

**Public Safety Committee  
October 3 2002  
11:30 a.m.  
Board Chambers**

Present: N. Schuler, G. Totman, K. Herrera, B. Blanchard,  
Staff: S, Whicher, B. Richmond, J. Hughes, P. Meskill, J. Vitale, D. Rogers, J. Beach, D. Cornell, D.  
Neimi, L. Shurtleff, A. Fitzpatrick  
Agencies and Guests: O. Mack, OAR; B. Holt, Ithaca College  
Board Members: P. Penniman

**Call to Order**

Mrs. Schuler called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes of September 5, 2002**

It was MOVED by Ms. Herrera, seconded by Mr. Totman, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of September 5, 2002 as submitted. MINUTES APPROVED.

**Additions to the Agenda**

Items relating to Jail Medical Professional Services and fleet maintenance for the Sheriff's Department was added to the agenda.

**Chair's Report**

Mrs. Schuler had no report. She thanked those individuals who attended the meeting yesterday to discuss the STOP-DWI program.

**Drug Court**

Ms. Johnson said one of the concerns that surfaced in the Felony Drug Court was that most of their referrals were individuals who had DWI offenses. She said alcohol only stays in a person's system for a limited amount of time, which is unlike some types of drugs that can stay in the body's system for a period of days and weeks. Since it is harder to track alcohol, they wanted something to be able to monitor these people in their home, particularly over the weekend. Ms. Rogers said with help from the STOP-DWI program, the Drug Court was successful in obtaining some sobrieters through a grant and also through a private donation. The program now has a total of seven sobrieters for the Felony Drug Court Program that are being used. As of this date those sobrieters have been used by 13 individuals and three of them were caught drinking in their home. She said these individuals would not have been caught otherwise. All of them were incarcerated until they could be placed in a long-term treatment in-patient treatment program.

**Presentation - Sobrieter Unit**

Ms. Rogers introduced Dan Cornell, Sr. Probation Officer from the Tompkins County Probation Department.

Mr. Cornell proceeded to demonstrate a sobriety that is used by the Felony Drug Court Program. He said this equipment is capable of obtaining a breath sample, processing it within the unit, and sending the appropriate authority the of what the individual's blood alcohol content is. The machine operates on a voice recognition system and tests can be called at random times. Mr. Cornell said when the sobriety detects alcohol, a notification is immediately sent to both the Probation Department and the court. He said this is generally used in conjunction with electronic monitoring equipment and noted the results are admissible in court. A question was raised about what happens if an individual had used products such as mouthwash, cough syrup, or Nyquil before they had taken the test, thus, producing a positive alcohol reading. Mr. Cornell said all participants in the program are instructed at the beginning that they are not allowed to use any products containing alcohol. He said if the sobriety detects alcohol, a second test is administered a short time later. If the reading was positive due to use of those types of items, the second reading will show a significant reduction in the amount detected, as those products only stay in a person's system for a very short time. Mr. Cornell said there are safeguards built into the machine which would make it impossible for a client to try to "cheat". Ms. Rogers said once the voice recognition system is activated the client may not remove his/her face from the machine without having an automatic alert sent to the court system.

Following the conclusion of Mr. Cornell's presentation the Committee briefly asked questions and thanked him for providing the demonstration.

### **Continuation of Report**

Ms. Rogers said she prepared a report on post-graduation convictions as requested by the Committee at the last meeting. She said she researched 71 participants from the Ithaca City Drug Treatment Court; out of those ten had been convicted following graduation and one of those graduates had two different convictions. She said the only information she has access to was City Court records for convictions. She noted out of the 71 graduates there was a total of 70 violations. Ms. Rogers said the Ithaca City Drug Court is part of a National Research on Drug Court Statistic to whom she submitted a list of 50 graduates' names and statistics. That report is due in November and will be specific on recidivism and will show research from tracking these individuals across the country. She will present that report to the Committee when it becomes available.

### **Probation Department**

Ms. Richmond reported on Sue Robinson's behalf. She said a "Domestic Violence Prevention in the Workplace" workshop was held at Tompkins Cortland Community College on October 1. It was very well-received and there was a write-up in the Ithaca Journal.

### **Sheriff's Department**

Sheriff Meskill reported the Jail Medical contract expires at the end of the year. He and the Jail Administrator have met with the Purchasing and have received two proposals; one from a current provider and one from a former provider. Mr. Meskill said he recommends that the County continue contracting with the Dr. Marshall M. Trabout, M.D. He noted this is a four-year contract for the provision of Jail medical services from a doctor. The Committee asked that this item be deferred to the next meeting so they can have sufficient time to review the material that has been distributed (Letter dated August 19 from Dr. Trabout, M.D. to Meegan Teeter, Tompkins County Purchasing).

Mr. Meskill asked for Committee approval to seek bids for fleet maintenance. The Committee authorized the Sheriff's Department to seek bids and allow Purchasing to review them. The Committee asked that this information will be provided to the Committee and this item be placed on the November agenda.

Mr. Meskill distributed copies of Jail statistics and program highlights for the Sheriff's Department. Included in this document was an organization chart, outlining current positions in the Corrections Division and Law Enforcement Division. At the present time each division has 43 staff. Mr. Meskill requested an executive session to discuss a personnel matter.

### **Appointment**

It was MOVED by Ms. Herrera, seconded by Mr. Totman, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the appointment of Marianne Graham to the Family Court Advisory Council as an at-large representative for a term expiring December 31, 2004.

### **Report - Sheriff's Role in Countering Terrorism**

Mr. Vitale, Captain, said the focus on countering terrorism began on September 11 with the attack on the World Trade Center. Immediately federal, state, and local authorities pinpointed certain areas that have more visibility and need more security. The second phase dealt with the anthrax scare on month later. Mr. Vitale said the Sheriff's Department investigated over 200 suspicious packages around the County. He said those events prompted the creation of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Task Force. The Governor formed this Committee and a meeting was held at the Crash, Fire, Rescue Building with emergency officials from throughout the County for the purpose of building an assessment of terrorist targets within this County. Mr. Vitale said this was done in every county across the country. From that point they addressed obtaining local supplies in the event a need should arise.

Mr. Vitale said all of things he has spoken of thus far deal with addressing a situation once it has happened. He said it the goal of the law enforcement community to work to prevent any disaster before it happens. They are working with various agencies, including local, state, and federal to prevent any future attacks.

Mr. Holt distributed a map showing the Counter-Terrorism Zones within New York State. He noted Tompkins County is in zone and is made up of seven counties: Delaware, Otsego, Broome, Chenango, Tompkins, Tioga, and Cortland. He said in January every law enforcement agency in the County was invited to S.U.N.Y. Binghamton where a presentation was made by the Governor and James Kallstrom who was the Director of New York State Homeland Security. Mr. Holt said he represents Tompkins County at each of these monthly meetings. At those meetings items are covered such as organizational and training issues and vulnerabilities, including water supply and hazardous waste. At the present time they are working on hosting a training session for all law enforcement agencies within Tompkins County so that officers will know what to look for and will able to identify problem areas.

Mr. Holt also distributed a New York State Office of Public Security FACT SHEET and a sample advisory received from that Office. He explained how communications are received at the Sheriff's Department and the protocol following the receipt of that information.

### **Executive Session**

It was MOVED by Ms. Blanchard, seconded by Ms. Herrera, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to enter into an executive session at 12:35 p.m. to discuss personnel matters. The meeting returned to open session at 12:48 p.m.

### **OAR**

Mr. Mack provided the following report:

"OAR continues to serve its client base at the Tompkins County Jail. Although low, the client population is slowly creeping up and services of OAR are still in demand. During the month of August OAR lost its Client Services Coordinator. OAR is in the process of interviewing to fill the position. In the interim, other OAR direct service staff and the Director are providing Immediate Assistance as best as possible under the current circumstances. As of the 26th of September, OAR has completed another successful volunteer training. In this latest volunteer class there were seven (7) participants. In addition to the training of new volunteers the Volunteer Coordinator has been active providing Medicaid, DSS, and housing applications to clients. The Bail Program has once again been active in providing interest free bail loans to eligible clients. The Bail program was able to assist eight clients with bail during the month of August.

"OAR is currently participating in the Tompkins County Jail's transition program. OAR has two weekly slots within the program, one from communication skill and one for transition assistance. Although the program attendance is not yet at optimal levels, the services being provided to the clients are very much needed. OAR hopes to continue to work with the Sheriff and the other Tompkins County Jail transition program providers to tweak the program to be of optimal service both to the clients and to the County.

"There was a glitch in the visitation room door, which made Volunteer visitation difficult during the month of September. The jail, at OAR's request, would sometimes be able to post a Corrections Officer at the visitation door to facilitate the OAR Volunteer program, but the availability of this option was not consistent enough to not allow for the free flow of the program. The door has been fixed and the program is once again flowing smoothly. OAR is scheduled to meet with the sheriff to further discuss access to the hallways during the second week of October. OAR is very optimistic that the OAR/Jail hallway access issue will be resolved in the very near future."

Ms. Blanchard requested a presentation on the new Transition Program at the Jail. Mr. Mack and Sheriff Meskill will provide this at the December Committee meeting.

### **Department of Emergency Response**

Mr. Shurtleff reported he received notification that there is \$20 million in State funding available to counties in this year's budget for providing 911 services. He said he was able to secure \$121,000 in reimbursement for Tompkins. Mr. Shurtleff said in the future \$10 million will be allocated in the State budget for counties providing 911 service. Mr. Whicher and Mr. Shurtleff agreed to meet to discuss how to utilize those funds.

### **Advisory Board Survey**

The Committee briefly discussed the advisory board surveys that were conducted and charged Ms. Blanchard and Mrs. Schuler with compiling and report a recommendation to the Government Operations Committee based on the work they had done on this subject last year.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Public Safety Committee  
October 3, 2002

Respectfully submitted by Michelle Pottorff, Board of Representatives' Office