

MINUTES

DEKALB COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER BOARD

Monday, May 6, 2024 @ 8:00 A.M.

CONVENED: 8:00 AM

ROLL CALL:

Member Present:

In Person: Ron Dicke, Kent Likes, Mark Olivero and Kevin Likes

Telephonically:

By Video:

Members Absent: Joe Dunn

Public in Attendance:

AGENDA:

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mark reviewed the minutes and Ron made a motion to approve minutes of February 5, 2024, Kent seconded. Motion passed.

II. QUARTERLY UPDATE

a. Review Reimbursement Report

Mark stated that this Quarter is our highest yet. A number of things affect this, as our salaries go up the reimbursement goes up as well. Cheryl stated that we had a couple of large invoices this Quarter- the Expert on the Sands case and Kevin had a large invoice from an appointment on a contested adoption that he was appointed to.

Ron stated he likes the reimbursement chart showing all reimbursements from 2016 to current. Mark added that you can see from the chart that we have come a long way on reimbursements.

b. Review Title IV-E Fund

Mark reviewed the items we have spent money on in 2024: Aqua System and Notary certification.

III. OTHER MATTERS TO BE PRESENTED BY CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER

a. Update on classification/benefits for deputy PD's

- Minutes from Sub-committee Meeting

Mark explained that after meeting with the sub committee that he met with Dotty, head of Human Resources, and they discussed the possibility of going to contracts with the attorneys that would include salary and benefits. She has done some research in the surrounding counties and is in support of Dekalb being comparable. Mark also explained that the need to retain good attorneys is even bigger now because the attorney shortage in Indiana is growing. Kevin stated that the National average is 4.5 attorneys per 1000

population. Indiana is 2.3 attorneys per 1000 population. Mark gave an example of this by stating that our Prosecutor is having trouble filling 2 positions. If we want to compete, we have to be comparable to other counties. Kevin said he spoke this past week to the Senior Class at Eastside and not one of them had any interest in going to law school.

Mark got a contract from Ben from Steuben County. He wants to be able to go to the Council and talk about the possibility of going to contracts. He would need to discuss the terms with the Council Attorney Don Stuckey. Mark is not sure about the length of the contract but the contract would include the benefits. Ron stated that the big thing for Council is probably the cost. Mark stated that Susan did a chart as if all attorneys participated and sign up for the max, and she had to do this for the Prosecutors office as well. It was a large amount but then we get 40% reimbursement on our attorneys. Council voted no the last time but now the Prosecutors office is on board and the Sub-Committee has passed it.

Ron is on board to get current with the times and get benefits for the Attorneys. He asked what the plus and minuses are of going to a contract. Kevin stated that the minus would be that if we wanted to let an attorney go that they could then say that they are under contract. Ron asked if we really need a contract or do we just need the benefits. It was agreed that we just really need the benefits. Ron and Kent did agree that if Council only approved benefits if Attorneys are under a contract, they would approve in order to get the benefits.

After the discussion about contracts Ron made a motion to authorize the request of the benefits, both health and Perf, Kent seconded the motion.

Kevin gave an update on the Seminar that was held at Community Corrections. The Public Defender Office volunteered to supply the snacks. The attendance was in the upper 20's. Mostly from the PD office. Kevin is the Chairman and was just reelected for another 3 years. Community Corrections has many employees, they have recently upgraded the ankle bracelets, they use SCRAM and other devices for Pre Trial Release. They also oversee Change Academy and Case. They have 52 beds, 42 for men and 10 for women. They need 32 residents to cover the cost

b. Discuss pilot Misdemeanor Program.

The Misdemeanor pilot program has changed a lot. The State has tossed around different ideas, but now is authorized to pick up to 12 counties to participate in the program. The plan is for 5 years. The Public Defender fee to the defendant will be raised to \$200 for a felony and \$100 for a misdemeanor. Half of these funds will go to the State to fund the pilot program. Then the 12 counties will receive 40% reimbursements on the misdemeanor expenses. Mark is pretty confident that we will be selected as one of the 12 counties to participate as we already are working with the State to collect data on the misdemeanor cases.

c. Update on LWOP case

The Final Pre Trial Conference is tomorrow and the jury trial is in June. We have book our hotel rooms for 2 weeks in preparation as the trial will be held in Wabash Indiana. We will know more after tomorrows hearing. On top of the LWOP case we have picked up 2 more murder cases.

IV. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ron asked if the Board needs to meet more often since the office is so busy with these high profile cases and with the CR4 issues in Superior II. No further action was taken at this time.

Kent made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ron Seconded the motion.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, August 5, 2024 at 8:00 A.M.

ADJOURNED: 8:57

Respectfully Submitted,

Cheryl Bradford