

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

MARCH 9, 2000

NOON

SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM

PRESENT: G. Totman, B. Blanchard, T. Joseph

EXCUSED: N. Schuler, C. Evans, M. Lane

STAFF: P. Meskill, Sheriff; J. Beach, Stop-DWI Coordinator; J. Hughes, Assigned Counsel; M. Putney, OAR; K. West, Deputy County Administrator; J. Miller, L. Shurtleff, Fire, Disaster and EMS; K. Leinthall, Probation; R. Haus, Undersheriff

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting opened at Noon.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

Add: Snowmobile Proposal - Sheriff's Department
Child Safety Restraint Grant - Sheriff's Department

MINUTES

It was Moved by Mr. Joseph, seconded by Ms. Blanchard and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to approve the minutes of February 10, 2000, as submitted.

ASSIGNED COUNSEL UPDATE

Ms. Hughes reported that her office has finished the 1999 annual report and after the Advisory Board on Indigent Representation approves it she will submit it to the Committee. She stated business in the office has been slower than usual.

RESOLUTION NO. - ADOPTION OF AMENDED BYLAWS (ARTICLE II, PART 4.) - ADVISORY BOARD ON INDIGENT REPRESENTATION

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

WHEREAS, a paragraph in the Advisory Board on Indigent Representation bylaws Article II, Part 4., Attorney Membership, was submitted incorrectly, and

WHEREAS, the Advisory Board on Indigent Representation wishes the attorney membership be a majority of the voting members and not two voting members of the board, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety Committee, That the following paragraph replace the language in Article II, Part 4., Attorney Membership:

"The majority of the Board shall consist of attorneys recommended for membership by the Tompkins County Bar Association",

RESOLVED, further, That the proposed amendment to the 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 reported that the new director has been hired. She stated the 1999 annual report should be available by the April Committee meeting. Ms. Putney stated that OAR to date has completed 65 intakes, 11 bails, 1 release assist, and 12 bail returns. She stated the office has had no bail forfeitures in 1999 or 2000. At this time, there are approximately 23 bails out.

DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Ms. West had no report.

FIRE, DISASTER AND EMS

Mr. Miller stated Jim King of Clinton County will be in town on March 27 making a presentation to the Fire Chiefs about Clinton County's 800 MHz system and asked the committee if they would like to meet with Mr. King prior to that meeting. Mr. Miller stated Clinton County has had their system for approximately 6 years and Mr. King was instrumental in the design of the system and bringing it online. He stated Clinton County had a unique way of financing radios for departments and this is very interesting since these discussions are taking place in Tompkins County. It was the consensus of the Committee to meet with Mr. King April 27th at 5 p.m. at the Crash, Fire, Rescue Building. Ms. Blanchard will also invite the COMCAP Committee.

Mr. Totman noted that Clinton County's jail was built beyond capacity through a private contractor and they are leasing the jail. He stated that they are taking in inmates and making money. Mr. Joseph stated that this does not cover the operating expenses.

Mr. Shurtleff stated he has been working with the County Administrator on a grant application through the State EMS office seeking federal and state matched funds to apply toward personnel and administrative expenses associated with the local emergency management program. He stated it may be possible to receive up to \$10,900 for disaster programs.

Ms. Blanchard reported on March 15, 2000, Murray Henry, who operates Ontario County's 911 Center, will be making a presentation to the 911 Committee at the CFR building. She stated Mr. Murray will be available after lunch to answer questions and invited the Public Safety Committee to attend.

Mr. Miller stated that in October 1999 the Board adopted Resolution No. 224 supporting cellular calls being transferred to local PSAP's. He stated the cell providers were notified and Frontier Cellular's switches have been programmed and calls from five of their towers will be sent directly to the County instead of the State Police. He stated that when the county moved to 911 there were six trunk lines that were not removed and each of the five towers will be assigned a phone number. This will help to identify where the calls are originating. Mr. Joseph asked how calls are handled that originate from out of the County. Mr. Miller stated general information will be obtained from the caller and then the call will be transferred to the appropriate agency.

Ms. West asked if with the inception of 911, there was an agreement with the cell companies to send calls coming in to the state police. She also asked if the revenue is linked to the calls. Mr. Miller stated in 1986 the state saw an opportunity to obtain revenue so they imposed a tax. Since there were very few local PSAP's the calls were sent to the state police. Mr. Miller stated phone companies may send in calls if requested, but they can choose not to. He stated Frontier has agreed to the switch because they have digital technology, but at this time Cellular One's technology prevents them from making the transfer easy.

Ms. West stated she would like to know if the County needs to have an agreement with cell companies and stated she will discuss this with the County Attorney and report back at the next meeting.

PROBATION DEPARTMENT

Ms. Leinthall stated it cost \$72,259 to run the Electronic Monitoring Program in 1999. She stated there were 24 people on electronic monitoring for a total of 1585 days. At \$80 per day, the money saved by the jail was \$126,800. The difference between the savings and the cost of operation was \$54,541. Ms. Leinthall stated an average of 4 people were on electronic monitoring each day and it was necessary to have 3 people on per day to break even. She stated in February 2001 the County will own the original ten units used in the program and at this time it costs \$7,380 to lease them. This

will increase the savings to \$16,921, an increase of 13.5 percent if all other factors remain the same. Ms. Blanchard asked if a surcharge is paid to the company. Ms. Leinthall stated a nominal daily fee is charged for monitoring and the cost of equipment.

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

K-9 UNIT

Sheriff Meskill reported that Captain Vitale has formalized a letter requesting a dog and training from the State Police. The State has indicated they are willing to do this and a firm answer should be received by spring. The state has said they would like to be involved in the selection of the officer who will be the dog's partner to ensure the person selected will be a good dog handler. Sheriff Meskill stated the position will be posted in his department shortly, and it will be made clear to interested officers that if selected, they will not be reassigned for at least five-years.

Mr. Joseph stated when an officer is partnered with an animal that person is responsible for the animal's care and he is concerned that this could be an overtime issue. Sheriff Meskill stated that the dog and officer will have a regular schedule and the schedule will be adjusted to allow for the care of the dog. He stated that the only anticipated overtime for the pair would be when their expertise is specifically requested. He stated the dog will be trained in patrol, search, and drug work and it is hoped that once training is complete and the dog gets settled, that back-up will not be needed for some calls.

STATISTICS

Sheriff Meskill distributed the monthly statistics. He stated there is currently one inmate boarded out in Oneida County for medical reasons and it costs \$110 per day. He stated his office is working on getting the individual released from Tompkins County' custody and noted if this is not possible it will be very expensive and the costs will drain the medical budget. Ms. Blanchard asked what the possibilities are of the individual being released. Sheriff Meskill stated the individual could be released from his custody, from jail and into the care of the mental health office, or sent to trial. Ms. Blanchard asked if there were options like have been discussed in the Public Safety Space Building Committee, where this individual would be placed. Mr. Joseph stated the status of the individual would probably be no different. He stated when the state closed the mental health institutions, they put people on the street and they did this with the belief that they would be able to live freely with mental health support. He noted the state did not provide the support and this is left to the counties, but there are still people who cannot live among society safely.

CHILD SAFETY RESTRAINT GRANT

Sheriff Meskill stated that Chief Niemi has completed the jail policy manual. He noted that Deputy Shane Spencer recently completed training in Albany and is now the office's Certified Child Restraint Technician. He stated the Governor's Traffic Safety Board has a grant opportunity available that can be used to provide child restraint seats, education, and miscellaneous items in the community. He stated he does not anticipate any additional expenditures and would like to apply for the grant when it is made available. Mr. Beach asked if Deputy Spencer can train other people as trainers. He noted there are public health employees that are involved in child restraint education and it may be possible to rotate these people and have more individuals involved in this effort. Ms. Leinthall stated it would also be good to provide training to DSS employees as they transport a lot of children. Mr. Meskill stated this may be possible, and noted the training takes 35-40 hours to become a technician. He stated he would like to apply for the grant, get the equipment and start small to see how well the program will work. It was the consensus of the Committee to allow Sheriff Meskill to apply for the grant.

Sheriff Meskill reported that Deputy Little will be graduating from the Broome Academy in March and in approximately twelve weeks he will be allowed to go out on patrol alone. The Sheriff reported he has also been working with Mr. Beach to put together a recognition ceremony for the seven deputies who were instrumental in the high number of DWI arrests last year. Mr. Beach has provided funding for plaques and a brief presentation will be made to the officers

at the next Board meeting. He also noted that the annual report is being completed and the Undersheriff has set up a mechanical system of vehicle and traffic statistics that will be used until a computerized system is obtained. He stated the department did not have the benefit of these statistics last year and they will be used to measure what the department does.

SNOWMOBILE PROPOSAL

Sheriff Meskill distributed a proposal for the purchase of two snowmobiles, a trailer, and a rescue boggan. He stated there is grant funding available from the state that can be used to offset the costs of the program, and if obtained, the program can be started with approximately \$5,000 from the County. He indicated that he has these funds available in rollover. He stated the grant would also pay \$6,000 for a tow vehicle and his Department currently has two four-wheel drive vehicles on order, as approved in the 2000 budget, and the money would be use to offset those costs. Sheriff Meskill stated that this program will bring the Sheriff's office up to the level of service the community wants. He stated the Parks Department has to approve the grant and if approved they will also pay 50 percent of ongoing expenses. He stated he would remanage the people in the department during the time of year when the program is needed as is done similarly with the lake patrol. He stated he would like a direction from the committee on whether to proceed with a detailed proposal for the state money.

Mr. Joseph asked if a regular patrol is envisioned and asked why it is needed. Mr. Meskill stated that the patrol would be done on a limited basis. He stated this is useful because by having a presence, snowmobilers are more conscious of their rate of speed and the patrol would also be used to conduct checkpoints for registrations. He stated that having the snowmobiles would also be useful in case a rescue situation ever arises. At this time, the Sheriff's Department does not have this capability. Mr. Miller stated that he supports the purchase because there have been times when towers have been difficult to reach due to snow and the sleds could be utilized during those times.

Ms. Blanchard asked if the Sheriff's office will be partnering with local snowmobile clubs in the County. Sheriff Meskill stated that those groups have been contacted, but noted most offenders do not belong to these clubs.

Mr. Joseph stated that he supports the County having the equipment, but expressed concern that the time needed will result in requests for additional staff in the future. He stated the more specialized patrols that are formed takes away from the regular patrols. Mr. Meskill stated that this program can be run within the confines of the department and the road patrol has and will continue to take precedent. He stated that there are secondary issues that can be addressed when they arise if the department is prepared.

It was the consensus of the Committee to allow Sheriff Meskill to apply for the snowmobile grant with the understanding that approximately \$5,000 will be requested for use from rollover funds.

OTHER

Sheriff Meskill stated that Captain Vitale and Undersheriff Haus have been working on forming a small tactical team that will be skilled to handle situations if they should arise. He stated people are needed who are clearly trained to hold perimeter control of a situation until back up is available. He stated additional funding is not anticipated. Ms. Blanchard asked about staff used for hostage situations. Sheriff Meskill stated he has hostage negotiators on staff and the idea of the tactical team is to be able to safely control an area until additional resources can be obtained.

Sheriff Meskill stated that he received an email from County Administration about the possibility of changes to the rollover policy and stated he is very concerned. He stated that he has worked very hard to insure that there would be money left over in 1999 and he has specific ideas on how to use those funds. Ms. West stated that this has to be discussed at both the department head level and the Budget Committee and it is too soon to make assumptions.

Sheriff Meskill stated he will be at a conference in Georgia speaking about seatbelt use in rural America next week.

BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

It was Moved by Ms. Blanchard, seconded by Mr. Joseph and unanimously adopted by voice vote to approve the following budget adjustments:

REVENUE	3113.42626	Drug Forfeiture	\$500
APPROPRIATION	3113.52220	Departmental Equipment	\$500

Explanation: Monies needed to cover the cost of binoculars to be used in drug enforcement.

REVENUE	3113.42706	D.A.R.E Donations	\$100
APPROPRIATION	3113.54484	D.A.R.E. Program	\$100

Explanation: Monies needed to purchase D.A.R.E. supplies.

STOP-DWI

Mr. Beach distributed the monthly report. This is on file with the original minutes. Mr. Beach stated that alcohol fatalities have decreased significantly over 15 years. Sheriff Meskill stated that rotating officers on the selective enforcement patrol is working very well and the number of DWI arrests on the regular patrol has also been increasing.

Mr. Joseph stated that when the program was started it was asked if there were enough DWI revenues to pay for this program and at that time there wasn't. He asked if at this time there is enough to fund the patrol. Mr. Beach stated that the revenue has remained consistent even through the Sheriff's Department is producing more arrests. He said that due to staffing, arrests at the Ithaca Police Department have gone down. Mr. Totman asked what the revenue is used for. Mr. Beach stated the program allocates funds to law enforcement, courts, treatment, probation, public education, and program administration. He stated one program is not favored over another, because all of the components are needed for a successful program.

Mr. Joseph stated that funds are allocated to several areas and there should be incentive for success and those areas that are most successful should receive the additional revenue.

Mr. Beach distributed the program expenditures and noted one-third of the revenue is going to the law enforcement community this year. He stated that over the last four years allocations have more than doubled for law enforcement. This money is used for overtime contracts and additional equipment. Mr. Totman asked if the money is allocated proportionately to the number of arrests. Mr. Beach stated that the money allocated to IPD went toward overtime contracts to conduct sobriety checkpoints and the Sheriff's Department allocations were used to purchase equipment. He stated there are contracts with six agencies to provide additional patrols, nothing more.

Ms. Blanchard asked if there are additional activities that Mr. Beach would like fund that he is currently unable to. Mr. Beach stated that he would like to see more interdepartmental operation i.e. joint checkpoints between City and County, and he would like to have additional money available for training.

GOALS

The Committee reviewed the goals for Stop-DWI. They are attached to the original minutes. Mr. Beach stated he would like the County to have another DWI Warrant night, noting the last one was very successful in getting DWI fines paid. He stated he would also like to have a local victim impact panel established so victims do not have to travel to Chemung County. After lengthy discussion the Committee asked that Mr. Beach reframe his goals so the results would be measurable and present them at the next meeting.

APPOINTMENTS

It was Moved by Mr. Joseph, seconded by Ms. Blanchard and unanimously adopted by voice vote to approve the following appointments:

Traffic Safety Board

Barbara Blanchard (Member, Public Safety Committee) - Expiring December 31, 2000
Peter Meskill (Tompkins County Sheriff) - Expiring December 31, 2000
Edward Abruzzo (New York State Police) - Expiring December 31, 2000
Nancy Schuler (Member, Public Safety Committee) - Expiring December 31, 2001
Charles Evans (Member, Public Safety Committee)- Expiring December 31, 2001
Fernando DeAragon (Metropolitan Planning Organization) Expiring December 31, 2001
George Totman (Member, Public Safety Committee) - Expiring December 31, 2002
Tim Joseph (Member, Public Safety Committee) - Expiring December 31, 2002

Criminal Justice Advisory/Alternatives to Incarceration Board

Nancy Zahler - At-large Representative - Expiring December 31, 2002

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m. The next meeting will be held April 13, 2000, at Noon in the Scott Heyman Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Luu, Administrative Assistant, Board of Representative's office.