

DRAFT
LAW AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 19, 2007

The Law and Justice Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, November 19, 2007 @ 6:30p.m. in the DeKalb County Administration Building's Conference Room East. Chairman Rich Osborne called the meeting to order. Members present were Marlene Allen, Ken Andersen, Sally DeFauw, John Hulseberg and Ruth Anne Tobias. Howard Lyle was absent. Others present were Regina Harris, Jill Olson and Margi Gilmour.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Mr. Andersen made some corrections to the minutes including, the first paragraph under Mr. Andersen's Request - he asked to change the second line to read, "Second Ward Alderman Pete Paulsen." He also asked on the second page, 4th paragraph, second line, to read, "The closing of Exchange Street near the Jail..." Finally, on the last page, second paragraph, 3rd line, he asked to have it read, "...Sycamore in 2009. The voters did not....."

Moved by Mr. Andersen, seconded by Ms. Allen, and it was carried unanimously to approve the amended minutes from October 2007.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

CASA UPDATE

Ms. Jill Olson, CASA Director, briefly updated the committee on what her agency has been doing since her last visit with the committee in June 2007.

Ms. Olson said that her office served 106 children from June 2006 to June 2007. Now she is reporting that from June 2007 to November 2007 they have served 118 children. Most of them are coming from the Regional Superintendent's Office on truancy and Abuse and Neglect

cases. The allegation always in abuse and neglect court is usually that the parents are at fault for education neglect and abuse cases.

She explained that the CASA advocate is solely there for the sake of the child. They monitor what is going on in the home and school, like attendance reports, teacher's comments, etc. Some cases can open and close quickly, while there are some that can take longer like an abuse or neglect case.

They are currently looking for male volunteers, but will always look for anyone who would like to volunteer as an advocate.

Mr. Andersen asked Ms. Olson what could this committee do to help with your program besides giving funds?

Ms. Olson said to try and get the word out there that CASA is here and needs more volunteers. She explained that the volunteers have to be 21 years of age and undergo a background check. They do 12 hours of continuing advocacy education each year, 30 hours of classroom training and 5 hours of courtroom observation. CASA asks each volunteer for a commitment of a minimum of 18 to 24 months after a person is certified and assigned to a case. She also said that they currently have 54 advocates and 86 children presently being served. The advocates usually work an average of 10 – 20 hours a month, unless a case goes into a "status" state, which all depends on where the case is procedurally.

Ms. Olson also informed the committee that for the last two or three years the Illinois CASA Program has been trying to get funding from the State Legislature for Illinois CASA Programs. Illinois is one of nine states that receive no funding for their CASA Programs.

The committee thanked Ms. Olson for her very informative report.

PUBLIC DEFENDER'S REPORT

Ms. Harris, DeKalb County Public Defender, presented her monthly report for the month of October 2007 to the committee. She said that she did some checking on the two-year trend and where they are for the month of October. She compared October to the last two years and she found that her office caseload is up by 3% over 2005. In October of 2006 the caseload was actually down.

The changes month to month seem to be the same, somewhere around 300 new cases each month. The office has pretty much kept pace with closing out cases at the same time.

Ms. Harris also said that she sees no need to hire additional staff for her office because of her research.

She did say, however, that she is losing the most experienced attorney among her staff, Ms.. Kelli Politte. Ms. Politte is leaving DeKalb County to go to Lake County as the first assistant public defender. Ms. Harris has been looking for a more experienced attorney to fill this vacancy. She has found someone that she has an offer out to currently and hopes that this person accepts it.

COURT SERVICES REPORT

Ms. Margi Gilmour, Director of the DeKalb County Court Services Department, presented her Adult and Juvenile Reports to the committee.

Ms. Gilmour said that the Adult Officers have seen more PSI's being ordered by the court recently.

Ms. Gilmour reported that the Adult monthly report shows that they had 24 new cases in October 2007.

She then informed the committee that her office has made an offer to a young man from Kane County for the new Community Services Coordinator position. He worked for Kane County for about 9 years. He will hopefully start with DeKalb County's Court Services Department in two weeks.

In the Juvenile Report they had 8 detention admissions for Juveniles in October. There were 5 for the 1st time, 1 for the 3rd time, 1 for the 4th time and 1 for the 7th time. They also had two residential placements.

Ms. Gilmour said that she had a very brief update on the status of the safe house property just north of the Sycamore Campus. She feels that they have some support on the Sycamore City Council for this project and they are trying to get the word out there.

Mr. Andersen asked if there was anything that this committee or the county board could do to help with a statement to the City Council to consider our proposal?

Ms. Gilmour said that this is a really good suggestion.

Mr. Andersen asked how could we do this? He further asked, maybe a letter from the County or a proclamation?

Ms. Gilmour said that she and her staff could draft something and bring it to this committee for review and approval.

JAIL REPORT

Chairman Osborne mentioned that the average daily population in October was 100 inmates with 22 transports. The Sheriff's Department also spent \$23,650, which is lower than last year.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Osborne, Chairman

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