

**JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING
Macon County Office Building
Macon County Board Room #514
141 S. Main Street, Decatur, IL 62523**

November 18, 2021 @ 3:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Greg Mattingley – Chair
Debra Kraft – Vice Chair
Lloyd Holman
Jim Gresham

MEMBERS ABSENT

Dave Drobisch
Verzell Taylor
Bill Oliver

COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT

Judge Griffith, Courts
Tammy Schneider, EMA
Jessie Smalley, HR
Michelle Sanders, Public Defender
Sheriff Root
Mike Day, Coroner
Jeannie Durham, County Board Office

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mattingley @ 3:00 p.m. at the Macon County Office Building.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING

Mr. Gresham made a motion to approve the minutes from the last Macon County Board Justice Committee meeting (10/28/2021), seconded by Ms. Kraft and the motion carried 4-0.

CLAIMS

Claims were not available for approval. Committee members agreed to send them on to Finance for approval there.

REPORTS

Circuit Clerk – no report

Circuit Courts –

Judge Griffith reported that they had just had another jury session this past week. They have been sending out 150 summons each term. The high number to report has been about 90. There were 98 jurors that attended this past week. There were 2 or 3 very serious cases. Of the 94 cases on the list, almost all of them were resolved. In terms of navigating through COVID and getting things done, they are doing quite well. They do not have a backlog. He said they could thank Ms. Sanders and Mr. Rueter and their offices for the good work they've done.

Judge Griffith apologized for not being able to attend that past couple of meetings.

Court Services / Probation – No Report

Coroner – no report

Emergency Management Agency –

Ms. Schneider reported that they had had their biennial nuclear exercise on Tuesday. It went very well. It is FEMA graded. There will be more feedback after tomorrow's after action meeting in Clinton with Exelon & the State (FEMA).

The LEPC (Local Emergency Planning Committee) meeting was held yesterday. The group is coming together well and is trying to make some headway with some of the IEMA (Illinois Emergency Management Agency) has set out. She expressed appreciation for the amount of recent cooperation from all the stakeholders.

Mr. Gresham asked about the LEPC. Ms. Schneider explained that it deals with hazardous materials planning based, but all hazards are addressed. The committee is being used as a base for meeting the exercise requirements with the state that have to be performed by Statute. This is a great group and they have all agreed to be part of an exercise design team. They are moving forward with trying to meet all of the benchmarks.

Ms. Schneider went on to explain that IPRA is the nuclear plan where we are a support county for the Exelon plant in DeWitt County. We participate biennially in that exercise along with several other counties. It is kind of a big deal.

Public Building Commission – No report

Public Defender's Office –

Ms. Sanders reported that they still have no applicants for the open Public Defender positions. At this point, Ms. Sanders said she has reached out to a few attorneys in town to see if they'd be interested in taking on a couple of contract positions until somebody can be found. Courtney Anderson and Andrew Weatherford are coming in to cover traffic cases and juvenile abuse neglect fathers until full time people come in. These contracts are 60 day renewable contracts in hopes that they will be very short term. With no applicants, there is no other option for the office.

Macon County Board Resolution Approving Increase in Appropriations in the Circuit Court's FY21 Budget for Expenses Fees in Certain Appeals

Ms. Sanders explained that this resolution is on the agenda under the incorrect department. It is for one of her cases, but it is a court expense. Judge Griffith presented the resolution saying that in sexually violent cases, the person who is deemed to be sexually violent is entitled to an expert of his choosing. We always set a limit in terms of expenses. By State Statute, the County is obligated to pay for the cost of the expert. Theoretically, the County can submit their expense to the State and are supposed to be reimbursed. For the expert in this case, the fee was \$3,515 which is reasonable for this sort of thing. We are asking on Ms. Sanders' behalf that this be paid.

Judge Griffith commented that in other counties, they actually have a separate fund for this type of thing, which at some point, might not be a bad idea versus having to bring it in front of the County Board each time. Chair Mattingley said that his experience was that there were never that many of them that it became that big of a problem. Judge Griffith agreed that they do not have that many.

Ms. Sanders added that in the Sexually Violent Person Cases, the Court pays through the County funds, whereas, previously when she had been asking for funds, it was for an insanity case and that is the difference.

Ms. Kraft made a motion to approve forwarding the resolution on to the Finance Committee with recommendation for approval, seconded by Mr. Gresham and the motion carried 4-0.

Sheriff's Department –

Macon County Board Resolution Approving Permission to Dispose of Junked Vehicles

Sheriff Root explained that the first one is a 2012 Impala which was involved in an accident in the Sheriff's department in 2014 or 2015. It has been out at the County Highway. It previously needed to be preserved for the purpose of litigation. It is now available to be disposed of according to the legal counsel. The second one is a 2015 Explorer which was also involved in an accident. There was no litigation with that. It has just been sitting out at the County Highway and the department would like to get rid of these vehicles so the lots can be cleaned up at the Highway Department.

Mr. Holman made a motion to approve forwarding the resolution on to the Finance Committee with recommendation for approval, seconded by Mr. Gresham and the motion carried 4-0.

Macon County Board Resolution Approving an Agreement with Homewav for Inmate Telephone and Video Visitation Services in the Macon County Jail for the Term of December 1, 2021 thru November 30, 2023

Sheriff Root explained that this is a two year contract. This contract is a revenue source for the jail. The money goes into the revenue line. There is a one time signing bonus of \$50,000 for the purposes of buying equipment for public safety needs for the Sheriff's Office. This is a \$750,000 contract which will be paid out quarterly by the vender. The State's Attorney's Office has reviewed the contract. There is one pending verbiage that needs to be clarified. That will be rectified prior to presentation at the Finance Committee meeting. The current vender is Securus and their contract expires on the 30th of this month. Chair Mattingley asked about the reason for switching vendors. Sheriff Root explained that their response to their downed telephone lines has been inadequate for the services they've provided. He said they have been unhappy with the services and so they put it out for RFP. This is the company that offered the best service and the best product. They have technology that surpasses some of the other ones. They also have the ability to – the department will no longer have to take mail. It will get shipped to a P.O. Box. They will scan that mail and it will come to the inmates through a kiosk. The department will no longer have to touch mail which has been a problem in the past because they have had people who have soaked letters in controlled substances and tried to get them through the jail that way. This will eliminate all mail except for legal mail. Chair Mattingley asked about the mail screening process. Sheriff Root said the vender will be screening it, the Sheriff's Department will not be. He said they would be screening the content once it goes into the que.

Ms. Kraft made a motion to approve forwarding the resolution on to the Finance Committee with recommendation for approval subject to the language clarification in the contract as mentioned by Sheriff Root, seconded by Mr. Gresham and the motion carried 4-0.

*State's Attorney -
Macon County Board Resolution Authorizing Disposal of Surplus Property by the State's
Attorney's Office*

There was no one present from the State's Attorney's office. Committee members agreed to send this on to the Finance Committee for presentation there.

New Business - None

CITIZEN REMARKS – PUBLIC COMMENT – None

Mr. Holman asked, in regard to the previous discussion about hazardous materials and problems with nuclear, how many knew what Thorium is and how long it has been around and what it can be used for and how much safer it is than normal Uranium. The reason he is asking is because he has intentions to pass this along to the people in the federal government. They have been trying for a long time to get some changeover from regular nuclear that has a shelf life of about 10,000 years to something like Thorium that has a shelf life of about 800 years. The good thing about it is that it is a lot safer to handle, it can be handled in smaller quantities, it is all over the place which most people don't know, and one of the biggest pluses is that it will eat spent Uranium fuel. They've done an experiment in Pennsylvania. They've had this 20 years and running. They had more fuel when they quit than they had when they started. This stuff is amazing. Mr. Holman said he had done some research on it after reading a book by Richard Martin called Super Fuel. Mr. Holman said that from his perspective, this would mean 1) lots of jobs, 2) it can be done in smaller places rather than having to have a power plant like the one at Clinton that could cause major problems, 3) it is so much safer, 4) it is easier to handle, 5) it is everywhere.

Ms. Schneider asked if it could be used in the same way, for generation of electricity as what is used at the nuclear facility. Mr. Holman confirmed saying that it will actually produce more because it builds on itself.

Mr. Holman said why we are not doing this goes back to who has the money invested in nuclear. There are other countries that are doing it. India is one of them. China is looking at it. They're putting on coal fired plants like they're going out of style and we don't need that. India is looking at changing their entire grid to this. Ms. Schneider commented that they are super polluters, so she can see why it would be attractive to them.

Mr. Holman said that we were stock piling it for a long time, but not so much anymore. He said he had bought 3 to 4 extra copies of the book simply to pass this along to the Senators and Reps. We are looking at a global catastrophe here and this an easy way to fix the problem.

Ms. Kraft commented about wind energy saying it is not Apex and these companies. It is Facebook, Target, Starbucks. They're the ones that own these windfarms.

Mr. Holman commented that you don't want to put all your eggs in one basket for a number of reasons, but the bottom line is that this is a planet saving, fuel saving. Look at the lesser of the evils here. It is still nuclear. Can you get killed by it? Yes, but it has been around since Madam

Curie. She did experiments with it. Ms. Schneider commented that it is clean energy. Nuclear has by products that are not . . . and does have potential for great harm. However, it is relatively clean energy in comparison to coal. People say wind or solar, but those all rely on sunshine or wind and you're at the mercy of nature. We have to have some redundancies and systems to ensure that we have a backup when the others fail. To completely eliminate nuclear or coal does not make sense. Mr. Holman said that if someone else is looking at this country as a target, where are they going to hit? They're going to hit the power grid. Communications will be another. But, the power grids are one big, easy target. With these, instead of having 4 or 5 across the state, you'd have 40. That is no longer an issue because it is not as viable to go after 40 targets when you could hit one or two and really put a wrench into the works. He said he was just curious as to how many people knew about this. Mr. Mattingley said he had heard of it, but did not know of the potential as a super fuel. Mr. Holman said he read the book and then had to reread it because there is language that has to be paid close attention to because they start numbering the different grades of Uranium and super fuels and how they mix it, how they cool it with a whole list of things. It is very interesting. He said he is hoping someone will do something. They are talking about changeover from coal. That was a major impact here in the State of Illinois. At some point, we will get away from it. It is going to mean jobs and changes and transitions. How we go about it is going to make all the difference in the world. Can we get away from standard nuclear. Mr. Holman thinks we can, but we have to get everyone else on board with this. They've been stalling for a long time in the US and some of these other countries are going to go right past us. Ms. Schneider commented that, as previously said, a lot of that comes down to the dollar. That is the great motivator around the world.

Judge Griffith asked to go back to the Court's resolution about the expert. It is not titled properly. It says for expense fees and certain appeals. It is not an appeal. The Attorney General's Office is trying to deem this person to be sexually violent. Chair Mattingley said it still has to go through Finance. Prior to that, we will check with the Auditor and State's Attorney's Office for proper wording.

Old Business None

Closed Session – None needed

NEXT MEETING December 16, 2021

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Mattingley @ 3:25 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham, Executive Secretary, Macon County Board Office