LAW & COURTS COMMITTEE  
March 28, 2019  
Minutes

Members Present: Celentino, Koenig, Polsdofer, Schafer, Slaughter, and Trubac.

Members Absent: Crenshaw.

Others Present: Sheriff Scott Wriggelsworth, Lance Langdon, Russel Church, Amy Preiskorn, Rhonda Swayne, Elizabeth Noel, Beth Foster, Teri Morton, and others

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Koenig, at 6:01 p.m. in Personnel Conference Room D & E of the Human Services Building, 5303 S. Cedar Street, Lansing, Michigan.

Approval of the March 14, 2019 Minutes

MOVED BY COMM. SLAUGHTER, SUPPORTED BY COMM. SCHAFER, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 14, 2019 LAW & COURTS COMMITTEE MEETING.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. Absent: Commissioner Crenshaw.

Additions to the Agenda

None.

Limited Public Comment

None.

MOVED BY COMM. SCHAFER, SUPPORTED BY COMM. SLAUGHTER, TO APPROVE A CONSENT AGENDA CONSISTING OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

1. **Sheriff’s Office**
   a. Resolution to Continue Patrol Car Video Storage Software Support from L3 Mobile-Vision, Inc. with the Ingham County Sheriff’s Office
   b. Resolution to Approve Purchase of Training from PoliceOne.com Academy for Ingham County Sheriff’s Office Staff

2. **Circuit Court**
   a. Resolution Amending Software Subscription and Service Agreement with Courthouse Technologies, Ltd. to Provide for Off-Site Hosting
   b. Resolution Honoring Paul Brandell on the Event of His Retirement
3. **Public Defender**
   a. Resolution to Authorize Licensing of defenderData Software and Implementation of Its Use

4. **9-1-1 Dispatch Center**
   a. Resolution to Authorize the Purchase of Chairs for the Ingham County 9-1-1 Central Dispatch Center from Ultra Seat Corporation
   b. Resolution to Authorize Software Support Agreement with Tritech for the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) System
   c. Resolution of Appreciation to the Ingham County 9-1-1 Central Dispatch Center Telecommunicators during National Telecommunicators Week April 14-20, 2019

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. Absent: Commissioner Crenshaw

THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. Absent: Commissioner Crenshaw

1. **Sheriff’s Office**
   c. Jail Cost Recuperation Considerations (*Discussion*)

Sheriff Scott Wriggelsworth introduced the jail cost recuperation considerations.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated he thought $50 per day was too high to charge for Pay for Stay. He further stated that no one paid the fees, and they were not recuperated.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated that for repeat offenders who were sentenced again, they got significant deposits into their accounts for noodles, razors, and other goods. He further stated that when those inmates received deposits into their accounts, the Ingham County Sheriff’s Office (ICSO) took 70% of the deposits to recover costs as outlined in the information provided to the Committee.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated that his suggestion was to reduce the fee for Pay for Stay to $8 per day. He further stated that it cost the ICSO $3 per day for inmates’ meals, so about $5 of the fee would be applied to Pay for Stay.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated if someone left the jail with only $240 in fees rather than $1,500 for a 30-day stay, it would be much more approachable for them to pay off. He further stated that with this proposal, the fees for Pay for Stay would also be deducted from the inmate’s account funds at a 75% rate.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated that the current system did not work, as the ICSO had recuperated about 0.01% of the fees incurred over the past 14 years. He further stated that the fees and 75% collection rate would be included in the inmate’s guidebook.
Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated he was looking for input or support from the Committee on this proposal. He further stated that he was not looking to pursue debts through collections or placing liens on property.

Chairperson Koenig asked what kind of data ICSO collected to come to the conclusion that only $30,000 had been collected over 14 years.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated that he did not have data for 14 years ago, but in 2017 and 2018 ICSO billed $3,752,000 just for Pay for Stay, not including any other costs incurred by inmates. He further stated that in 2017 and 2018, ICSO only collected $21,000.

Chairperson Koenig asked what ICSO had charged the State for bed rentals at the jail.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated that the State had been charged $36 per day, per inmate.

Chairperson Koenig asked what the average stay was for an inmate at ICSO.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated the average stay at the jail was 21 days.

Chairperson Koenig stated that the Michigan Department of Corrections used a system where it did not flag an inmate’s fees until they exceeded a certain amount. She further stated that she thought it was an interesting concept to reduce the fee.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated he would report back in about six months with the results of the Pay for Stay fee reduction.

Chairperson Koenig asked if there were any studies about the fees for Pay for Stay.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated he had not seen any studies regarding the fees for Pay for Stay, but he knew that some counties in Michigan were aggressive with recuperating the fees.

Chairperson Koenig stated that if ICSO took an aggressive approach, then she would oppose that, because the recently incarcerated were a fragile population.

Commissioner Schafer stated that back in the 1980’s, there had been a more aggressive approach, where they did studies during inmate intake and found out their income and ability to pay. He further stated that the Board of Commissioners had decided then that they did not want to be more aggressive in the recuperation of fees.

Commissioner Schafer stated he would support the Sheriff in his proposal, and he knew a lot of counties had fees.

Chairperson Koenig stated that perhaps the Board of Commissioners during the 1980’s recognized that this was a fragile population and that was why they did not pursue collecting the fees more aggressively.
Discussion.

Commissioner Slaughter asked if there were projections on how much the ICSO expected to collect by lowering the Pay for Stay fees.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated he had no idea how much to expect to collect from the reduction in fees.

Commissioner Slaughter stated he appreciated the Sheriff's willingness to experiment, and he looked forward to seeing what happened with the proposal.

Discussion.

Commissioner Polsdofer stated he appreciated the example the Sheriff provided of 0.01% of fees charged were collected. He further stated that he supported trying to move forward with this plan.

Commissioner Slaughter asked if ICSO did not see a significant uptick in a collection of fees, they expected to go back to charging $50 per day again.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated he did not see ICSO going back to charging $50 per day for Pay for Stay. He further stated it had even been discussed about not billing at all, because if no fees were recuperated, then it was an effort in futility.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated that the results might be shocking, especially with the 75% rate collected on inmates' account deposits.

Chairperson Koenig asked when ICSO sent notice of the increase to a 75% collection rate, if the notice would also include what the inmates owed and how much they had to spend after the collection of fees.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated the inmates would know the balance of their accounts.

Discussion.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated the more palatable they made the program, the more successful it would be.

Discussion.

Commissioner Schafer stated he thought it was a reasonable approach to giving the inmates some sense of responsibility in the situation.

Chairperson Koenig stated that the reduced fees would be within something the inmates could reach.
Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated he also wanted to address the Work Release program, which was archaic and not financially feasible. He further stated the current Work Release program rules charged 30% of the person’s weekly pay or $30 per day, whichever was greater, and the amounts had to be paid upfront before being allowed out to work, so many people did not want to do it.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated when people got out of jail, they had financial responsibilities, like rent and other obligations and current Work Release costs affected the ability to pay for those responsibilities. He further stated that he would like to just charge $8 per day for Work Release instead, as he thought that would significantly increase those willing to go on Work Release, and allow them to keep their job when they got out of jail.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated ICSO would still have to do visit checks, and those on Work Release would have to incur tether fees as well.

Discussion.

Chairperson Koenig asked what length of contract ICSO had with Securus Technologies.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated the contract with Securus Technologies was very long, and he estimated there was about nine more years on the contract.

Chairperson Koenig asked if the Sheriff thought the contract should be revisited.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated he did not know if the contract could be revisited.

Chairperson Koenig stated she knew other counties were going to GTL.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated the contract could be looked at, but ICSO was happy with Securus Technologies currently. He further stated that the proposed fees would be static for everyone, whether the offender was staying in jail or out on Work Release.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated that Friend of the Court offenders were not charged, and neither were inmate workers. He further stated that only sentenced people that were not on bond were charged to Pay for Stay.

Chairperson Koenig stated that if the inmate had access to more money for phones, then there could potentially be more contact with their family.

Sheriff Wriggelsworth stated that the money collected from Pay for Stay and Work Release went to the General Fund.

Discussion.

Teri Morton, Deputy Controller, stated she did not think the Pay for Stay and Work Release fees were set by the Board of Commissioners, as they were not part of the fee resolution.
3. **Public Defender**
   b. **Update on Public Defender’s Office**

Russel Church, Chief Public Defender, stated that there were currently 25 conditional offers for staff, and by the end of April, he expected to have about 20 to 25 attorneys working. He further stated that the Public Defender’s Office would begin having a presence in District Court, next week.

Mr. Church stated there were a couple of pieces that had not played out in time, including the software the office would use. He further stated that the software company offered a 30-day free trial that was currently being used for training purposes, but they were not yet inputting real data into the system.

Mr. Church stated that the space the Public Defender’s Office would be working out of had limited connectivity to the internet, which might be challenging.

Chairperson Koenig asked why there was limited connectivity with the internet.

Amy Prieskorn, Public Defender’s Office Administrator, stated there had been a miscommunication between Facilities and Management Information Systems Department (MIS) about when the lease for the building would be signed. She further stated that MIS could not sign the contract for internet until the lease was fully signed, and there was a 30-day layover from the time the contract was signed.

Ms. Prieskorn stated that the lease for the building was with the Clerk’s Office currently.

Chairperson Koenig asked what the holdup in the process was. She further asked if signatures from were being waited on.

Ms. Prieskorn stated that MIS could not sign the contract for internet until the lease for the building was signed by all parties involved.

Chairperson Koenig asked if this issue had been brought to the Controller’s attention. She stated she suggested taking the issue to the Controller tomorrow, to help speed up the process.

Ms. Prieskorn stated that the contracts were now at the same time, so it would just be uncomfortable for a little while.

Mr. Church stated that District Court cases could be managed with paper files. He further stated that paper was not his preferred method, but the office could do it.

Mr. Church stated that contract attorneys in 54A and 54B District Courts had been notified that their contracts would be terminated next week. He further stated that most attorneys he had hired had worked with paper files, so it would be fine but a little chaotic for a month.

Chairperson Koenig asked how many interviews the Public Defender’s Office had done.
Mr. Church stated about 53 or 54 candidates had been interviewed.

Discussion.

Chairperson Koenig asked when attorney first appearance would begin.

Mr. Church stated those were planned to begin on Thursday of next week in District Courts, and it would be relatively seamless because there were two people hired that had already worked out of 55th District Court and he planned to have them stay there. He further stated that as attorneys came on board, he planned to have them in 55th District Court for two days to train.

Commissioner Slaughter asked where the attorneys that were hired were coming from.

Mr. Church stated that just about half of the attorneys hired had been on the Circuit Court list of contract attorneys. He further stated that two people hired had just taken the Bar Exam in February and could not start until they were licensed, and there was one attorney that was the law clerk for a federal judge and previously clerked with a Michigan Supreme Court Justice, which was very special that he chose to come work for the Public Defender’s Office.

Mr. Church stated that there was an attorney hired that had been practicing law almost as long as he had, and was now able to do public defender work full-time. He further stated that about half of the attorneys hired had ten or more years of practice experience.

Commissioner Slaughter asked if there was a sense of how applicants found out about the positions.

Mr. Church stated he did not specifically ask how people heard about the position in interviews. He further stated that the positions had been posted with all of the law schools in Michigan, as well as with all specialty Bar organizations, and people had known that this was happening.

Commissioner Slaughter asked if Mr. Church was happy with the crop of employees he had ended up with.

Mr. Church stated he was pleased with the group of people hired so far. He further stated that he was upset about a few people who withdrew, as he had special plans for them, and some people had contacted him to say they had accepted offers elsewhere.

Mr. Church stated he wanted the Committee to know that a conditional offer had been made to Brian Jackson, Lansing City Councilmember, which had been discussed with the Lansing City Attorney and it was decided that Councilmember Jackson would not practice in 54A District Court. He further stated that some firewalls would need to be put up as to not create a conflict for the City of Lansing, but Councilmember Jackson would be a valuable member of the Public Defender’s Office and had good connections.

Discussion.

(7)
Chairperson Koenig asked how the hiring was going for other staff members.

Mr. Church stated the interviews for investigators, clerks and paralegals had started that day. He further stated that he was disappointed in the amount of candidates for investigator positions so far.

Mr. Church stated that there was also not much interest in a part-time clerk position.

Chairperson Koenig stated that positions could be re-posted if the pool of applicants was not sufficient.

Mr. Church stated that paralegal and clerk positions were of limited utility until the software was working. He further stated he had asked Human Resource to rework the part-time clerk job description.

Discussion.

Chairperson Koenig asked when the Public Defender’s Office was expected to be fully functional.

Ms. Prieskorn stated she thought the Public Defender’s Office would be fully functional by August.

Mr. Church stated that he thought that by the end of May the Public Defender’s Office would have a full presence in the Circuit Court, and a full presence in District Court could be by the end of April.

Discussion

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.