

MINUTES

Approved

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

JULY 18, 2008 2:00 P.M. SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM

Present: G. Stevenson, Chair; M. Robertson; J. Dennis; M. Hattery

Excused: W. Burbank

Staff: C. Covert, Clerk of the Legislature; S. Cook, County Attorney's Office; B. Stolp, Assigned Counsel; K. Leinthall, Probation and Community Justice Director; P. Meskill, Sheriff; P. Younger, Deputy County Administrator; J. Hughes, Assigned Counsel; G. Potter, Information Technology Services Director; L. Shurtleff, Emergency Response Director

Guests: K. Schlather, Human Services Coalition; D. Dietrich, Opportunities, Alternatives and Resources; J. Ward, Tompkins County Red Cross; C. Monahan, Social Services; K. Damm, Advisory Board on Indigent Representation; D. Bodnar, Social Services Department; A. Mills, Social Services Department

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

Changes to Agenda

Mr. Stolp requested time to speak to the Committee concerning problems with his budget in Assigned Counsel he recently learned of. The County Administrator has reviewed the Assigned Counsel and is suggesting a change to the program as outlined in the correspondence distributed to Committee members. The proposal is an unspecified reduction of approximately \$25,000 in the administrative side of the budget (to be funded for two years). He hopes the Committee will discuss the proposal at the next meeting.

Report from the Chair

Mr. Stevenson did not have a report.

Sheriff's Department

Report

Mr. Meskill said he has been working with the Personnel office on putting together some recruiting plans for the upcoming Corrections Officer exam.

He reported caseloads have increased dramatically. Following a preliminary review of the Department's budget, Mr. Meskill believes there will be some concerns for 2009. One area is the increased cost of fuel (currently spending \$200,000) and on the jail side of the budget, he has concerns in the payroll and food lines and believes adjustments will need to be made.

Mr. Hattery spoke about a program called Chill-Cook available through NYSAC (New York State Association of Counties). It is a State Corrections program that supplies pre-cooked meals to County jails. Mr. Meskill said they are looking into it, but does not believe there is a large difference in the food costs. He said they are looking at other possible options for supervising kitchens as well. At this time, there is one full-time cook, one part-time cook, and one per-diem cook as needed.

Probation and Community Justice Department

Resolutions

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It was MOVED by Mr. Hattery, seconded by Ms. Robertson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval:

RESOLUTION NO. – APPROPRIATION FROM CONTINGENT FUND – TERMINAL PAY – DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE

WHEREAS, the Department of Probation and Community Justice had a Probation Officer resign effective March 4, 2008, and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Policy of Tompkins County allows for terminal pay from the Contingent Fund, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety and Budget and Capital Committees, That the Director of Finance is hereby authorized and directed to make the following budget appropriation for 2008:

FROM:	A1990.54400	Contingent Fund	2,472
TO:	A3142.51000585	Probation Officer	1,791
	A3142.58800	Fringes	681

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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It was MOVED by Mr. Hattery, seconded by Ms. Robertson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval:

RESOLUTION NO. - APPROPRIATION FROM CONTINGENT FUND - REPLACEMENT PAY – DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE

WHEREAS, the Department of Probation and Community Justice had an employee out on disability for greater than two months in the Core Probation Services Program, and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Policy of Tompkins County allows for replacement pay from the Contingent Fund, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety and Budget and Capital Committees, That the Director of Finance is hereby authorized to make the following adjustment to his books for 2008:

FROM:	A1990.54400	Contingent Fund	\$3,600
TO:	A3142.51000585	Probation Officer	\$2,609
	A3142.58800	Fringes	\$991

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Dennis, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval:

RESOLUTION NO. - APPROPRIATION FROM CONTINGENT FUND - REPLACEMENT PAY – DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE

WHEREAS, the Department of Probation and Community Justice had an employee out on disability for greater than two months in the Core Probation Services Program, and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Policy of Tompkins County allows for replacement pay from the Contingent Fund, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety and Budget and Capital Committees, That the Director of Finance is hereby authorized to make the following adjustment to his books for 2008:

FROM:	A1990.54400	Contingent Fund	\$6,665
TO:	A3142.51000585	Probation Officer	\$4,830
	A3142.58800	Fringes	\$1,835

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Criminal Justice Data Sharing – Phase II Technical Assistance

Ms. Younger said a comprehensive e-mail was sent out recently that provided an update on the May 19th meeting. Mr. Potter said he, Norma Jayne, and Paula Younger have been meeting and decided to separate technical assistance in to two phases. The first phase was the broader discussion that included all the criminal justice agencies in the County. The second phase was designed to focus on the police entities that are currently participating in the on-line applications and combined data system. The District Attorney (DA) is also part of that phase. All parties have signed agreements that allow access to certain levels of data across each others agencies; although the DA's office has not yet signed an agreement.

There are numerous applications the Information Technology Services Department supports on behalf of the police agencies including the villages, City of Ithaca, and the Sheriff's Department. An all day technical assistance session is scheduled for next Wednesday. Two of the individuals that will be providing the technical assistance expertise will be coming from the Center of Technology Government. The primary focus at the next session will be on needs assessment level or defining objectives and discussing the framework of data sharing amongst the police agencies.

Mr. Potter spoke about his perspective of the project and said to him it is more of a shared services project. The County is providing a service in which it is hosting an application and hosting the data. One of the purposes for doing that is to move towards a data sharing model. He commented that he is not the one to advocate with how data is shared, he advocates how data is stored, managed, and accessed which now is the focus of the project. He is hoping that the technical assistance will better define the role and how much effort and time his department should be putting into this project and said this a policy question that will need to be addressed. Some of this will come up during the budget season as he will likely have an over-target request to replace the server.

Mr. Stevenson asked Committee members what they want or expect from data sharing.

Ms. Robertson asked if this project would help the County in such areas as analyzing what the recidivism rate. Mr. Potter said it would not provide that level of information; it only collects information about incidences or arrests.

Mr. Hattery believes this service to be valuable to law enforcement agencies including the Sheriff's Department.

Discussion followed and Committee members requested more information be provided if a proposal is coming forward during the budget process.

Committee Goal – Transitional Housing for Ex-offenders in Tompkins County

Ms. Robertson said she requested an update from appropriate departments and agencies concerning the barriers for people getting out of jail such as housing. At this time introductions were made.

Ms. Dietrich began with a brief overview of her program and said OAR (Opportunities, Alternatives, and Resources) works in collaboration with the Continuum of Care Committee of the Human Services Coalition. She distributed a report that shows where 20 ex-offenders ended up between February 2007 and June 2008. A majority rent or live with family members or friends which typically only lasts for a few months and then issues come up and the need for different housing arises. Ms. Dietrich recognizes there is a large demand for SROs (Single Room Occupancy).

Ms. Dietrich spoke about housing options in the pipeline:

- Red Cross SROs
- Lakeview Housing
- Iacovelli project on Buffalo Street (OAR learned developer will be charging \$800 per month plus utilities for a studio apartment-exceeds any clients ability to live there)

Ms. Dietrich said OAR has identified three fundamental housing needs: (1) transitional housing for up to a one-year period for individuals incarcerated eight months or more with on-site programming (anger management, life skills, etc.); (2) permanent housing for level two and level three sex offenders; and (3) mission-type temporary shelter that would provide nourishment to more permanent living arrangements.

Mr. Ward spoke about the Red Cross shelter and the necessary requirements and approval by the Department of Social Services (DSS) needed. Some people do stay in the shelter who are not approved by DSS for various reasons. However, eligibility criteria must be met in order for individuals to stay at the shelter. He believes the shelter provides a useful purpose for some of the individuals especially those dually diagnosed (substance abuse and mental health issues). Six units are being added to the Friendship Center building. Eight shelter beds are also being added to get some people out of hotel rooms. There are some who find the rules of the shelter a barrier such as a curfew. The Red Cross has learned that many of the low-income housing projects are doing criminal background and credit checks. However, efforts are being made to work with these landlords to overlook some of the credit checks.

Ms. Schlather said one of the most difficult areas is people trying to find Section 8 housing. The Human Services Coalition has committees and programs working with the various populations including people who are homeless, people coming out of incarceration or institutional care, etc.

Ms. Bodnar said a database is maintained as required by the HUD program for everybody who applies for housing or the emergency shelter. She provided 2007 statistical information about 20 clients released from incarceration. A vast majority of them were released to permanent housing, or to live with family members or friends. From January to June 2008, seven individuals applied for the emergency shelter however for various reasons four were not placed in the shelter.

Ms. Schlather reported on another statistic and said there are 100 people who cannot find Section 8 housing arrangements.

In response to a question by Ms. Robertson, Ms. Bodnar said they do not follow-up with their clients and Mr. Ward said the Red Cross has a nine month follow-up program. However, Mr. Ward spoke of a grant the Red Cross just received for five years that will allow them to track individuals for twelve

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months. He also said the Red Cross has an incentive if it can be verified that an individual remains in safe affordable housing, a claim for reimbursement is filed with the State. As a result of this program, bed nights over the last three years have decreased by about 2000 total. Mr. Ward also spoke of the difficulties with finding affordable housing downtown because of transportation issues and the number of appointments an individual may have per week.

Following further discussion, Ms. Robertson asked that the Committee be kept informed of any other models or programs that might be of interest. She also requested that a follow-up report be provided to the Committee in two months.

Emergency Response

Appointment

The Committee considered an appointment to the Emergency Communications Review and Oversight Committee. Mr. Stevenson said this appointment was discussed last month and questions were raised about the residency of the applicant. Following a brief discussion the Committee agreed to have Lee Shurtleff contact the head of police or the Police Captain at Cornell to see if one of them would consider applying as they are County residents. Mr. Shurtleff agreed to make the contact as requested.

Mr. Shurtleff updated the Committee on the emergency systems and said installations are being done now. Almost all the portable radios have been distributed to agencies designated by the Legislature. Mobile radios are also being installed and anticipates that being complete by the end of July. His Department is working with individual agencies by providing training packages and material.

Approval of Minutes

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Hattery, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of the June 20th meeting as submitted.

Executive Session

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Dennis, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to hold an executive session to discuss a personnel matter. An executive session was held at 3:24 p.m. and returned to open session at 3:28 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:29 p.m.