

**LAW AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
December 12, 2008**

The Law and Justice Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, December 12, 2008 @ 6:30p.m. in the DeKalb County Administration Building's Conference Room East. Chairman Marlene Allen called the meeting to order. Members present were Kevin Chambliss, Richard Osborne, Riley Oncken and Anita Turner. Others present were Judge Kurt Klein, Ronald Matekaitis, State's Attorney for DeKalb County, Sheriff Roger Scott, Margi Gilmour, Director of Court Services for DeKalb County and Michael Stuckert, DeKalb County Board Member.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Oncken, seconded by Ms. Turner, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from November 2008.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Ms. Turner, seconded by Mr. Oncken, and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda.

JUDGE KLEIN AND MR. RON KLEIN – STUDY OF THE COURTHOUSE

Judge Kurt Klein introduced himself to the new committee members and explained the process of the 16th Judicial Circuit of which DeKalb County is a member. The other counties that are members of the 16th Judicial Circuit are Kane County and Kendall County. There are 17 circuit judges that are responsible for the administration of the judicial process in the circuit. The 17 judges elect the chief judge who is Chief Judge Keith Brown. Chief Judge Brown appoints two presiding judges for the circuit - for Kendall County and DeKalb County. Judge Klein has been appointed by Chief Judge Brown as DeKalb County's Presiding Judge.

Judge Klein further explained that there are 5 judges assigned to DeKalb County. They are, Judge Stuckert, Judge Donnelly, Judge Brady, Judge Schreiber from Kane County and then Presiding Judge Klein. The 5th local judge is Judge Jordan Gallagher who is practicing in Kane County. He will be assigned there for about three years.

The amount of criminal cases filed in DeKalb County were 70,000 cases per year. That ranges from a parking ticket, ordinance violations to a murder case. As far as civil cases filed in our county, that amount totaled 30,000 per year. They stayed pretty busy to say the least. A new judge is usually assigned to a county for every 20,000 cases filed.

He proceeded to explain to the committee members about the overcrowding issue at the courthouse. There is no room in the courthouse to add any room there. He has gotten some informal signals from the county board that they might be considering an expansion of judicial space in the next few years. He feels that the county board needs to look at a 50-year plan and that the County should study it and the judicial needs. He feels that we should keep the courthouse as part of the community and continue to use it that way.

He then proceeded to explain to the committee briefly, what has been discussed in the past. Plan B was suggested to buy 40 acres of land and build a new complex. The old courthouse would be left abandoned and is no longer the focal point of interest for the county board(s). The building will then begin to deteriorate and become an eyesore for the community. The courthouse would then not be used anymore. He feels that the County should add on to the existing courthouse.

He asked Mr. Ron Klein, as attorney in DeKalb County, to form a committee of local residents from around the county to study a plan on how an expansion to the courthouse should be done. Mr. Ron Klein is the chairman of the committee. He further stated that the committee is aggressive and feels a plan will be submitted to the county board from this committee.

Judge Klein then introduced Mr. Ron Klein, a respected attorney from DeKalb County, to the committee. Mr. Klein said that he feels that we should preserve the courthouse, too. His committee will be visiting the courthouse in Oregon during their study. They will determine how many square feet the County will need in the future. He feels that the north side of the courthouse could be considered for an addition. He also said that the committee would be looking at what the courthouse needs are for the next fifty years.

Judge Klein said that he felt that the State's Attorney and the Public Defender would need to be brought on site.

Mr. Osborne asked when would the final product/report be finished?

Mr. Klein said that he felt a report from the committee would be ready by April of 2009.

PUBLIC DEFENDER'S REPORT

Ms. Regina Harris, DeKalb County Public Defender, was not able to attend the meeting tonight. Chairman Allen told the committee that if they had any questions pertaining to her report to please call her office.

COURT SERVICES MONTHLY REPORTS

Ms. Margi Gilmour, DeKalb County Court Services Director, presented her monthly Juvenile and Adult Report to the committee. She introduced herself to the new committee members and explained what her departments' duties are.

She said that the adult report showed that the numbers remained consistent.

In the Adult report, in November 2008, there were 486 active adult cases from age 17 years old and up. There were just under 300 administrative cases too. She explained that they have five probation officers that handle about 100 cases each. In November there were 18 new cases and 6 cases that were successful terminations.

There were 4664 CRS hours ordered with 2032 hours completed.

With regards to the juvenile report, Ms. Gilmour stated that there were 4 in residential placement and that they are seeing some kids with significant mental health problems.

JAIL REPORT

Chairman Allen introduced Sheriff Scott to the committee.

Sheriff Scott introduced himself to the new committee members and explained what his departments' duties are. He mentioned that the November 2008 population report shows that the average daily population in the jail was 150 inmates. He said that they also house inmates when they are overcrowded at the Boone County Jail. The current jail was built in 1981 with 62 beds, in the early 90's they were double bunking beds, which was legal. They, of course, separated women from the men and both (men and women) from the mental disability inmate.

Mr. Oncken asked Sheriff Scott if there could be a separate entrance for attorneys that come to the courthouse for the court security?

Sheriff Scott said that his office requires everyone to go through the security. His office does not have enough staffing to do it a different way.

Judge Klein said that statute provides that the Sheriff provide security at the courthouse.

Before adjourning the committee agreed to leave their meeting on the third Monday of the month at 6:30p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Marlene Allen, Chairman

MA:mcs

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