

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

April 28, 2022 @ 3:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Greg Mattingley – Chair
Debra Kraft – Vice Chair
Kevin Greenfield
Jim Gresham

MEMBERS ABSENT

Verzell Taylor
Lloyd Holman
Bill Oliver

COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT

Judge Griffith, Circuit Court
Scott Rueter, State’s Attorney
Kris Thompson, Sheriff’s Office
Jon Perona, DPBC
Pat Berter, Probation
Michelle Sanders, Public Defender
Jeannie Durham, County Board Office

Chair Mattingley called the meeting to order at 3 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING

Ms. Kraft made a motion to approve the minutes from the 3/24/2022 meeting, seconded by Mr. Gresham and the motion carried 4-0.

CLAIMS

Ms. Kraft made a motion to approve the claims, seconded by Mr. Gresham and the motion carried 4-0.

REPORTS

Circuit Clerk –

Ms. Doty had no report

Circuit Courts –

Macon County Board Resolution Approving a Budget Amendment for Court Technology Improvements

Judge Griffith explained that they had received a grant from the AOIC (Administrative Office for Illinois Courts) in the amount of \$128,016. They want us to make our courtrooms ZOOM compatible. The Access to Justice Committee wants to bring the courts to the people. Judge Griffith said they will make his courtroom which is one of the main felony courtrooms, Judge Bollinger’s courtroom which is the main civil courtroom, and the Traffic & OP Courtroom fully ZOOM compatible. He said he does not want people to start to think that the courts are going to come to them. It is not going to work that way.

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

Judge Griffith explained that this next resolution did not make it in time to go out on the agenda, so he would like to explain it to these committee members and request permission to take it straight on to the Finance Committee and full board for approval.

Macon County Board Resolution Authorizing Contribution to the Macon County Foreclosure Mediation Program Regarding the Loss of Revenue Due to COVID-19

Judge Griffith went on to explain that when Judge Webber was in his position, he had started something called the Foreclosure Mediation Program. It was supposed to be fully funded by the filing fees. During COVID, there was, of course, a foreclosure ban where no foreclosure proceedings could be filed. They lost 72.3% of their revenue meaning it could not be self funded. Now, hopefully, COVID is over and all the foreclosure proceedings are being refiled and there is no money to fund this Mediation Program which is helpful to the people involved. So, the Foreclosure Mediator which is headed up by the Law Librarian is requesting \$20,000 from the COVID monies to fund this program.

Chair Mattingley agreed that this committee would discuss it and then agree to allow it to be sent straight to Finance to be considered.

Mr. Gresham asked what it meant that the people could continued to be serviced. What does serviced mean? Where is the money going? Judge Griffith explained that now that COVID is past, they are refiling again. Mr. Gresham asked if that means that they pay the \$100 refiling fee? Judge Griffith confirmed, and said he really didn't have a good answer, but felt that it might be a buffer to get things started again. There is also some cost for the Mediators that come in.

Mr. Greenfield asked if there is a fund that has that money in it. Judge Griffith said the request is for funds from the American Rescue Plan Funds (ARPA). Ms. Reed explained the purpose of the ARPA funds and thought this request is what the funds were intended for.

Chair Mattingley clarified that he thought what they were trying to find out is if the Mediation Group had a fund in a fund balance before everything got shut down. Ms. Reed explained that their funds run through the courts. Judge Griffith said there is a line item for that in the budget. Ms. Reed said it has income and it has expense. Yes, at one time it did have a fund balance, but since there's been no revenue for the last year, and there were still some expenses for things like computer equipment and people and it has depleted whatever reserves there were. Ms. Doty explained that they get \$100 per case and there haven't been a lot filed lately, although they are picking up.

Chair Mattingley said it would go on to finance, but these questions might be good to ask the Librarian. Judge Griffith said he would ask her to come to the meeting.

Coroner – no report

Court Services / Probation –

Mr. Berter reported that he had received information from Dan Hunt, the Assistant Director for the AOIC that we should be fully funded again for FY2023. That is great news.

Emergency Management Agency –No Report

Decatur Public Building Commission – no report

Public Defender’s Office –

Ms. Sanders reported that they had been filling some gaps with contract employees who were taking a few of the conflict cases and extra cases. Most of those contracts are expiring or have expired or the individuals have opted out. So, that money will be available to be put into a potential salary position.

There was a need to hire someone due to serious and severe conflicts in one case. It was a murder / attempt to murder – two different cases for one person.

In an effort to be transparent, Ms. Sanders informed the committee that after the budget process last year, a quote for a case management system was obtained. Ms. Sanders said she had signed the contract and noticed that the numbers were not quite what she had thought they were supposed to be. She said they had all misunderstood part of the terms. The budget is fine. The cost for implementing this Case Management system was just as presented at the budget hearing, close to \$20,000. That part is fine. She said she just wanted the board to be aware that there is the annual maintenance fee that will have to be paid. That will be asked for in the upcoming budgets. It does not affect this year at all. She said she had initially stated that once she paid the lump sum fee up front, it was going to cover the full four years. No, it covers the installation and the maintenance has to be paid annually. She said she would have to submit a request for maintenance each year.

Sheriff’s Department –

Macon County Board Resolution Approving Intergovernmental Agreement Between the County of Macon on Behalf of the Macon County Sheriff’s Office and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

Chief Deputy Thompson explained that he and the Sheriff had been approached 3 or 4 months ago by some DCFS Administration out of the Chicago area about a pilot program. About 4 to 6 months ago, a DCFS Investigator was murdered in Sangamon County. In light of that, DCFS or somebody within the state, greenlighted this pilot program that would contract with Sheriff’s offices and pay the entire benefits, salary, equipment, training, and even an overtime allowance plus anything we can show that is over this estimate just to designate someone full time to DCFS to go out on high risk calls, helping to evaluate which calls might be considered high risk for them, etc. There is only one other county that has started this. They are in southern Illinois. He said he and the Sheriff have reached out to them and spoken with them. It is going very well. The differences is that they have a population of about 19,000 while we have a little over 100,000. They’ve assigned one full time to them, so we are a little concerned that this caseload might be a bit much for one person. DCFS has assured that if that is the case, they will hire more or ask us to contract for more. Essentially, it is a 2 year commitment. The revenue and expense on the

resolution is reflective of a July 1 start through this fiscal year for \$72,090. This is a no lose for the County Board. It would be a really good program to help keep DCFS workers safe.

Mr. Thompson explained that right now, if DCFS knows of a problem, they will call and the County will go. The real problem is that the bulk of their calls are in the City of Decatur. When the City of Decatur gets a call, they respond with we'll be there as soon as we can, and then through no fault of their own, it is 8 hours or so before they get there. This will take that away. They have an office space and a detective will be assigned to that position. The math was done on a 15 to 17 year deputy, but someone with far less experience than that will be placed there. There is language in the agreement that if that deputy needs to be recalled, that can be done for up to 2 to 3 days without replacing them.

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

Macon County Board Resolution Approving a Grant from Norfolk Southern Corporation to the Macon County Sheriff

Chief Deputy Thompson explained that he had received an email from someone at Norfolk Southern offering a grant opportunity. He said he had filled out 2 pages and submitted it within an hour or two and they immediately replied that they had been trying to get this grant for \$5,000 to the Decatur Police Department or the Sheriff's Office for the last 5 years and nobody had filled it out. They are sending \$5,000 that is earmarked for any community services, equipment, etc.. It was very unrestricted. He said they have plans to purchase new chairs in the jail where they are badly needed.

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

Chief Deputy Thompson went on to report (inform) the PBC and the Judge that that morning at about 6 a.m. in Green County, the day before in Jersey County and two weeks before in Moultrie County, they had some protestors, mostly peaceful, that are dumping some type of oil on the sidewalk. No other harm has been done. The protests are against the Judicial System against discriminating against the black race.

State's Attorney -

Mr. Rueter reported that he would like to brag a little bit. Almost all the time in DUI cases and some other alcohol related offenses, the defendant can or has been ordered to attend the Victim Impact Panel. It is basically a Think Scared Straight Driving Instruction where they have drunken drivers come in and listen to people who have been victims of car crashes because of intoxicated drivers or themselves have been under the influence and had a crash that ruined their lives, etc.

A 2 hour live presentation had always been done in Macon County at the Courthouse after hours. So, there would have to be courthouse personnel there as well as the community members that were presenters. There were also videos that were utilized.

It was found a while back that there were services online where people could be directed to complete it at a fee. The end result was that we lost the fees. Those were somewhat unreliable.

Amanda Caudill, the Victim Witness Coordinator, along with Mike Baggett and the computer people got together and decided to do our own. Now there have been over 200 people successfully go through our program. It is doing very well at filling that need and the income from it is all ours. The clients like it too and we no longer have to pay personnel, security or community members to be here.

CITIZEN REMARKS – PUBLIC COMMENT – None

New Business - None

Old Business None

Closed Session – None needed

NEXT MEETING May 26, 2022

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

Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham, Macon County Board Office