

Public Safety Committee
May 4, 2006

**Public Safety Committee
May 4, 2006
3:30 p.m.
Scott Heyman Conference Room**

Approved June 1, 2006

Present: R. Booth, M. Hattery, M. Koplinka-Loehr, M. Robertson, G Stevenson (temporary appointment)
Excused: L. McBean-Clairborne
Staff: N. Zahler, Youth Services Department, G. Grinnell-Crosby, Public Health Department; W. Furniss, District Attorney's Office; S. Whicher, Administration; J. Hughes, Assigned Council, L. Shurtleff, Department of Emergency Response; P. Meskill, Sheriff; J. Wood, County Attorney

Called to Order

Mr. Booth called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Changes to the Agenda

It was MOVED by Mr. Koplinka-Loehr, seconded by Ms. Robertson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the addition of an appointment to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes of April 6, 8, and 18, 2006

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Hattery, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the minutes of April 6, 8, and 18, 2006 with the changes submitted. MINUTES APPROVED.

RESOLUTION NO. - AMENDMENT TO BYLAWS - ADVISORY BOARD ON INDIGENT REPRESENTATION

It was MOVED by Mr. Koplinka-Loehr, seconded Mr. Hattery. Mr. Koplinka-Loehr stated this resolution is a recommendation from the County Attorney as to how this Advisory Board should proceed to allow the Director of Offender Aid and Restoration (OAR), an out-of-County resident, to serve on this advisory board. The Committee discussed the County's existing policy that prohibits out-of-County residents from serving on advisory boards unless a seat is specifically required by law. Mr. Meskill cautioned the Committee that approval of this resolution violates the County's existing residency policy and would set a precedent. Mr. Shurtleff referred to another advisory board that has had difficulty filling a vacancy because the only qualified and interested individual is not a Tompkins County resident.

Mr. Koplinka-Loehr said it is important that the Director of OAR have a voting seat on this advisory board.

Ms. Robertson said the residency policy has created a lot of problems and said she is glad it is currently under review by the Government Operations Committee.

A voice vote resulted as follows: Ayes - 3, Noes - 2 (Hattery and Stevenson). MOTION CARRIED.

WHEREAS, the Advisory Board on Indigent Representation (ABIR) wishes to amend its bylaws for the purpose of designating one of the thirteen existing seats to be filled by the Director of Offender

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Aid and Restoration with residency being waived if the individual is not a Tompkins County resident, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety Committee, That the bylaws of the Advisory Board on Indigent Representation are hereby adopted as amended,

RESOLVED, further, That a copy of said bylaws will be on file in the Office of the Clerk of the Legislature.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Sheriff's Office

Ms. Robertson questioned number six in the Department's April, 2006 report in which it was stated that a new labor schedule was created to allow supervisors the ability to supervise. Sheriff Meskill said the constant shuffle of inmates involving transportation to other facilities has created an abnormal amount of work for staff and the new schedule is an attempt to address problems that are the result of the Jail living without variances.

There was also a brief discussion pertaining to the number of officers that are out on Worker's Compensation or disability. Sheriff Meskill said there has been a significant increase in the number of physical incidents arising when inmates are moved to another county jail.

Ms. Hughes, Assigned Counsel Program Coordinator, spoke of the boarding of prisoners in other county jails and stated other facilities which are often far away are not very accommodating in terms of visits by prisoners' lawyers; she also said attorney travel time is becoming costly.

Mr. Booth asked if the Sheriff could discuss this with other Jail administrators in an attempt to get them to be more accommodating. The Sheriff said he did not feel comfortable making such a request. He said other Jails are operated much more strictly than Tompkins County in terms of visiting hours. The Sheriff cautioned Legislators on how this is handled, because other facilities do not have to accept inmates from outside counties. Ms. Robertson suggested one way to approach this would be for the Chair of the Legislature speak with other county legislature chairs.

Ms. Hughes will keep track of expenses related to attorneys traveling to other county facilities.

Health Department

RESOLUTION NO. – SUPPORT OF PANDEMIC FLU PLANNING EFFORTS – HEALTH DEPARTMENT

MOVED by Mr. Koplinka-Loehr, seconded by Mr. Stevenson.

Mr. Booth referred to discussion that took place at a previous meeting, and asked what the status is of identifying critical staff for dealing with emergencies. Mr. Whicher said the County Attorney and Personnel Commissioner are bringing this item forward; however there are many questions that have arisen in the beginning stages of discussions. This will be discussed next week at the Department Head meeting.

Ms. Robertson said she has tremendous respect for the program and departments but is concerned that this resolution says anything related to this program is going to get special treatment during the budget process. She feels there are other ways to communicate to the public and although this doesn't add anything to their funding, it might send a disturbing message to other department heads.

Ms. Grinnell-Crosby said this is not a budget-related resolution; it is only intended to show support for planning and coordination efforts.

A voice vote resulted as follows: Ayes - 4, Noes - 1 (Robertson). MOTION CARRIED.

WHEREAS, Pandemic Influenza could cause serious illness and result in disruption of social and business activity in Tompkins County, and

WHEREAS, the effects of a pandemic could be less severe if appropriate preparations are in place prior to a pandemic, and

WHEREAS, other agencies and the general public will be asked to participate in planning, coordinating, and implementing resources, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Health and Human Services and Public Safety Committees, That the Health and Human Services Committee, the Public Safety Committee, and the Tompkins County Legislature consider preparedness for pandemic flu and other health emergencies to be a high priority and pledge support of the efforts of the Tompkins County Health Department in coordinating the planning for Pandemic Influenza for the protection of the residents of Tompkins County.

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Explanation: This resolution was crafted as a result of a meeting with Anita Fitzpatrick, Tim Joseph and Steve Whicher. Surrounding counties have passed a similar resolution and County Executives/Legislature Chairs have made public statements to demonstrate to the public that the County is planning and preparing for a pandemic. All department heads have been briefed by the Public Health Director on this issue and are aware of this resolution. This resolution does not require any additional funds at this time.

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Youth Services Department

Ms. Zahler provided the Committee with an update on youth violence in Tompkins County. She said an increase in activity that began late last summer has continued to be monitored. She said there has been gang-like activity in terms of kids wearing colors and graffiti; fortunately however, there have not been the most serious of activities, such as drive-by shootings and other types of violence that have occurred in large cities. She said a proactive approach has been taken in this community that will hopefully prevent violence and gang-like activity. Networking with others in the region has begun in the hope of learning from the experiences of others and also of determining to see if there are regional networking opportunities available. She said in small communities where there is suspicious activity, a small police department can keep tabs on things and can easily identify activities that are taking place and that has been the case in parts of Tompkins County. Ms. Zahler spoke of the recent presentation about underage drinking with over 90 people in attendance and noted that all six school districts from Tompkins County were represented.

Sheriff Meskill recommended that the term "gang" not be used because when a sense of awareness is created, a group is empowered. He said there is nothing illegal about a group of people getting together to talk about anything. He said there is some criminal activity which can be described as mischief and is carried out by all kinds of kids and also adults for various reasons.

Ms. Robertson said there are not enough safe or free things for youth to do in Tompkins County and spoke of the many budget cuts that have been made to youth services.

Ms. Zahler said she would report back on this issue if there were any major developments.

Communications Project

Mr. Shurtleff reported the contract with Motorola was completed, signed, and delivered and the schedule should be finalized in the next two weeks. He expected field work to begin approximately June 1st. He distributed a chart showing the timeline for the radio system. At the present time the County is going back to municipalities to make sure that they are satisfied regarding the tower project. He said it is very delicate because each municipality has different concerns or different aspects of the system they are interested in. He noted site work is still running according to schedule and no new technical concerns have arisen.

Mr. Booth stated there still needs to be consideration given to the adoption of an ordinance that would prohibit tower obstructions.

Mr. Whicher reported there has been no news on grant applications that have been submitted. Mr. Shurtleff said he is hopeful that when the State budget process ends that the budget may contain something for Tompkins County's Communication System but he is not sure at this time.

Department of Emergency Response

**RESOLUTION NO. - REVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL POLICY NUMBER
01-19 - EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE**

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Stevenson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the following resolution and submit to the full Legislature.

Mr. Booth said he would like the following areas addressed:

1. An order of succession for the Chair of the Legislature (Mr. Shurtleff said this is addressed in the Comprehensive Plan).
2. The Plan is written in a sense of an emergency happening in a particular place. In the case of an epidemic that would happen in many places, there should be language addressing general and not specific sites (Mr. Shurtleff said this is addressed in the Comprehensive Plan).
3. Designation of the new Department of Emergency Response as the new Center. Also, what if the Center becomes unusable.
4. The usage of equipment other than the County's if similar equipment is available but not desirable.

WHEREAS, Policy 01-19 is in need of being updated to reflect the current format of Administrative Manual Policies and changes in titles and department names, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety and Government Operations Committees, That the following Administrative Policy is adopted as amended:

01-19 - Emergency Action Plan

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Appointment

It was MOVED by Mr. Koplinka-Loehr, seconded by Mr. Stevenson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the following appointment:

Advisory Board on Indigent Representation

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Diane V. Bruns - term expires December 31, 2007

Committee Goals

Mr. Booth asked members to send him suggestions and he will prepare another list of goals for the next meeting.

Chair's Report

Mr. Booth, Vice Chair, had no report.

Appointment

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Advisory Board on Indigent Representation

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Liaison Reports

Ms. Robertson reported the Criminal Justice Advisory/Alternatives to Incarceration Board meets every Monday and is working very hard on examining all parts of the criminal justice system.

Mr. Koplinka-Loehr reported OAR will celebrate its 30th anniversary on May 20th at 2:30 p.m. Congressman Hinchey is expected to speak at the event.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Michelle Pottorff, TC Legislature Office