

Law enforcement rift discussed during commission meeting

(KLZA)-- A rift between Falls City Police Chief Duane Armbruster and Richardson County Sheriff Don Pounds did not appear to move toward being resolved Tuesday during the Richardson County Commissioners meeting.

In front of a crowded Commissioners meeting room that included City officials and member of the Police Department and members of the Taking Back Our Community group, Chief Armbruster read from a prepared statement concerning a power point presentation Sheriff Pounds did during the November 13th Commission meeting.

Chief Armbruster asked from some clarification about allegations concerning searches of prisoners by Falls City Police Officers not being thorough enough allowing contraband into the Richardson County Law Enforcement Center on several occasions.

One of the allegations was that a prisoner at the Richardson County Law Enforcement Center brought a small bag of methamphetamine into the facility in his shoe that was not found during an initial search. The drugs were later found in the prisoners shoe in storage, away from the prisoner.

Last week in responding to questions from the Taking Back Our Community organization, Sheriff Pounds indicated Falls City Police Officers did not properly search the individuals. The Sheriff said this is not an issue he is pushing, noting TBOC was asking why there were issues with meth getting in the jail.

The rules of the Richardson County Law Enforcement Center are that anyone bringing in an arrested person must search them before the prisoner is booked. Jail Standards allows each

facility to create their own system.

Later in the meeting Chief Armbruster asked the Sheriff to contact him when there are issues so he can address them with his officers. Armbruster said the agencies need to get along.

Commission Chairman David Sickel, who has advocated combining the Falls City Police Department and Richardson County Sheriff's Office said it is an issue that needs to be taken care of. He called it a serious situation that needs to be rectified.

Sickels suggestion of a weekly meeting between the entities to resolve their differences led to a final disagreement between the two law enforcement leaders. Chief Armbruster said "I'm in, lets make it happen."

Sheriff Pounds responded that Armbruster was "good in front of an audience saying this." Pounds went on to say that "weekly meetings are fine for a department that is overmanned."

Pounds noted he is short-handed and having to work nights himself due to a shortage of officers.

Sheriff Pounds says he will need to hire additional personnel in the jail to take over all the searches of those booked into the jail and complete the required paperwork.