

JUDICIARY AND LAW COMMITTEE

Tuesday, September 6, 2011
Administrative Center – Room 3220
2:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vicki Burke, Joe Bilskemper, Bridget Flood, Tammy Gamroth, Maureen Freedland, Karin Johnson

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Ray Ebert

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF & GUESTS: Pam Radtke, Tim Gruenke, Steve Helgeson, Doris Daggett, Steve O'Malley, Margaret Norden, Bev Heebisch, Jan Contreras, Anne Jungen, Hubert Hoffman, Michael Horstman

ROLL CALL/CALL TO ORDER

Chair Vicki Burke called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

APPROVE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF AUGUST 18, 2011

MOTION by Flood/Bilskemper to approve the Committee Minutes of August 18, 2011.

Motion carried unanimously. Ebert excused.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None requested.

CONFERENCE/MEETING REPORTS

None reported.

RESOLUTION RE: APPROVAL OF POLICY AND CONTRACT FOR NON-EXCLUSIVE RECOVERY OF HUMAN TISSUE FROM DECEASED REMAINS AT THE LA CROSSE COUNTY MORGUE

The Resolution states that recovery of donor tissue for transplantation will provide a public benefit and provide cost savings to the County by reducing the number of autopsies. Improvements to the morgue will need to be made to provide water, an appropriate table, and other capital improvements. The total cost is estimated to be \$10,350. The \$750.00 per use fee is estimated to provide \$9,000 annually, with additional savings of \$3,000 from reduced autopsy costs. Steve O'Malley reported that the State mandates working with companies such as RTI when possible. It would be a non-exclusive contract, and if other companies wish to enter into the same contract, they would be charged the same fees. The fees will be added to the administrator's budget proposal for 2012. **MOTION** by Freedland/Gamroth to approve the Resolution Re: Approval of Policy and Contract for Non-Exclusive Recovery of Human Tissue from Deceased Remains at the La Crosse County Morgue. **Motion carried unanimously.** Ebert excused.

CLERK OF COURT REPORT ON CHANGES IN INDIGENT OFFENDER PAYMENTS

Pam Radtke provided information on the legal fees for public defenders. Until recently, the State had not raised poverty guidelines since 1988. There were ever-increasing numbers of people that were ineligible for public defender representation, but who still could not afford an attorney, and would therefore need to have an attorney appointed and paid at County expense. The State recently raised the income guidelines, and Radtke thus anticipates a considerable savings to the County. In 2010, the actual County expense was \$365,513. For 2012, with the new guidelines, the Clerk of Court office is budgeting \$190,000 for court appointed attorneys in juvenile cases or others where public defenders cannot represent.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY REPORT REGARDING CONCEALED CARRY

Tim Gruenke reviewed the "Concealed Carry" law which will go into effect on November 1, 2011. He stated the law allows people to obtain a permit to carry a concealed weapon. The permit requirements are that the person must not have a previous felony conviction or Chapter 51 detention that would prohibit them from carrying a weapon, must be a Wisconsin resident of at least 21 years of age, must have proof of attending a concealed carry class, and pay a \$50 fee. The permit is good for five years. Gruenke addressed the areas in County buildings where the law disallows weapons, such as the jail, sheriff's department, juvenile detention facility, and courtrooms. Other areas in the Law Enforcement Center, including Justice Sanctions and Probation and Parole, would have to be posted with appropriate signage to prevent weapons on-site. Chair Burke spoke about the proposed ordinance that the County Board will consider that addresses both building and employee policies.

UPDATE ON JAIL

Sheriff Helgeson and Doris Daggett reported that the new facility is functioning well, and there are few things they would have done differently with the design. Any current concerns have to do with staffing. One of the direct supervision pods, "Pod L", is still not used for inmates because more staff has been needed in receiving and the medical area. Helgeson reported that they are seeing more inmates with severe mental health issues, and many more persons who are withdrawing from opiates. These persons can require much more special attention, since they can be very ill or violent. There can also be other serious medical issues, such as an inmate who requires transport for dialysis. Helgeson stated they are seeing more use of heroin and meth, and also alternative substances such as K2 and bath salts. He attributed some of the increase in mentally ill inmates to fewer local psychiatric beds, and fewer admissions at state facilities. He also reported that the female population has increased more than anticipated. Captain Daggett said the jail was designed to be flexible, but with more inmates, there is not as much flexibility. They have had to delay introducing a reward system for females because Pod L has not been available due to staffing concerns. Helgeson emphasized that staff is dealing very well with these issues, and in fact there are fewer problems than some other jails. Discussion was held about difficulties with accessing mental health treatment and health insurance to cover treatment outside of jail.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None requested.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING: OCTOBER 11, 2011

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Flood/Bilskemper to adjourn. **Motion carried unanimously.** The meeting adjourned at 3:23 p.m.

Approved, October 11, 2011, Margaret Norden, Recorder