

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 29, 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, Wilson,
Debra Prehoda, Clerk
Melissa Fitch, County Administrator
Roger Wickes, County Attorney

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

1. Call to Order
2. Accept Minutes – June 1, 2021
3. Department Reports/Requests:
 - A. Code Enforcement
 - 1) Personnel Update
 - 2) Fire Inspections Update
 - B. Alternative Sentencing
 - 1) LEAD Program Overview
 - C. District Attorney
 - 1) Backfill – Clerk/Typist Position
 - D. Probation
 - 1) Department Updates
4. Other Business – Biosolids Fertilizer Products
5. Adjournment

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

A motion to accept the minutes of the June 1, 2021 meeting was moved by Mr. O'Brien, seconded by Mr. Hogan, and adopted.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS /REQUESTS:

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

- Personnel Update – The Code Enforcement Officer for the northern part of the county is going to be out for an extended amount of time and two other officers will be covering.
- Fire Inspections Update – Completed 418 fire inspections and another 50 that were inspected and reinspected.
- Chairman Ward met last week with the Code Enforcement Administrator to go over a few issues and the modernization of their computer system. The County Administrator stated the Code Enforcement Administrator has spoken with the Information Technology CIO to discuss different software that could possibly be utilized by the department to help keep track of cases to ensure things are addressed in a timely manner. The Code Enforcement Administrator has a meeting with Information Technology on July 12th. Currently the department has no centralized uniform way of being reminded of outstanding items; the office notifies contractors/engineers of items that need to be addressed but no notification process of the follow up or if the issue remains outstanding.

Mr. Shaw followed up on an item he previously addressed with the Code Enforcement Administrator, permits for solar farms and cell towers. The Code Enforcement Administrator did provide Mr. Shaw with information on permits for solar farms and cell towers and was accurate in what they are doing as no permits are required but Mr. Shaw stated it does allow for the adoption of a local law to require a permit if we choose to do that. Mr. Shaw thinks the County should be issuing permits, that there is a minimal workload involved and it is a revenue stream

because more of these projects are happening. The town of Easton does collect a permit fee on commercial projects. Mr. Shaw feels the County should consider permits. The County Attorney stated the State has control in this area so that local regulations do not hold up these projects; the State wants to encourage cell tower building and solar farm construction projects. He stated if the County does not have any jurisdiction on these projects, he would not recommend putting a fee in for not doing anything other than saying to build in my jurisdiction you have to pay a fee for something they can do anyway. A lot of this control lies at the local level. These projects are more town related than having any impact on the County. The State is taking over jurisdiction of these utility types of projects. Mr. Shaw feels we are missing an opportunity here. The local law that established the Code Enforcement Office refers to enforcing the uniform fire and building code so if Code was to enforce something else the law would need to be amended. Mr. Hicks asked between the County Attorney and County Administrator to check what the other counties are doing. The County Attorney stated he is sure other counties that have extensive county planning and zoning would collect fees because they would be doing something for it in return for them. Right now, the County is not doing anything.

ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING – Mike Gray, Director, addressed the following items with the committee:

- LEAD Program Overview – Law Enforcement Diversion Program – No presentation today because as a workgroup they have more work to do on the criteria and participant criteria so he will come back to the committee in the near future to present a comprehensive overview of the program.
- Community Services Update: Completed painting of small shed at the Georgi Museum, completed painting Greenwich bath house, roadside pickup on Rt. 4, clean up and mowing Moss Street and other cemeteries and the garden is fully planted in Argyle. The juvenile work program is out in the pull-off areas along the Battenkill doing roadside pickup of trash and continue washing vehicles at the County car pool. Chairman Ward presented Mike Gray with a certificate of appreciation acknowledging the work performed by the community services team assisting the town of Greenwich with their park rehabilitation project.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY – Tony Jordan, District Attorney, addressed the following item with the committee:

- Staffing:
 - Backfill – Clerk/Typist Position – A motion to approve backfill, Clerk/Typist, was moved by Mr. O'Brien, seconded by Mr. Hogan and Mrs. Clary, and adopted.
 - Congratulated the District Attorney for being named head of the New York State District Attorney's Association.

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

- Department Updates:
 - Couple of employees attended a virtual training called decision points training on how Probation Officers are supposed to deal with DWI clients especially after they have a period of sobriety and start thinking differently. There are only a few people in the State that have been trained at this time. He feels it was definitely worth their time to get trained because the skills they learned will benefit the department but will take some time to evaluate implementing a program and will report back to the committee. Probation Officers are mandated to get 21 hours of continuing education credits every year.

- Received status report on 2020 financials for the department and compared to the statewide restitution collection for victims noted that the department even during COVID had restitution collected on a regular basis. Allowing payments by credit card helped. Received \$248,000 in restitution for victims in 2020 which was more than some larger counties, Warren, and Saratoga. He is very proud of his staff and having an established method of accepting payment by credit card during the COVID shutdown.
- Recently, Civil Service exams were held for positions in the Probation Department and only about seven people took the exam. Law enforcement agencies may not be the most desired job right now. This is a very low turnout.

SHERIFF – Sheriff Murphy addressed the following items with the committee:

- Staffing changes:
 - PT Typist position in Civil Division – Requesting to change the part time Typist position in the Civil Division back to full time due to an increase in pistol permits and amendments to pistol permits. Currently only one full person doing this work. He does not anticipate any budget impact from this change as the part time position has been vacant for three months. A motion to approve changing a part time Typist position in the Civil Division to full time, amend Staffing Pattern and forward to the Personnel Committee for consideration was moved by Mr. Hogan, seconded by Mr. O'Brien, and adopted.
 - Sr. Account Clerk – Recently a Senior Account Clerk in the Sheriff's Office transferred to another department and he was approved to backfill the position with an Account Clerk. Due to the duties of this position, the Sheriff is requesting to upgrade the position to a Senior Account Clerk as it was previously. A motion to approve upgrading an Account Clerk to a Senior Account Clerk position, amend Staffing Pattern and forward to the Personnel Committee for consideration was moved by Mr. O'Brien, seconded by Mr. Hogan, and adopted.
- In the process of looking to apply for a grant through the Canal Corporation and will bring to the next meeting. They would like to start a bike patrol and a local business will donate bikes for this unit. There would be no cost to the County, the grant amount is \$40,000.
- Mrs. Clary thanked him for making it safe for the tour of the Battenkill bike race.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- Biosolids Fertilizer Products – Mr. Hogan stated there was an incident in Kingsbury back at the end of May, first of June with this biosolids fertilizer product which has a strong odor which resulted in a right to farm law grievance. A local farmer took delivery of a Casella product, biosolids fertilizer product, and it started to give off a very strong odor with the town receiving numerous complaints. Due to storage issues, mechanical breakdown of equipment and weather, the product became wet making the odor worse. His understanding is that this product has been approved for use by NYS DEC. This is a Type A fertilizer product and can be purchased at local garden stores. Going forward he would hope that companies selling this product do a better job of training and encouraging best practices to avoid issues in the future. Recommended that delivery and temporary storage of this product not be near neighbors, try to coordinate to avoid wet weather conditions and spread within three days. This product is becoming more commonly used in Washington County and if there is an issue to contact the farm owner and the company selling this product to ensure best practice

procedures are followed. Mr. Haff stated this is a sewage sludge product and we need to be careful of our farming image.

The meeting adjourned at 1:47 P.M.

Debra Prehoda, Clerk
Washington County Board of Supervisors