

DRAFT
LAW AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 15, 2007

The Law and Justice Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, October 15, 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, Ken Andersen, Sally DeFauw, John Hulseberg, Ruth Anne Tobias and Howard Lyle. Others present were Gary Hanson, Marilyn Stromborg, Regina Harris, Paula Schmicher, Gail Samulouskly, Amanda Schrem, Ron Matekaitis and Matt Woodstrup.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

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

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chairman Osborne amended the agenda to place the Drug Court Report after the Jail Report. Mr. Andersen asked to address the committee on an issue. Chairman Osborne said that Mr. Andersen's issue could go first on the agenda.

Moved by Ms. Tobias, seconded by Ms. Allen, and it was carried unanimously to approve the amended agenda.

MR. ANDERSEN'S REQUEST

Mr. Andersen said that in September he received an email from Second Ward Alderman Pete Paulsen concerning an article about a recent escape from the County Jail. There is a lot of concern by a number of neighbors in the area about the jail and what is going on.

He thinks that the biggest thing is that people are wishing that their voices would be heard by the County Board. That the public has some input on some of the things that happen to the County.

He received another email from Matt Woodstrup about what is going on with the present location of the jail?

This is one of the reasons why he asked Chairman Osborne if we could add "Public Comment" to our agenda permanently so that we make sure that we keep our agenda open for the public to speak?

Mr. Hulseberg agreed with Mr. Andersen and feels that the committee should add Public Comment too because their input is desired.

Mr. Matt Woodstrup one of the neighbors near the Sycamore Campus asked if he could speak about the recent article on the escape on inmate from the County Jail. He said that he feels that there are some serious concerns about the security at the Jail. He is asking that the County Board and this committee please involve the neighbors living around the Sycamore Campus and respect them in the future consideration of the Jail.

He continued by stating that this has not happened in the past. The closing of Exchange Street near the Jail and how they were not involved in that is one issue. He suggested to Mr. Bockman one time to add the word Jail to the Public Safety building so that people would know that it was the building that housed the jail and inmates. He asked if video cameras are placed on the outside of the Jail? He asked that the County Board please share their ideas with the neighbors and to please send out flyers to the neighbors about meetings that will discuss jail and items that would affect the neighborhood. He is asking for the County Board to have a positive attitude and listen to new ideas.

Ms. Paula Schmicher, from Genoa, asked not to eliminate an Assistant State's Attorney position and Investigator for Domestic Violence in the budget for 2008. She also said that she read this in the MidWeek. She also said that she is all for a new jail. The reason that it did not pass the last time is because there are some people who do not want anything added on to the building here. They would like to see it move. She would like to see another concerted effort to have another referendum so that the public could get on board. She would not like to see the County Board start a savings account for the jail because we don't know how much it will cost to build a new jail. Each year that you save money the costs to build a jail will climb and in 2008 half of this board may not be re-elected. So by the end of 2008 and let's say you save \$600,000 and the new board didn't have the same agenda that you have, now we are dead in the water again and we have lost two important people that have really helped to prosecute domestic violence.

PUBLIC DEFENDER'S REPORT

Ms. Harris was not present to discuss her monthly report with the committee. Chairman Osborne said that if any committee member had a question on her report to please call her office.

COURT SERVICES REPORT

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

The Adult report shows that they added 19 new cases in September 2007. They also had 39 referrals in CRS hours.

In the Juvenile Report they had 3 residential placements and one is an active case in an independent living center. Two others are in placement.

Ms. Gilmour stated that there were 12 detention admissions for Juvenile in September. There were 9 for the first time, two for the 3rd time, 1 for the 4th time and 1 was detained twice.

Ms. Gilmour said that she had a very brief update on the status of the property just north of the Sycamore Campus. It was her understanding that there's been a joint proposal to the City Council from the Park District and Historical Society. The City Council will take time to review that proposal and that no decision will be made until their November meeting or even after that.

JAIL REPORT

Chairman Osborne mentioned that the average daily population in August was 100 inmates. The Sheriff's Department also spent less in rental costs than they did at the same time last year.

DRUG COURT UPDATE

Ms. Marilyn Stromborg, Special Court Administrator, for the DeKalb County Drug Court, presented her Quarterly Report to the committee. She said that they celebrated their first year anniversary on October 20th. They have an evaluation that she will share with the committee that is 98 pages long. She will review the recommendations at the next meeting that she attends. She said that they have 12 people in the program with the median age being 38 years of age. They have had one drug-free baby and two women that are pregnant and those babies will be as drug-free as possible. The crimes that these people have committed are all non-violent crimes, she said.

They have five people in treatment right now. They are starting with intensive residential currently.

They have applied for grants, which one is for \$400,000, however, they have not heard anything on it yet. She just applied for the Planning Initiative Grant too. They have made a real effort to go after federal funds.

She is interviewing more people to enter the program. They should have another two or three people soon.

The major issues are the lack of resources and housing, and the lack of halfway houses in DeKalb County. She had a meeting with Ms. Jean Torma to discuss a halfway house recently and hopefully something will come of it.

She has had meetings with Judge Stuckert, State's Attorney Ron Matekaitis and Michael Flora of the Ben Gordon Center regarding a halfway house.

They have having someone from Kane County to come in and talk about the role halfway houses and recovery houses, too.

FY2008 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Jail Savings Account

Mr. Gary Hanson, DeKalb County Deputy County Administrator, said that the appeal that he has received that will affect this committee is how to find a Jail Savings Account without potential cuts to the budget. He said that the *MID-WEEK* article was written in error and that he wanted to inform the committee of this.

Ms. Allen said that in the past cuts haven't been made and people feel that we are not telling them the truth. She feels that we will need another referendum.

The committee discussed that the County could try another referendum and use the Jail Savings Account monies to fund the operating costs of the Jail.

Domestic Violence Prosecutor and Investigator

Mr. Matekaitis, State's Attorney for DeKalb County, explained the domestic violence position in his office. He said that about three years ago the Attorney General's office partnered with his office and Macon County in securing a grant from the Department of Justice to provide for a prosecutor/investigator and advocate through Safe Passage - full funding for three years. That funding expired last year November/December. As part of the budget process last year knowing that it had expired, he presented the board and this committee with a request that the progress that we had made looked very promising over the last two years. Being cognizant of the County's fiscal situation, he

suggested funding it on a temporary basis. Now the one-year has past and the Attorney General's office did try to reapply and was informed in the last week that the Department of Justice will not be funding the program again.

He said that the prosecutor that was hired for this position is very dedicated and can do misdemeanor cases, felony cases for domestic violence. This person has done an excellent job in this capacity. Mr. Matekaitis feels that these cases are the most challenging cases in his office. His office is now #1 in the State for prosecuting stalking cases because we have a dedicated prosecutor.

The Investigator is invaluable too.

He said that the position is not funded then there will be one prosecutor would leave his office and the cases would need to be rotated among the attorneys in his office. There will be no stand-alone prosecutor for Domestic Violence cases though.

He is asking the committee and the County Board to continue this program.

Court Services Additional Person

Ms. Margi Gilmour, Court Services Director, said that they are asking to add a person to her staff. There has not been an additional staff member added to her office in seventeen years.

Discussion

Mr. Gary Hanson, said that their recommendations is to fund the extra probation officer and fund the prosecutor and investigator in the State's Attorney's Office.

Ms. Allen asked where are we going to get the money for the Jail?

Mr. Hanson said that the real question is how are you going to operate it? May need a new revenue source, he said.

Ms. Allen asked if we could put some money aside?

Mr. Hanson said yes, but that if you do you may have to cut somewhere.

Ms. Tobias asked what is the amount that is going in the Opportunity Fund? that is called the Land Acquisitions and Building Fund that will have \$500,000 being assigned to it in the budget. That's something.

Mr. Hanson said to remember that the General Fund is our last resort.

The committee discussed exploring a bond. They also discussed that the DeKalb School District may put a referendum on the ballot next year and possibly Sycamore in 2009. The voters did not understand the Public Safety Sales Tax last time because they confused it with a property tax.

Mr. Hanson reminded the committee that when they are thinking of other options he wanted to point out to them to think of a long-term solution that is recurring and growing every year. It will be extremely hard to make cuts, he continued.

Mr. Hanson also said that we have the Mitigation Issue also.

He reminded the committee that there will be a Public Hearing on the Budget at the November Finance Committee Meeting (11/7/07) and that it will be the first item on the agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Osborne, Chairman

RO:mcs

G:Law and Justice Committee/Law and Justice Committee Minutes 101507.doc