

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
April 26, 2021**

The Law and Justice Committee of the DeKalb County Board met virtually via Zoom on Monday, April 26, 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, Mrs. Kathy Lampkins, Mr. Neill Mohammad, Ms. Linda Slabon, Mr. Larry West, and Chair Dianne Leifheit. A quorum was established with all seven Members present.

Others that were present included Chief Deputy Andy Sullivan, Chief Joyce Klein, Michael Venditti, Tom McCulloch, and Greg Millburg.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Slabon moved to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2021 Committee Meeting and Mrs. Lampkins seconded the motion. Those Members voting yea were Ms. Cozad, Mrs. Cribben, Mrs. Lampkins, 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 March 2021 Public Defender's Report on file with the Committee. According to the report, there were 845 cases opened and 634 closed. There is currently still only one courtroom that is hold jury trials, which is slowing down the ability to move and close cases, he shared. The question will be raised of whether speedy trial rights are being violated.

Prior to the FY 2022 Budget kick-off, Mr. McCulloch gave the Committee a heads up that he would like to see his Office's staff salaries a little more comparable to surrounding Counties of like-size. He also stressed that staffing levels are a concern with the post-COVID rush of cases when the Courthouse fully opens back up and with the Illinois criminal justice reform beginning July 1, 2021. Mr. McCulloch anticipates there will be problems forthcoming.

COURT SERVICES REPORT

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

Mr. Venditti reported that they are down to one juvenile in detention after several months of having two. Court Services was able to work with DCFS to find a placement for one of the two youths that have been hung up in detention. Unfortunately, the one who has been there the longest and still remains was close to obtaining a placement but after a recent incident, more charges have been filed on them in Kane County as well.

The Office has seen a little bit more activity over the course of the last month as far as some new cases coming into probation from DeKalb County. Most have been the result of plea deals and aren't contingent on a trial taking place. They have also continued to see a fair number of cases transferring in from other Counties. Mr. Venditti believes they are on the precipice of starting to see the incoming workload they knew inevitably would be coming.

Mr. Venditti last shared that the Legislative Center opened its doors to the public a couple weeks ago as well as did the Court Services Office. Many meetings and visits with the Court Services Staff are still being conducted virtually but they are slowly moving forward to getting back to "normal".

SHERIFF'S ANNUAL REPORT – [Link to Annual Report](#)

Chief Deputy Sullivan and Chief Klein joined the Committee to review the highlights of the Sheriff's 2020 Annual Report. This year's Annual Report has been dedicated in memory of Deputy Margaret Rice and Deputy Steven L. Johnson, both 911 Telecommunicators, and who both unexpectedly passed away in late 2020/early 2021.

The Sheriff's Merit Commission is a three citizen Commission that was established in 1970. The Commission met 13 times in 2020 to carry out its duties. Its duties consist of hiring and promotional processes as well as the actual testing and development of the test procedures to hire new individuals at the Sheriff's Office. In the past, the Commission had the ability to hear disciplinary matters, but several years ago that was changed legislatively and goes directly to an arbitration process.

The COVID-19 pandemic clearly had a significant impact on all areas of civil process due to the moratorium on evictions that remains in place as of now. The only area that showed an increase was the service of Orders of Protection which showed a significant increase in orders served by the Sheriff's Deputies.

Chief Deputy Sullivan additionally reviewed the five-year comparison of total dispatched calls, activities and incidents. He also reviewed the accident counts and more specifically the 2020 Plank Road Review. Throughout the years the Sheriff's Office has had significant interest in Plank Road because of the high traffic activity. The office has supplied data to those who have requested, and Sheriff Deputies have been aggressive with traffic enforcement. The Sheriff's Patrol Division is responsible for the patrol of approximately 1,100 miles of township, County and state roads in DeKalb County, including Plank Road. Plank Road will continue to be a significant area of focus through effective enforcement as we support the efforts to improve

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.

traffic safety along the Plank Road corridor. In 2020, the number of accidents decreased however, the number of citizen concerns brought to the Sheriff's Office's attention resulted in a significant increase in the number of stationary patrols along Plank Road in response to those complaints.

Chief Joyce Klein reviewed the Jail Operations. In 2020, the DeKalb County Jail averaged 100 inmates per day. This is a 6% decrease from 2019 when the jail population was 106. In 2018 and 2017, the average daily population was 123 and 139 respectively. This represents three consecutive years of decrease. The highest annual average daily population for DeKalb County Jail is 141 inmates per day which occurred in 2011 and 2014.

The COVID-19 pandemic was clearly the reason for the decline in the inmate population in 2020. The jail staff took significant steps in conjunction with the Judiciary and State's Attorney's Office to alleviate the number of people we kept in custody and reduce the number of new Bookings. By doing this they were able to have enough space to meet CDC, IDPH and the local Health Department's guidelines for social distancing, isolation and quarantines as required. Fortunately, the additional housing and booking area in the jail expansion provided the space to abide by health guidelines, keeping inmates and employees safe within the facility.

Due to the pandemic in 2020, the number of transports and transport hours decreased significantly. For a period of time the Department of Corrections did not accept inmates to serve their prison sentence. When they did start accepting inmates again, the County was required to test the inmate 72 hours prior to the arrival at DOC. It did take longer to get a reservation date to take the inmates to DOC, taking two months or longer for a reservation date. There are currently 8 inmates waiting to be transferred to DOC.

The 2020 New Horizon was Body Worn Camera which was implemented in October of 2020. The Sheriff's Office, with the strong support and urging of the DeKalb County Board was able to implement the Body Worn Camera Program for Patrol Deputies October 1, 2020, becoming the first major law enforcement agency in DeKalb County to fully implement this program. Immediately upon authorization of the funding, the Sheriff's Office worked with Kustom Signal Corporation in developing the Body Worn Camera Program, building upon our in-car Kustom video system initiated in the mid 1990's.

Sheriff deputies were accepting and actually eager for this new program to begin. The program involved much behind the scene work by our office, the Information Management Office and Kustom Signal. The behind the scene work involved a great deal of technical work including storage and technical development, as well as development of policy and training for Sheriff's Office deputies and support staff, with close cooperation with the State's Attorney's Office.

On June 2nd trial body cams were deployed. The deployment of the body cameras for patrol came in two phases. The first phase was mid-August with 14 body cameras deployed, and the second phase in mid-September deployed the remaining 12. With 28 body cameras in operation by October 1st there came a variety of issues to work through. The increase in data provided a significant challenge for IMO, and along with the increase in data came the increase in FOIA requests and subpoenas for office staff.

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.

It is important to note that from June 15th, the day the beginning trial period to the end of 2020, there were 1,584 body camera videos that were required to be saved per Illinois statutes. This program implementation and success in such a short period of time is a prime example of DeKalb County Government teamwork that included County Board, Sheriff's Office, Information Management Office, State's Attorney's Office, and private vendor Kustom Signals.

Chief Deputy Sullivan ended by saying they are very happy with their profession at the Sheriff's Office. They continue to make changes in law enforcement, whether it be within their own policy or legislative changes. This year has probably been the most significant with the new Crime Bill, but they will adapt to those changes and continue and try to do better. They will continue with their training and are already in the process of conducting new trainings. They are sending Deputies to Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). There are 13 Deputies that have already gone through that training, and when more trainings come up, they will be sending more in order to better serve the community. The Department is also looking to the Mental Health Board to help fund a Part-Time Social Worker for the Sheriff's Office.

Lastly, the Committee wished Chief Klein a happy retirement. She will be retiring from the Sheriff's Office next month after 40+ years of service!

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Lampkins moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 p.m. Mrs. Cribben seconded the motion. Those Members voting yea were Ms. Cozad, Mrs. Cribben, Mrs. Lampkins, Mr. Mohammad, Ms. Slabon, Mr. West, and Chair Leifheit. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Madam Chair Dianne Leifheit

Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary

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.