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Law and Justice Committee

Minutes

August 19, 2013

The Law and Justice Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, August 19, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. in the DeKalb County Administration Building's Conference Room East.

Chairman Julia Fullerton called the meeting to order. Members present were Anthony Cvek, John Frieders, Riley Oncken, Ruth Anne Tobias and Anita Turner. Derek Tyson was absent. Others present were Margi Gilmour, Thomas McCulloch, Carl Leoni, Richard Schmack and Jill Olson.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mrs. Turner asked to amend the agenda by adding Jill Olson's CASA Presentation. Mrs. Fullerton agreed to add the CASA Presentation as #5 to the agenda.

Moved by Mr. Cvek, seconded by Mrs. Turner and it was carried unanimously to approve the amended agenda.

Derek Tyson arrived at 6:32 p.m.

PRESENTATION BY CITY OF DeKALB'S "CRIME FREE HOUSING & INSPECTION COORDINATOR" – CARL LEONI

Chairman Fullerton introduced Mr. Carl Leoni on behalf of the City of DeKalb's Crime Free Housing & Inspection. Mr. Leoni explained that his program is a behavior driven program, so if there is no crime there is no program. The key points that the coordinator does is annually register rental properties and conduct crime free program certification workshops for residential property managers along with coordinating crime prevention security assessments of property and serving as a liaison between the DeKalb Police Department and the landlord/rental property owner community.

Mr. Leoni's presentation also covered violations, notification processes, registration, contracts between landlord and tenants and lastly, landlord/manager training. The 2013 emphasis of the program is to continue to identify non-registered property managers along with staying on top of

notifications and paperwork of already registered properties. The goals of the program are to reduce crime, build landlord relationships while continuing to assist them with training.

Riley Oncken asked if there were any penalties on the landlords/property managers if they do nothing after a problem is identified. Mr. Leoni said that yes there are fines that can be assessed to the property owner if they do not comply.

John Frieders asked if there are any other towns in the area that have this program. Carl answered there are none yet but he hopes more will be starting in years to come. The key with this program is it produces a ripple effect in the community and hope is to keep that ripple effect going to drive crime out further and further.

CASA PRESENTATION

Ms. Jill Olson, Executive Director of the CASA Program in DeKalb County presented an update on her department to the committee. She said they are currently serving 159 children in their program. The numbers are holding and are roughly about the same as last year and there is a possibility of seeing a slight increase. She did state that there were an extraordinary amount of cases coming into the court system right now. Ms. Olson also explained that the main cases being served right now are educational neglect coming from the Regional Office of Education. She gave an internal organizational overview and also thanked the County and Committee again for the funding that her department receives from them and that because of the funding and the fundraisers that are put together the CASA program is financially stable. The CASA Program is also celebrating their 20 year anniversary on August 20, 2013.

PUBLIC DEFENDER'S REPORT – MR. THOMAS McCULLOUGH

Mr. McCulloch, DeKalb County Public Defender, said that the middle of the summer tends to be a busy time and according to his report there are a number of cases not closed yet with the start of more opening but it is nothing to be concerned about. Mr. McCulloch also shared some statistics involving the jail numbers. He explained that traditionally the jail numbers are in the low 120's and currently the number is 137. In looking at those numbers, 14 inmates are sentenced individuals and also 14 have notations of failure to appear along with other different circumstances.

Mr. Cvek brought up looking into a more structured pretrial supervision type of set up so more backgrounds can be checked and do a better job of evaluating the type of threat these individuals are to the community with the potential of putting them on a home monitoring system. After further discussion of home monitoring systems along with more pretrial supervision it was determined that court services is currently trying to budget two new employees to do exactly what is being discussed.

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Lastly discussed between the committee, Mr. McCulloch and DeKalb County State's Attorney, Richard Schmack was different possibilities of afternoon bond call, expediting procedures, mandatory sentencing and pretrial supervision.

COURT SERVICES REPORTS – MS. MARGI GILMOUR

Ms. Margi Gilmour, Director of the Adult and Juvenile Court Services Department, did mention that it can be seen in her budget that she had budgeted this year for a couple pretrial officers. Then Ms. Gilmour reviewed her reports with the committee starting with the Adult Probation hours show 23 new cases were opened in July and there were 11 cases that were closed. Ms. Gilmour did say that she had neglected to explain that new active cases are a little misleading because on the report because that number does not include pending intake cases which could possibly add an additional 50 to 60 cases. She also shared that the Community Service Report shows there are 97 cases referred in July and 6000 case hours that were completed.

Juvenile arena shows 4 detention admissions for the month of July, 3 kids were detained for the first time and 1 detained for fifth time. Ms. Gilmour stated that they were still doing well and the numbers were down and gave credit due to the entire system including the Public Defender's Office, States Attorney's Office and Judge Brady. All those departments have good communication and detain kids as a last resort for their safety or safety of the community.

Ms. Gilmour then referred to The Safehouse and reiterated that it is now officially closed after they had tried to find foster parents for several months along with it being vacant for the past 6 months.

Mr. Cvek asked how the determination was made to close the program and questioned what the potential costs effects are going to be.

Ms. Gilmour expressed that it was an unfortunate and difficult decision to be made and that the costs were all budgeted out of the Probation Department. She continued that everyone was aware that when the house was given to them to use it was a temporary arrangement and would eventually have to be torn down due to the jail expansion, along with the difficulty it was to keep foster parents in the house it was more than the department was able to handle on their own. The hope is to get more organizations involved in the future and try to create another program that could help like this one did and also provide even more housing for different situations that Safehouse was unable to do due to licensing issues.

Mr. Cvek again questioned the fiscal implications and long term costs of this decision. Mrs. Turner reiterated that the house could not be run without foster parents. Ms. Gilmour explained that after this program closed there is now a MST Program, an at home counseling service which involves the whole family and community along with reaches out to the child's whole world and school life. There were 17 youth in the program, some were long term and some short term. There are no hard numbers that have been assessed in the cost of the program as opposed to the children having been detained elsewhere.

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JAIL REPORT

Chairman Fullerton stated that the Jail Report for July 2013 had already been discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Oncken, seconded by Mr. Turner, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Julia Fullerton

Tasha Stogsdill, Recording Secretary

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