

Minutes
Eau Claire County
Committee on Judiciary and Law Enforcement
Wednesday, May 27, 2020 – 3:00 PM
Virtual Meeting via Cisco Webex

Members Present: Melissa Janssen, Sandra McKinney, Zoe Roberts, Connie Russell, and Gerald Wilkie.

Others Present: Criminal Justice Director Tiana Glenna, Clerk of Circuit Court Susan Schaffer, Sheriff Ron Cramer, Captain Joel Brettingen, Lieutenant Cory Schalinske, Captain Dan Bresina, Lieutenant Dave Riewestahl, Admin. Services Div. Manager Danielle Powers, Director Travis Quella, District Attorney Gary King, Kimberly Cronk, and Eric Huse.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Wilkie at 3:00 PM.

Call of the Roll

The Clerk called the roll. Attendance was noted above.

Confirmation of Public Meeting Notice

The Clerk confirmed this meeting was properly noticed to the public.

Public Comment

Kayla Rick provided written comments that were provided in the meeting materials. The committee reviewed the comments and discussed the desire for more information regarding the topic.

Dr. Susan Wolfgram spoke on behalf of the ACLU Smart Justice – Rights for All Campaign about the Jail COVID-19 response and made a call to action for transparency. A written transcript of the comments have been included with these minutes.

Approve Minutes from May 14, 2020 Meeting

Supervisor McKinney moved to approve the minutes from the May 14, 2020 meeting. The minutes were adopted as published in the meeting materials via 5-0 voice vote.

Criminal Justice Collaborating Council Dashboard Update

A link to the dashboard website was included in the meeting materials. The data is completely refreshed monthly on the website with additional data being added periodically. The committee reviewed the information.

1st Quarter Fiscal Updates

- **Clerk of Courts**

- Clerk of Court Susan Schaffer presented the 1st quarter fiscal update for the Clerk of Courts Office. There have been staffing changes this year. A Clerk Supervisor resigned, an internal promotion of a Court Clerk filled that vacancy. An additional internal promotion of a Docket Clerk filled a separate Court Clerk vacancy. The new hire for the Docket Clerk position started just before COVID-19. There is still one Court Clerk position vacant. Schaffer reported there is no new State legislation pending that would affect operations. There has been an overall reduction in case filings, primarily driven by the reduction in filing of small claims, evictions, and other related civil matters. Evictions were also frozen through May 26, 2020 by State order. State Debt Collection is not collecting/accepting new debts during COVID-19 so there may be some decrease in revenues from that source. The committee discussed the possibility of leaving the Court Clerk position vacant through the end of the year. The department did experience a surplus in Quarter 1.

- **Circuit Court**
 - Clerk of Court Susan Schaffer presented the 1st quarter fiscal update for the Circuit Court. Much of what was reported in the Clerk of Courts update applies to the Circuit Court. They are in the process of reviewing the interpreter procedure/protocol. This is partly due to the increased utilization of Zoom for court appearances and the possibility that interpreters could appear by those means with greater frequency. The department also experienced a surplus in Quarter 1 in large part due to debts collected by State Debt Collection prior to the COVID-19 pandemic freezing collections.
- **Criminal Justice Collaborating Council**
 - Criminal Justice Director Tiana Glenna presented the 1st quarter fiscal update for the Criminal Justice Collaborating Council. Glenna highlighted the number jail bed days diverted through use of testing at the Community Transition Center. Glenna and other criminal justice partners were invited to participate in the Peer Learning Network through the National Association of Counties. The Criminal Justice Collaborating Council strategic planning has been delayed due to COVID-19 but they are eager to continue work on it soon. Community Service surcharges are down; however, there are other areas of reduction that can help cover some of those decreased revenues.
- **District Attorney**
 - District Attorney Gary King and Office Manager Eric Huse presented the 1st quarter fiscal update for the District Attorney's Office. Court filings are consistent with the increases seen in the last several years. DA King discussed COVID-19 protocols in the office including staff working from home as much as possible. On the financial side, grant funding is reliable and stable and the department is working to reduce costs as much as possible.
- **Register in Probate/Clerk of Juvenile Court**
 - Register in Probate/Clerk of Juvenile Court Jean Gay was unable to attend this meeting. This agenda item will be carried over to the June 24, 2020 meeting.
- **TRY Mediation**
 - Director Travis Quella presented the 1st quarter fiscal update for TRY Mediation. The department is slightly up in revenue despite decreases in mediations. This is due to an increase in Families in Transition program revenue. The department is experiencing some different-than-usual expenses as a result of COVID-19. They have had to procure cellular phones and laptops to continue services. Quella is confident that TRY Mediation will come in at or under budget.

Eau Claire County Sheriff's Office Updates

- **1st Quarter Fiscal Update**
 - Administrative Division Manager Danielle Powers presented the 1st quarter fiscal update for the Sheriff's Office. They have not experienced any significant differences in cases, bookings, and inmates from same time last year. Currently, the department is planning for 2020 festivals around the County with uncertainty if they will or will not be held. The department is funded through two separate funds: Fund 212-Anti-Drug Grant Fund & 100-Sheriff General Fund. Fund 212 is not funded by tax levy. The department budget is on track for the year after 1st quarter even with a slight decrease in public charges for services as a result of COVID-19.
- **Jail Population, Staffing, & COVID-19 Response**
 - Lieutenant Riewestahl provided an overview of the jail population. There has been a reduction in inmates in the jail, both secure & Huber inmates, as a result of collaboration across all system players. Bookings are down significantly. They typically average 100 bookings per week; last week there were 28 bookings.
 - Lieutenant Riewestahl provided an overview of staffing. They were notified of one Correctional Officer resigning. There was no mandatory order-in to work in the month of

- April. The perception is that morale is at a good level, has increased, and will continue to get better. The addition of four correction officers was very helpful to aide in morale.
- Captain Bresina reviewed the timeline of the Sheriff's Office response from the very beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, even before CDC guidelines were published to continued updates in policies and procedures. Outlined those procedures across the divisions from patrol to courthouse security to jail.

Future Meeting Date

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 3:00 PM.

Future Agenda Items

- Stop & Think Program Presentation
- Court Process & Treatment Courts Overview
- Sentence Modifications & COVID-19
- Register in Probate/Clerk of Juvenile Court 1st Quarter Fiscal Update

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Wilkie at 5:29 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:



Eric Huse
Committee Clerk

5.27.20 Judiciary & Law Enforcement Committee Meeting

3-5pm

“Good afternoon Chairman Wilke and Judiciary & Law Enforcement Committee Members-my name is Susan Wolfgram and I am offering public comment on Agenda Item #8B, the Sheriff’s Office report. I speak today on the behalf of our ACLU Collaborative Under The Rights For All Campaign group: David Carlson-Regional Organizer, Kim Cronk, Anthony Ledford, and myself. On May 14th we presented to you the ACLU’s Smart Justice objectives related to COVID-19 care and prevention in our Jail and Juvenile Detention Center. This afternoon, I will again highlight our primary concerns and request for action.

On May 21st, David Carlson sent a letter to Marisa Stanley, Captain Bresina, Sheriff Cramer, Chairman Jerry Wilke and others alerting to our being aware of two positive COVID-19 cases at the Jail. On May 22nd, Marisa replied with a standard response. We were waiting for Captain Bresina to update during a Public Health Briefing releasing this information and advising the public of the testing plan and prevention of community spread; we have not seen an update unless it is happening this afternoon during the 3:30pm Public Health Briefing.

We all know that when we are not transparent to the public with accurate information, we set in motion a process of misinformation which is not in our community’s best interest. At the Public Health briefing on April 8th, Captain Bresina stated that he would inform the public if matters arose concerning COVID-19 in the jail. Lieske Giese stated in her April 26th COVID-Care in the Jail Evaluation and Recommendations to Sheriff Cramer that, I quote, “Please consider regular reporting to the public of the measures you are taking including provision of this report. This is helpful for the community to be assured that our most at-risk populations are being protected.” On May 14th, Lieske Giese stated in the Leader-Telegram: “If we get a case in a larger site where there’s lots of close contact, we know that that will likely result in a public health investigation”. The County Strategic Plan Objectives states under Communication, “To develop an effective, modern, and accessible communications system, including internal, external, and advocacy to better serve and engage the citizens of Eau Claire County”. This would also include the Jail COVID-Care Action Plan being on the Sheriff’s Dept. website; it does not need to include any security related information. San Francisco Sheriff Paul Miyamoto is a good example of transparency on their website

including their COVID-19 Response and Action Plan (I can provide the link at your request). We would expect that County departments would follow their own strategic plan objectives.

At least four other counties in WI have demonstrated transparency to the public regarding positive COVID -19 cases in their Jail and then committing to testing all incarcerated people and staff; these include: Trempealeau County, Fond du Lac County, Kenosha County, and Dane County. Congregate settings, considered “hot spots” for infection and spread include nursing homes and jails/prisons. Since mid-March, the CDC has prioritized these “hot spots” for testing and the National Guard has performed much of this testing. In a few weeks, Eau Claire County has the opportunity for the National Guard to return and test; we recommend that our priority be testing everyone at our Jail, if testing cannot be done sooner.

In conclusion, correctional health IS public health. We are asking that Captain Bresina update the public as soon as possible regarding the positive cases of COVID-19 in our Jail and commit to testing all incarcerated people and staff. We also ask that the COVID-19 Jail Action Plan be posted on the Jail or Sheriff’s Dept. website.

As the WI Epidemiologists wrote on April 3rd and we shared with you on May 14th, “All it takes is one asymptomatic correctional officer to infect an entire facility, and then community spread”.

We appreciate you hearing our concerns and call to action.