

TO: TOMPKINS COUNTY LEGISLATURE

FROM: JOE MAREANE

DATE: AUGUST 8, 2017

RE: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CGR JAIL STUDY CONTRACT

Background: The County retained the non-profit Center of Governmental Research (CGR) to undertake a Criminal Justice/Jail Population Trend Assessment last November at a cost not to exceed \$63,000. The agreed-to scope of the study anticipated “a total of up to 30 meetings, including a combination of individual interviews and group discussions.” CGR also assumed that the various County data bases needed to undertake the analysis would be readily available and in a condition that allowed the data to be easily migrated and used by CGR’s analysts.

The Issue: As CGR progressed in the study and was encouraged to substantially increase the number of individuals interviewed, the number of individuals actually interviewed grew to 60—double the number included in the scope of CGR’s proposal. Additionally, the consultants conducted a dozen or so telephone interviews and two meetings with groups of between 15-18 former inmates and family members with experience with our Jail. To assure the NYS Commission of Corrections of the progress and seriousness of the study, and to gain the Commission’s insights, CGR representatives also visited Commission staff in Albany.

Additionally, the quality of electronic jail data available to CGR became an issue in the analytical part of the study, and required substantial adjustments and time-consuming “work-arounds”. The work done by CGR to address these problems should make it easier for the County to generate high quality, reliable reports regarding the jail population in the future.

As a result of these additional tasks, CGR initially advised that the time invested in the study exceeded the scope of the original agreement by approximately 45%, or \$30,000. A later estimate indicated that the firm incurred additional expenses exceeding \$50,000. CGR has requested consideration of its request for compensation for these additional services.

Recommendation: It is clear that CGR should have requested a change order when it became evident that it needed to conduct many more interviews than anticipated in the original Agreement. However, the County has received significant value in return for the additional work. By expanding the number of individuals interviewed, CGR enabled the County demonstrate the sincerity of its commitment to incorporate a broad range of perspectives in the development of the Jail Study. It also resulted in richer study and stronger recommendations than might have otherwise been achieved. Additionally, the County’s ability to monitor jail population trends in the future will improve as the result of the “data cleaning” done by CGR.

I have therefore recommended a compromise increase of \$15,000 in the fee paid to CGR for the Jail Study.