

## Minutes of the Justice Committee

The Justice Committee of the McLean County Board met on Monday, July 2, 2007 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 400 of the Government Center, 115 E. Washington Street, Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman Renner; Members Rackauskas, Owens Harding, Selzer and Butler

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Mr. John Zeunik, County Administrator and Ms. Jude LaCasse, Assistant to the County Administrator

Department Heads/  
Elected Officials  
Present:

Mr. Craig Nelson, Director, Information Services;  
Ms. Roxanne Castleman, Director, Court Services;  
Mr. Will Scanlon, Court Administrator, Circuit Court;  
Ms. Billie Larkin, Director, Children's Advocacy Center;  
Sheriff Mike Emery

Others Present: Judge Donald D. Bernardi; Ms. Laura Beavers, Children's Advocacy Center; Rev. Tom Shea, Alternatives to Jail Committee

Chairman Renner called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Chairman Renner announced that there are no Committee Meeting Minutes for the June 4, 2007 Committee Meeting as a quorum was not present.

Mr. Craig Nelson, Director, Information Services, presented a request for approval of Change Order #2 to Work Order #18 of the Integrated Justice Information Systems Project. He explained that this system was designed so that it would be possible to view warrants across multiple jurisdictions. This change order is deemed necessary by the Sheriff's Department and the Circuit Clerk's Office as well as Information Services. Mr. Nelson stated that the total cost for the Change Order is \$23,583.00 and there are sufficient monies within the budget.

Motion by Rackauskas/Owens to Recommend Approval of Change Order #2 to Work Order #18 of the Integrated Justice Systems Project.  
Motion carried.

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Ms. Roxanne Castleman, Director, Court Services, presented the Court Services Monthly Reports. Ms. Castleman stated she would be glad to answer any questions on the reports.

Mr. Butler pointed out the difference in the work load between the Adult Division and the Juvenile Division. He asked if it was possible for the employees to shift between the areas when necessary. Ms. Castleman replied that the employees work in separate areas and it would be difficult to move someone from one area to another. She also noted that the caseloads change monthly.

Ms. Castleman reported that the Juvenile Detention Center is filling up with McLean County youth. However, she noted that five youth are being transferred to the adult system due to the nature of their crimes.

Ms. Rackauskas recommended that all of the Committee members tour the Court Services area on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of the Law and Justice Center. She suggested that the Committee meet at the Law and Justice Center again for that purpose. Ms. Castleman recommended that the meeting take place at the Law and Justice Center in the fall when most of the construction will be completed.

Mr. Selzer asked what is the capacity of the Juvenile Detention Center. Ms. Castleman replied that the capacity is 26 juveniles. Currently, there are 16 McLean County and Out-of-County juveniles in the Center.

Chairman Renner asked if there were any further questions or comments. Hearing none, he thanked Ms. Castleman.

Chairman Renner presented the Monthly Caseload Report for May 2007 as submitted by Ms. Amy Davis, Public Defender. Chairman Renner asked if there were any comments or questions. There were none.

Judge Donald D. Bernardi presented a request for approval of the 2007 Guardian Ad Litem Contract for Services, and request for approval for extension of contract from Fiscal Year 2007 through Fiscal Year 2009. He explained that the Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) acts as the attorney for the children in abuse and neglect cases.

Judge Bernardi advised that the Contract for the GAL expired last month. He stated that the salary for the GAL has remained constant at \$60,000.00 since FY'2001. Judge Bernardi indicated that the cases have continued to increase, as follows:

- 2001: 70 cases
- 2002: 96 cases
- 2003: 103 cases
- 2004: 102 cases
- 2005: 79 cases
- 2006: 132 cases
- 2007: anticipated to be over 132 cases

Judge Bernardi recommended that the GAL salary be increased to \$6,166.67 per month (\$37,000 for the remainder of FY'2007 and \$74,000.00 for 2008 and 2009). He further noted that the salary would be frozen through 2009.

Chairman Renner asked if this salary is higher than some of the State's Attorney and Public Defender attorneys. Mr. Zeunik replied that this salary would be at the top end of the range of an Assistant State's Attorney III or the midpoint of an ASA IV.

Ms. Rackauskas pointed out that the GAL is an independent contractor and does not receive County benefits, including health coverage.

Mr. Scanlon stated that the Contract requires the GAL to be in Court four days per week, which limits any outside practice. Judge Bernardi indicated that every attempt was made to make the salary for this position similar to those of Assistant State's Attorneys and Public Defenders. He noted that Supreme Court Rule 299 has a \$75.00 per hour minimum for Court appointed attorneys. If this figure was used for this Contract, the GAL salary would be significantly higher.

Judge Bernardi indicated that, due the tenure of this GAL, his knowledge of the cases and the youth is a great benefit to the Court.

Ms. Rackauskas asked why the GAL has not received an increase in seven years. Judge Bernardi replied that the GAL is very dedicated and has not asked for an increase. Ms. Rackauskas recommended that the salary freeze be removed from the Contract. Mr. Selzer indicated that he would suggest reviewing the salary based on the increase or decrease in the caseload. Mr. Selzer stated that he does not object to the proposed increase, but is reluctant to include annual increases as a part of this contract.

After a discussion regarding the salary freeze in the Contract, Chairman Renner asked for a motion on the request as submitted.

Motion by Selzer/Butler to Recommend Approval of the Establishment of the 2007 Guardian Ad Litem Contract for Services, and to Recommend Approval of the Extension of Contract from Fiscal Year 2007 through Fiscal Year 2009.

Ms. Rackauskas reiterated her recommendation that the Contract be amended to remove the salary freeze. Mr. Selzer and Mr. Butler responded that they would only support their motion on the Contract as it was submitted.

After an additional discussion on the Contract and a brief history by Mr. Zeunik on the GAL position salary compared to the State's Attorney and Public Defender salaries, Chairman Renner called for a vote on the motion as submitted.

Motion carried with Ms. Rackauskas voting "No".

Chairman Renner asked if there were any additional comments or questions. Hearing none, he thanked Judge Bernardi and Mr. Scanlon.

Chairman Renner presented the Monthly Caseload Report and Asset Forfeiture Fund Report as submitted by Mr. Bill Yoder, State's Attorney. Chairman Renner asked if there were any comments or questions. There were none.

Ms. Billie Larkin, Director, Children's Advocacy Center, presented the Monthly Statistical Report for the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) and the CASA Report. She pointed out that, to date, they have seen 132 children as compared to 200 children in all of 2006.

Ms. Larkin announced that she has resigned her position as Director of the CAC effective July 25<sup>th</sup> to accept the position as the Executive Director of Children's Advocacy Centers of Illinois. She indicated that she will be relocating to Chicago.

Ms. Larkin introduced Ms. Laura Beavers, who works in the CAC Office, and indicated that Ms. Beavers will work with the Justice Committee until a new Director has been hired.

Chairman Renner and the Committee expressed their appreciation for everything Ms. Larkin has done for McLean County and the Children's Advocacy Center.

Chairman Renner asked if there were any comments or questions. Hearing none, he thanked Ms. Larkin.

Sheriff Mike Emery reviewed the McLean County Adult Detention Facility Report for May, 2007. Sheriff Emery reported that the numbers are still high and more inmates are being housed out-of-County. He noted that there is a significant increase in inmates on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings.

Mr. Selzer asked what is the capacity of the Jail. Sheriff Emery replied that the rated capacity is 205 beds. He indicated that the inmate population is complicated by the weekend inmates and work release inmates that report back on evenings and weekends. He pointed out that the population often increases from 203 during the day to 250+ in the evenings and weekends, which makes it necessary to house inmates out-of-County.

Mr. Selzer suggested that it may be time to look at other alternatives, such as off-site centers, sub-stations or a work release center. Sheriff Emery responded that he believes it is necessary to start looking in that direction. He noted that the rate of growth in the County is projected to be 200,000 residents by 2025. Sheriff Emery anticipates that, by 2025, the county would need a minimum of 365 beds.

Chairman Renner indicated that many alternatives have been considered, such as modular units, work-release centers and electronic monitoring. He suggested that electronic monitoring might be a solution for people who have not yet been convicted of a crime or people who are on work-release. Chairman Renner indicated that this might be a better alternative than building a new facility.

Mr. Zeunik advised that there will be some relief in the jail when the expanded work-release facility opens on the first floor of the Law and Justice Center, which could also function as a day-reporting center. Further, the current work-release facility in the Jail can then be converted to space for female inmates. Mr. Zeunik stated that the 2007 budget provided funding for a pre-trial program. He noted that Court Services is working with the Circuit Court on that program. Mr. Zeunik indicated that Judge Robb is interested in expanding Drug Court into areas where it affects families, and is also looking at Mental Health Court. He stated that these programs will assist in alleviating the overcrowding in the Jail.

Mr. Zeunik reported that Mr. Selzer's suggestion for a larger facility would require a great deal of time and effort to plan. He noted that a lot of factors would have to be determined in the planning, such as the size of the facility, the size of the site needed, etc.

Ms. Rackauskas expressed her opinion that a short-term and a long-term plan should be implemented by the Justice community. Mr. Selzer agreed that a strategic direction needs to be determined. He pointed out that there is not a lot of space for expansion on the existing facility.

Mr. Selzer recommended that a proposal be prepared, by the Justice community, for the potential implementation of electronic monitoring or whatever programs they feel are appropriate to help alleviate the overcrowding in the jail. He noted that it is the responsibility of the Justice Committee and the Board to approve funding for whatever programs or facility requests the Justice community recommends.

Ms. Rackauskas stated that it is important to have professional research done to support whatever plan the Justice community prepares.

Chairman Renner noted that the Justice Committee and the Board can appropriate funds for any number of alternative programs or additional capital projects. In the end, Chairman Renner stated that the implementation and effectiveness of such programs rests with the Court and the State's Attorney.

There was a brief discussion of building a facility large enough to rent space to other Counties as a potential revenue source to the County.

Chairman Renner asked if there were any additional comments or questions. Hearing none, he thanked Sheriff Emery.

Chairman Renner presented the May Monthly Report as submitted by Ms. Kimmerling, County Coroner. He asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Chairman Renner presented the Quarterly Report as submitted by Ms. Cindy Brand, Jury Commission and the May 2007 Monthly Report as submitted by Ms. Sandy Parker, Circuit Clerk. Chairman Renner asked if there were any comments or questions. There were none.

Mr. Selzer asked if the issue regarding the creation of a new position in the Circuit Clerk's Office, which was filled by an employee in another office, had been resolved in terms of some negative publicity. Mr. Zeunik replied that the new position in the Circuit Clerk's Office was warranted. He noted that, since the creation of the position, the Traffic Division eliminated the backlog for the first time in many years.

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Chairman Renner presented the June 30, 2007 Justice Committee bills for review and approval as transmitted by the County Auditor. The Justice Committee bills include a pending total of \$24,913.69 and a prepaid total of \$1,899,004.26 for a Fund Total of \$1,923,917.95.

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Motion by Owens/Selzer to Recommend Approval of the Justice Committee bills as of May 30, 2007, as transmitted by the County Auditor.  
Motion carried.

Chairman Renner asked if there was any other business or communication for the Justice Committee. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith A. LaCasse  
Recording Secretary