

*Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Law and Justice Committee at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.*

DeKalb County Government  
Sycamore, Illinois

**Law & Justice Committee Minutes  
February 22, 2021**

The Law and Justice Committee of the DeKalb County Board met virtually via Zoom on Monday, February 22, 2021. Madam Chair Dianne Leifheit called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Those members present via Zoom were Ms. Mary Cozad, Mrs. Karen Cribben, Mr. Neill Mohammad, Ms. Linda Slabon, Mr. Larry West, and Chair Dianne Leifheit. Mrs. Kathy Lampkins was absent. A quorum was established with six Members present and one absent.

Others that were present included Gary Hanson, Sheriff Roger Scott, Chief Deputy Andy Sullivan, Michael Venditti, Tom McCulloch, and Jerry Osland.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**It was moved by Mr. West and seconded by Ms. Slabon to approve the agenda as presented. Those Members voting yea were Ms. Cozad, Mrs. Cribben, Mr. Mohammad, Ms. Slabon, Mr. West, and Chair Leifheit. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Mr. West moved to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2021 Committee Meeting and Mr. Mohammad seconded the motion. Those Members voting yea were Ms. Cozad, Mrs. Cribben, Mr. Mohammad, Ms. Slabon, Mr. West, and Chair Leifheit. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**PUBLIC DEFENDER'S REPORT**

Mr. McCulloch placed the January 2021 Public Defender's Report on file with the Committee. According to the report, there were 306 cases opened and 165 closed. Mr. McCulloch shared that they are sort of treading water at the moment. They are getting appointed to many cases and then closing as many as they can. For the most part, cases are getting statuses set but there are no trials. Some trials are starting to be set in the near future. That ability to close cases with trials is temporarily suspended. Mr. McCulloch explained that is why many more cases are being opened as opposed to closed. He added that he thinks there is progress being made but things are continuing to still move a little slow.

**COURT SERVICES REPORT**

DeKalb County Court Services Director Michael Venditti placed his monthly Adult, Juvenile, and Pretrial Reports on file with the Committee.

He reported that the January numbers were pretty typical and that the Department is bracing for the eventual influx when the courts do start to ramp up.

## **SHERIFF'S REPORT**

Sheriff Scott and Chief Deputy Sullivan joined the Committee to provide a few updates. The Sheriff addressed the State of Illinois Criminal Justice Reform Bill that was signed by the Governor earlier in the day. He expressed that he thought there were many good items in the bill but because of how big the bill is, he also felt there are some unintended consequences that will tend to hurt citizens in the long run. The Sheriff shared he was encouraged by the Attorney General's comments that he understood there were some unintended consequences and he would be working with law enforcement to try and rectify those through some trailer bills. If that is done, overall, the Sheriff thought that would be a benefit to citizens.

Mr. Venditti shared that he actually agreed with the Sheriff in regards to the bill. He didn't think there was enough time put in by the legislature before it was passed. The intent was noble; however, it is a very large bill addressing quite a few areas of the criminal justice system. One of the most notable places is the impact that it has on law enforcement/police agencies as well as the drastic overhaul of pretrial court and unfortunately, this was yet another unfunded mandate by the State. Most of the items that affect the courts do not go into effect until 2023, so there will be time to prepare.

The Sheriff briefly reviewed his Jail Population Report and his new Monthly Corrections Overtime Report per the FY 2021 Budget: *"The Sheriff has requested an increase of \$169,000 for overtime for the Jail. While a significant increase during a year when we are trying to keep increases minimal, the history indicates that previous budgets have been too low based on departmental needs for covering staff shortages due to turnover, workers compensation absences, and Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) absences. Consequently, this amount is approved, but with the suggestion that the Law & Justice Committee monitor the status of this line-item on a monthly basis."*

The Committee was also saddened by the news of an unexpected loss of yet another Sheriff's Office Telecommunicator. This is the second loss in the past four months. The Chair and the Committee expressed their deepest condolences.

Chief Deputy Sullivan shared that the week of February 8<sup>th</sup>, EF Johnson was here again. They did a number of on-site improvements and performed many internal changes to the radio system on the VHF fire side. They located a bad repeater at the south tower down in Sandwich that was replaced. They also have used some equipment that the Sheriff's Office had to bring in the Leland Water Tower for another site down south to improve coverage on the south and west portions of the County. Additionally, EF Johnson identified some bad cables and an antenna that they are going to be fixing. The company has made the strong commitment to the County to move to the acceptance stage and have the system finalized by April.

## **CIRCUIT CLERK'S REPORT**

DeKalb County Circuit Clerk Lori Grubbs introduced herself to the Committee Members she had not yet met. She shared that she is new to the position of Circuit Clerk but is not new to the Office. Ms. Grubbs has been with the Clerk's Office for 26 years under Ms. Maureen Josh under the Civil Division. She shared that she had quite a task learning more about the Criminal and Traffic Division since becoming Clerk. The role of the Circuit Clerk's Office is the keeper of the court records. They also collect fines and fees that are ordered to be paid by the court. There are

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seven courtrooms that Deputy Clerks are sent to every day. Currently, they are holding all courts via Zoom. All of the courtrooms have plexiglass to help with COVID safety for those limited individuals who are in the courtrooms.

Ms. Grubbs shared that Jury Trials will be beginning March 15<sup>th</sup>. It will be their first Jury Trial in the Courthouse in over a year. Only one courtroom is capable of accommodating a jury. Getting that courtroom ready has taken a lot of work and a lot of time from the Judges, the Jury Commission, the State Attorney, Public Defender, Sheriff's Department, Health Department, IMO, and Upstaging of Sycamore.

Additionally, Ms. Grubbs provided a handout that depicted the case statistics of the Circuit Clerk's Office dating back from 2015 to current. She also shared with the Committee that due to the newly signed State of Illinois Criminal Justice Reform Bill, the Circuit Clerk's Office will no longer receive cash bail in 2023. Ms. Grubbs reviewed a spreadsheet that showed the 10% bond fee that the Circuit Clerk has collected over the past few years.

Lastly, Ms. Grubbs offered any Board Members a tour of the Clerk's Office and the courtrooms to see how they are operating today with COVID.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Ms. Cozad moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 p.m. Mrs. Cribben seconded the motion. Those voting yea were Ms. Cozad, Mrs. Cribben, Mr. Mohammad, Ms. Slabon, Mr. West, and Chair Leifheit. The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Madam Chair Dianne Leifheit

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Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary