

**JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 23, 2012
3:00 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chair Jon Baxter
Dave Drobisch
Tim Dudley
Merv Jacobs
Bill Oliver
Mark Wicklund

MEMBERS ABSENT

Keith Ashby

COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT

Rodney Forbes, Public Defender
Jack Ahola, State's Attorney
Lois Durbin, Circuit Clerk
Mike Day, Coroner
Judge A. G. Webber, IV
Jim Root, EMA
Max Austin, Sheriff's Office
Sheriff Tom Schneider
Jerry Lord, Public Building Commission
Linda Koger, County Board Office

This meeting was called to order by Chair Baxter at the Macon County Office Building.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes of prior meeting made by Dave Drobisch, seconded by Bill Oliver, and motion carried 5-0.

CLAIMS

Motion to approve the claims made by Dave Drobisch, seconded by Bill Oliver, and motion carried 5-0.

REPORTS

Circuit Clerk

Lois Durbin said they started their new collection agency this week on Tuesday since Jack signed the contract so they are working on that, and things are going very well. They turned over 22,613 cases from 1999 to 2011 outstanding cost, fines, and fees on traffic cases. Chair Baxter asked how much they got. Lois replied they turned over 22,613 cases and when they looked at it, it was a little over 4.3 million that is out there on those. Chair Baxter said she had indicated they are putting docket entries on some of these cases. Lois replied right, anything they turned over has docket entries to call the collection agency. Chair Baxter asked if that has resulted in money coming in. Lois said they don't know about the amount since this is just day two, they are just finishing up their second full day so it is coming in pretty well, and she thinks it has been a little over \$5000 in two days that they have collected.

Circuit Court

Judge Webber spoke to Phoebe Bowers last week who is President of the Decatur Bar Association, and she said Bill McNutt has agreed to serve on the renewed Library Committee. Judge Webber will serve on behalf of the judges and if the board wishes to appoint a representative, he can probably organize the first meeting in the near future. Chair Baxter volunteered himself. Judge Webber commented we have our committee then, so let's talk and find a date to get together.

Coroner

Mike Day had no report. Chair Baxter asked how things were going. Mike replied they have had about 94 cases since January 1, and that is a little above normal. Chair Baxter commented on some of these, he and Dee have had to go out at night. Mike replied yes, and basically with the staff that he has it keeps them pretty busy, the two full-time people and a part-time person. Chair Baxter commented it is Dee Coventry for those who don't know, and that is a 24/7 type of job.

EMA

Jim Root had their first hazard mitigation planning meeting yesterday, the contractor came in, and it was well represented throughout with only a few municipalities that didn't make it to the meeting. It was a pretty good showing, they provided information they are wanting from us, and we should plan on having another meeting sometime in the middle of May or first part of June. Right now it is the data collection part of it where we sit down to collect the data, and get together the data they are requesting so they can start putting things together.

Last month he reported we have to move the antennas on top of the Macon water tower, he is waiting on cost from our contractor, and as soon as he gets more information he will present it to this committee. There is a possibility he does have some revenue sources that he hasn't claimed yet to cover the cost, he doesn't know what the cost is going to be, but he has some revenue he hasn't claimed yet that just came in, and he might be able to use that to cover the cost.

Public Building Commission

Jerry Lord sent out a memo to all departments about the phone system tomorrow, there is going to be an adjustment on the PRI lines, so from 3:30 for a few minutes phone service will be out so if there are important calls, do them after that or before that so it doesn't interrupt service. PRI changes are so they can get the locator ID onto 911, and hopefully everything will go well.

(Tim Dudley came into the meeting.)

Public Defender

Rodney Forbes was sworn into office this month, Mr. Mattingley has retired, and he has hired his replacement. With the funds that the Board appropriated for the hiring of a new felony assistant, he hired that person so they have two new people in the office; because of that, they had to do some remodeling of their office to create some new office space, and with the help of the Public Building Commission they were able to do that. They have had some recent changes in the office with employees and the way the office is organized, but other than that it has been business as usual.

He was informed by Judge White that the Courts are now assessing public defender reimbursement fees differently, that they will not be asking for the attorneys' input because it puts the attorneys in a position of potential conflict of interest with their clients, and that they are just going to begin assessing those fees by looking at the file; according to her conversation with Justice Steigman who helped write the statute, Judge White seemed to think that the Courts could impose more cost or more reimbursement than had previously been imposed, so that is something new as well.

Chair Baxter remembers in the old system they would ask how much time you had put in or something like that and judge the amount of reimbursement which put you in a bad spot if you are the Public Defender; he commented the person hired is a seasoned prosecutor or defense attorney from McLean County that has worked in the area of felonies. Rodney Forbes replied that is correct, they hired Jacob Harlow, he is a prosecutor from McLean County who had worked there about five years, started with misdemeanor traffic and worked his way into the felony drug division, and had prosecuted successfully a number of drug cases there before being promoted or transferred to the criminal sexual assault unit where he represented child victims; he is a very experienced and capable attorney, has a lot of experience as a prosecutor and is learning the defense side, and he is very happy to have him.

There was a movement in the office where they brought somebody who was doing misdemeanors into felonies, and then they hired somebody to take over his place in misdemeanors; he is a former prosecutor with the state's attorney's office here at Macon County, has a lot of felony defense experience from Marion County for over the last ten years, and they were happy to get him too.

Chair Baxter asked if he is keeping up the tradition that Jack and Greg had of continuous negotiation to keep cases moving. Jack Ahola indicated he would say something to that, he thinks yesterday did you have any hearings or were they all waivers or a couple of continuances which is good; one reason they do that, Mr. Forbes tells them that ahead of time so they can notify the law enforcement agency to avoid unnecessary overtime, and he would suggest they probably saved thousands and thousands of dollars for the sheriff and Decatur Police Department; it is working out very well, and he is even better than you.

Sheriff

Sheriff Schneider reported population at 268 which is fantastic, they have about 20 feds which is an excellent number, so the population right now for us is outstanding. Chair Baxter commented we saved money by having the jail population down, and we got a lot more money from the feds. Sheriff Schneider commented a substantial amount, and his projection was if we were able to maintain 20 we would have a substantial amount of money at the end of the year.

Resolution Approving Contract Between Sheriff & Public Building Commission

Copies of resolution were distributed, and Sheriff Schneider said contract sum is \$17,851.37 which is partial salary reimbursement from the PBC, it is reoccurring, and he requested that it be moved and forwarded. Dave Drobisch said so moved, seconded by Mark Wicklund, and motion carried 6-0; Chair Baxter said we will send it on to Finance.

Resolution Recognizing April 2012 As National Donate Life Month

Copies of resolution were distributed, and Sheriff Schneider commented it is to recognize the critical needs for donated organs and tissue and increase the number of Macon County citizens who donate organs, tissue, corneas, bone marrow and blood; he asked that it be moved. Dave Drobisch said so moved, seconded by Mark Wicklund, and motion carried 6-0.

State's Attorney

Resolution Approving Macon County Criminal Justice Strategic Priorities

Jack Ahola distributed copies of resolution to approve and adopt the Macon County Criminal Justice Strategic Priorities. He passed out a copy of this last month to this committee since you are his oversight committee, and he also passed out a copy to the Finance Committee although this is not requiring any expenditure of funds. He also passed out a copy to everybody at the County Board, so hopefully you all have seen this before.

Most of you here are part of the Macon County Justice Council which meets on a monthly basis, it was formed by Jerry Dawson several years ago to address overcrowding in the jail, and since then we have expanded that for a wide range of initiatives including Drug Court, Mental Health Court, Domestic Violence, DUI Court, DUI Initiative, Adult Redeploy, several Juvenile Redeploy, Disproportionate Minority, all sorts of deferred and diverse programs to stop the revolving door into the jail and prison system.

He applauds everybody here for all the work they have done and continue to do; they noticed, however, when they applied for one of their grants involving a large influx of money for drug and mental health treatment that we were rejected because we didn't have a plan for our community. Several members of the Justice Council put this together, it is a very good summary of all work over the last few years and where they hope to go, this would help our county and community in how we look at the criminal justice system, and with money being scarce we have to use money in very wise methods.

He also pointed out recently, and will have to do this next month, we received an additional \$100,000 from Adult Redeploy IL which is designed to rehabilitate 96 persons that would otherwise have gone to the Department of Corrections so it is a very successful program; most of that funding goes to community based sentences and court services, he urges you to pass this, and does not think it needs to go to Finance but straight to the next county board meeting.

Dave Drobisch commented he is glad to see this type of a program because it certainly has reduced the population in the jail, that has always been an ongoing challenge ever since we built it, and if you build it they will come. Jack pointed out on page 6, we are #1 in the state per capita sending people to the Department of Corrections, not county jail, Department of Corrections; Cook County and Sangamon are way down there on the list which is one reason those counties have cities on the most dangerous violent cities in the United States, Decatur is not on it, so there are some benefits of incarceration too. Chair Baxter added this Justice Council has been in existence for quite a while and has expanded, started out as just to solve the overcrowding in the jail, has expanded from that into quite a few programs, and it has been a very good organization.

Motion to approve passing resolution to the board made by Tim Dudley, seconded by Merv Jacobs, and motion carried 6-0.

2-23-12 Memo to Chairman Dunn

Jack Ahola distributed copies of his memo to Chairman Dunn, and said he is not going to go into detail on this because he does not want to hear about this anymore. There has been a lot of politicking going on at different committee meetings and county board meetings, and that needs to stop. Each office has independence, and he summarized the law just as it has been summarized before when Auditor Stockwell asked the same question several years ago.

You cannot campaign on county time, and this memo pretty much says what the county board has authority to do and not do. It is not only his office but quite a few others, he is just passing that on, is not asking for any vote, but for information.

NEXT MEETING

3-29-12

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Bill Oliver, seconded by Dave Drobisch, motion carried 6-0, and meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Linda Koger
Macon County Board Office