

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 2, 2021

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Ward, Hogan, Haff, Hicks, O'Brien, Clary, Rozell

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

SUPERVISORS: Hall, Henke, Fedler, Ferguson, Shaw, Campbell, Griffith

Debra Prehoda, Clerk

Al Nolette, County Treasurer

Roger Wickes, County Attorney

Melissa Fitch, County Administrator

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

1. Call to Order
2. Accept Minutes – January 26, 2021
3. Department Reports/Requests:
  - A. Coroners
    - 1) Staffing Requests
      - a) Rate Increases – Autopsy & Storage Fees
  - B. Code Enforcement
    - 1) Discuss Depositions and Pictures
    - 2) Discuss Returning Applications
  - C. Alternative Sentencing
    - 1) Department Updates
  - D. Probation
    - 1) Department Updates
  - E. Public Defender
    - 1) Department Updates
  - F. District Attorney
    - 1) Review Spending Plan for Forfeited Funds 2021
    - 2) Criminal Justice Discovery Reform Grant
  - G. Public Safety
    - 1) Grant Project Updates
    - 2) Proposed Adoption of Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
    - 3) Staffing – Request to Change Grade – Per Diem Communication Officers
4. Other Business
5. Adjournment

Chairman Ward called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M. via teleconference.

A motion to accept the minutes of the January 26, 2021 meeting was moved by Mr. O'Brien, seconded Mr. Hicks and Mrs. Clary, and adopted.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS /REQUESTS:

PUBLIC SAFETY – Tim Hardy, Deputy Director, addressed the following items with the committee:

- Grant Project Updates: All of their spending is up to date with all of their grant programs.
  - \$1.5M into radio project which has been all grant funding. Continuing to move forward with this project working on some of the other frequencies.
  - Closed out FY 19 PSAP Grant and received full reimbursement back from the State in the amount of \$147,000.
- FY 20 PSAP Grant application finished. The State is behind on these grant and will find out allocation hopefully very soon.
- Adoption of Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan – This plan was sent out to all stakeholders. They did receive some feedback and made a couple of changes. Not much has changed from last year. A motion to move Comprehensive Emergency Management

Plan forward to the full Board for approval was moved by Mr. Hicks, seconded by Mrs. Clary, and adopted.

- Staffing – Request to Change Grade Per Diem Communication Officers – Proposed a grade change for the per diem Communication Officers at the end of last year from a grade 10 at \$19.05 per hour to a grade 13 at \$22.17 per hour equivalent to the full-time staff but was asked to table that request until the contract negotiations were final and the contract has been approved. A motion to move request to change grade of per diem Communication Officers from a grade 10 to a grade 13 to the Personnel Committee for consideration was moved by Mr. O'Brien, seconded by Mrs. Clary, and adopted.

CORONERS – Bob Lemieux, Coroner, addressed the following items:

- Rate Increases:
  - Autopsy Fees – Autopsy services performed by Dr. Sikirica at the Glens Falls Hospital increased for 2021 and that information was provided to the County Administrator for the budget process. The rate increased from \$1,150 to \$1,300 for autopsy with report and death certification.
  - Storage Fee Increase as of January 26, 2021- If the morgue at the G.F. Hospital is full, M.B. Kilmer Funeral Home has a refrigeration unit and the fee for storage has increased from \$50 per day to \$75 per day as of January 26, 2021. The increase is due to increased cleaning costs, middle of the night transfers to funeral homes and varied hours bringing bodies to the hospital for autopsies. He anticipates using Kilmer's unit less because the G.F. Hospital is moving forward with increasing storage to twelve and expects construction to start soon with completion in a couple of months. A motion to increase refrigeration unit fee from \$50 per day to \$75 per day effective January 26, 2021 and forward to the Finance Committee for consideration was moved by Mr. O'Brien, seconded by Mr. Hicks, and adopted.

CODE ENFORCEMENT – John Graham, Code Enforcement Administrator, addressed the following items:

- Depositions and Pictures – A lot of the contractors in the past have been allowed to just sign depositions or provide pictures that they performed the work in a certain way and that they are in compliance with code instead of having the work inspected. He is proposing that would only be an option if it was discussed ahead of time because there are scenarios where that makes sense but would like to reign in the option of depositions/pictures as a general practice. He would add pre-approval required for depositions and pictures to the application process. Mr. Hogan asked for status of building permits. The Code Enforcement Administrator stated some of the areas are down to like a week and one area is two to three weeks and that is Hebron, Hartford, and septic's due to the workload. The two new officers test tomorrow for their certification and if they are successful the areas will be divvied up and the Officer doing the septic's will not have an area workload. He would just like to make it official on the application that depositions and pictures are not an acceptable practice. Mr. Hogan stated he is opposed because he would like to see the department caught up before adding further restrictions on the builders. Mr. Hogan stated that fire inspections have not been completed in the town of Kingsbury and they have 500 multi-family dwellings that did not get inspected last year and we are worrying about codification of language related to speeding up the building permit process while completely ignoring other areas that need to be addressed. Allowing for pictures and depositions is not a practice that is done by the surrounding counties in their Code Enforcement departments only as an exception. The Code Enforcement Administrator recommends putting it on the applications and if you take

pictures or do a deposition on it call the office to discuss and get agreement ahead of time not after the fact. A motion to add wording to the application that contractors must call the office to discuss submitting pictures or depositions in place of an inspection and receive approval beforehand in an attempt to stop contractors just going ahead and coming back after the fact with pictures and depositions was moved by Mr. Hicks, seconded by Mr. O'Brien and adopted.

- Returning Applications – Code has checklists on their applications that indicates what is required for submission. With septic applications they are routinely getting only half of what is required and have to write and request the applicant provide the additional information which is time consuming. The Code Enforcement Administrator is proposing to reject and send back to the applicant any application that does not have the required items on the checklist advising them to provide all the necessary information and resubmit. This will help with efficiency. He plans to focus on the septic's because they are the biggest problem. No change to the buildings permit process at this time. A motion to allow Code Enforcement to return septic engineering applications if they don't meet the checklist requirements was moved by Mr. Rozell, seconded by Mr. O'Brien, and adopted.
- Fees not charged for cell towers and solar farms – Mr. Shaw had previously asked for documentation that indicated that they cannot charge any fees for cell towers or solar farms and he has not received that information. The Code Enforcement Administrator will provide all Supervisors with a copy of the State information that exempts these structures.

ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING – Sue Mowrey, Assistant Director, addressed the following items with the committee:

- Department Updates: Worked with the District Attorney on a list of costs related to bail reform and in the process of gearing up for spring. Mike Gray, Director, had provided information stating that bail reform expenses for 2020 totaled \$18,215.

PROBATION – Dan Boucher, Director, addressed the following items with the committee:

- With local courts being back in action, the office is kind of back to normal functioning adhering to COVID guidelines and some staff are out in the field so not all in the office at the same time. Subpoenas are coming in to testify at hearings and their violation of probation hearings are being scheduled. There is definitely a backlog of court cases. Things are getting back to more normal.
- Proceeding with some things he wanted to do in the department:
  - Working with IT on scanning functions for their closed files. This should speed up access to information and free up office space with the removal of filing cabinets.
  - E-signatures – With the discovery process and the various law enforcement agencies and remote work with COVID, they are looking into e-signatures especially on release of information.
  - Caseload explorer program – The Washington County Probation Department is the last probation department in the state to not have that supervision program. This program would cost about \$100,000 over a three-year period with initial outlay about \$75,000. It would not eliminate all the databases and he is working with IT and the company to further explore.
  - Reducing file room space allows the Director to make some physical office space changes for more security and safety for storage of firearms and evidence. Suggesting moving these items into a small file room that would be fobbed, more secure and

able to track who comes in and out of the door. For evidence, what they store the most of right now is electronic devices.

PUBLIC DEFENDER – Mike Mercure, Public Defender, addressed the following items:

- Department Updates: Everything is going well and local courts are returning to live appearances. Family court will be returning to live and virtual appearances.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY - Tony Jordan, District Attorney, addressed the following items with the committee:

- Review Spending Plan for Forfeited Funds 2021 – Presented the spending plan for forfeited funds for 2021, on file. Current funds available as of January 1, 2021 totaled \$62,015.82; Federal Funds \$27,392.19 and State Funds \$34,623.63. The DA does not anticipate spending all this money but if spent would be used for investigations, training, equipment, and related items to support their law enforcement efforts, travel and transportation, awards and memorials and payment of Special Prosecutor. All of the forfeiture funds they have taken over the past seven plus years have come through actual arrests with conviction in every instance but one an agreement with defense court and ourselves regarding the forfeiture of the money – a bunch of evidence that was in our evidence locker that was involved in a mass burglary and items we didn't know who they belonged to. A motion to approve District Attorney's Spending Plan for Forfeited Funds for 2021 was moved by Mr. O'Brien, seconded by Mr. Hogan, and adopted.
- Criminal Justice Discovery Reform Grant – The Division of Criminal Justice Services announced an award of a grant opportunity that was included in the April 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021 budget and looking for approval to seek the funding. This is reimbursement of monies expended by the county on discovery and pre-trial services in terms of release which comes from the attendance by alternatives to incarceration at our CAP court and a few other designated courts. This is really reimbursement to the county for money spent and maybe a small portion to local law enforcement agencies. If approved they will send us a check estimating between \$190,000 and \$193,000 and have been advised that the money is there. A motion to approve applying for Criminal Justice Discovery Reform grant was moved by Mr. O'Brien, seconded by Mrs. Clary, and adopted.
- Two felony trials scheduled to start March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

OTHER BUSINESS: None.

A motion to adjourn was moved by Mrs. Clary, seconded by Mr. Hogan, and adopted.

The meeting adjourned at 2:16 P.M.

*Debra Prehoda, Clerk  
Washington County Board of Supervisors*