

**LAW AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
July 16, 2007**

The Law and Justice Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, July 16, 2007 @ 6:30p.m. in the DeKalb County Administration Building's Conference Room East. Chairman Richard Osborne called the meeting to order. Members present were Marlene Allen, Sally DeFauw, Ken Andersen, John Hulseberg and Howard Lyle. Ruth Anne Tobias was absent. Others present were Michael Stuckert, Marilyn Stromborg, Margi Gilmour and Regina Harris.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Andersen, seconded by Mr. Hulseberg, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes for June 2007.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Mr. Lyle, seconded by Mr. Andersen, and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda.

DRUG COURT UPDATE

Ms. Stromborg, Drug Court Administrator, said that the River Valley Workforce Board recognized the County's program at their recent awards for their work (see attachment to these minutes). Since her last report a woman in the program gave birth to a drug-free baby and another is pregnant. She said that the major drugs that they are seeing include crack and heroin.

A challenge for the program is that there is no men's halfway house facility locally, but there is one for women. There is also no in-patient treatment facility. They have one man getting in-patient care in Lake Villa, and another person is in a halfway house in Rockford.

An application for a \$400,000 grant was made but no word is expected on that issue until September.

The Drug Court did complete a 6-month evaluation. Ms. Stromborg believes the biggest fault that they have is that they care too much about the people in the program.

Ms. Allen asked Ms. Stromborg about relapses? Ms. Stromborg said that those do happen. The woman with the baby has not had any, but another person has had them multiple times. Ms. Stromborg described relapses as a chance to get back on track.

John asked if we could attend that Drug Court? Ms. Stromborg said that we are welcomed to attend. It is better to do it at a time when there is more happening. It is unlike any court environmental They meet 11:00a.m. to 12noon in Room 204 on Friday, but they might hve to move to a Wednesday meeting with the new judge starting.

PUBLIC DEFENDER'S REPORT

Ms. Regina Harris, DeKalb County Public Defender, noted that the number of clients is more important than the number of cases in setting staffing for the office and gave a breakdown of the client loads of the assistants in the office.

Attorney Criswell has 73 clients (20 felony DUI's), Attorney Politte has 57 clients, and Ms. Harris has 33 clients. Attorney Olson has 215 clients, Attorney Hubert has 171 clients and Attorney McAdow has 141 clients. Both attorneys Hubert and Mc Adow handle misdemeanor, traffic and DUI cases. Public Defender Regina Harris noted that people handling misdemeanors handle more clients.

Judge Klein has set a new schedule with the new judge starting and Ms. Harris will be redistributing work among the Public Defender's staff.

The new judge, Judge Schreiber, will arrive at the end of July 2007.

Ms. Harris said that the salary structure is a challenge when it comes to redistributing cases. The current structure, with Levels 1 and 2 designated based on type of cases handled-felonies by level 2 and misdemeanors level 1. Restructuring caseloads puts felony work in everyone's hands and handling felonies is considered a promotion but there is no change in status under the current system.

Ms. Harris previously was going to ask for a new position in the budget but her thinking has changed. She wants to restructure the office and to eliminate the level 1, level 2 distinction and have everyone fit along a single pay scale. She will ask for funding to adjust pay according to cases, which would be less expensive than adding staff. Ms. Harris noted that there are ways to handle the changes with the new judge with less expense.

Ms. Allen wondered how we cannot pay people more for handling more felonies? Ms. Harris agreed, she favors eliminating the level 1 and the level 2 distinction and noted that except in unionized offices a single scale is the norm. The advantage to this structure is that everyone is equal but paid in accordance to experience, workload and the nature of their work.

Mr. Andersen asked for a breakdown of the pros and cons of the change for the next meeting and is happy that someone is looking with a new perspective and not just doing things the way they've always been done.

COURT SERVICES REPORTS

Ms. Margi Gilmour, Court Services Director, reviewed her Adult Court Services Report for the committee. She said that there were 47 arrests in the month of June, which is not good. She said that this was by far the most arrests for the year. Of the 707 adult cases 448 are active cases and the rest are administrative, typically transferring out to other jurisdictions.

Ms. Gilmour said that the restitution hours completed are low, but at the time of the report not all of the time sheets were turned in.

The office has been working with a consultant for 4 months and the consultant recommends adding a new position in adult probation. An adult probation officer could see 7 to 9 cases in the office on a given day and spend a lot of time working on making contact with cases, explained Ms. Gilmour.

With the consultant they are looking at shifting orientation in the office to focus more on high and medium risk cases to avoid violations.

In the juvenile report, said Ms. Gilmour, there were 3 minors in placement. Eleven kids were admitted to detention in June, she continued.

Ms. Gilmour said that they are looking at why they are detaining kids and looking to find ways to change how they handle technical violations. They are looking at how to focus on changing behaviors not just locking the kids up.

JAIL REPORT

Chairman Osborne said that the average daily population for the month of June was 98. He also said that the jail spent \$16,550 last month holding inmates out of county. If anyone should have any questions pertaining to this report, they should call the Sheriff, he further stated.

Before adjourning Chairman Osborne said that he had been contacted by Frank Beierlotzer about a chemical disaster planning group he is part of. He is looking for at least a couple of County Board members to meet with them 4 times a year. Mr. Beierlotzer will be invited to talk to the committee at a future meeting about the group.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Osborne, Chairman

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