

**LAW AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
MARCH 13, 2006**

The Law and Justice Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, March 13, 2006 @ 6:30p.m. in the DeKalb County Legislative Center's Freedom Room. Chairman Sue Leifheit called the meeting to order. Members present were Richard Osborne, Pat Vary, Anita Turner, Pat LaVigne and Roger Steimel. Eric Johnson was absent. Others present were Judge Kurt Klein, Maureen Josh, Ron Matekaitis, Marilyn Stromborg, Ken Johnson, Margi Gilmour, Greg Millburg and Julia Fullerton.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**Moved by Ms. LaVigne, seconded by Mr. Steimel, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from February 27, 2006.**

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Moved by Ms. Turner, seconded by Ms. LaVigne, and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.**

**JUDICIAL UPDATE**

Judicial

Judge Kurt Klein, DeKalb County Presiding Judge, informed the committee about what his department's duties have been over the last six months. He said that the childcare room would go in the courthouse this June. After that is done, there will be no more room in the courthouse. He said that drug court would begin shortly too.

Circuit Clerk

Ms. Maureen Josh, DeKalb County Circuit Clerk, said that the compliance department would be expanding soon, hopefully. Per the Governor's directive that the courts look at integrated justice - her office is now talking about sharing data with the State's Attorney's Office.

Ms. Josh said that they do have space needs too. Along with what Judge Klein reported about the childcare room opening in June, she feels that the child's waiting room is a really good initiative.

State's Attorney

Mr. Matekaitis, DeKalb County State's Attorney, said that the court system is very busy. He said that his office has run out of space. They had to assemble some numbers for spacing needs for the next 15 to 20 years. By compiling this information, they found that since 1980 felonies have increased over 500% in this county. Even over the last 13 years they have increased at an average of about 9%. The reason for that is that some misdemeanor cases are now felonies. DUI's have increased 100% in the last 10 years, too.

Mr. Matekaitis said that we lack judicial resources. Ninety-percent of felony cases were handled by one Judge last year. Kane County has given them a judge part-time for family court, where this part-time judge comes only 2 times a week.

Space-wise, he said, they ran out of office space the day they moved into the Legislative Center. They are unable to add a support staff person or new attorney in their office currently. He said they also have an annex office in the courthouse for their juvenile division who stays there. They are completely out of space in his office.

Mr. Matekaitis informed the committee that this is the second year for the Domestic Violence Grant, which paid for a full-time attorney, a full-time investigator and an advocate who works out of the Safe Passage office. That program he feels will be very successful in their domestic violence caseload. Last year they disposed of nearly 300 domestic violence cases. By having a full-time investigator and attorney they are able to do things that they couldn't do in the past, which is to be more victim intensive in terms of them reaching out and contacting the victim earlier. With the investigator they have been able to do things that they were never able to do, like increasing their stalking caseload by 3 cases, which is 3 more than they ever filed in the last fifteen years.

They are nearly at the 800-caseload range for felonies for the last two years in their office, said Mr. Matekaitis. Last year was 762 cases and the year before that was 794 cases, he continued.

Ms. Vary asked Mr. Matekaitis why did we run out of space as fast as we did? Mr. Matekaitis said that their current office space was never intended for the long-term solution. It was just intended to be an interim solution.

Ms. Vary asked if this should be part of the issue along with the jail, that there is a space needs problem with various offices in the county on the Sycamore campus? Mr. Matekaitis said that he could give the committee projections of space needs for the next fifteen to twenty years from now. I could never reasonably ask you to build a building to represent staffing needs for so many years down the road. He continued by saying the jail perhaps because you could rent out the space for the interim, but not for traditional office space.

Judge Klein said that it is his hopes, with the issue of space needs, that the county board does not move the courts system or any offices away from the Sycamore Campus. He wants the campus to stay here in Sycamore.

#### Drug Court Update

Ms. Marilyn Stromborg, Special Court Administrator, for the Drug Court, presented her report to the committee. She said that she has visited as many drug courts as possible. She even visited a few in Florida because that is where drug courts began. She visited a Teen Court also in Florida and said that this county may be starting one here. She was able to visit treatment centers too and spent a week in Chicago visiting a Specialized Treatment Center for women.

Ms. Stromborg visited with Dr. John Webster from Kane county and he has assumed a position on our County's Drug Court Team to provide consultation on program evaluation.

On page 2 of her report, she highlights the goals that the Drug Team has set for themselves to meet. The items that have been met so far are in bold print (please see report attached to these minutes).

The Team has also established their long and short-term goals found on the last page of her report. They are now determining their target population.

The committee asked Ms. Stromborg if the county is on the right track after her visits with other drug courts? Ms. Stromborg said yes, especially by hiring a full-time person to help run the drug court. She said that the counties that she visited and spoke with said that the main reason that some of the drug courts failed was because they did not hire a person full-time.

The committee thanked all of the judicial department heads and Judge Klein for their very informative reports.

### **PUBLIC DEFENDER'S REPORT**

Mr. Ken Johnson, DeKalb County Public Defender, said that if anyone had any questions regarding his report he would be happy to answer them. No questions were asked.

### **COURT SERVICES REPORT**

Ms. Margi Gilmour, Director of DeKalb County Court Services, said the same thing that if anyone had any questions regarding her report that she would be happy to answer them too. No questions were asked of her either.

### **JAIL MONTHLY REPORT**

Chairman Leifheit said that the average population in the jail in January 2006 was 105 inmates. She also said that the Sheriff's Department has already spent \$41,000 in transporting people outside of the county already.

Chairman Leifheit also said that when the Jail Population Review Committee met one of the shocking things that was discussed was that by the year 2010 we will be spending \$916,000 to transport prisoners out of our jail, that's in 4 years. That is if we keep it at the rate we are going right now. It is going to take at least two years to build a jail, if we get the voters to agree to it.

Chairman Leifheit also said that we have tax caps and it is like a "monster eating someone from the inside" and if it continues to grow like this and we cannot increase taxes, something has got to give. People will not be happy when they come for county business and they have to wait in a very long line because there is only one clerk to wait on them.

As far as solutions coming out of those meetings - about everything that has been suggested has been tried. There was a glimmer of hope in home monitoring in perhaps increasing that program because there is new Global Positioning Technology that makes it more specific on how a person can be watched on the system. But then that let's people out of a supervised situation that we may not really want out of the jail, she continued to say.

Ms. Vary said that the County needs to report better projections on the costs and space needs over 20 years, not 3 to 5 years. She continued to state that the jail and rooms are not the only expenses involved here, that the staffing costs are, too.

Ms. Josh said that she was working here in 1990 when they were talking about the jail space problem back then. She served on the committee then and all the rest of the committees through the years. All the same topics that we are talking about today were discussed then, she explained. That is where we came up with home monitoring in 1990. We are exactly where we said we would be. She continued by stating that the worst thing that has ever happened at the

courthouse was to move the State's Attorneys Office from the courthouse. That is a terrible situation at our courthouse. Not only moving people and cases across a busy street but on a day-to-day basis. It's not serving the public or the courts, she said. We have studied everything, we have done all the right things, and the problem is that we have not been able to get the public to understand that these are really critical issues.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved by Ms. Turner, seconded by Ms. Vary, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Sue Leifheit, Chairman

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Mary C. Supple, Secretary