

**League of Women Voters**  
**Kane County Government**  
**Monitoring Committee Report**

MEETING: Judicial & Public Safety \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: Thursday, March 22, 2007 \_\_\_\_\_ REPORTING: Barbara Zaha \_\_\_\_\_

ATTENDING: Judge Wier; Dr. Timothy Brown; Dan Kliment, Kane County Public Defenders Office; Deb Seyller, Kane County Circuit Clerk; John Barsanti, Kane County State's Attorney; Pat Perez, Kane County Sheriff; John Klinkhammer, Merit Commission; J. Mueller, Court Services; Jim Mitchell, Committee Chair; Committee Members Mark Davoust, Arlene Shoemaker, and Jackie Tredup.

ABSENT: Rudy Neuberger; John Noverini; and John Fahy \_\_\_\_\_

WAS PRESS IN ATTENDING: YES  NO   
Steve Lord, *Aurora Beacon News*; Lisa Smith, *Daily Herald*; Bob, *Chicago Tribune*; and two other unidentified reporters

DID PRESS COVER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES: YES  NO   
(this report submitted prior to publication)

SUMMARY OF MEETING: After approving meeting minutes of February 22, 2007, Judge Weir asked the Committee to approve an additional \$5 fee per guilty plea or conviction or court supervision for all traffic violations, misdemeanors, and felonies, per a relatively new state statute passed in June 2006 which allows for such fees to finance juvenile and adult drug courts. According to the statute, \$5 is the maximum fee which can be assessed by the county for the purpose of financing drug courts. Weir estimated \$350,000-500,000 in revenue will be generated annually by the new fee. The committee approved the measure and forwarded the resolution to the Finance Committee, prior to sending it on to the full Board. This funding will replace federal funds which are to be cut off in 2008 for the Juvenile Drug Court and in 2009 for the Adult Drug Court. The addition of this particular fee has already been introduced into all other local counties' jurisdictions.

States Attorney John Barsanti reported \$110,000 in assets and cash have been forfeited and turned over to Kane County from drug and alcohol-related traffic arrests. To date, Kane County has garnered \$56,000 in vehicles and \$38,000 in cash from such forfeitures as allowed by state statute. Vehicles are being split between the Sheriff's Department and other local law enforcement agencies. Barsanti also distributed an annual report for the State's Attorney's Office, which indicated a 95% conviction rate had been achieved and the department was under budget for 2006.

Circuit Clerk Deb Seyller indicated the automated phone messages have resulted in greater efficiency as has re-engineering of the flow of paperwork within her department. Other counties have visited the Kane County Circuit Clerk's office to view the enhancements which have been made.

Kane County Sheriff Pat Perez stated his department is continuing to revamp policies and procedures with the help of consultant Voorhis Robertson. He is increasing staff training to better prepare deputies and guards, which will be on-going. Perez alluded to a very positive innovation which is in the works but must remain confidential for the time being. Perez asked the press to clarify misstatements made by proponents of the incorporation of Campton Township as they pertain to his department preparing a general quote for service rates should the referendum be successful. Perez underscored the fact his department merely provided estimates of the cost the Sheriff's Department would charge Campton for patrols, drug and gang surveillance, arson investigations unit, evidence units, and civil process services for more than 10,000 residents should they incorporate. Lastly, Perez praised the collaborative efforts of the State's Attorney's Office and the Sheriff's Department which resulted in lowering the daily inmate population to an average of 551. He attributed the significant decrease to drug court, mental health court, second chance program, and a new special bond call specifically for non-violent offenders who were unable to make a relatively low bond. As a result, overtime has been reduced from 297,000 hours down to 126,000 hours. Finally, Perez lauded the Jail Steering Committee for their progress in planning the transition to the new jail facility, expected to transpire in 18 months, during that committee's March 21, 2007 meeting.

Dr. Brown of Juvenile custody reported residential care may be necessary for some of the participants of the Mental Health Court, composed of 8 active cases with 3 more cases, which are currently on the waiting list, to be added relatively soon. The number of cases for this new specialty court is consistent with the 30 cases annually averaged nationally in similar specialty courts. He announced an up-coming training specifically for the specialty courts (Drug Court and Mental Health Court) which will be conducted by the National Center for Court Innovations.

J. Mueller of Court Services Administration reported a substantial savings to the county by increased application of electronic monitoring for non-violent criminals and defendants. The \$568,000 yearly cost of the ankle bracelets has been exceeded by the fees charged defendants and inmates who are in the program, fees totally \$923,000 annually, which has proved most profitable. Since the program was initiated in 1993, Mueller estimates the county saved \$10 million by using monitors as opposed to incarcerating these same offenders; moreover, fewer social costs (family, child care, job loss, housing, etc.) are incurred by the offenders or taxpayers when the option of monitors are used instead of incarceration.

**MOST CRITICAL ISSUES(S):** Many fees have been added for court costs, medical services of inmates, phone usage of inmates, drug court, and more, it would be interesting to see the total dollar amount of fees charged per offense.

**COMMENTS/NOTES:**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):**

NEXT MEETING: April 19, 2007