</li> <li>• Sheriff using city zone as punishment assignments for deputies</li> <li>• No measurable cost saving</li> </ul>
Wrightsville	2000	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unreliable service from sheriff</li> <li>• Lack of cooperation from sheriff</li> <li>• Citizen complaints</li> <li>• No measurable cost saving</li> </ul>
Soperton	2005	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor service from sheriff</li> <li>• Lack of cooperation from sheriff</li> <li>• Citizen complaints</li> <li>• No measurable cost saving</li> </ul>
Hawkinsville	2010	#	#
Monticello	2014	^	^

\*Only cities of similar size are listed for comparison purposes

#The police force consolidation was accomplished prior to the vote to consolidate all city/county services. With the failure of the vote to consolidate, the long term status of the police force consolidation is unknown. City Manager and County Commissioner feel positive about the way consolidated department is operating. The primary reason for consolidation was improvement of services.

^Currently engaged in internal discussions with county to explore consolidation. Primary reason for consolidation is improvement of services.

***Issues to consider in any consolidation***

- Sheriff is a publicly elected official with autonomy. City Council would not have any control over Sheriff expenditures, law enforcement culture, quality of service, and contracts. This environment could shift every four years based on the results of a local election.
- Are there true cost savings or are they perceived? The City could lose most of its current revenue stream from fines and forfeitures, seizures, and grants that would now be routed back to the Sheriff and county.



- By consolidating, do we position ourselves to gain or lose state and federal funding for the city and/or county?
- How do you balance cost savings with intangible benefits (i.e. service and quality of life)?
- Beyond basic law enforcement, the Sheriff currently does not offer any services or programs to the community as compared to the Police Department? (Community Oriented Policing, Neighborhood Watch Program, Business Watch Program, Teen Driver Program, Bicycle ID Program, etc.) Are these programs important to the quality of life in Cochran?