

To:

Jane Heun and Supervisors:

I, Sheriff Jack Williams, have been talking with Jefferson Police Chief Mark Clouse about what we can do to make sure that the City of Jefferson will have law enforcement coverage in the event the Jefferson Police Department loses enough officers that it would not be able to provide coverage.

With this being said, the first and foremost concern of mine, as Greene County Sheriff, is that I do not have enough personnel to cover the City of Jefferson, rural Greene County, and the other cities that I already am responsible for. To provide 100 percent coverage for the entire County and all cities, I would need to add an additional 6 to 8 deputies depending on what services the City of Jefferson would want. To cover the City of Jefferson at a 50 percent rate I would need to add an additional 4 deputies. Just to take emergency calls, I would need to add at least two more deputies, as the city of Jefferson has an average of 1,500 emergency calls a year.

The second most important issue is that if this does happen, until an agreement is made between the City and the County, the residents of the City of Jefferson will only get a law enforcement response for emergency calls. An emergency call, for example, would be any type of assault. Harassment would not be included. We would also not provide animal control, enforcement of city ordinances, funeral escorts, and any other call for service that the Jefferson Police Department would take that is not an emergency. I would like to be clear that such a limitation on services would be necessary simply because the Greene County Sheriff's Office does not have the manpower to do more. The City would have to pay for any additional services, just like any other city.

The third problem that I am concerned about is that if we decide to hire more deputies, some of the remaining Jefferson Police Department Officers would likely apply. This will only compound the problem that exists for the Jefferson Police Department.

We have had talks with the Mayor of Jefferson and explained those fees that would be required to provide more services to the City of Jefferson. We also discussed the hardship it would place on my office and deputies to double the population that we would be covering overnight. I do not see this problem going away anytime in the next year, or even two, as the problem is greater than ever expected. No police department or Sheriff's Office would expect to lose more than one officer a year but to lose 3 to 4 in a few months is detrimental and almost impossible to recover from when you are an 8-man department. The Jefferson Police Department has a large possibility to lose 50 percent or more of its force in just a few short months or weeks.

I am stating this just to make sure that the residents of Jefferson and Greene County are aware that we are working together to mitigate and plan for the problem but there is no short-term solution in my opinion. Whatever the City decides to do, their problem will inherently become my problem in some way, shape, or form. If the City were to get lucky and hire several certified officers it will still take several months for the hiring process. If they can only get uncertified officers there is training and then the 9 or 14-week academy that they have to contend with. In closing, if or when the Jefferson Police Department loses one or two more officers, we will be covering Jefferson for at least 12 hours a day, and we need to be prepared for that possibility.

