

Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Law & 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
January 23, 2023**

The Law & Justice Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, January 23, 2023, in the Legislative Center's Gathertorium in Sycamore, Illinois. Chair, Kathy Lampkins called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Those members present were Tim Bagby, Mary Cozad, Patrick Deutsch, Maureen Little, Michelle Pickett and Chair, Kathy Lampkins. Amber Quitno was absent at the time of the roll call and arrived at 6:55 p.m. A quorum was established with six members present and one absent. Others present included Jim Burgh, Chip Criswell, Brian Gregory, Andy Sullivan, Michael Venditti, and Ellingsworth Webb.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Maureen Little moved to approve the agenda as presented. Michelle Pickett seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Mary Cozad moved to approve the minutes of the October 24, 2022 committee meeting and Kathy Lampkins seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Resolution #R2023-17: A Resolution Approving the Procurement of Body Cameras from Axon Enterprises - Sheriff, Andy Sullivan provided a brief overview of the resolution and requested that Chief Deputy, Jim Burgh present the details concerning the proposed purchase of equipment from Axon Enterprises.

Jim Burgh mentioned that body cameras are required for the DeKalb County Sheriff's law enforcement officers. He outlined significant operational issues with the current equipment, including camera features not functioning properly and battery failure and software issues that have resulted in time-consuming workarounds and decreased effectiveness. He added that servicing the current equipment is expensive and inconvenient.

Jim Burgh reviewed that Axon Enterprises is the leading supplier for law enforcement equipment in the United States. He stated that the City of DeKalb, NIU, and the City of Elgin use Axon equipment and that those law enforcement agencies are very pleased with the

equipment's performance and aren't experiencing any of the issues the sheriff's personnel have experienced with the current equipment.

Jim Burgh outlined the many benefits of purchasing the Axon equipment, including an improved ability to respond to FOIA requests through a more efficient video review process, software compatibility with current and future equipment used by the Sheriff's Office and other DeKalb County departments, and a significant overall improvement in functionality and effectiveness.

County Administrator, Brian Gregory stated that he fully supports this request to purchase the equipment and referenced the industry's typical two-year repair/replace frequency and associated expense that's covered in the Axon agreement. He outlined that the acquisition's funding is possible through resources currently available in the budget, including funds that were allocated for camera replacement. He added that reallocated funds are also available due to the receipt of grant money and diminished need in other areas of the budget.

Jim Burgh added that the state will soon be accepting applications to request body camera grant funds that would assist in funding the purchase. He mentioned that DeKalb County will be applying for this grant as soon as the application process begins.

Mary Cozad moved that the committee advance Resolution #R2023-17 to the full county board for approval. Patrick Deutsch seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Jail Population/Overtime Reports – Andy Sullivan reviewed that overtime exceeded the budget allocation for 2022 due to a shortage of personnel. He stated that he hopes to fill the open positions soon and reduce the overtime expense. Andy Sullivan reviewed the Jail Population Report for December 2022.

COURT SERVICES REPORTS

Court Services Director, Michael Venditti reviewed that there has been a steady increase during 2022 in the amount of adult probation cases their department is monitoring and that this increase has continued into 2023. He stated that the amount of community service hours also increased during 2022 and that this increase has started to level off.

Michael Venditti stated that he was pleased report that there were no juvenile residential placements during 2022, as research has shown that programming of this type has had a horrible long-term impact on juveniles. He added that placements are also very costly and the county has continued to avoid residential placements.

Michael Venditti stated that he is concerned with the trend in juvenile offenses and the severity of the offenses, such as armed robbery and vehicle theft. He reviewed that consequently, there has been an increase in the number and duration of detentions and that the expenses in this area for 2022 were significantly overbudget. Michael Venditti mentioned that adjustments

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were made for the 2023 budget to accommodate the concerning trend in this area. He added that expense adjustments made in 2022 in other areas of the budget should result in an acceptable overall budget performance for Court Services in 2022.

Michael Venditti reviewed that DeKalb County's intergovernmental agreement with the Juvenile Justice Center in St. Charles to detain the county's juveniles is reaching the end of the contract period. He explained that the Center will be increasing their rates significantly and that increase, combined with the trend in juvenile cases DeKalb County is experiencing, resulted in the county considering other options and entering into an agreement with the River Valley Detention Center in Joliet. Michael Venditti said that DeKalb County utilized River Valley Detention for short-term cases during the COVID outbreak and that River Valley was very happy to enter into an agreement with the county for a much more reasonable cost than what the Juvenile Justice Center in St. Charles proposed. He stated that the county has a good relationship with the River Valley Detention Center.

Michael Venditti provided an overview of the Pretrial Statistics Report stating that there are no significant changes in activity with a slight decline in the number of releases during the pretrial phase. He added that there has been an increase in the severity of offenses and in the number of individuals not suitable for release.

Michael Venditti mentioned that the Pretrial Fairness Act requires cash bail to be eliminated across the state as of January 1, 2023. He outlined that the Act is now on hold and that the State Supreme Court is due to hear arguments in March.

Michael Venditti reviewed that there is an increase in turnover in the Probation Department due in large part to the county's relatively low salary range as compared with other counties in the area. He mentioned that due to inflation relief efforts, there is now state funding available to counties willing to increase salaries for probation officers. Michael Venditti provided salary examples illustrating DeKalb's starting salary is significantly lower than Kane County's and is lower than the state average of \$45,000. He stated that he has been working with Brian Gregory and Judge Waller to increase salaries in an effort to become more competitive. Michael Venditti also outlined that DeKalb and Kendall County are partnered in a collective bargaining agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding has been presented to the union for consideration. He stated that the MOU would increase the starting salary to just below the state average and also increase each step in the existing compensation scale. He added that the impact to the county budget would be just under \$30,000, as some position funding also comes from the state. Michael Venditti said that he has reviewed the financing plan with Brian Gregory and they have determined that the \$30,000 expense for 2023 can be covered through the reallocation of American Rescue Plan/government relief funds that were originally targeted for vehicles. Michael Venditti added that he hopes to secure additional funding from the state to offset the \$30,000 impact for 2024 and future years, which would avoid the need to make significant cuts in the department. Michael Venditti thanked Brian Gregory for his assistance in

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coordinating efforts with DeKalb and Kendall Counties to fund the adjustments and stated that he hopes this will result in an increased ability to recruit and retain quality staff.

PUBLIC DEFENDER’S REPORTS

Interim Public Defender, Chip Criswell reviewed the “Report of Public Defender” and stated that his department is also experiencing difficulties with recruiting and retaining attorneys due to salary issues. He emphasized that because of the staffing shortage, each attorney has been assigned more cases than they should have and that the staff has done a tremendous job in working their caseloads.

ADJOURNEMENT

It was moved by Patrick Deutsch and seconded by Michelle Pickett to adjourn the meeting. The motion was carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Lampkins, Chair

Chris Klein, Recording Secretary