

DRAFT
LAW AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 20, 2006

The Law and Justice Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, November 20, 2006 @ 6:30p.m. in the DeKalb County Administration Building's Conference Room East. Chairman Sue Leifheit called the meeting to order. Members present were Rich Osborne, Pat Vary, Anita Turner, Pat LaVigne and Roger Steimel. Paulette Tolene was absent. Others present were Margi Gilmour and Jill Olson with CASA.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Moved by Ms. LaVigne, seconded by Ms. Turner, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes for October 2006.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

CASA UPDATE

Ms. Jill Olson, Executive Director of the CASA Program here in DeKalb County, updated the committee on her office and their duties. She said a few cases have closed so the numbers are a little down compared to June of 2006. The number of children being served is still consistent she feels.

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has continued to implement a policy that they are not referring as many cases to the system. CASA of course will not be appointed until the cases are placed in the system. With Mr. Brian Samuels stepping down from DCFS in Springfield it will be interesting to see if the philosophy will change. Governor Blagojevich now has to appoint someone to fill that position, Ms. Olson continued.

Another challenge that her advocates are facing is that DCFS is also subcontracting more cases to outside agencies, said Ms. Olson. They are dealing with some agencies that do not have local offices here in DeKalb County. DCFS is slowly but surely trying to get Catholic Charities out of the scene, which she feels, is not a good thing. They are concerned about this. They have tried to encourage DCFS to re-look at this policy to try to keep the local agencies in. She continued by stating that our Catholic Charities is very well run out of Aurora and DeKalb.

The committee asked her if she knew why they would want to do this? Ms. Olson said that their assumption is because of the costs. Without being privy to their costs and figures, her assumption is that they think it is more cost effective to contract out with some of these other agencies. They have one

case where the agency is in Des Plaines and the family that they are serving lives in Sandwich. They have to provide transportation for visitation for the child in foster care in Glen Ellen, which is rare for them to have a child outside of the county. She doesn't know where the cost effectiveness in this case is.

PUBLIC DEFENDER'S REPORT

Mr. Ken Johnson, DeKalb County Public Defender, could not be with us this month for his report, but any committee member can call him with questions at his office, said Chairman Leifheit.

COURT SERVICES REPORT

Ms. Margi Gilmour, Director of DeKalb County Court Services, said her numbers for the Adult Court Services Report remain consistent. There were 434 active cases and the numbers of new cases were cut in half in September. The CRS hours are consistent with 40 cases referred a month for adults and the juveniles have about 5 cases a month referred.

She also said that there was an error in the juvenile report where three minors were detained twice in September and one minor detained for four times.

Ms. Vary asked if Ms. Gilmour could compare even further on the Year-to-date totals with one sheet showing all of FY05 figures? Ms. Gilmour said yes, she could do that.

Out of the 17 detentions that they had in September, there were 3 residential placements, with 1 released juvenile, 1 admitted juvenile and another one added for the month of October, which will be reflected in next month's report. Of those 17 detentions, 1 kid detained for the 4th time and 3 kids detained for the 2nd time.

The Year-to-Date total that we spent in 2005 through September 2006, was almost \$52,000, which does not include the \$85,000 that we spent out of the IGA account, said Ms. Gilmour. The total amount spent is \$137,480 for detention through 9/30/06, which is a large amount, she further stated.

Chairman Leifheit said that she thought that the judges were saying that the placements were not working, why are they still sending them there? Ms. Gilmour said that when they took a look at residential placements about four years ago, they had NIU do a study. She thinks that what the judges are thinking is that when the kids are in placement, they are learning things and doing fine, we spend about \$40,000 a year and when they come out they revert right back to their old behavior.

Ms. Vary said that many times the kids go right back to the old environment. Ms. Vary asked, is there anyway to somehow get the environment or family.....?

Chairman Leifheit said that there used to be a multi-family problem-solving program.

Ms. Gilmour said that she would like to see that program resurrected again. She said that she never was given a reason why it was cancelled. It met on a weekly basis and was co-facilitated by a psychologist out of DuPage County and juvenile officers. Kids that were involved in the court system were ordered to attend about 10 sessions and the whole family had to attend. The philosophy was that a lot of kids came from families that have all sorts of problems and you can't just fix the kid-you have to get the whole family involved in trying to make changes.

Chairman Leifheit said that the program was started because the detention numbers and charges were up to around \$400,000 or more.

Ms. Gilmour said that one of the reasons that we are seeing juvenile detention costs going up is because the county has two juvenile offenders that are in JJC that are pending adult charges. They will likely sit there for at least one year. That adds up really quick when you have two beds that are being used up right away with kids pending adult charges. We did not have that last year or even the last couple of years.

JAIL REPORT

Chairman Leifheit said that the Jail Report reflects staggering numbers. We have spent nearly \$250,000 in out-of-county rental space costs so far for 2006. She further stated that the Finance Committee, at their last meeting, discussed where the County is going to come up with the funds now that the referendum has failed. They are going to do some kind of special study about what funds could be raided to cover this since we won't have any new jail for quite some time. And the costs are just going to go up and up when it comes to building a new one, and it's inevitable that we are going to have to build a new jail.

Mr. Steimel said that we will need to follow a stricter fiscal responsibility. A year ago he made a point to try and put a hold on the idea of a new community outreach building until a referendum passed. He also voiced a year ago to only ask for a ¼ cent rather than a ½ cent, and there were some who said that it wouldn't be worth it to only go ¼ cent. Look at where we are at now, if we only had a ¼ cent request and being prudent – you and I could have done it, but County government could not seem to do it. It is not going to get better just look at the trend in the recent weeks, he further stated.

Chairman Leifheit also said that the Auditors have said that we do not have enough money stored away in the opportunity fund to cover this.

Before adjourning the committee thanked Chairman Leifheit for her seventeen and half years of service to the County and wished her well upon her retirement from the county board.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Leifheit, Chairman

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