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Taxpayers' costs for Lancaster County Sheriff Mark Reese rise to \$69,000 as lawmakers review forced removal

SAM JANESCH | Staff Writer Feb 7, 2017



Lancaster County taxpayers have paid nearly \$69,000 toward embattled Sheriff Mark Reese's salary, benefits and legal expenses.

And there is no resolution in sight, after more than six months of investigations into allegations of sexual harassment against Reese, who has been on an administrative leave since July.

Reese has collected \$53,632 in salary and benefits through January while lawyers' fees for both the sheriff and the county have combined for at least \$14,964, county records obtained by LNP show.

And as state legislators sit on a [resolution that could lead to forcefully removing him from office](#), the county will continue to pay \$4,185.23 every two weeks for his salary and benefits, according to the records.

Reese has been on paid leave since July 26 as the county investigates a deputy sheriff's accusation of ["severe and pervasive" sexual harassment](#). In her July complaint, Deputy Sheriff Jessica Padilla alleges that Reese tried to lure her into a sexual relationship, citing several pornographic emails from the sheriff.



Senators will try to remove embattled Lancaster County sheriff with same method tried to force out Kathleen Kane

The three county commissioners called for Reese's resignation in August, after they said a preliminary investigation led to Reese admitting to sending the alleged pornographic emails.

Reese has since refused to resign and lawmakers in both the state House and state Senate have begun processes to impeach him or remove him through another rarely used method.

The most recent step to force him out came as state Sens. Ryan Aument, of Landisville, and Scott Martin, of Conestoga Township, introduced a resolution that, if passed, would establish a seven-member committee to investigate Reese. After a maximum 90 days, the committee would give a report and the full 50-member Senate would vote on whether or not to remove him.

Senate Resolution 8, which would jump-start that process, was referred to the Senate Rules and Executive Nominations Committee on Jan. 24 and has not yet been considered.

A 90-day removal process, if it occurs, would allow the sheriff to collect more than \$25,100 in additional salary and benefits during that time, according to LNP's calculation.

Costs to the county

County records updated through January show Reese is continuing to collect payments toward his \$85,460 annual salary.

The county also pays hundreds of dollars every month toward his medical, dental, vision and life insurance plans, as well as \$243.96 each pay period for the federal payroll tax, FICA.

If he resigns, Reese, 58, would also be eligible to receive a roughly \$20,000 pension when he turns 60, [LNP previously reported](#). That pension grows by \$40.55 for each additional pay.

If he is impeached or forcefully removed, he would be at risk for losing that pension.

Additionally, the county picks up the monthly tabs for both Reese's Chester County-based law firm, Siana, Bellwoar & McAndrew LLP, and the county's Philadelphia-based counsel, Marshall Dennehey Warner Coleman & Goggin.

Reese's firm charges \$225 per hour and charged the county for \$11,234 in fees from August through December, records show. Meanwhile, the county's legal fees — at \$185 per hour — have accrued to \$3,730 from August through November, according to the latest figures available.

Most of those fees came in August, immediately after Padilla issued her complaint.