

Minutes of the Justice Committee

The Justice Committee of the McLean County Board met on Tuesday, September 2, 2008 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 400 of the Government Center, 115 E. Washington Street, Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Members Rackauskas, Butler, Cavallini and Harding

Members Absent: Chairman Renner; Member Nuckolls

Other County Board

Board Members Present: None

Staff Present: Mr. John Zeunik, County Administrator; Mr. Terry Lindberg, Assistant County Administrator; Mr. Bill Wasson, Director, Administrative Services; and Ms. Judith LaCasse, Assistant to the County Administrator

Department Heads/ Elected Officials

Present: Mr. Bill Yoder, State's Attorney; Ms. Cathy Waltz, Superintendent, Juvenile Detention Center; Ms. Judy Renner, Director, Children's Advocacy Center; Sheriff Mike Emery and Ms. Beth Kimmerling, Coroner

Others Present: Ms. Kimberly Wells, Executive Director, Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence; Rev. Tom Shea, Alternatives to Jail Committee

Acting Chairman Rackauskas called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas presented the minutes from the August 5, 2008 Committee meeting and the July 22, 2008 Stand-up meeting to the Committee for approval.

Motion by Harding/Butler to approve the Minutes of the August 5, 2008 Committee Meeting and the July 22, 2008 Stand-up meeting.
Motion carried.

Mr. Bill Yoder, State's Attorney, presented a request for approval of a Resolution of the McLean County Board Proclaiming Wednesday, October 15, 2008 "*It's Time to Talk Day*" and the Month of October 2008 as "*Domestic Violence Awareness Month*" in McLean County.

Mr. Yoder advised that this is a timely reminder of the importance to recognize and discuss domestic violence in light of a recent domestic violence homicide in McLean County. Mr. Yoder stated that this is a very important topic and one the State's Attorney Office addresses.

Ms. Kimberly Wells, Executive Director, Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence reported that October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month and local community agencies, employers, community law enforcement agencies and many others will be hosting events promoting awareness that domestic violence is an issue in McLean County. She stated that Wednesday, October 15, 2008 has been declared "*It's Time to Talk Day*" throughout the United States. People are urged to talk about this issue in schools, workplaces and homes.

Mr. Cavallini asked how long has the County participated in this program by approving this Resolution. Ms. Wells responded that McLean County has passed this Resolution for the past three years. She pointed out that the Town of Normal, the City of Bloomington and the local college communities are also involved in this effort. Ms. Wells noted that Lincoln College joined this year.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas asked what changes have been made since its inception. Ms. Wells replied that each year a different focus is highlighted. This year it centers on "once you phone, you are not alone," which focuses on the perspective of what happens once a phone call to 911 is made. Ms. Wells reviewed the various programs that will take place on October 15th, including a mock trial and a candlelight vigil.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas asked who can attend the mock trial. Ms. Wells replied that anyone can attend the trial.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas asked what major corporations are involved. Ms. Wells indicated that Country Financial and State Farm are the two largest corporations that are actively involved with this program.

Motion by Harding/Butler to Recommend Approval of a Resolution of the McLean County Board Proclaiming Wednesday, October 15, 2008 as "*It's Time to Talk Day*" and the month of October, 2007, as "*Domestic Violence Awareness Month*" in McLean County.
Motion carried.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas thanked Ms. Wells for her efforts in promoting awareness that domestic violence is an issue in McLean County.

Mr. Yoder reviewed his Monthly Caseload Report and Asset Forfeiture Fund Report. He indicated that the numbers remain consistent with where it is expected they will be at the end of the year. Mr. Yoder pointed out that the felony charges have fallen back this month.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas requested that Mr. Yoder provide the Committee with a report on the number of domestic violence cases in McLean County. She added that the information should be shared with the community as well, so that victims can see that they are not alone.

Ms. Harding asked if domestic violence is cyclical. Mr. Yoder replied that alcohol is a major factor in domestic violence. He noted that there are also some patterns around the holidays.

Mr. Cavallini asked if Sheriff's Deputies are trained to deal with domestic violence. Mr. Yoder assured him that the Deputies are well trained, as domestic violence is often one of the most dangerous situations the Deputies face.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, she thanked Mr. Yoder.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas presented the Monthly Caseload Report for July 2008 as submitted by Ms. Amy Davis, Public Defender.

Ms. Cathy Waltz, Superintendent of the Juvenile Detention Center, presented the Court Services Department Monthly Report. She indicated that there was nothing significant to note on the report.

Ms. Waltz stated that the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) had its annual inspection conducted by the Department of Juvenile Justice. Ms. Waltz noted that the results of the Audit have not been received.

Ms. Waltz reported that the JDC had its American Correctional Association accreditation audit on August 18-19. She advised that the Juvenile Detention Center passed its mandatory requirements with a score of 100% and its non-mandatory requirements at 99.7%. Ms. Waltz indicated that the 0.3% was the result of one standard out of 358 that was not met. She added that the standard that was not met is out of JDC's control. Ms. Waltz stated that the American Correctional Association requires that juveniles be brought before a juvenile judge within 24 hours, while Illinois law allows 48 hours. She advised that she intends to ask for a waiver to try to recoup the 0.3%. Ms. Waltz indicated that the review hearing is in January.

Ms. Waltz stated that the National Conference on Juvenile Justice is held in the spring of each year. The next conference is scheduled in March 2009 in Orlando. She indicated that she will let the Committee know if a group plans to attend next year. Acting Chairman Rackauskas added that it is a very worthwhile conference.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, she thanked Ms. Waltz.

Ms. Judy Renner, Director, Children's Advocacy Center, presented her Monthly Statistical Report for the Children's Advocacy Center and the CASA Report. She indicated that there was nothing to add to the report. Ms. Renner announced that a new training class for CASA volunteers will begin later this month.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, she thanked Ms. Renner.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas presented the July 2008 Statistical Reports and the Second Quarter Statistical Reports as submitted by Ms. Sandy Parker, Circuit Clerk.

Sheriff Mike Emery presented a request for approval of an Expanding Multi-Jurisdictional Narcotics Unit Task Force 6 Grant in the amount of \$64,106.00 from the Department of Justice. He indicated that this is a continuation of a pass-through grant to Task Force 6. Sheriff Emery added that the appropriate paperwork has been filed with the County Auditor. He noted that the grant provides funding for the operation of Task Force 6. Sheriff Emery advised that there is no expense to McLean County for this grant.

Mr. Butler asked how many years has this grant been received. Sheriff Emery replied that it has been received for approximately 7 years. He advised that Task Force 6 cannot accept the grant directly, but must go through a local government entity. Mr. Butler asked if it is a federal grant. Sheriff Emery replied that it is a federal grant administered by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority at the State level.

Mr. Butler asked what will happen if the grant ends. Sheriff Emery responded that the County would have no financial obligation. He added that funds would be available to continue Task Force 6, but without the flexibility provided by the grant. Sheriff Emery noted that the grant funds were reduced from last year, but it is sufficient to continue the operations of Task Force 6.

Mr. Butler asked what is the “lack of cooperation from UPS” in reference to the shipment of drugs, as noted on page 33 of the Packet. Sheriff Emery replied that DHL, Fed Ex and UPS have private terminals to receive packages at the Central Illinois Regional Airport. Since it is considered private property, the Sheriff’s Department must ask permission to search the area for suspected drugs. Sheriff Emery noted that a new canine was recently certified to search for drugs. He advised that he has been working with the Regional Director for Homeland Security to obtain the Homeland Security Certification Course, which would allow the Sheriff’s Department to go in unannounced to conduct canine searches of the property at any time. Sheriff Emery pointed out that UPS is not always uncooperative.

Mr. Butler asked how do you know when drugs will be arriving. Sheriff Emery replied that agents have sources who may reveal information on shipments of drugs. He noted that often there is not time to obtain a search warrant.

Motion by Butler/Cavallini to Recommend Approval of
an Expanding Multi-Jurisdictional Narcotics Unit Task
Force 6 Grant in the amount of \$64,106.00 from the
Department of Justice.
Motion carried.

Sheriff Emery submitted the Jail Population Report.

Sheriff Emery presented the McLean County Jail 2008 Inspection Report. He advised that the Illinois Department of Corrections inspects the jail every six months. Sheriff Emery noted that the cover letter to the Illinois Department of Corrections’ report indicates that “the 2007 annual report of your facility showed a substantial disparity between training hours and days between the law enforcement officers and the corrections staff.” He stated that the Illinois Department of Corrections recommends additional training opportunities for the corrections staff. Sheriff Emery indicated that the next paragraph of the report commended the Sheriff’s Department for meeting and/or exceeding the mandated suicide prevention/mental health issues training.

Sheriff Emery reassured the Committee that training and certification for the correctional staff is taken very seriously. He pointed out that the Illinois Department of Correction’s inspector looked at the 2007 numbers only. Sheriff Emery’s indicated that his reports go back to 2003 when there was no training for the corrections staff. The progression of training is as follows:

- 2003: No training;

- 2004: 88 hours of training;
- 2005: 368 hours of training;
- 2006: 492 hours of training;
- 2007: 836 hours of training.

Sheriff Emery pointed out that this represents a 48% increase in training of the correctional staff since he took office.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas recommended that Sheriff Emery provide this report to the Illinois Department of Corrections. Sheriff Emery agreed to provide this information to the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Sheriff Emery announced that training will be increased in 2008 with the addition of a DVD training program specific to the correctional staff. The training will be done on-shift to avoid overtime demands. He added that upon training, correctional staff will be tested to keep track of their progress.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas expressed concern that the report's reference to inadequate training could cause problems should a case go to court wherein training may be an issue. Sheriff Emery reiterated that he will provide this training information to the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Sheriff Emery advised that Ms. Joan Naour, Director, Jail Medical provides AED training and CPR/First-Aid training to keep the correctional staff certified on an annual basis. He added that an important aspect in the current training deals with suicide prevention and mental health issues. Sheriff Emery also pointed out that there are 75 volunteers that are utilized by the facility and checked yearly for security clearance.

Ms. Harding asked how the 75 volunteers are utilized. Sheriff Emery replied that the volunteers are used with the various programs in the Jail, including pastoral volunteers, life skills training, etc.

Sheriff Emery advised that, just as the inspector was completing his report, a facilities management employee walked by with a bucket of tools. The inspector pointed out that an inventory of the tools should be available. Sheriff Emery noted that he is working with Facilities Management to develop an inventory of tools that go in and out of the Jail.

Sheriff Emery stated that, overall, the report from the Illinois Department of Corrections is very good. He added that he will provide a follow-up report to the Department on the increase in training. Mr. Butler suggested that he include the information on the tool inventory system as well.

Sheriff Emery reiterated that, with the amount of confusion in the Jail area due to the renovation, the Illinois Department of Corrections' report was very positive. He stated that the correctional staff is doing an outstanding job on maintaining the standards and the policy of the Jail.

Mr. Cavallini asked how is the renovation project progressing. Sheriff Emery replied that the project should be completed in October. He indicated that he expects the renovations will provide a safe and secure facility.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas asked if there were any additional questions. Hearing none, she thanked Sheriff Emery.

Ms. Beth Kimmerling, Coroner, presented the Coroner's Monthly Report for July 2008. She pointed out that the year-to-date numbers are very close to last year, except that the number of deaths being reported to the Coroner's Office is up.

Ms. Kimmerling distributed her 2007 Year-end Report. She asked that the Committee read the report and contact her by phone or e-mail if they have any questions regarding the information in the report.

Ms. Kimmerling pointed out that 2007 will stand out for the following reasons:

- Change in the Coroner's Inquest Law, which allows Ms. Kimmerling the authority to make rulings without going through the inquest process; and
- Dr. J. Scott Denton, who is our dedicated board certified forensic pathologist, is now living in the community.

Ms. Kimmerling reported that McLean County autopsies were 33% ahead of last year and out-of-County autopsies were 30% ahead. She noted that accidental deaths were the majority of the increase. Ms. Kimmerling pointed out that accidental deaths were 46% ahead in 2007 as compared to 2006. She indicated that accidental deaths can be broken down into three categories, namely:

- Motor vehicle deaths;
- Drug overdoses; and
- Falls.

Ms. Kimmerling advised that falls that resulted in deaths were 70% higher in 2007 than in 2006. Acting Chairman Rackauskas asked how this compares to State and National figures. Ms. Kimmerling replied that she will obtain that information and report back to the Committee.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas asked where do most people fall. Ms. Kimmerling replied that people fall on private property and in nursing homes primarily. She indicated that if a fall happens on private property, an inquest would not be recommended, but if a fall happened in a nursing home, an inquest would be performed. Ms. Kimmerling noted that, predominately, falls happen to women between the ages of 60 and the upper 90s.

Ms. Kimmerling pointed out that she has a particular interest in the suicide rate in this community. She stated that she recently made a presentation to all health officials in the community regarding suicide prevention and survivors of suicide.

Ms. Kimmerling reiterated that she would be glad to respond to any questions about the report via internet, phone or at next month's meeting.

Ms. Harding asked what does the future look like with the increase of caseload in regards to personnel and budget. Ms. Kimmerling replied that if the numbers continue to increase, it will become necessary to increase full-time personnel or add additional part-time personnel. She reported that this weekend she utilized her entire staff except one full-time person who was on vacation, due to the three deaths that were in the paper, as well as 15 other deaths.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas asked if the report is being sent to the library. Ms. Kimmerling responded that she sends the reports to all of the libraries, local law enforcement agencies and to the universities.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas asked if there were any additional questions. Hearing none, she thanked Ms. Kimmerling.

Acting Chairman Rackauskas presented the August 31, 2008 Justice Committee bills for review and approval as transmitted by the County Auditor. The Justice Committee bills include a Pending Total of \$853.08 and a Prepaid Total of \$1,820,107.46 for a Fund Total of \$1,820,960.54.

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Motion by Cavallini/Butler to Recommend Approval of the Justice Committee Bills as of August 31, 2008, as transmitted by the County Auditor.
Motion carried.

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Acting Chairman Rackauskas asked if there was any other business or communication for the Justice Committee. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith A. LaCasse
Recording Secretary