

**Public Safety Committee**  
**May 11, 2000**  
**Noon**  
**Scott Heyman Conference Room**

Present: G. Totman, C. Evans, B. Blanchard, N. Schuler, T. Joseph

Staff: J. Miller, Fire, Disaster, and EMS Coordinator; P. Meskill, Sheriff; B. Benjamin, Deputy County Administrator; K. West, Deputy County Administrator; J. Beach, STOP-DWI Coordinator; R. Haus, Undersheriff; J. Smith, Intern, Criminal Justice Intern; J. Vitale, Sheriff's Department; G. Dentes, District Attorney; J. Hughes, Assigned Counsel Program; K. Leinthall, Probation Director; M. Pottorff, Board Office

Guests: Olin Mack, Director of OAR; Michael Lane, Board of Representatives

The meeting was called to order at 12:01 p.m.

**Changes to the Agenda**

Mr. Meskill asked that the Committee discuss the Winter Weather Alliance and consider a request by his department to proceed with an application for a universal COPS grant.

The resolution entitled Endorsement of Reorganization of Emergency Planning Committee and Revision of Administrative Manual Policy 01-19 was added to the agenda

**Approval of Minutes of April 13, 2000**

It was MOVED by Mr. Evans, seconded by Ms. Blanchard, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the minutes of April 13, 2000. MINUTES APPROVED.

**OAR Update**

Mr. Mack provided the Committee with an update on agency statistics and stated that as of April they have met with 43 clients, seven of which have been youths. There has been 374 volunteer hours and OAR has met with the Jail and Sheriff to discuss some of the issues about volunteers having access there. He said as a result of those meetings, those issues are in the process of being resolved. In terms of intake, as of April 30 there have been 19 bails for the year and the total for the immediate assistance program for April was 112.

A report on staffing at OAR was provided to the Committee with the announcement that there have been two staff resignations. The Client Services Coordinator has been replaced by an intern and the Bail Coordinator position is now vacant. He intends to hold interviews for that position next week. In the meantime the Volunteer Coordinator will be handling those duties.

**Traffic Safety Board**

Mr. Beach provided the Committee with a report on the Traffic Safety Board, and said at the last meeting they did a second spreadsheet based on the eleven grants the board has prioritized. He said the cumulative total for the top ten grants equals \$83,282. He is hoping that this captures the attention of the Governor's Traffic Safety Board when they see that.

**STOP- DWI Update**

Mr. Beach provided the Committee with a copy of DWI statistics by selective enforcement and regular patrols thru March 18. A copy of those statistics are on file in the Board office. Mr. Beach referenced an article that appeared in the Ithaca Journal recently that stated that DWI arrests were down compared to twenty years ago. He said he didn't feel the article accurately represented the facts and will be sending a letter to the Journal to clarify his viewpoint.

Ms. Blanchard said at the Facilities and Infrastructure meeting this week the Committee discussed the Coddington Road improvement project. A man who lives in that area brought some very useful information to the Committee and asked if the County would consider building a pedestrian path that would connect Coddington Road and Hudson Street so that people would have to walk on the road. Ms. Blanchard asked if this is something the Traffic Safety Board could work on. Mr. Beach said he believes the appropriate venue for pedestrian issues is the Traffic Safety Board and that he will bring it up for discussion.

**RESOLUTION NO. - Budget Adjustment and Appropriation of Unspent General Funds from 1999 to Various Departments**

The Committee discussed the departments reporting to the Public Safety Committee that are listed in the resolution. When asked about the Assigned Counsel Program's request for rollover funds, Ms. Hughes said the department did not expend its travel and training account because they are trying to set aside money to use towards drug court training.

The District Attorney explained that his rollover request is related to a prior year carry over of salary reimbursement.

Mr. Joseph said that several of the requests for the Sheriff's Department contain the explanation of how and why there is rollover as "good management and new efficiencies," and asked how this translates into dollars. Mr. Meskill responded that this is the result of him trying to manage payroll and all of the things that relate to overtime.

It was MOVED by Mr. Joseph, seconded by Mr. Evans, and unanimously adopted by voice vote to approve the rollover requests that fall under the purview of this committee.

**Criminal Justice**

It was MOVED by Mrs. Schuler, seconded by Mr. Joseph, and unanimously adopted by voice vote to approve the following resolution and submit to the full Board:

**RESOLUTION NO. - AUTHORIZATION FOR PROGRAM RECONFIGURATION – 2001 BUDGET – CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

WHEREAS, the Planning and Coordination function of Criminal Justice Services is a component of the Criminal Justice Budgeting Unit, and

WHEREAS, the salary, fringe, and supplies for the Deputy County Administrator is included in this function, and

WHEREAS, the Deputy County Administrator not only provides oversight for the Criminal Justice Program, but also provides a myriad of services related to the administration of County government, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety, Governmental Operations, and Budget and Fiscal Policy Committees that the salary, fringe, and supplies of the Deputy County Administrator be combined into County Administration, and

RESOLVED, further, That the Fiscal Target for Criminal Justice be reduced by \$76,963 and the Fiscal Target for County Administration be increased by the same amount.

**SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20**

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It was MOVED by Mr. Evans, seconded by Mrs. Schuler, to approve the following resolution and submit to the full Board. Ms. Blanchard asked if a program evaluation is available for this program. Mr. Benjamin said Sue Robinson is working on this.

**RESOLUTION NO. - APPROPRIATION FROM CONTINGENT FUND - DOORS  
(DOMESTIC OFFENSE OFFENDER REHABILITATION SERVICES)  
PROGRAM - TST BOCES**

WHEREAS, Tompkins County currently has a contract with Tompkins Seneca Tioga (TST) BOCES to provide education classes for domestic violence offenders (DOORS Program), said contract being in the amount of \$31,275 which includes providing for two classes for the calendar year 2000, and

WHEREAS, the intention of the program is to avoid, where possible, waiting lists for this population group before they are able to commence enrollment in classes, and

WHEREAS, the DOORS, program currently has a list of nine domestic violence perpetrators waiting to start a class and there being no available class to enroll them, and

WHEREAS, the Public Safety Committee also desires to avoid waiting lists for this population, and

WHEREAS, the additional amount of \$1, 750 will eliminate this waiting list by allowing the program to commence another class from June 1 through December 21, 2000 instead of waiting until the next budget period, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety and Budget and Fiscal Policy Committees, That the County appropriate \$1750 from the Contingency Fund to the TST BOCES Contract via the Criminal Justice Services Office and the County Administrator or his designee is directed to execute a modification of the existing contract with TST BOCES to incorporate the new dollar amount and class start-up expectation

FROM: Contingency Fund 1990.44400	\$1,750
TO: Administration Criminal Justice Services 6314.54400 Program Expense	\$1,750
TOTAL	\$1,750

**SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20**

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It was MOVED by Mrs. Schuler, seconded by Mr. Evans. Mr. Benjamin said this is an item that is being held up in negotiations and this resolution just asks that Congress act on it as soon as possible. A voice vote resulted as follows: Ayes - 5, Noes - 0. MOTION CARRIED.

**RESOLUTION NO. - IN SUPPORT OF FEDERAL LEGISLATION THAT  
CONTINUES THE COMMITMENT OF THE VIOLENCE  
AGAINST WOMEN ACT**

WHEREAS, the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, set to expire in fiscal year 2000, has already made a difference in thousands of women's lives: bolstering prosecution of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse, increasing victim services, increasing resources for law enforcement, and creating a National Domestic Violence Hotline, and

WHEREAS, Tompkins County has benefited from this legislation as the recipient of two Grants to Encourage Arrests totaling over \$800,000 over three years, and

WHEREAS, this funding has made it possible to improve advocacy services to victims of domestic violence, has improved prosecution of domestic violence offenders, has provided extensive

training for law enforcement officers, has provided law enforcement with cameras and film to assist with crime scene documentation, has made it possible for us to outfit criminal justice system agencies with computer hardware and software, and has improved the domestic violence community organization and collaboration, and

WHEREAS, legislation has been introduced in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act for another five years at levels essential to service providers and law enforcement doing this work on the front lines, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety Committee, That the Tompkins County Board of Representatives supports the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Bill (S.51/H.R.1248) and urges Congress to take appropriate actions to ensure that this bill is reauthorized.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

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### **Probation Department**

Ms. Leinthall reported there are currently six individuals in the electronic monitoring program. They will be starting the felony drug court on June 14<sup>th</sup> and it will be held every Wednesday at 1:30 in Judge Sherman's court. She said there are 5-7 interim probation cases that apply to this. Ms. Leinthall said they will be trying to hire a Drug Court Coordinator by July 1, with the program officially beginning October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Benjamin said as part of the alternatives to incarceration proposal there is a core group of people from the Criminal Justice Advisory/Alternatives to Incarceration Board that are working on putting together a day reporting proposal that this Committee will see during the budget process. Mr. Beach said the same is happening with the restorative justice proposal. This is the main item on the next CJA/ATI meeting agenda.

### **Fire, Disaster, and EMS**

The following resolution was MOVED by Ms. Blanchard and seconded by Mr. Evans. Mr. Evans said this law is very restrictive on how these funds are used. Mr. Miller said this will also be very restrictive because the State is very concerned with how counties spend these dollars. He said this money will be used towards upgrading the communications systems in ambulances. This will increase efficiency at the dispatch center and will allow them to communicate directly with the hospital.

Mrs. Schuler asked what the next priority would be for use of these funds. Mr. Miller said if they were not being used towards upgrading communication systems in the ambulances it would be used towards part of the new radio system. A voice vote resulted as follows: Ayes - 5, Noes - 0. MOTION CARRIED.

### **RESOLUTION NO. - ENDORSING STATE LEGISLATION AUTHORIZING INCREASING E-911 SURCHARGE**

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Board of Representatives desires to maintain and improve the capabilities of E-911 service, and

WHEREAS, the current E-911 telephone surcharges, paid for by all system users, covers a limited portion of actual system operational expenses, and all other costs related to the system must be raised through property taxes, and

WHEREAS, this Board by Resolution No. 42 of 1999 requested the New York State Legislature to authorize an increase in the Tompkins County 911 Surcharge, and

WHEREAS, the New York State Legislature has recently introduced A10997/S7823 "AN ACT to amend chapter 607 of the laws of 1999, amending the county law relating to authorizing the county of Tompkins to impose fifty-five cents per access line per month surcharge for its enhanced emergency telephone system, in relation to extending the expiration of such provisions", now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety Committee, That this Board endorses and requests State approval of legislation known as A10997/S7823 extending the expiration of 55 cents surcharge for the enhanced emergency telephone system in the County of Tompkins for an additional year, and urges its elected representatives in the Senate and the Assembly to support this legislation.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

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It was MOVED by Ms. Blanchard, seconded by Mr. Joseph, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the following resolution and submit to the full Board:

**RESOLUTION NO. - ENDORSEMENT OF REORGANIZATION OF EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE AND REVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL POLICY 01-19**

WHEREAS, Tompkins County established a County Emergency Action Plan in 1983 that included the designation of a Disaster Advisory Committee, and

WHEREAS, recent national events have underscored the importance of community-wide emergency planning in order to coordinate and maximize local resources in the event of local disasters, and

WHEREAS, a commitment to County-wide emergency planning is evident, as exhibited by the large number of public and private officials from Tompkins County who recently participate in the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Integrated Emergency Management Course in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and

WHEREAS, a reactivation of the Disaster Advisory Committee as an Emergency Planning Committee will facilitate the planning process, and

WHEREAS, a restructuring of the committee will ensure proper representation and input toward a Comprehensive County Emergency Management Plan, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety Committee, That the Board of Representatives endorses the reorganization of this Emergency Planning Committee and hereby updates Policy 01-19 to reflect the updated membership and its mission.

**SEQR ACTION:** Type II-20

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Mr. Miller reported last week the County-wide paging system was lost for 14 hours. They are also having a loss of communications between the Sheriff's office and the downtown CAD system. He said this is due to the microwave system.

**Assigned Counsel Program**

Ms. Hughes reported that every family court case in 1999 was assigned. There are times when there are others involved which could mean a few attorneys needing to be assigned for one case. She stated that in a neglect proceeding there is at least a mother and father who are entitled to attorneys. The New York State budget does not contain any increase for fees; the result is that she does not have very many attorneys. There is a grant proposal being put together for drug court that will contain some type of compensation for defense attorneys. Ms. Leinthall stated that there is going to become a point when a position will need to be created for a drug court attorney. She said that by having such a position there would consistency as well as a presence in the court.

Mr. Joseph said it is very important that whoever is writing the grant proposal be told to include money for defense.

Mr. Benjamin said the issue of drug court and the issue of intensified defense services raises, again, the issue of creating a public defender's office. Ms. Leinthall said with more people buying into

the drug court concept, the situation is much different than it was a few years ago. When this idea came up a few years ago it was not cost feasible, and it may be now.

### Department Goals

The Committee reviewed the Goals submitted by the Assigned Counsel Program. Ms. Hughes said there have been many administrative changes in departments they work with on a regular basis (e.g., Sheriff and OAR). She said they have been able to adapt to those changes.

Ms. Hughes said during the last five years the mandate side of the budget has been under \$100,000 because there has been no high level of crime. Therefore, this year they have adjusted the mandate line down where they feel it is more realistic. She reported she has worked out a system with Chief Neimi (Jail) that when a person is booked at the jail, part of the package is an assigned counsel form that is faxed to the Program. OAR then goes into the Jail and takes an application and brings it to the Assigned Counsel Program. This has worked out great and is making things happen much faster.

Ms. Hughes announced that Georgette King, Coordinator of the City Drug Court has resigned. A new person has been hired but she does not know who that person is yet. She also reported there is a problem with the database program at the Assigned Counsel office. They have been working with George Hammer in Criminal Justice to rectifying this situation.

Mr. Joseph said he feels the first two goals are vague and suggested that wording be added so that the goals are measurable. Ms. Hughes said she will work on revising some of the wording, but noted that some of the goals are vague because she does not know how the new drug court is going to affect them.

### Sheriff's Department

Mr. Meskill distributed Jail statistics dated April, 2000. He reported that at the present time two sergeants are attending supervisory school and two deputies are attending accident and reconstruction school.

### **RESOLUTION NO.                    – AUTHORIZATION TO APPLY FOR GRANT FUNDING – U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE – COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES (COPS) – SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**

Mr. Meskill reported the deadline for filing this COPS grant application is May 31. He said he needs the support of the governing agency (Board of Representatives) to be sure that when he applies for this that it will be enacted. He said he would like to apply for two positions; an investigator and a uniformed deputy. Mr. Meskill said it would be a good idea to tie the deputy position to the Newfield substation. Aside from the three-year grant period, it requires that the County fund each position for a subsequent year. He estimates the grant funding to be around 50 percent. Mr. Meskill said he is reluctant to invest a lot of his own time into preparing this if the Board is not going to support it.

He said at this time there are three areas in the Department that need attention: responding to calls in a timely basis; being able to be proactive; and traffic enforcement.

Mr. Joseph said he is not comfortable with this. He feels the COPS program is a temporary inducement to get counties to add deputies at a county's expense. He also does not feel this should be handled outside of the County's regular budget process.

Ms. Blanchard said she would like an opportunity to talk this over with other Board members to get a broader feel for whom might support it. She said she sees this as part of the bigger package that

was discussed as part of the Public Safety Building space project. She said she is willing to fight for increases in other programs and this is the kind of program that seems to fit into those discussions.

Mr. Totman said he sees this as bringing the staffing in the Sheriff's Department back to the 1990 level. Mr. Meskill said there have been vacant positions on the books for several years and he sees the is an opportunity to fill some of those positions. Mr. Evans said he believes the justification stated above.

Ms. Schuler asked if there are any other sources of monies that could be used to fund these position. Mr. Meskill said he has been exploring other options. Although other areas are still being pursued, he has not yet found anything.

A voice vote resulted as follows: Ayes - 3 (Representatives Blanchard, Evans, and Totman); Noes - 2 (Representatives Joseph and Schuler). MOTION CARRIED.

WHEREAS, The COPS Universal Hiring Program (UHP) is one of several approaches developed by the U.S. Department of Justice under the Public Safety Partnership and Community Policing Act of 1994 to deploy additional officers devoted to community policing on the streets and rural routes of this nation, and

WHEREAS, UHP enables interested agencies to supplement their current sworn forces, or interested jurisdictions to establish a new agency, through Federal grants for up to three years, and

WHEREAS, community policing is an integral part of combating crime and improving the quality of life in the nation's cities, towns and rural areas, and

WHEREAS, it stresses the importance of police-citizen cooperation to fight crime and maintain order, and

WHEREAS, departments that practice community policing work with community members to identify persistent local problems, learn more about why these problems occur, and address the underlying conditions that lead to these problems so that predictable future crimes can be prevented, and

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Sheriff's Department would like to establish such a program and are seeking authorization and endorsement by the Board of Representatives to pursue this opportunity made available through this grant process, and

WHEREAS, grants will be made for up to 75 percent of the total salary and benefits of each new officer over three years, and up to a maximum of \$75,000 per officer, with the remainder to be paid by local funds, and

WHEREAS, all grant applicants must develop a written plan to retain their COPS-funded officer positions for one full budget cycle after the three-year Federal funding has ended, and

WHEREAS, this plan must be submitted to the COPS Office with an application prior to the deadline on May 31, 2000, and

WHEREAS, the total cost of a new deputy, including overtime and basic equipment (exclusive of vehicles) over a four-year period is approximately \$235,000, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety Committee, That the Sheriff's Department shall apply for such Grant with the understanding that if the Federal Grant is awarded to the County, the local share commitment to the program for each Deputy Sheriff hired is approximately \$160,000 over such four-year period.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

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Mr. Meskill provided the Committee with a brief update on staffing at the Sheriff's Department. He said right now things are tight there are a fair amount of people out on disability.

Mr. Meskill said the Department has approximately ten very outdated computers and would like permission to give these to families with children who do not have much money. He said he would do this by giving units to school nurses and letting them determine who the most needy is. Mr. Meskill was

told there is a County policy already in place that addresses this. However, the Committee had no objection to this being done and advised Mr. Meskill to speak with the Finance Director and the Government Operations Committee to see if there needs to be a change made to the policy.

It was MOVED by Mrs. Schuler, seconded by Mr. Evans, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by member present, to approve the following resolution and submit to the full Board:

**RESOLUTION NO. - AUTHORIZATION FOR PROGRAM RECONFIGURATION –  
2001 BUDGET – SHERIFF**

WHEREAS, the Budgeting Unit areas within the Sheriff's Department cross boundaries frequently, and

WHEREAS, the personnel within the Civil, Criminal Investigation, and Uniform Budgeting Units serve a multitude of tasks on a daily basis making program accountability impossible to measure with any absolute certainty, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety, and Budget and Fiscal Policy Committees, That the Civil, Criminal Investigation, and Uniform programs be consolidated into one Budgeting Unit known as "Sheriff",

RESOLVED, further, That the Fiscal Targets for each Budgeting Unit be consolidated into one Budgeting Unit Fiscal Target in the sum of \$2,507,339,

RESOLVED, further, That the programs of Civil, Criminal Investigation, and Uniform will continue to be reflected within the Sheriff Budgeting Unit,

RESOLVED, further, That these amounts reflect the anticipated Target changes effective on January 1, 2001 and that the Budgeting Units be collapsed effective immediately giving the Sheriff the authority to transfer funds within his 2000 Budget without regard to Fiscal Target boundaries.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

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It was MOVED by Mr. Evans, seconded by Mr. Joseph, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by member present, to approve the following resolution and submit to the full Board:

**RESOLUTION NO. – AUTHORIZATION TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH THE  
TOWN OF NEWFIELD FOR USE OF FACILITIES - SHERIFF**

WHEREAS, the Sheriff's Office and Town of Newfield are mutually interested in establishing a Tompkins County Sheriff's Satellite Office, and

WHEREAS, the Newfield Town Hall will provide space as needed at no cost to the County or Sheriff, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety Committee, That the County Administrator or designee is authorized and directed to execute a contract between the County of Tompkins, the Sheriff and the Town of Newfield for facilities use for the period of June 1, 2000 through December 31, 2002.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

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**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m.