

Justice Committee Meeting Minutes

The Justice Committee of the McLean County Board met on Monday, June 2, 2003 at 5:15 p.m. in Room 700 of the McLean County Law and Justice Center, 104 W. Front Street, Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman Renner, Members Rodgers, Nuckolls and Board Chairman Sweeney

Members Absent: Members Johnson, Kinzinger and Rackauskas

Staff Present: Mr. John Zeunik, County Administrator; Mrs. Carmen Zielinski, Administrator's Office

Department Heads/ Elected Officials

Present: Ms. Mary Whitaker, Assistant Director, Children's Advocacy Center; Ms. Beth C. Kimmerling, Coroner; Ms. Roxanne Castleman, Director, Court Services; Mr. Eric T. Ruud, First Assistant State's Attorney, State's Attorney's Office; Mr. William Scanlon, Court Administrator; Ms. Amy Davis, Public Defender; Mr. Bill Gamblin, Director, E-911; Mr. Tony Cannon, Director, MetCom

Members of the Public Present:

Ms. Barbara Stuart, Alternatives to Jail Committee, League of Women Voters and Ms. Carol Reitan, Collaborative Solutions Institute; Mr. Bob Sutherland, Secretary, McLean County Jail Review Committee

Chairman Renner called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. Chairman Renner explained that when there is not a quorum present, Board members can meet and listen to monthly statistical reports, but no decisions or actions can be made until a quorum is achieved. County Board Chairman Sweeney is enroute to the meeting, and pursuant to Board Rules, will make a quorum for the Committee.

Ms. Mary Whitaker, Assistant Director, Children's Advocacy Center, presented the Monthly Statistical Report for the Children's, Advocacy Center. Ms. Whitaker informed the Committee that the application for reaccreditation for the National Children's Alliance has been completed. Ms. Whitaker presented the application to Mr. Zeunik for review in the Administrator's Office before it is turned in. Committee members had no further questions for Ms. Whitaker at this time.

Ms. Beth C. Kimmerling, McLean County Coroner, referred to the Monthly Report for April 2003. Ms. Kimmerling noted that March was a quiet month for the Coroner's Office even though some of the numbers continue to increase. The year-to-date numbers are still

Page Two

lower than 2002. Ms. Kimmerling stated that out-of-county cases are keeping the office busy, and inquest numbers have increased some. Committee members did not have any further questions for Ms. Kimmerling.

Ms. Sandra Parker, Circuit Clerk, was not present to discuss the Monthly Statistical Report for April 2003. The Committee did not have any questions.

Sheriff Dave Owens, McLean County Sheriff, was not present to discuss the McLean County Detention Facility Population Report. Chairman Renner pointed out that the totals mentioned in the Population Report will relate to an agenda item due to be discussed later in the meeting when a quorum has been achieved. The Committee had no further questions at this time.

Ms. Amy Davis, Public Defender, presented the Monthly Statistical Report for the Public Defender's Office. The Committee had no questions on the report.

Chairman Renner asked Ms. Davis to update the new members of the Justice Committee on the progress of the Screening Program used in the Public Defender's Office.

Ms. Davis stated that the screening program being used in the Public Defender's Office has been in place and used for six years now. Ms. Davis explained that anyone who applies for Public Defender services has to be screened by two members of the Court Services. The staff members gather information from the defendant and then confirm the information provided to make sure the applicant is eligible for services. This screening is done before the first meaningful court hearing occurs. A recommendation is then made to the courts on whether the applicant is eligible or not eligible for services. The screening program has reduced the caseload in the office. In 2002, the Public Defender's Office handled 184 felonies and 220 misdemeanors less than the previous years.

Mr. Eric T. Ruud, First Assistant State's Attorney, State's Attorney's Office, presented the Caseload and Asset Forfeiture Reports for Mr. Bill Yoder who was out of town. The Committee had no questions for Mr. Ruud.

Mr. Bill Gamblin, 911 Administrator, E.T.S.B., informed the Committee that the chart enclosed with the 911 Call Report for April indicates the number of 911 calls received increased 30% due in part to cellular calls coming in. While cellular calls are increasing all of the time, this 30% figure represents the calls that were handled on the land lines also. Historically, the 911 systems across the United States indicate that cellular calls range from 25% to 60% of their calls for service.

Chairman Michael F. Sweeney, McLean County Board Chairman, entered the meeting at 5:42 p.m., thus making a quorum.

Justice Committee Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2003
Page Three

Chairman Renner referred to the Justice Committee minutes of April 7, 2003.

Motion by Nuckolls/Rodgers to accept and place on file the Minutes of the April 7, 2003 Justice Committee. Motion carried.

Mr. Ruud recommended that due to the Open Meetings Act, the monthly reports from the Children's Advocacy Center, McLean County Coroner, Circuit Clerk, Sheriff's Department, Court Services, Public Defender, State's Attorney and E-911 be officially received and acknowledged. The Justice Committee members concurred with Mr. Ruud's recommendation.

Chairman Renner referred to a request for approval of an Emergency Appropriation Ordinance amending the McLean County Fiscal Year 2003 Combined Annual Appropriation and Budget Ordinance ETSB Operating Fund 0450, Emergency Telephone Systems Board Department 0098 Metro Communications Center Fund 0452, MetCom Department 0030.

Mr. Tony Cannon, Director, MetCom, explained that MetCom is mandated by State law to maintain a back-up center and staff it 24 hours/7 days a week. Presently, this is being done by one staff member performing all of the dispatching for the Sheriff, Fire and EMS departments. The ETSB Board charged Mr. Gamblin with finding an alternative to a back-up center. After extensive research and some meetings with DeWitt County, to see if DeWitt County would become McLean County's back-up center, this option was dropped. After reviewing all of the issues presented by DeWitt County, it was decided that the funds would be better spent if the back-up center stayed and was maintained within McLean County. After comparing the cost of paying DeWitt County or maintaining this back-up center here in McLean County, it was decided that three additional Telecommunicators would be needed to staff the County's back-up center. This would allow for the staffing of a back-up center 24/7 with two telecommunicators. This would make the back-up center a secondary PSAP and do all of the Fire and EMS dispatching from that building, moving the Sheriff's Department back into the main MetCom building.

Mr. Cannon stated that on April 22nd, the Emergency Telephone Systems Board voted to appropriate additional funds in the amount of \$42,037.00 from the unappropriated fund balance of the ETSB Operating Fund 0450 to fund the addition of 3.0 full-time equivalent Telecommunicator positions and related expenses for MetCom to provide the required back-up capability in a cost-efficient manner. Mr. Cannon informed the Justice Committee that the Finance Committee approved the companion FTE Resolution earlier today.

Motion by Nuckolls/Rodgers to recommend approval of an Emergency Appropriation Ordinance amending the McLean County Fiscal Year 2003 Combined Annual Appropriation and Budget Ordinance ETSB Operating Fund 0450, Emergency Telephone Systems Board Department 0098 Metro Communications Center Fund 0452, MetCom Department 0030. Motion carried.

At this time, Chairman Renner referred to the Alternatives to Jail: Fiscal Year 2004 Budget Policy: 1) Pre-Trial Release Program with Electronic Monitoring or 2) Sentenced Program for Work Release and/or Weekend with Electronic Monitoring. Chairman Renner noted that the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee and the League of Women Voters have spent a fair amount of time evaluating the overcrowding in the jail. Using Tazewell County as an exemplary County regarding pre-trial programs, McLean County recognizes that we have different problems and a larger population to contend with. The two options listed on the agenda have been derived from the documentation of the shifting of numbers in the jail during December 2002, January 2003 and February 2003.

Chairman Renner noted that under the administrative issue regarding the Pre-Trial Release Program, the resources in the \$188,692.00 figure would not necessarily change if there is a mixture of the two options. There may be less of an expense if offenders were only sentenced to electronic monitoring. Ms. Castleman answered that would be a correct statement because the screening portion of the process would not be included in the program. Through a pre-trial program, someone has to gather the information and screen the candidate to help the courts decide if they are a good candidate for release or not.

Chairman Renner noted that if the Justice Committee decides to move ahead with the policy suggesting that this was a "high priority" for the 2004 budget cycle, some of the administrative details could be worked out between now and January 1, 2004. Ms. Castleman stated that if this program is implemented, the program may shift from one option to another as the years go on. Chairman Renner agreed that this program should have the flexibility to shift from one option to another. Chairman Renner pointed out that the data does not provide a good "point-estimate" on how much any one of these programs will save McLean County at the present time.

Ms. Rodgers commented that it is simple logic to see that any of these programs will help reduce jail population, which should reflect in one manner or another on the budget.

Ms. Castleman said that a Pre-Trial Release Program, from all of the research that has been done, is not a guarantee that the program will reduce the jail population. The Pre-Trial Release Program should help guarantee that the "appropriate" people are in jail.

Mr. William Scanlon, Court Administrator, informed the Committee that he was
Justice Committee Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2003
Page Five

representing Chief Judge John P. Freese, who was called away. On behalf of Judge Freese, Mr. Scanlon assured the Committee that the courts are going to stand behind Court Services and will utilize it to the best extend possible. Mr. Scanlon also stated that Judge Elizabeth Robb, during her term as Presiding Judge of the Criminal Division, will attend the Justice Committee when able, if not Mr. Scanlon will attend.

Mr. Nuckolls asked what direction the Committee needed to take regarding the Pre-Trial Release Program. Chairman Renner answered that the Committee needed to recommend that the proposed Pre-Trial Release Program and Electronic Monitoring be designated as a "high priority" issue for the Fiscal Year 2004 Budget.

Motion by Nuckolls/Rodgers to recommend that the Pre-Trial Release Program and Electronic Monitoring be designated as a "high priority" item for the Fiscal Year 2004 Budget.

Mr. Sweeney asked for clarification on the staffing request documented in the agenda. The request shows a need for four (4) probation officers. Mr. Sweeney wondered if these officers were going to be working on a 24 hours/7 days a week basis, because if they are going to be on 24/7, the budget request should document the need for five (5) probation officers. Ms. Castleman explained that as a system is set-up, a contractor receives all the calls regarding violations, they then fax or page the probation officer on call to respond to the call. High priority cases will be handled immediately, low priority will wait till the next morning. Mr. Sweeney just wanted to make the point clear that the proposed staffing request was determined at the proper level. This would facilitate approval from the Finance Committee. Chairman Renner asked if there were any more questions or comments. Hearing none, Chairman Renner called for a vote on the previous motion.

Motion carried.

Ms. Castleman asked that the policy include a time-table, such as 12 months, 18 months, etc., regarding how long the probation officers are to be employed under these funds. Mr. Sweeney noted that this request is not part of the motion on the table. Mr. Zeunik noted that the request presently on the table will be sent to the Executive Committee for their recommendation to the County Board. The Finance Committee will not need to visit this request at this time.

Ms. Castleman stated her concern that due to the initiation of this program, present and established programs will be discontinued. Ms. Castleman stated that she is 100% behind the new program as long as Court Services does not have to sacrifice established programs. Chairman Renner noted that Ms. Castleman's point was understood and accepted by the Justice Committee members.

Justice Committee Meeting Minutes

June 2, 2003

Page Six

Mr. John M. Zeunik, County Administrator, did not have any items for the Committee at this time.

Chairman Renner presented the bills, as transmitted and recommended by the County Auditor, for review and approval by the Justice Committee.

Justice Committee Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2003
Page Seven

Motion by Nuckolls/Rodgers to recommend approval of the bills, as presented by the

County Auditor. Motion carried.

There being nothing further to come before the Committee at this time, Chairman Renner adjourned the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carmen I. Zielinski
Recording Secretary

E:\Ann\Minutes\Just_June.03.doc