

**LAW AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
April 21, 2008**

The Law and Justice Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, April 21, 2008 @ 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, John Hulseberg, Howard Lyle and Ruth Anne Tobias. Mr. Andersen was absent. Others present were Margi Gilmour, Regina Harris and Ron Matekaitis.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Lyle, seconded by Ms. Allen, and it was carried unanimously to approve the amended minutes from March 2008.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Matekaitis, DeKalb County State's Attorney, said that Judge Klein and Ms. Josh were both at attending prior engagements and could not be present this evening at the meeting. He said that they both sent their apologies. They will be coming next month in May to give their updates. He said that he would do the same and that tonight he would just address the resolution on the Establishment of a Fee for the Children's Advocacy Center. Chairman Osborne removed the Judicial Updates from the agenda.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHMENT OF A FEE FOR THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER

Mr. Ron Matekaitis, DeKalb County State's Attorney, explained the resolution for establishing a fee for the Children's Advocacy Center to the committee. He stated that the center was created about five and a half years ago. Largely to the efforts of Ms. Sue Plote, Executive Director of Family Service Agency and Ms. Monique Hiedelmeier, the Director of the Advocacy Center itself, it was created. It started because in the past prior to the Center being created, there were reported cases of sexual abuse against a child and depending on how many law enforcement authorities that child may be interviewed by three or fours different agencies repeatedly. By doing this that person doing the interviewing can add to the severe stress for that child, he further explained. The Children's Advocacy Center has replaced this type of

practice. There are 36 Children Advocacy Centers throughout the state. One Advocacy Center is all that can exist in each county.

A trained child forensic interviewer now conducts the interviews. They tape record the sessions and take on a truth-seeking role. Counseling services will come out of these sessions too. The one interview setting that is tape-recorded, will satisfy all the other players involved because they are sitting behind a two-way mirror and they are able to listen, watch the victim and hear all that is being said, Mr. Matekaitis explained.

The Center has largely existed up until its affiliation with the Family Service Agency four years ago. Large independent support is through DCFS, Attorney General's Office that has provided us with a grant for that purpose and now the Mental Health Board does provide funding, too. It has been declining lately and because of a deficient budget is how the Family Service Agency has stepped up to help with this shortfall.

Legislation has recently provided a funding mechanism to offset the costs of running a Children's Advocacy Center. It is tied into certain types of felony, criminal, and misdemeanor cases. It does not involve traffic matters though, he stated.

In the end the agency that is most impacted by this resolution is our County, he explained, because as a County when we prosecute those felony, criminal and misdemeanor cases we receive that fine revenue and is placed in the General Fund. What they are suggesting is to take \$30 to be paid by defendants in certain criminal cases with such monies to be paid to the Children's Advocacy Center. The estimates attached to the resolution are working estimates based on the information that was provided to his office as the maximum amount that it could be. The net result of this is that it reaffirms its viability as a service that is provided in the community. This would represent, obviously, a commitment by the County for this Center, he said.

The activity at the Center itself shows that in 2007 – 106 children were interviewed at the Center, so far this year in 2008 – 66 children have been interviewed. It is an active, busy, growing caseload. Fifty-five cases have been referred to the Center from law enforcement agencies or DCFS. So far this year there have been 44 cases referred. The overall trend is that there is a growing caseload for the Center and shows that it is meeting a need that exists out there that won't go away.

Ms. Tobias asked how much their budget was?

Ms. Hiedelmeier said that it was \$130,000 and they have a 37% deficit.

Ms. Tobias asked if this resolution is passed will there be less money going to the County on fines? Mr. Matekaitis said that on a \$500 fine case, \$250 would go to the County usually, now it would be \$220 that would go to the County.

Ms. Allen asked if each year the figure could grow and grow?

Mr. Matekaitis said no, that the \$30 figure is the maximum amount.

He also said that Sheriff Scott and a couple of other organizations have pledged \$1000 to help the Advocacy Center.

Moved by Ms. Allen, seconded by Mr. Hulseberg, and it was carried unanimously to forward the resolution to the full board for approval.

DRUG COURT: SEMI-ANNUAL UPDATE

Ms. Marilyn Stromborg, Drug Court Coordinator, presented her Semi-Annual Report to the committee on the Drug Court. She handed out their evaluation report and monthly snapshot report (attached to these minutes). As of March of this year they have 20 people in the program and for or five more are in the "pipeline". She said what she finds encouraging is that she even has people that come into her office referring themselves.

They have had 3 drug-free babies and the ages of the people enrolled are between 19 and 49 years of age. They are seeing more people that are using needles. The one thing that their growth has shown is the need for more resources in DeKalb County. Right now out of DeKalb County, they have placed 3 people at Gateway and Lake Villa, 1 at Cornell, 2 at females in DeKalb and 1 person at Opportunity House. We have no halfway houses in DeKalb County, no residential treatment houses in the County, but we do have one small recovery house for women.

They have a lot of people that are finishing their education. One person is completing her GED, one who is in the paralegal program at Kishwaukee College, and one person who is on a grant to do the auto-mechanics program at Kishwaukee College and one young woman who is at the Cosmetology College in DeKalb.

Ms. Stromborg has tried really hard to get resources for DeKalb County. They did get a Drug Court Planning Grant that paid for their whole team to be trained in Portland, Oregon, for one week. She was told that they have been earmarked for \$171,000. She has to write a grant for the earmark, she continued. They do generate money, which they usually receive about \$12,000 to \$14,000 a month. Hopefully, this shows that they are trying to be very independent.

Ms. Tobias asked Ms. Stromborg if she was having trouble meeting the needs of the people that use the program, there is quite a jump in the number of people using the drug court?

Ms. Stromborg said yes it is, in fact, Judge Klein asked her if there should be a limit because he doesn't want it to go the route of Kane County, which has 700 people in the program.

Ms. Stromborg continued by stating, for example, if a person needs a psychiatrist they can go to Ben Gordon, but they have to wait two to three months. That's not okay, but that is just the way it is because of the demand that they have on them. But when you have a person who is really in a crisis and you are trying to keep them off of drugs it becomes very difficult. If they have a medical card then they can get services from private psychiatrists, but they have to wait two or three months. If she tries to get them in earlier and she says that she will pay for it, and if they have a medical card, the doctor can't be paid.

Mr. Hulseberg asked what type of grant do you see for a halfway house, have you seen grants like that at the federal level?

Ms. Stromborg said that she has been told that there are for halfway houses. They have approached a commercial organization called "Gateway" about looking at this county and they seem to be very receptive. So we will see where that goes, she said.

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

PUBLIC DEFENDER'S REPORT

Ms. Regina Harris, the DeKalb County Public Defender, said that her monthly March report remains fairly consistent. She said that she will be sitting down with the State's Attorney's Office to look at working more effectively between their two offices. She said one of the issues that she has is that while the State's Attorney's Office's numbers seems high, she feels that her office is not closing the cases as fast as she feels they should be. There are a lot of different reasons for that - it is not really anyone's fault. Between her office and the State's Attorney's Office they will be looking at ways to speed up the process.

COURT SERVICES MONTHLY REPORTS AND ANNUAL REPORT

Ms. Margi Gilmour, DeKalb County Court Services Director, said that her Adult Court Services Report for the month of March 2008 showed nothing out of the ordinary. She said that in her Juvenile Report for March 2008 there were 7 detainees. Out of those 7 admissions, 4 were for the 1st time, 1 for the 2nd time, 1 for the 3rd time and 1 for the 4th time.

She informed the committee that in her April 2008 report they would see that there were 3 kids in placement. Two of those kids were placed outside of the state. She said that one of those two kids is in a restrained environment outside of this state. The third individual was placed in a local residential placement facility.

She said that one of the families whose child is in placement are very good parents who have invested much with their child and they hope to get their child home soon. The other child doesn't have quite the same family support, but an officer in her department is working directly with that family.

In the past the child was sent to placement, out of sight, out of mind. She said, thought, that because of these placements there is a concern for her budget.

They did begin the Sheriff's work alternative program with the Adults on April 11, 2008 and most of the adults showed up and did the road pickup. The first juvenile one will be held this weekend. They are also beginning to plan on the summer camp program for this summer.

Chairman Osborne said that Mr. Andersen had a question on the status of the safeway house?

Ms. Gilmour said that they are receiving continued support by the City of Sycamore. They are not looking at any property right now and Alice Elliott and Russ Josh are always looking at the issue all the time.

JAIL REPORT

Chairman Osborne said that the monthly Jail Report shows that the average daily population for the month of March 2008 was 105 inmates, which is a good 20 beds over capacity at least. He said that \$33,000 has been spent on out-of-county transports, which is a little bit less than last month's figure.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Osborne, Chairman

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