

Minutes of the Justice Committee

The Justice Committee of the McLean County Board met on Tuesday, September 4, 2007 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 400 of the Government Center, 115 E. Washington Street, Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman Renner; Members Nuckolls, Rackauskas, Harding (4:36 p.m.), Butler and Cavallini

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Mr. John Zeunik, County Administrator; Mr. Terry Lindberg, Assistant County Administrator and Ms. Jude LaCasse, Assistant to the County Administrator

Department Heads/
Elected Officials
Present:

Ms. Roxanne Castleman, Director, Court Services;
Ms. Laura Beavers, Case Manager, Children's
Advocacy Center; Sheriff Mike Emery; Ms. Beth
Kimmerling, Coroner; Ms. Sandy Parker, Circuit Clerk

Others Present: Rev. Tom Shea, Alternatives to Jail Committee

Chairman Renner called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Chairman Renner presented the August 6, 2007 Committee minutes to the Committee for approval.

Motion by Butler/Rackauskas to approve the Minutes of
the August 6, 2007 Committee Meeting.
Motion carried.

Ms. Roxanne Castleman, Director, Court Services, presented the Court Services Monthly Reports. Ms. Castleman reported that the Juvenile Detention Center ("JDC") has been very busy. She noted that eight of the youth in the JDC are being charged as adults and will be transferred to the adult system.

Ms. Castleman announced that the Pre-Trial Program will start on Thursday.

Ms. Rackauskas pointed out that the statistics show that 15 and 16 year olds appear to be a target group. She asked if the higher statistics in June and July are typical of the summer months when school is not in session.

Ms. Castleman replied that this increase in the summer months is not a typical pattern.

Ms. Rackauskas also pointed out that the offenses are much more serious, including aggravated battery, aggravated criminal sexual assault and armed robbery. Ms. Castleman advised that the youth who commit these major offenses are the ones that are being transferred to the adult system.

Ms. Rackauskas asked why Bloomington statistics are higher than Normal. Ms. Rackauskas replied that, since she has been here, Bloomington statistics have been higher. She noted that Bloomington's population is also higher than in Normal.

Ms. Rackauskas asked if the youth are tracked in terms of race or economic divisions. Ms. Castleman replied that Court Services keeps statistics on economic status, racial background and gender.

Ms. Rackauskas expressed concern with the statistics and asked how the County Board can assist in targeting these troubled areas to prevent. Ms. Castleman replied that she believes prevention is the best way to help troubled youth, but it is expensive and time-consuming. She indicated that it is necessary to find agencies that are willing to work in this area.

Chairman Renner asked Ms. Castleman to advise the Committee on ways the County Board can help, such as making policy statements and policy changes, and working with the Bloomington Police and McLean County Sheriff's Department. Ms. Castleman indicated that Mr. Bill Yoder, State's Attorney, chairs the Youth Impact Board, which is the community youth board. She suggested that Mr. Yoder may be able to pass along the Committee's concerns to the Youth Impact Board.

Chairman Renner stated that the local clergy is another group that is interested in helping the at risk youth in McLean County.

Ms. Castleman advised that a new Illinois Appellate Court decision came down from the Second District stating that if juveniles are in Juvenile Court when they turn of age at 17, they must have a hearing in front of the Juvenile Judge in order to be transferred to the adult facility. If the juveniles are transferred to the adult facility, they must be kept sight and sound separate from other inmates. In the past, juveniles turning 17 were automatically transferred to the adult facility. Ms. Castleman stated that this will likely cause the census number at the JDC to go up.

Chairman Renner asked if there were any additional questions or comments. Hearing none, he thanked Ms. Castleman.

Chairman Renner presented the Monthly Caseload Report for July, 2007 as submitted by Ms. Amy Davis, Public Defender. He asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Chairman Renner presented the Monthly Caseload Report and Asset Forfeiture Fund Report as submitted by Mr. Bill Yoder, State's Attorney. Chairman Renner asked if there were any comments or questions. There were none.

Ms. Laura Beavers, Case Manager, Children's Advocacy Center, presented the Monthly Statistical Report for the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) and the CASA Report. She reported that the CAC remains very busy. Ms. Beavers noted that there has been an increase in the number of hotline calls. She noted that there were fewer interviews last month, with a total of 15, but the scope of the interviews were very challenging.

Ms. Beavers reported that the CASA Program has served 173 children so far this year as compared to 186 children in all of last year.

Ms. Harding asked if more children go through the system during the school year because there are more observers. Ms. Beavers indicated that there is typically an increase when school starts. She noted that, this summer, there were a large number of reports, which is not typical.

Mr. Nuckolls asked who are the reporters over the summer. Ms. Beavers replied that the reporters are historically doctors, teachers, day care professionals and other child welfare workers.

Chairman Renner asked if there were any additional questions or comments. Hearing none, he thanked Ms. Beavers.

Sheriff Mike Emery reviewed the McLean County Adult Detention Facility Report for June, 2007. He stated that they continue to house prisoners out-of-County. Sheriff Emery advised that they have started sending prisoners to Piatt County because the fee is only \$35.00 per day as compared to \$50.00 in other Counties. He indicated that Piatt County is east of DeWitt County and is about 50 miles from Bloomington. Sheriff Emery pointed out that the approved FY'2007 budget for housing prisoners out-of-County is \$60,000.00 and they have spent in excess of \$185,000.00 year-to-date.

Ms. Rackauskas asked what is the expense of housing prisoners here in McLean County. Mr. Zeunik indicated that he will update that information and report back to the Committee.

Ms. Rackauskas expressed concern with the over-population in the jail. She also expressed concern with the necessary space for those 17 year old inmates who may be transferred to the adult detention facility and must be housed out of sight and sound of other inmates.

Chairman Renner advised that the implementation of the Pre-Trial Program, coordinated by Mr. Sarge Rizvi, and Drug Court may help ease some of the over-population.

Sheriff Emery advised that the Sheriff's Department has begun alcohol compliance checks on County Liquor License facilities. He reported that seven out of 15 facilities served alcohol to minors. Sheriff Emery pointed out that the minors used their own personal driver's licenses, with correct birth dates. He indicated that four out of the seven facilities were under County jurisdiction liquor licenses. That information has been forwarded to the First Civil Assistant State's Attorney for the Liquor Control Commission to review. Sheriff Emery stated that he has sent correspondence to the Towanda, LeRoy and the City of Bloomington Mayors.

Sheriff Emery advised that another alcohol compliance check will be scheduled in the near future.

Mr. Cavallini asked what is the penalty for a liquor violation. Sheriff Emery replied that the seven County facilities will be charged with a misdemeanor. Each individual Liquor Commission, with jurisdiction, will determine what the fine will be to the establishments. The McLean County Liquor Commission will determine what will be the fine to the owners in the unincorporated area of the County. He noted that the fine may be dependent upon prior offenses.

Chairman Renner asked if there were any additional comments or questions. Hearing none, he thanked Sheriff Emery.

Ms. Beth Kimmerling, Coroner, presented her Monthly Report for July 2007. She reported that July was a busy month. Ms. Kimmerling noted that year-to-date is running very close to last year in both McLean County autopsies and out-of-County autopsies.

Ms. Kimmerling pointed out three significant items from the 2006 Annual Report. The first item is the fact that the motor vehicle death rate remained low.

The second item Ms. Kimmerling wanted to highlight was her concern regarding how depression is treated in this community. She noted that she has an affiliation with the Center for Human Services. Ms. Kimmerling stated that this group is trying to reduce the wait time to see a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist. She pointed out that there is often a wait of 60 to 90 days to see a psychiatrist or psychologist. Due to this delay, the suicide rate is high. Ms. Kimmerling stated that there are not enough psychologists available in the community. She indicated that a Mental Health Clinic would be beneficial to the citizens of the County. Unfortunately, there are only six private psychiatric physicians that could be called upon to volunteer their time for that type of clinic as compared to the Community Health Clinic, which is staffed by many general practitioners.

Ms. Kimmerling noted that she included in the Annual Report an assessment form that people use to determine a person's mental health needs. She stated that there are 20 signs and symptoms of mental health crisis. If a person meets at least five of those symptoms, treatment should be more readily available.

Chairman Renner asked that Ms. Kimmerling apprise the Committee if there is anything that the Board can do to assist with the situation.

Ms. Kimmerling advised that the final point she wanted to bring up is the fact that there was a decrease in the out-of-County autopsies last year. She stated that this is due, in part, to the increase of newer facilities opening.

Ms. Kimmerling reported that, as of September 1, 2007, Dr. Brian Mitchell, the Board Certified Forensic Pathologist who has served our community, will no longer provide his services to McLean County. She indicated that Dr. Scott Denton, who is the forensic pathologist who provided vacation coverage for Dr. Mitchell and who was the Acting Interim Cook County Medical Examiner, will be the new forensic pathologist for McLean County and he will be moving to McLean County. Ms. Kimmerling noted that this situation can open many doors in terms of attracting business to McLean County.

Ms. Kimmerling indicated that Dr. Denton wants to work out of McLean County, rather than travel from one facility to another. She advised that it is important that the Coroner's Office be kept up to date in terms of the facility and equipment. Ms. Kimmerling stated that, during budget talks, she will work to keep the morgue area current.

Chairman Renner asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he thanked Ms. Kimmerling.

Ms. Sandy Parker, Circuit Clerk, presented her July 2007 Monthly Report. She stated that the statistics are very positive at the half-way mark of the year. Ms. Parker indicated that she will present a report that shows the percentages next month.

Ms. Parker stated that the Circuit Clerk's Office is planning to make an adjustment at the beginning of the year in the disbursements of the in-court traffic money. She stated that, some time ago, the Supreme Court mandated that all over-the-counter money be disbursed on a percentage distribution system, rather than an itemization of the cost. Currently, they are doing percentage distribution, which streamlines the accounting. Ms. Parker indicated that they are considering doing all traffic disbursements that way. She stated that, in order to make that transition, she will need to ask for a Resolution from the Board for approval. Ms. Parker advised that she would like to implement the change in January. She noted that she may also request an adjustment to the Court Automation fee and the Court Document Storage fee at the start of the year.

Chairman Renner asked if there were any comments or questions. There were none.

Chairman Renner presented a transfer of \$12,000.00 in Court Services as recommended by the County Auditor. The transfer is for an adjustment of an expense from Line Item 0832.0001 to Line Item 0621.0001.

Motion by Cavallini/Harding to Recommend Approval of a transfer of \$12,000.00 from Line Item 0832.0001 to Line Item 0621.0001 in Court Services, as recommended by the County Auditor.
Motion carried.

Chairman Renner presented the August 31, 2007 Justice Committee bills for review and approval as transmitted by the County Auditor. The Justice Committee bills include a pending total of \$1,374.04 and a prepaid total of \$1,850,054.55 for a Fund Total of \$1,851,428.59.

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Motion by Harding/Butler to Recommend Approval of the Justice Committee bills as of August 31, 2007, as transmitted by the County Auditor.
Motion carried.

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Chairman Renner introduced a request to move the Justice Committee meeting from the first Monday of the month at 4:30 p.m. to the first Tuesday of the month at 4:30 p.m. After a brief discussion, the Committee concurred to move the Justice Committee meetings to the first Tuesday of the month at 4:30 p.m.

Chairman Renner asked if there was any other business or communication for the Justice Committee. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith A. LaCasse
Recording Secretary