

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
September 27, 2021**

The Law and Justice Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, September 27, 2021 in the Legislative Center's Gathertorium in Sycamore, Illinois. Madam Chair Dianne Leifheit called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Those members present were Ms. Mary Cozad, Mrs. Karen Cribben, Mrs. Kathy Lampkins, and Chair Dianne Leifheit. Those absent were Mr. Neill Mohammad, Ms. Linda Slabon, and Mr. Larry West. A quorum was established with four Members present and three absent.

Others that were present included Michael Venditti, Sheriff Sullivan, and Jill Olson.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Mrs. Cribben, seconded by Mrs. Lampkins and it was carried unanimously by voice vote to approve the agenda as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Cozad moved to approve the minutes of the August 23, 2021 Committee Meeting. Mrs. Lampkins seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no Public Comments.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Chair Leifheit shared that the DeKalb County Treatment Courts were granted continuation funding through Adult Redeploy Illinois, which funds the majority of the Treatment Courts. The current grant started on July 1, 2021 and runs through June 30, 2022, with a total budget of \$495,856. Unfortunately, the department has shown a continued reduction in revenue from the fees collected through the Circuit Clerk's Office. Treatment Court has been fortunate to have been able to move these costs over to the grant, so that they are able to operate on a balanced budget. They also receive funding from the 708 Mental Health Board. That funding pays for their peer mentoring support position. Additionally, they have received one-time funding from the 708 Mental Health Board to purchase a vehicle for the Treatment Courts which is in the process.

Additionally, the DeKalb County Sober Living House continues to be operational, and currently has six individuals in the house, with a capacity of seven. The residents are doing very well and are keeping the house in good shape. The participants of the house are earning Community Restitution Service Hours (required by the program) by painting the exterior stair cases and decks of the home. Once this project is completed, they will be painting the exterior of the home, due to the fading of the current siding.

PUBLIC DEFENDER'S REPORT

The August 2021, Public Defender's Report was placed on file with the Committee. According to the report, there were 2,079 cases opened and 2,035 cases closed.

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 Pretrial Services remained busy. They were still waiting to hear more details from the State on when they can expect to see the Pretrial Services move from the County to the State. He had originally heard that the change would take place on January 1, 2022, but having to get the entire state to change over, he suspects DeKalb County won't see that change until at least July, 2022 or later.

Adult probation numbers are similar as last month. The cases seem to be on a steady incline as a result of the court system moving more now. The more cases they have, the more practice it provides for many of the new staff members he has within the department, Mr. Venditti shared.

In regards to Community Services Hours, they have found some ways for hours to be made up at outdoor events but as the weather becomes colder, there will be a challenge again in finding places that will accept hours to be made up, especially with the pandemic still in place. The department is still accepting charitable donations to local food pantries in exchange for hours.

Mr. Venditti noted that they had one youth in detention at this time. He also shared about recent legislation that past last month in regard to strict deadlines that will now be placed on how long a youth can be in detention (30 days). This came to light when many youth were stuck for longer periods of time in detention during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The effective date of that new mandate will be January 1, 2022.

Lastly, Mr. Venditti provided a brief overview of a couple grants his department has in place. Court Services has a multi-year probation grant called Swift, Certain, and Fair (SCF) Probation, which is a 100% federal grant funded program with a total budget of \$750,000 over the course of four years. The current grant was renewed for a second 3-year agreement in late 2020 and will remain active until September 2024. SCF Probation is an intensive probation program that was developed as an alternative to jail or prison. Clients sentenced to SCF are those who are assessed as being at a moderate/high risk of committing new crimes and/or continuing use of illegal substances or alcohol. Persons referred to SCF may be individuals who have failed on standard probation or clients who may succeed in the community if given a very high level of supervision. The ultimate goal is to help people make positive behavioral change while keeping the community safe.

The Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program (COAP) is a 100% federal grant funded program with a total budget of \$900,000 over the course of three years. The current grant agreement expires in September 2021; however Court Services has submitted a grant request for an additional three year agreement for an additional \$900,000 which is anticipated to be approved. COAP is a program designed to help individuals in the criminal justice system suffering with opioid use disorder sustain drug free lives through decreasing barriers, providing treatment,

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.

resources, and ongoing support. Whether an individual has insurance or not, COAP will pay the remaining costs for inpatient, medicated assisted treatment (MAT), and outpatient treatment while providing case management activities with the client. The program is completely voluntary.

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE (CASA) ANNUAL REPORT

CASA DeKalb County Executive Director Jill Olson joined the Law & Justice Committee to provide an update on the program.

Ms. Olson explained that the mission of CASA is, “To advocate for and serve as the voice for abused and neglected children in DeKalb County.” CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) is the designated Guardian ad litem (GAL) appointed to abused and neglected children in DeKalb County (DeKalb County is one of eleven GALs in Illinois). These children are in the court system through no fault of their own. CASA advocates interview the child and all relevant parties in his or her life and share this information with the judge so the judge can make decisions that enhance the child’s well-being. CASA’s vision is a community where every child is given the opportunity to thrive in a safe and loving home.

CASA DeKalb County Inc. was founded in 1993. They have over 60 DeKalb County residents as volunteer advocates. Annually, CASA serves over 200 abused and neglected children in DeKalb County. The advocates provide over 9,500 hours of volunteer service each year.

Ms. Olson also reported that last year (12/31/2020) they represented 217 children, 77 of those were newly filed cases. This year (as of 9/27/2021) they have already represented 231 children. Of those 2031 children, 10% represent physical abuse, 6% represent sexual abuse, 5% represent dependency issues, and 79% represent some sort of neglect (physical, medical, etc.).

This year CASA has taken in 74 new cases. The court has closed 54 cases where 17% ended in adoption, 7% aged out (21+ years old), 59% went back home (which is the goal), and 17% resulted in other outcomes, such as transfers out of the County.

CASA trains community members as volunteer advocates for abused and neglected children in DeKalb County. A CASA volunteer stays with each child until the child’s court case is completed by having the child placed into a safe, permanent and nurturing home.

Unfortunately, with the large increase of cases in the beginning of the year (140% increase), for the first time, CASA staff is handling cases in addition to their 60 active advocates. The numbers are thankfully starting to level off. CASA is always looking for new volunteer advocates.

Ms. Olson thanked the County for their annual \$40,000 contribution. That funding represents 20% of their budget, although costs continue to increase. Federal and State grants represent 9% of their budget and the large majority of made up from fundraising efforts and private donors.

The Committee thanked Ms. Olson for her update and all the work that CASA does for the children of the community.

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.

Sheriff Sullivan briefly reviewed that the jail population was currently just under 100 inmates. The department is still down a significant amount of staff in Patrol and Communications. Testing is taking place and there are currently 9 interviews in process. With the staff shortage they have been utilizing overtime in Corrections, but they are still on target with the budget.

E. F. Johnson will be in DeKalb tomorrow to work on some issues that were discovered as well as work through a couple last punch list items for the Sheriff's Digital Radio System.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mrs. Lampkins, seconded by Mrs. Cribben, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Dianne Leifheit

Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary