

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

JANUARY 13, 2000

NOON

SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM

PRESENT: G. Totman, B. Blanchard, N. Schuler, T. Joseph, C. Evans (arrived 12:25 p.m.)

STAFF: J. Hughes, Assigned Counsel; J. Beach, Stop-DWI; F. DeAragon, Metropolitan Planning Organization; K. West, Deputy County Administrator; J. Miller, L. Shurtleff, Fire, Disaster and EMS; M. Putney, OAR; W. Skinner, Public Information; G. King, Ithaca Drug Treatment Court

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Totman called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

Appointments
Budget Transfer

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was Moved Mr. Joseph, seconded by Ms. Blanchard and unanimously adopted by voice vote to approve the minutes of December 28, 1999, as submitted. Mrs. Schuler noted that she was a guest at that meeting and asked that it be included in the minutes.

Mr. Totman stated that Mr. Evans will be late to today's meeting and noted Mr. Evans requested that the Traffic Safety Board discussion be postponed until he arrived.

ASSIGNED COUNSEL

Ms. Hughes distributed her 1999 year-end report. This is attached to the original minutes. Ms. Hughes stated the Drug Court budget was under the projected \$18,000 figure by approximately \$4,500 for the year. She stated there are approximately 50 cases in Drug Court assigned to two attorneys versus assigning 50 attorneys in the past. This should be noted when considering a Family Court Drug Court program. She also noted that along with drug court, the County did not have any high profile cases in 1999 and there is a savings of \$140,000 in the Assigned Counsel budget left over from 1999.

Ms. Hughes stated that crime is up in the County for January and her office has seen 150 cases since the beginning of the year. She stated it isn't clear why the numbers are so high, but noted there have been several C and B Felony burglaries.

Ms. Blanchard stated that Channel 7 gave a lot of coverage to the recent Drug Court graduation. Ms. Hughes stated they did and noted six people graduated. She stated the defense attorneys assigned to the program are very dedicated, noting they also get involved in participant's private lives after hours.

RESOLUTION NO. - ADOPTION OF AMENDED BYLAWS - ADVISORY BOARD ON INDIGENT REPRESENTATION

It was Moved by Mrs. Schuler, seconded by Mr. Joseph and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present.

WHEREAS, the Advisory Board on Indigent Representation wishes to amend its bylaws, and

WHEREAS, such amendment will change the meeting date from the first Thursday of the month to the second Wednesday, and

WHEREAS, this action will relieve the Chairman of the Advisory Board of certain obligations in regard to the agenda, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety Committee, That the proposed amended bylaws of the Advisory Board on Indigent Representation be and hereby are adopted, said bylaws are on file with the Clerk of the Board.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

OAR

Ms. Putney stated that four bails have been done since the beginning of January. She stated that intakes for the office are also up from this time last year. She stated OAR completed 52 bails for 1999, and delivered over 300 affidavits. She stated she is still compiling year-end statistic and will make these available when they are ready. Ms. Putney also noted the agency is over target for client assistance and volunteer hours. She stated that in past years these numbers have been lower and attributes this to attrition in volunteers and small trainings. In the last couple of years the volunteer pool has expanded.

Ms. Blanchard asked how volunteers are solicited. Ms. Putney stated that public service announcements are done, solicitation is done at the local colleges, churches are contacted, and posters are placed on buses.

Ms. Blanchard asked how the director search is going. Ms. Putney stated that the search committee will be doing the first round of interviews and she hopes the position will be filled by early February.

DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Ms. West had no report. She stated that she and Mr. Erb will be attending future meetings, noting Mr. Benjamin has readjusted his schedule.

Ms. Blanchard stated that a meeting is being set up for all police agencies to come together to begin discussing what types of information will be released into the CISNET system. She stated this will be done before January 26, 2000, to keep the project on schedule.

PROBATION DEPARTMENT

Probation staff was not in attendance. No report was given.

FIRE, DISASTER AND EMS UPDATE

Mr. Miller stated that the software for the crimes system interface has been received and the install is progressing. He stated there will be a training done in February and then the program will be phased in.

Mr. Miller stated the County recently encountered its first obstacle with frequencies. He stated he was notified that the County has lost one frequency and this frequency shuts down all paging instantly. He stated the State Department of Transportation owns the frequency and this frequency was recently changed from a high to low power frequency. The State started the change in New York City and has been gradually working its way upstate. The County has been allowed two weeks to get off the frequency and it will be necessary to recrystal transmitters and receivers and move to another frequency that the County owns. He stated the necessary equipment has been ordered and will be installed in time and he does not anticipate any interruptions in the paging capability.

Mrs. Schuler asked if this will affect the Personal Emergency Response System. Mr. Miller stated that this system would only be affected if paging ability was lost.

Mr. Beach stated that his neighbor recently had this system installed and noted the Office for the Aging staff was very helpful in setting up the equipment and explaining the system.

Ms. Blanchard asked if there is any way a list could be provided showing which frequencies are being used by the County. Mr. Miller stated the County has approximately 30 frequencies it uses. Mr. Joseph asked how substitutable those frequencies are. Mr. Miller stated that it was necessary to take one of the City frequencies for the paging frequency. Mr. Totman stated that most assume that the County owns the frequencies it is using. He asked if it is known what frequencies the County will be getting, and if it is possible to purchase the licenses for those frequencies. Mr. Miller stated that there is no way of knowing; the rules have changed for that group of frequencies and this same situation could happen in the future.

Mr. Miller stated he was recently approached Chief Ferretti of the Trumansburg Police Department about taking over the tower in Trumansburg and leasing space on that tower to a cellular carrier. He stated he asked the County Attorney's office to draft an agreement to sell the tower to Village of Trumansburg and he distributed this agreement to the Committee for their consideration. Mr. Miller stated that this tower was scheduled to be removed when the new towers project is completed. He stated the County will not have the additional costs of tearing this tower down if it is turned over to the Village. He stated the County will continue to use the tower until the new system is up and running. Mr. Joseph asked about the feasibility of the County keeping the tower and making income off it. Mr. Miller stated that this is possible, but noted the Village allowed the County to locate the tower on the site, but they own the property. Mr. Joseph stated that none of the towers should be removed until it is known that they will not have a future purpose. Ms. Blanchard stated that this was also the feeling of the Environmental Management Council. She also stated there may be questions about why the County is building more towers if there are existing ones. Mr. Miller stated that the old towers will not meet the County's needs and this was indicated in the engineering study. It was the consensus of the Committee to have Mr. Miller pursue the sale of the tower to the Village of Trumansburg.

911 STATISTICS

Mr. Shurtleff stated the year passed with a smooth transition and he distributed statistics showing a comparison over a two-year period. These are on file with the original minutes. Mr. Shurtleff stated the bulk of emergency calls are coming in on the 911 line and the calls are being answered within four seconds.

STOP-DWI REPORT

Mr. Beach provided a year-end report. This is on file with the original minutes. He stated the Sheriff's Department made nearly 46 percent of its arrests on the special patrol and there was a 42 percent increase in DWI arrests by the Sheriff's Department over 1998. Mr. Beach stated seven deputies made 183 of the Departments 217 DWI arrests during 1999 and Deputy Manning accounted for 23 percent of all of the DWI arrests made by the Department. Mr. Beach stated in 1999 the Sheriff's Department had the second highest annual total ever by a Tompkins County law enforcement agency.

RESOLUTION NO. - AUTHORIZING A PUBLIC HEARING ON RECISSION OF LOCAL LAW NO. 2 OF 1968 AND ADOPTION OF LOCAL LAW NO. a OF 2000 ESTABLISHING A COUNTY TRAFFIC SAFETY BOARD

Mr. Totman stated that this item was postponed at both the November and December Committee meetings. He stated he has asked Mr. Erb to provide information about what other counties are doing and has also asked Mr. Meskill to provide information from the Sheriff's Association. He stated he would like to see this information along with information from the State about funding before a final decision is made.

Mr. Beach stated that Tompkins County has an existing law that allows for a Traffic Safety Board. He stated the new law changes the Board of Supervisors to the Board of Representatives and modifies the membership to bring it current. He stated the language in the law was taken verbatim from the Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL). Mr. Totman asked how many people have to be on the Board. Mr. Beach indicated the VTL states the Board has to be at least ten

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individuals with at least one but not more than three from the City. The remainder of the membership is left to the County's discretion.

Mr. Beach stated the Governor's Traffic Safety Board is the conduit for funding. He stated the Buckle-up funds will need to come through the traffic safety board in year three of that program and the program is currently in year two. If this isn't done, local agencies will not receive their funding. He stated Tompkins County has missed out on funding over the last twelve years since the Traffic Safety Board has not been active. His recommendation is to clean up the language and update it to year 2000 standards and pursue the funding.

Mr. Joseph stated that there has been concern about the size of the Board and the fact that the board became inactive due to lack of interest in the past and it is not desired to repeat this. There was concern about the lack of a clear charge to the Board and hearing from the proposed members that they are interested in serving. Mr. Beach stated the new board was expanded to include interested members in the community. He stated he contacted the members and a meeting was held in October and there was a lot of interest in those people coming together to deal with traffic safety issues in Tompkins County and they have stayed in contact.

Mr. Totman stated that there has been some concern by certain agencies about the number of committees agencies are asked to serve on and the time commitment involved. Mr. Beach stated he feels the County would be remiss if those agencies weren't included.

Mr. Evans stated he is certain the County needs a Traffic Safety Board, but expressed concern over the size of the Board. Ms. Blanchard stated she is interested in seeing the information Mr. Totman has requested and also expressed concern about another board being established and the time commitments these people already have. She suggested the 2000 goals of the Committee should include a goal to identify a way to address traffic safety issues in the County. Mr. Joseph asked if it is necessary to have these people come together to get some essential piece completed, or if that piece is already complete. Mr. Beach stated the strategic plan will need to be completed each year. He stated that there was also concern expressed at an earlier meeting about staffing this board and noted he will be the staff person working with this group. If additional staff is needed it would be included in funding requests.

Mr. Joseph suggested appointing members under the existing law. Mr. Beach should bring resumes to the next committee meeting for consideration. Mr. Totman stated a decision will be made at the next meeting about either keeping the existing law or adopting a new one.

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

STATISTICS

Mr. Meskill distributed the monthly and year-end statistics. These are on file with the original minutes. Mr. Meskill stated the jail population is up since last summer, but it is not much different from this same time last year. Mr. Meskill stated his department was not over-budget at year end and noted he anticipates being able to use part of the surplus to repay both contingent fund requests for the jail. The overrun in the medical line will also be absorbed by other lines in the budget that are providing a year-end surplus. The final figures have not yet been received, and he will make these available to the committee at a later date. Mr. Meskill stated the annual report is also being completed. He stated one of the deputies Mr. Beach noted as having a high DWI arrest record has been promoted to sergeant and interviews continue for the Captain and deputy positions. He stated the department is very close to being completely computerized and the cars under state contract are being ordered. He stated he hopes to have the auto replacement plan in place by the end of the year and there may be rollover on the road side that can be used for additional needs. He stated he hopes to provide a better presentation at budget time dealing solely with staffing and contractual increases. He stated he learned a lot as a department head going through the 2000 budget process.

OTHER

Mr. Totman recognized Georgette King of Drug Court. Ms. King reported that bids and contracts have been sent out through the Binghamton District Office for the evaluation of drug court. She stated the Family Court Drug Court process is moving along smoothly. Ms. King stated that graduation for Drug Court was held yesterday and six people graduated. This brings the total number of graduates to 25 over the life of the program. Mr. Evans asked if graduates progress is tracked. Ms. King stated that this is mandated for a minimum of two years.

2000 GOALS

Mr. Totman stated a discussion of the 2000 goals will be discussed at the next meeting. The 1999 goals will also be distributed.

APPOINTMENTS

It was Moved by Mr. Joseph, seconded by Mr. Evans and unanimously adopted by voice vote to approved the following appointments to the Family Court Advisory Council:

Patricia Kerr-Segal - Family and Children's Representative - Expiring December 31, 2001
Leslyn McBean - At-large Representative - Expiring December 31, 2002
William Cornell - Law Enforcement Representative - Expiring December 31, 2002

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:32 p.m. The next meeting will be held February 10, 2000 at Noon in the Scott Heyman Conference Room.