

Minutes of the Justice Committee

The Justice Committee of the McLean County Board met on Tuesday, March 4, 2014 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 400 of the Government Center, 115 E. Washington Street, Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman Caisley; Members Rankin, McIntyre, Schafer, Soeldner and Wollrab

Other County Board
Members Present: None

Staff Present: Ms. Hannah Eisner, Assistant County Administrator;
Ms. Judith LaCasse, Assistant to the County
Administrator

Department Heads/
Elected Officials
Present: Mr. Jason Chambers, State's Attorney; Ms. Kim
Campbell, Public Defender; Mr. Don Everhart, Circuit
Clerk; Sheriff Mike Emery; Ms. Beth Kimmerling,
Coroner; Ms. Judy Brucker, Director, Children's
Advocacy Center

Others Present: Mr. Rusty Thomas, Chief Deputy Sheriff

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

Chairman Caisley presented the February 4, 2014 Justice Committee Minutes for Approval.

Motion by Soeldner/Rankin to Approve the Minutes of
the February 4, 2014 Meeting.
Motion carried.

Mr. Jason Chambers, State's Attorney, reviewed his Monthly Caseload Report and Asset Forfeiture Fund Report.

There was a discussion on the decline in DUI arrests. Mr. Chambers indicated that traffic and DUI arrests have been lower, which he attributed to weather and other cyclical events.

Chairman Caisley asked if there were any additional questions or comments. Hearing none, he thanked Mr. Chambers.

Ms. Kim Campbell, Public Defender, presented her Monthly Report. She expressed concern with the number of post-conviction cases, which she hopes will trend down in the future.

There was a discussion on the increase in mental health cases. Ms. Campbell noted that she expects this trend will continue.

Mr. Rankin asked if it will be necessary to ask for additional help during the next budget cycle. Ms. Campbell replied that she will continue to watch the number of post-conviction cases to determine future needs.

Mr. Soeldner asked for an explanation of post-conviction cases. Ms. Campbell advised that when someone is sentenced to the Department of Corrections term that usually means that all appeals have been exhausted. She indicated that there are only a few avenues left to overturn the conviction, including the Post-Conviction Act which allows someone to allege a constitutional violation, which usually means that the person will allege that their attorney was ineffective, therefore, their constitutional right to effective counsel was denied them. Ms. Campbell added that 80% of these people are represented by the Public Defender, which means that the allegation is against Public Defender's attorneys.

Mr. McIntyre asked how many post-conviction cases are there. Ms. Campbell replied that there were six cases in 2013 and there are 22 cases so far in 2014, which is a significant increase.

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

Mr. Don Everhart, Circuit Clerk presented his January Statistical Reports. He indicated that there was nothing unusual in the reports.

Chairman Caisley asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he thanked Mr. Everhart.

Sheriff Mike Emery reviewed the February 2014 Detention Facility Population report. He noted that the population average is running 245 inmates this year, which is a little high. Sheriff Emery added that the numbers fluctuate so much that there are no concerns at this time.

Chairman Caisley advised that he received an anonymous letter in his mailbox at the Government Center expressing concern about the possible failure to give inmates the psychotropic drugs that they were taking on the outside. Sheriff Emery responded that this anonymous letter has been circulated through the media, but the media will not publish an anonymous letter. He stated that when the media would not publish the letter, the letter was circulated to various people,

including Chairman Caisley. Sheriff Emery indicated that the letter is allegedly from an employee at the Jail who fears for his job because inmates are not getting their medications. He advised that he does not believe that a staff member on the Sheriff's Department would have authored that letter. Sheriff Emery pointed out that if inmates were not being provided with their medications, it would have been discovered in the two NIC Reports through the Department of Justice. He indicated that the NIC Reports mentioned that McLean County is a model county jail.

Mr. McIntyre stated that he believes that an anonymous letter does not deserve time being spent on it.

Sheriff Emery reviewed correspondence received from the Center for Human Services regarding distribution of medications to two individuals. He advised that there needs to be a better line of communication between the organizations.

Mr. Rankin concurred that there appears to be a communication problem. He added that the two Mental Health Advisory Groups are a positive step in working together and opening up the communication process.

Mr. Rankin indicated that he is not happy with anonymous letters, but he can understand someone's reluctance to sign their name if the individual truly fears for their job. He would encourage that person to come forward if there is a legitimate concern and speak to someone about it rather than send an anonymous letter. Ms. Wollrab agreed. Mr. McIntyre stated that you don't legitimize something with anonymous information.

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

Chairman Caisley presented the Court Services Monthly Reports as submitted by Ms. Lori McCormick, Director, Court Services, as she was unable to attend the meeting. There was a brief discussion on the out-of-state detainees in the Juvenile Detention Center.

Ms. Beth Kimmerling, Coroner, presented her January 2014 Report. She reminded the Committee that the report runs a month behind, so revenue numbers are down in January.

Mr. McIntyre pointed out that we are still providing services to Vermilion County. Ms. Kimmerling stated that Champaign County has hired a pathologist. She added that Sangamon County has hired a forensic pathologist, and he has received his license. Ms. Kimmerling predicts that Sangamon County will no longer come to McLean County. She indicated that it is unclear at this time how these changes will affect McLean County.

Ms. Kimmerling stated that there are now only two forensic pathologists working out of the McLean County Coroner's Office, namely Dr. Scott Denton and Dr. Amanda Youmans.

Mr. Soeldner asked if losing Sangamon County, other than losing potential revenue, is a relief or a disappointment. Ms. Kimmerling replied that she has a difficult time separating the two, but there are projects that could be completed.

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

Ms. Judy Brucker, Director, Children's Advocacy Center, reviewed the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) Monthly Statistical Report and the CASA Report. She pointed out that numbers are on par with last year.

Ms. Brucker stated that the annual fundraiser, the Blue Kids Benefit, just finished and was well received. There were 505 people in attendance and the net profit of \$101,500 will go into the program. Ms. Brucker pointed out that 24% of the people that attended were new people to that benefit.

Ms. Brucker reminded the Committee that April is Child Abuse Awareness Month. She indicated that four committees have worked diligently on how to keep this issue in the public eye, including the yard signs that have been used in the past. Other initiatives include local artists painting umbrellas and putting them on display in various businesses where they can be purchased after April. There are window clings that say "Speak up for Kids," and posters for business windows. Ms. Brucker indicated that Sugar Mama Bakery has asked to feature a cupcake for the effort during the month of April.

Ms. Brucker stated that there is a group of 16 business partners who are working on a Community Task Force to push the idea of providing more public speaking arenas for child abuse awareness.

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

Chairman Caisley presented the February 28, 2014 Justice Committee bills for review and approval as transmitted by the County Auditor. The Justice Committee bills include a Prepaid Total of \$217,122.60 and a Fund Total that is the same.

Motion by Schafer/Wollrab to Recommend Approval of the Justice Committee Bills and transfers as of February 28, 2014 as transmitted by the County Auditor.
Motion carried.

Chairman Caisley asked if there was any other business or communication for the Justice Committee. Hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith A. LaCasse
Recording Secretary