

**LAW AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
September 17, 2007**

The Law and Justice Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, September 17, 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, Ruth Anne Tobias and Howard Lyle. Others present were Margi Gilmour, Dennis Miller, Janie Torma, and Regina Harris.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes by Ms. Tobias, seconded by Ms. DeFauw. No changes made, the minutes of August 2007 were approved unanimously

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Ms. Tobias, seconded by Mr. Hulseberg, and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

CHILDREN'S WAITING ROOM UPDATE BY JANIE TORMA, DIRECTOR

Ms. Torma said that they started the Children's Waiting Room in May of 2006. They have seen 330 children in the first year of the program. She believes that they have seen well over 400 children to date.

They have two staff members and four volunteers. They are not a babysitting service, and they have no TV in the room. A young man is helping them with the kids while he is going to Kishwaukee College. They take any child even babies over 3 months old.

Their funds come from civil cases, that is, for every civil case they receive \$5.00. The more civil cases, of course, the more money they receive. The money has to go through the court system and no tax money ever touches their program. It is all done through volunteer work. The judges and the circuit clerk are very happy with the program.

The security system at the courthouse for the room is that once a mother brings in the child through the door, the parent or guardian can't go beyond the desk and the gate. The room has two security cameras that are on all the time.

When each parent brings their child, they must show an I.D. and then that same parent must come back to pick up that child. The children get wristbands that match the number that the parent has. Those wristbands

must be returned with the parent in order to pickup a child. The parent can't take it off and give it to someone else. It has to be the same person.

Big question is what if Mom and Dad go out shopping and don't come back on time to pick up the child at 12:30p.m. since that is the time the room closes. If they can't find the parent within the courthouse, they then call DCFS. It is a very secure place for the children.

They do not feed the children, unless it is an infant who needs bottle that their parent brought for them, that is the only exception.

Every child who comes to the room gets a book when they leave. These books are donated to the Children's Waiting Room. They do not need books over 5th grade right now. Also, they only allow 7 kids at a time in the room since it is a smaller room. As a child leaves another one can come in.

In closing, Ms. Torma said that they would be expanding to Friday's to include domestic violence cases.

ESDA DIRECTOR'S UPDATE – DENNIS MILLER

Mr. Dennis Miller, DeKalb County ESDA Director, updated the committee on the recent flooding in the County. He said that the residents at Evergreen Village in Sycamore were evacuated to a couple of different shelters since the flood occurred in August. At one time there were 80 people that were in shelters.

On August 27, 2007 the State of Illinois declared DeKalb County a Disaster Area.

On September 17, 2007 the Governor has asked the President to declare the affected counties in the state as Federal Disaster areas, which will free up the money to help these people. He doesn't know when the President will declare this - he has not heard anything yet.

In 1996, Mr. Miller said, the County was dealing with two mobile parks, one in Kirkland and the other one was Evergreen Village in Sycamore. At that time the Kirkland trailer park decided to opt out and turned the mobile home park into a park.

Mr. Miller said that he thinks the owner of Evergreen Village wants to sell it, and that 167 homes were affected by the recent flood. Not all of the homes were destroyed. Some of the places that were flooded in August were the same trailers that were there in 1996. The owner repainted and put new carpeting in these 1996 trailers and then sold them.

If there is water over the floor that makes it 50% damaged. If they want to rebuild it – it has to be 2 feet over flood plane, said Mr. Miller. Some of those trailers will be 8 feet high.

He has kept Chairman Tobias informed on what is going on throughout the operation.

Mr. Miller said that we have started on the Mitigation Plan over a year ago and puts us way ahead of the curve. What this does is that no one can enter into the Mitigation Program unless they have a Plan. He will be submitting a draft plan before the end of this month. Once this happens we will have to figure out where we will put these people

Mr. Andersen asked Mr. Miller if the County is trying to get those people out of Evergreen Village?

Mr. Miller said yes, we are trying.

The committee thanked Mr. Miller for his update.

PUBLIC DEFENDER'S REPORT

For the Public Defender's report, Regina Harris, DeKalb County Public Defender, presented her monthly report to the committee. She said that from last year to this year they went up only 3% for total cases open and closed. What this tells her is that we have a very healthy private bar in this county. They have around 60% of felonies less a percentage of traffic and misdemeanors. This is good, it is where you would expect it to be, she further stated.

Ms. Tobias asked if this is the same as Kane County sees?

Ms. Harris said that when she first started out in Kane County the Public Defender represented 90% of the felonies. Now there are a greater percentage of private lawyers doing it. Currently 65% of felonies are handled by the Kane County Public Defender and they handle 45% of the traffic and misdemeanor cases, too. The office also handles most of the juvenile caseload.

She explained that she did not ask for another attorney in the budget. She reorganized the caseloads in the office and the attorneys feel better about it.

COURT SERVICES REPORT

Ms. Margi Gilmour, Director of the DeKalb County Court Services Department, said that in her budget she is requesting a new adult court services officer position. They have not added any new adult officers in over ten years in her office. Her office has seen the PSI requests going up and violations, too. What they are going to do is a reallocation of resources and commit to reducing criminal violations.

She also has started the interview process as a general probation officer because she is really not quite sure where they are going to need that position. They have decided that their CRS Coordinator will take the adult officer

position. They are looking for someone now to fill the CRS Coordinator position. There will now be five adult court services officers in her office.

She then presented her Adult and Juvenile Reports to the committee.

The Adult report shows that they have 452 active cases between the four officers and they hope to reduce their load with the new position added.

In the Juvenile Report they did make significant cuts in detention by reducing those funds by \$25,000. They are making a commitment to try and detain less children and then reduce the placement costs. They will focus their efforts with the guardians/parents of those children.

They had two placements in August with six detentions for the month. One young man was released out of Kane County Detention Center and he is at DOC now. Out of those detentions, 3 were for the 1st time, 2 for the 2nd time and 1 for the 5th time. She also mentioned that detention and placement numbers for August 2007 vs. August 2006 are down, which is good and hopefully it stays that way.

Ms. Gilmour said that the Safe House Update in Sycamore is on hold and that she has not heard anything yet on it.

In their summer camp this year there were about nine or ten kids that completed it successfully. Funds for the camp come from Probation. The kids were thrilled at the end and they learned to work as a team. This year's group will be asked to mentor next year's class.

JAIL REPORT

Chairman Osborne mentioned that the average daily population in August was 87 inmates. The Sheriff's Department also spent \$6,400 in rental costs. He doesn't know why this is so low in costs but if any of the members have questions, they should call the Sheriff.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Osborne, Chairman

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