

JUDICIARY AND LAW COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 8, 2012
Administrative Center – Room 3220
2:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vicki Burke, Thomas Downer, Tammy Gamroth, Bob Keil

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Ray Ebert

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF & GUESTS: Tim Gruenke, Steve Helgeson, Margaret Norden, Tara Johnson, Bev Heebsh, Jan Contreras, Doris Daggett, Steve Anderson

ROLL CALL/CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF APRIL 10, 2012

MOTION by Gamroth/Downer to approve the Committee Minutes of April 10, 2012.

Motion carried unanimously. Ebert excused.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION by Keil/Gamroth to receive and file the Criminal Justice Management Council minutes of March 21, 2012. **Motion carried unanimously.** Ebert excused.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None requested.

CONFERENCE/MEETING REPORT

None reported.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S ANNUAL REPORT

Tim Gruenke provided statistics and a basic overview of employees and responsibilities. He stated that while overall case numbers were down, there was a rise in serious cases, including four pending homicide cases, and three others under investigation. He also noted a spike in heroin cases, which he said was reflected throughout the state, particularly in campus towns and among a younger population. He stated that attorneys in his office are paid by the state, but support staff is county-paid. He spoke about funding challenges with state cutbacks, including a cut in funding for victim-witness reimbursement. He does not anticipate being able to add attorneys on staff, and cuts are forcing them to issue more local tickets so smaller cases can be tried in municipal courts. He stated he supported use of videoconferencing in the courtroom for cost savings, but technology equipment upgrades would be needed to ensure privacy for families, victims, and witnesses.

JAIL AND PATROL STAFFING REPORT

Steve Helgeson presented a Power Point explanation of staffing in the following areas: Patrol, court services, investigations, jail, administration, and the West Central Drug Enforcement group. He outlined areas of responsibility for the 111 employees, plus the contracted employees that provide chaplain, medical, and meal services.

JAIL OVERVIEW

Steve Helgeson showed a floor plan of the jail and photographs of some areas, including receiving, booking, holding cells, and the master control area. He explained the difference between direct and indirect supervision cells, and that direct supervision was allowing them to offer incentives for better behavior to some inmates and provided more safety for both staff and inmates. He spoke about the anticipation during the jail design process that one jailer for the female section would be sufficient, but jail population now includes more

females with mental health and drug issues. The staffing adjustment has meant a delay in opening another direct supervision pod. Discussion was held about reductions in numbers of patients accepted at mental health care facilities, such as Mendota Hospital.

RESOLUTION RE: APPROVAL OF JOINT LAW ENFORCEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN LA CROSSE COUNTY AND THE COUNTIES OF WINONA AND HOUSTON

The Resolution approves an agreement between La Crosse and Houston Counties and La Crosse and Winona Counties to provide mutual law enforcement services. Steve Helgeson explained that an agreement has been in place and has been operational, and is only being made current. **MOTION** by Keil/Gamroth to approve the Resolution Re: Approval of Joint Law Enforcement Agreement between La Crosse County and the Counties of Winona and Houston. **Motion carried unanimously.** Ebert excused.

ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING RESOURCE FAIR

Chair Burke announced an upcoming event to acquaint court system staff with types of resources that are available in the community, to be held on June 14, 2012. Chair Burke also announced a Sheriff's Department awards ceremony to be held on May 11, 2012.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None requested. A tour of the jail could be included.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING: JUNE 12, 2012

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Keil/Gamroth to adjourn. **Motion carried unanimously.** The meeting adjourned at 3:37 p.m.

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