

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD
COMMITTEE MINUTES

JUSTICE & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday, January 3, 2005

Meeting Rm. 1, Brookens Administrative Center

1776 E. Washington St., Urbana

7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Anderson, Carter, Greenwalt, Hogue, James, Putman, Sapp, Schroeder, Tapley

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Deb Busey (County Administrator), Patricia Avery (County Board Member), Lorraine Cowart (County Board Member), Joel Fletcher (State's Attorney), Jeremy Maupin (Nursing Home), Dan Walsh (Sheriff), C. Pius Weibel (County Board Member), Barb Wysocki (County Board Member), Sandra Ahten, Chris Evans, Marilyn Garmon, Maria Thompson, Patrick Thompson

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Declaring a quorum present, the Chair proceeded with the meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ADDENDUM

MOTION by James to approve the agenda; seconded by Carter. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Carter to approve the Regular Session minutes of November 3, 2004; seconded by Hogue. Motion carried.

MOTION by Tapley to approve the Closed Session minutes of November 3, 2004; seconded by James. Motion carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were five people for public participation.

Marilyn Garmon, the juvenile delinquency specialist from the Champaign-Urbana Area Project, clarified the information in her report to the committee, available in the agenda booklet. Garmon encouraged any committee members with questions to contact her.

Maria Thompson, founder of the Single Parent Scholarship Association spoke on how single parent issues affect juvenile delinquency. She wants to apply for a juvenile delinquency grant.

Patrick Thompson spoke in support of the Single Parent Scholarship Association.

Chris Evans, an Urbana resident, spoke concerning the recent suicides at the County Jail. He encouraged additional funding for the Public Defender's Office for more lawyers to assist with the caseload.

Sandra Ahten spoke concerning the inmate phone policy and the suicides at the County Jail. She is a member of Group C's Citizens for Peace and Justice. She asked for the consideration of an external investigation of the recent suicides, an outside agency to evaluate the climate of the County Jail, and increased communication between inmates and their families. Ahten appreciated the Sheriff's willingness to make changes in the visitation schedule to accommodate more inmates' visitors. She requested changes be made to the current inmate phone services contract.

MONTHLY REPORTS

MOTION by Tapley to receive and place on file the Animal Control reports for October 2004 and November 2004; the Children's Advocacy Center reports for September 2004, October 2004, and November 2004; the Circuit Clerk report for September 2004; the Coroner reports for amended April 2004, amended June 2004, amended August 2004, amended September 2004, October 2004, and November 2004; the Court Services reports for October 2004 and November 2004; the Developmental Disabilities Board minutes for November 17, 2004, November 23, 2004, and December 7, 2004; the ESDA reports for November 2004 and December 2004; the Head Start report for November 2004; the Mental Health Board report for November 2004; and the Public Defender reports for September 2004 and October 2004. Motion seconded by James. Putman noted there is no report from the Nursing Home. Anderson stated Jeremy Maupin gave her the Nursing Home report tonight and it will be included on next month's agenda. Motion carried.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY GRANT MONTHLY REPORTS

MOTION by Tapley to receive and place on file the CASA reports for September 2004, October 2004, and November 2004; the Don Moyer Boys & Girls Club reports for October 2004 and November 2004; the Provena/Family Conference Program report for October 2004; the Provena/Family Intervention Program report for October 2004; the Provena/Talks Mentoring report for October 2004; the Regional Office of Education reports for October 2004 and November 2004; the RPC-Court Diversion Services reports for October 2004 and November 2004; and the Urban League reports for October 2004, November 2004, and December 2004. Motion seconded by Greenwalt. Greenwalt asked if there is guidance for grant applicants prior to the submission of their applications. Busey answered that the request for applications outlines the necessary information, the committee will have this document at the February meeting. Motion carried

CIRCUIT CLERK

Grand Jury Report

MOTION by James to receive and place on file the Grand Jury Report; seconded by Greenwalt. Motion carried.

SHERIFF

Discussion/Update regarding incidents of suicide at County detention facilities

Sheriff Walsh was present to discuss issues of concern about the County Jail and gave a report on steps he has taken. Concerning the suicides, Sheriff Walsh, the Justice Chair, and the County Board Chair met with the Department of Corrections County Jail Inspector to see if he had any ideas on things Champaign County should be doing differently. The Inspector had no suggested changes, but he did recommend a DOC psychiatrist who specializes in prison suicides. The psychiatrist is supposed to send the Sheriff some information. This information has not been received yet, though the Sheriff's Office has reminded the DOC several times to send

it. Captain Young has contacted Lindsey Hayes, an author and expert on in custody suicides. Mr. Hayes is a hired consultant. He is sending the Sheriff's Office his bio and what he could possibly do if the County engages his services. Sheriff Walsh has made a formal, written request for assistance to look at what happened in the past and towards the future from the National Institute of Corrections, a division of the Department of Justice. By phone, the National Institute of Corrections told Captain Young they thought they could send a team to assist the Sheriff's Office. They have acknowledged Sheriff Walsh's request in writing, but the technical specialist that needs to make arrangements with Sheriff Walsh is on vacation from December 20th-January 6th. The federal government might pay for this service. At present, the Sheriff's Office is working on an internal investigation. After the most recent suicide, Sheriff Walsh contracted with Mental Health for an additional twenty hours a week of mental health counselors. For the holidays, visitation was added for the Sunday after Christmas and the Sunday after New Year's Day. Mental Health prepared and the Sheriff's Office is distributing an informational brochure to the inmates' families and friends when they come to visit. A Morris Watchman, a computerized verification of checks, has been added to the downtown facility. Denny Inman is contacting Integrator Systems, who provided the digital cameras that record at the Courthouse, to see if the Jail can be retrofitted and what it would cost.

On the matter of visitation, Sheriff Walsh stated that prior to being contacted by Ahten two weeks ago, no inmates or visitors had made any complaints about visitation. Ahten complained about the policy that a maximum of fifty visitors are allowed to see inmates during visiting hours. After this discussion, Sheriff Walsh spoke to his evening shift supervisor and determined that there have been rare times when more than fifty visitors have been in line, so some visitors have left before seeing an inmate. Therefore, Sheriff Walsh has implemented a new visitation policy. If a visitor comes to the County Jail during visiting hours, he or she will get an opportunity to visit with an inmate. This policy began last weekend and will be tried for a month. County Jail inmates are allowed two twenty-minute visits per week, the state-wide jail standards only require one fifteen-minute visit per week.

The Chair had asked the Sheriff to discuss the inmate phone policy. In general, the inmates have access to phones to call family and friends from about 9:00 a.m. to about 10:30 p.m. The calls are limited to fifteen minutes each. The County has a contract with Evercom for phone service. The contract was for two years and has the option of a two year extension. Sheriff Walsh calculated that a local ten minute call would cost \$5.07, a local fifteen minute call would cost \$6.15, and an interstate call for ten minutes would cost \$12.85. These figures do not include taxes. Sheriff Walsh stated that Evercom provides a way to block and track the phone call and provides repairs. If the County does not renew the Evercom contract, the Sheriff must have a system that allows inmates' calls as well as enabling officers to block and track the phone calls. Inmates must not be able to threaten or harass citizens over the phone. Under the Evercom contract, the County receives a minimum \$14,000 a month. The medical and mental health contracts for inmates cost \$31,000 a month. Another \$8,000-\$10,000 a month is spent by the County on medical supplies, outside medical care, and prescriptions for inmates. Sheriff Walsh will accept any decision the County Board makes on how to fund these costs.

Sheriff Walsh also discussed the intake process at the County Jail. When a prisoner is brought in, about seventy questions or observations must be noted by the correctional officer completing the intake process. The correctional officer asks the arresting officer if there is any indication that the prisoner might harm himself or others. The officer observes if the prisoner is abusive, has consumed alcohol, is not oriented to space and time, or is sweating profusely, among other things. The correctional officers ask the prisoners a series of questions including: are they being treated by a doctor, are they are a drug or narcotics user, are they having suicidal thoughts, have they attempted suicide before, are they receiving psychiatric treatment? Officers are trained to err on the side of caution and likely put more people on fifteen-minute checks than is absolutely necessary. If prisoners suggest they might hurt themselves, they are put on fifteen-minute checks and a mental health counselor is contacted.

James asked if a great deal of contraband brought to inmates by visitors. Sheriff Walsh said there is contraband brought by visitors, so prisoners are patted down but visitors are not searched. James asked how other counties handle their inmate phone systems. Sheriff Walsh said, according to Evercom, the company has contracts with eighty counties in Illinois and Champaign County's rates are the same as seventy of these counties. Evercom will send a representative to Wednesday's Policy meeting.

Greenwalt asked if the extra twenty hours of mental health counselors has been used by inmates. Sheriff Walsh said the extra counselors have been utilized. He asked a counselor if they noticed a difference in the inmates' attitudes since the addition of more hours. The counselor said he did not see any difference in inmates' attitudes. Greenwalt asked what is involved in having an external investigation into the suicides. Sheriff Walsh stated there was an investigation by his law enforcement division after the first suicide. After the second and third suicides, the Sheriff contacted the Urbana Police Department to conduct the investigations. The Sheriff's Office is also doing an internal investigation into the third suicide, because this situation is so rare. Urbana's Police Department is independent of the Sheriff's Office. Avery commended the Sheriff on the proactive steps he has taken regarding the suicides and the changes he has been willing to make to the visitation policy. Sheriff Walsh said he is willing to consider other options for the visitation policy. Hogue asked if the investigation results would be available to the Justice Committee Chair. Sheriff Walsh believed the investigation results would be available to anyone under the Freedom of Information Act. Fletcher noted that if this matter is referred to the State's Attorney's Office for charges, then there would be a delay in the publication of the results.

Sheriff Walsh continued to answer committee members' questions and explain the training his officers undergo to handle prisoners, as well as the procedures involved in visitation. The committee discussed the rise in suicide throughout Champaign County this year as a trend. Wysocki encouraged committee members to go to the County Jail and view prisoner visitation. She spent two hours observing at the Jail on Christmas Day and found it very educational. She noted it is worth the time to inform oneself on how the visitation actually works and speak with the officer in charge of visitation. Sheriff Walsh stated all committee members are welcome to visit. He gave details about the jail commissary at the request of Putman. James commended the Sheriff and his staff on their work.

Fletcher clarified the subject of the investigation reports becoming available to the public. The reports will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the State's Attorney's Office to determine what can and cannot be made public. Certain information will not be disclosed to the public to protect the privacy of inmates, their families, and the confidentiality of jail security procedures. The State's Attorney will have to submit, in writing, the reasons for not making certain information public. Ahten asked to speak and the committee permitted this. Ahten asked when the reports would become available to the public. Fletcher stated he did not know because he is not the attorney who would be reviewing the reports.

CIRCUIT COURT

Position Re-Evaluation

Busey explained the Circuit Court is requesting that two Court Clerk positions be submitted to the Job Content Evaluation Committee for review and determination if a reassignment of job content needs to be made. Two of the Court Clerk positions were designated as swing clerks. The knowledge and skill expectation for these positions are different than for the other Court Clerk positions. The Job Content Evaluation Committee would submit a report to the Justice Committee as to whether a reassignment of job classification is appropriate. If a re-evaluation is recommended and approved by the Justice Committee, it will be forwarded to the Policy, Personnel, & Appointments Committee, and ultimately referred to the County Board.

MOTION by Greenwalt to forward the two Court Clerk positions to the Job Content Evaluation Committee; seconded by Putman. Motion carried.

NURSING HOME

Agreement Between Champaign County and Altschuler, Melvoin, and Glasser, LLP for Accounting and Consulting Services

Maupin explained this is an annual agreement to form the Nursing Home's cost reporting services for the Medicaid and Medicare cost report. An amendment to the contract is drafted each year by Fletcher.

MOTION by Sapp to approve the Agreement Between Champaign County and Altschuler, Melvoin, and Glasser, LLP for Accounting and Consulting Services and forward it to the County Board; seconded by Greenwalt. Motion carried.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Appointment of County Board Representative to serve on the Delinquency Grant Program Evaluation Teams

Anderson appointed Hogue to be the County Board Representative on the Delinquency Grant Program Evaluation Teams. Anderson noted if any other committee member wants to attend the visits, they are welcome to do so.

OTHER BUSINESS

Communication from constituent

Provided for information only.

Article from News-Gazette

Provided for information only.

DETERMINATION OF ITEMS TO BE PLACED ON COUNTY BOARD CONSENT AGENDA

The Agreement Between Champaign County and Altschuler, Melvoin, and Glasser, LLP for Accounting and Consulting Services will be placed on the County Board Consent Agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kat Bork
Administrative Secretary

Secy's note: The minutes reflect the order of the agenda and may not necessarily reflect the order of business conducted at the meeting.