

**Minutes**  
Eau Claire County  
Committee on Judiciary and Law Enforcement  
Wednesday, February 24, 2021 – 3:00 PM  
Virtual Meeting via Cisco Webex

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

**Ex-Officio Member Present:** Nick Smiar

**Others Present:** County Administrator Kathryn Schauf, Clerk of Court Susan Schaffer, TRY Mediation Director Travis Quella, Criminal Justice Director Tiana Glenna, Register in Probate/Clerk of Juvenile Court Susan Warner, Captain Joel Brettingen, Captain Dave Riewestahl, Lieutenant Cory Schalinske, District Attorney Gary King, Ryan Patterson, 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**

No public comment was made.

**Approve Minutes from December 23, 2020 Meeting**

Vice-Chairperson Russell moved to approve the minutes from the December 23, 2020 meeting. The minutes were adopted as published in the meeting materials via 5-0 voice vote.

**Criminal Justice Collaborating Council Dashboard Update**

- **Dashboard Review**
  - 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 did not specifically review the information in detail.
- **Report from Vice-Chairperson Russell**
  - The Criminal Justice Collaborating Council met on February 17, 2021. Vice-Chairperson Russell provided highlights from the meeting:
    - Grant funds increased to allow for the hiring of a limited term employee for pre-trial assessment. The individual will work with clients on pre-trial supervision and help improve the program as a whole.
    - There has been work with Sojourner House & Positive Avenues to improve services for substance abuse & mental health.
    - The CJCC updated 2021 focuses & goals and reviewed current trends. One of the key points in 2021 is improving public awareness.
    - The CJCC received other updates from Judge Michael Schumacher, Attorney Dana Smetana, and Public Defender Regional Attorney Manager Laurie Osberg.

**4<sup>th</sup> Quarter/End of Year Fiscal Updates**

- **Clerk of Courts**
  - Clerk of Court Susan Schaffer presented the Clerk of Courts Office update. Staff worked mostly remotely in 2020. Small claims cases being held remotely has had a positive impact on appearance rate. Collections were down as a result of COVID-19 & State Debt Collection stopping collections until July 2020. Looking forward, Clerk of Court Office lobby area remodel is near completion. Jury trials are slowly starting up again, first one is scheduled for

beginning of March. Schaffer advised the Committee that the department will end year over budget.

- **Circuit Court**
  - Clerk of Court Susan Schaffer presented the Circuit Court update. The courts saw significant cost savings in interpreter expenses as a result of Zoom court appearances & reduction in overall hearings. Use of Zoom appearances for interpreters will likely be extended as much as possible into the future. The department will end year with a surplus, though it will be less than what was published in the meeting materials due to outstanding invoices that will be paid.
- **Criminal Justice Collaborating Council**
  - Criminal Justice Director Tiana Glenna provided an update. CJCC is working, as result of grants, to improve services for homeless and mental health concerns in the community. The Pre-Trial Services Assessment launched in December and are CJCC is working through implementation/ironing out details with other criminal justice system departments. CJCC is also exploring diversity trainings for system stakeholders. One rather significant issue on the horizon is the likely need to pay for CCAP data that data analyst uses beginning in 2021. The department will end year under budget. There will be some changes to final fiscal report as grant funds are added to line items. The Committee engaged in clarifying discussions with Glenna about the department budget.
- **District Attorney**
  - District Attorney Gary King provided an update. Despite cancellation of various hearings, case closure rate for all of 2020 was still 98%. Jury trials were down from average due to mass cancellation. The department will end the year under budget as additional grant funds are forthcoming. Looking to 2021, there will be a significant jury trial backlog. The Committee clarified that revenue is still outstanding.
- **Register in Probate/Clerk of Juvenile Court**
  - The Committee welcomed Susan Warner as the new Register in Probate/Clerk of Juvenile Court, who provided an update. Ms. Warner was sworn in after the retirement of Jean Gay.
  - The department is under budget due to an increase in filing fee revenue. On the horizon, Warner is filling the now-vacant legal specialist position. She will be evaluating the potential need for an additional clerk as result of 6<sup>th</sup> circuit court branch addition.
- **TRY Mediation**
  - Director Travis Quella provided an update. Zoom mediations will remain post-COVID-19 pandemic restriction due to the overall success that has been experienced. The department is looking to expand some programming to increase revenues based on early success with them. The department saw decreased revenues in 2020 but there was also a decrease in expenses.

#### **Eau Claire County Sheriff's Office Updates**

- **4<sup>th</sup> Quarter/End of Year Fiscal Update**
  - Captain Brettingen provided an update. Cases handled and bookings for the department were down in 2020 due to COVID-19 protocols. All staff participated in various trainings in the fourth quarter. Alongside the Eau Claire Police Department, they are testing new audio-visual systems to replace the soon-to-be not-supported equipment. An anonymous donor has come forward to fund the new system which will support squad car and body cameras. Body cameras are anticipated to be on jail staff as well. The department is working through a complete update of the policy/procedure manual with the help of an outside contractor.
  - As to the budget, there is outstanding grant revenue that will be added to final year-end report. Public charges were down in 2020 due to COVID-19. The department is currently under budget.

- **Jail Population, Staffing, & COVID-19 Response**

- Captain Riewestahl provided an update. Jail bookings have been steady over the last few months. Seven jail staff ended employment in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. There are now eight total vacancies with five of those positions at various stages of recruitment. COVID-19 statistics for the jail are posted on the County's website. The jail has been managing through the pandemic thanks to the dedication of jail staff.
- Beginning March 1, 2021 the WI Department of Health Services priority 1b group vaccinations will start. Congregate living settings are included in this group which includes the jail population. Jail staff were included in priority 1a group and have been offered vaccinations already. Inmates that qualify under priority 1a group have also been offered vaccinations.

**Future Meeting Date**

The next regularly scheduled committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 24, 2021 at 3:00 PM.

**Future Agenda Items**

- Eau Claire County Sheriff's Office
  - Jail Population, Staffing, & COVID-19 Response
  - Audio/Visual Recording Equipment
- Procedures/Policies for the Proper Execution of Search Warrants
- Procedures/Policies for Officer Involved Critical Incidents
- Procedures for Citizen Complaints for Eau Claire County
- Appropriate System-Wide Criminal Justice Language Presentation

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Wilkie at 4:41 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

*Eric Huse*

Eric Huse  
Committee Clerk