

JUDICIARY AND LAW COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 7, 2012
Administrative Center – Room 3220
2:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vicki Burke, Joe Bilskemper, Ray Ebert, Tammy Gamroth, Maureen Freedland, Karin Johnson (exc. 3:46 p.m.)

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Bridget Flood

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF & GUESTS: Gary Ingvalson, Dave Lange, Margaret Norden, Jay Loeffler, Keith Butler, John Steers, Bev Heebsh, Jan Contreras

ROLL CALL/CALL TO ORDER

Chair Vicki Burke called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

APPROVE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2012

MOTION by Freedland/Johnson to approve the Committee Minutes of January 10, 2012.

Motion carried unanimously. Flood excused.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bev Heebsh spoke about attending Criminal Justice Management Council.

CONFERENCE/MEETING REPORT

None reported.

RESEARCH-BASED SMARTER SENTENCING TRAINING

Chair Burke provided a handout on the upcoming training on Research-Based Smarter Sentencing on February 29, 2012. Training will provide education on principles and practice of Smarter Sentencing to prepare for implementation in La Crosse County. Supervisor Freedland said she would consider representing the Judiciary & Law Committee.

FINAL TEAM VISIT OF TRANSITION FROM JAIL TO COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

Chair Burke reported that a meeting with the Jail to Community technical assistance team will take place on February 9-10, 2012. It will be the last site visit by the Carey Group. She pointed out that the 9:00-10:00 a.m. session on February 10 when community partners meet would be particularly beneficial.

REPORT ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL RETREAT DEALING WITH EMPLOYMENT ISSUES AND SUPPORT OF LETTER IN OPPOSITION TO AB286

Chair Burke reported on a discussion at Criminal Justice Management Council regarding proposed legislation, and presented a draft of a letter to the editor opposing Assembly Bill B286 and Senate Bill 207, which allow discrimination against felons in employment. The current law allows discrimination only when the felony conviction is related to the employment. Local governments would be prevented from passing any provisions in opposition of the state legislation. The CJMC letter states that the bill would undermine successful employment, which is a key component to successful transition back to the community. Supervisor Bilskemper pointed out that after running a criminal background check, employers would be protected by law if they chose not to hire a person with a conviction, but it would not mean that employers would be prevented from hiring a convicted felon if they chose to do so. Chair Burke explained that the bill is in the Rules Committee, and could be put on the agenda for a vote at any time. Discussion was held about putting the matter in resolution form for the County Board, but it was determined a resolution would not be timely. **MOTION** by Freedland/Johnson to approve the letter in

opposition to AB286 and SB207. **Motion carried 4-1-1-1.** Bilskemper opposed; Ebert abstained; Flood excused.

MEDICAL EXAMINER'S ANNUAL REPORT

John Steers presented statistics for 2011 including the following:

- Of 361 cases referred to the Medical Examiner, 30 had a postmortem examination, 305 were certified without a postmortem, and 26 were not certified by the Medical Examiner.
- The largest number of deaths was from natural causes (263), followed by accidents (72), and suicides (14); eight were undetermined and four are pending. There were no homicides.
- Of the deaths by natural causes, 103 were cardiac.

Steers focused on drug deaths, and reported that there were 10 deaths in 2011 and 11 in 2010. He stated there have already been four deaths from overdose in 2012, all of them from opiates. He stated that heroin can be purchased more cheaply than prescription drugs, and users cannot judge the strength of the dose. He also provided an update on the organ donation contract with RTI, and said the morgue updates were in place to begin donations as soon as the contract is signed by all parties.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair noted that the agenda title should have been stated as Emergency Services Director's report. Jay Loeffler gave statistics that showed there were 290,277 total calls in 2011, with an average of 795 calls per day. This was a decrease of 2% from 2010. July was the busiest month, and included calls regarding storm damage in most of the area, a fire in downtown La Crosse, and a bad accident. Loeffler noted that despite the number of calls, only one call took longer than 30 seconds to answer. He stated that there has been gradual improvement each year on answer time. Wireless calls make up 72% of calls to 9-1-1; this is up from 69% in 2010, 65% in 2009, and 63% in 2008. He spoke about the successful transition to narrowbanding, which was completed well before the December 31, 2011, deadline, and came in under budget. He identified other pending equipment upgrades, including simulcast, phone hardware upgrades, and the WISCOM and ARMER (used in Minnesota) systems to allow connectivity with multiple jurisdictions. He also spoke about the MABAS system, which enables mutual aid response among area police and fire departments, as well as organizations like the Red Cross.

RESOLUTION RE: EPCRA COMPUTER AND HAZMAT RESPONSE EQUIPMENT GRANT APPLICATION

The Resolution approves the acceptance of grant funding in the amount of \$6,544.41 to purchase an EPCRA computer and Hazmat response equipment. Matching funds are included in the 2012 budget. **MOTION** by Bilskemper/Ebert to approve the Resolution Re: EPCRA Computer and HAZMAT response equipment grant application. **Motion carried unanimously.** Flood, Johnson excused.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Drug trends

Executive Committee agenda item on LEC hours

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING: MARCH 6, 2012

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Bilskemper/Freedland to adjourn. **Motion carried unanimously.** Flood, Johnson excused. The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Disclaimer: The above minutes may be approved, amended or corrected at the next committee meeting. Margaret Norden, Recorder