

MINUTES

DEKALB COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER BOARD

Monday, August 5, 2024 @ 8:00 A.M.

CONVENED: 8:00 AM

ROLL CALL:

Member Present:

In Person: Kent Likes, Joe Dunn, Mark Olivero, Kevin Likes

Telephonically:

By Video:

Members Absent: Ron Dicke

Public in Attendance: None

AGENDA:

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Kent made a motion to approve minutes of May 6, 2024, Joe seconded. Motion passed.

I. QUARTERLY UPDATE

a. Review Reimbursement Report

This is the 2nd report over \$100,000. We had seven pay periods in this quarter and Travel Expenses from the Rise 24 and Annual update that contribute to this reimbursement. Joe made a motion to accept the 2nd Quarter Reimbursement Request and Kent seconded. Motion passed.

b. Review Title IV-E Funds

We received \$1100 in the 1st Quarter. This is not a large amount but adds up. We have received \$14,123.33 to date.

II. OTHER MATTERS TO BE PRESENTED BY CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER

a. Update on benefits for deputy PD's

Mark gave an update on things going on in the office. He went before the Council regarding budget and benefits. He went right after the Judges who also brought up that the Prosecutor has been unable to find someone.

We had an attorney leave this past week and so we are currently seeking a new attorney. We have not received many applications. Joe's last day was Friday and he is not looking for another public defender position. Mark has heard from the private practice attorneys that they are swamped due to the attorney shortage.

Mark has heard that the approval of benefits is looking good. Council meets August 7th and hopefully they will make a decision at that time. The Prosecutor is frustrated because he can't find anyone. He feels they need to offer higher pay and benefits. We can cover right now with the staff we have but will eventually need to hire.

b. Misdemeanor Grant

This goes along with the Misdemeanor Pilot Program, where if we are accepted into it we will then get 40% reimbursements on our misdemeanor attorneys salary and benefits. This will raise our reimbursements. Mark thinks the likely hood of benefits being passed is good. Dave Yarde pulled him aside and said it would help if he and Neil would not ask for raises for a few years. Mark could do that but Neil can't make that promise.

The Public Defender Commission has changed it's name because of confusion with the Indiana Public Defender Council. They are now called Indiana Commission on Court Appointed Attorneys (CCAA).

Mark has been working with Derrick Mason on the Misdemeanor Grant to keep in the running for the Misdemeanor Pilot Program.

Sarah keeps track of the Misdemeanor Data in our office and the grant will reimburse us for the time she spends collecting data.

c. Job posting for Felony/Chins attorney

HR posted this for us in several locations, but we have not had a good response.

Joe Dunn asked what we are looking for in the new hire. Are you looking for someone who will stay for a while. Mark said yes and somewhat local because judges have emergency hearings come up and we are given short notice. We have had Fort Wayne attorneys in the past and can make it work. Mark stated that he is looking for someone who really wants to do this kind of work and not just a paycheck. Looking for someone who is CHINS qualified, which is hard to find.

Joe Carlin covered CHINS and Superior II higher level felonies.

We are short on attorneys to cover the higher level felonies right now.

Stephanie covers two of the treatment courts, CHINS and just a few felony cases that go along with CHINS.

Cory is a court appointed GAL, covers juvenile cases and lower level felonies.

Two of our attorneys cover misdemeanors.

Jake is qualified for upper level felonies but he is moving into CHINS and won't be able to cover as many higher felonies now.

John can cover the high level felonies along with Mark and Kevin.

Joe Dunn asked if we have a lot of jury trials scheduled. It was stated that they go in waves. Sometimes a lot and sometimes just a few. Kevin does have a jury trial in just a couple of weeks. We just recently had some conflicts on a murder case and found out that Jake is not murder qualified. He is working on getting his experience as an intern to count and get approved by the state. We had assigned him a murder case and it was going to dock us on the reimbursement report since he is not state qualified.

d. Annex security

We have had some issues in the annex building recently. Whereas other counties have probation and the public defender office in the Courthouse where there is security, we do not have any. The Sheriff was asked to assist with this and he said no. The Department Heads in the Annex building had a meeting on this issue. Michael from probation went to the Commissioners and asked for funds to hire a 3rd party to come in and do a sweep of the building at closing time.

e. More bat bugs spotted in the office

More bat bugs have been spotted. The exterminator came back and sprayed again so we are just keeping an eye out for bugs.

III. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Joe Dunn asked if something bad has to happen before anything is done about security. Mark said he recently sent the Commissioners/Council an email regarding the issue because one evening after coming back from ATC graduation after 4:00PM, when he entered the

building the cleaning lady heard him and got scared because she didn't know who was in the building. She is pretty spooked about the situation.

Kent asked about the doors being unlocked because they were open this morning when he came in. It was stated that with the new key card entry that when a meeting is scheduled the doors are unlocked 15 minutes before the meeting and 15 minutes after the start of the meeting to allow entrance. Otherwise, you have to use the front door.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, November 4, 2024 at 8:00 A.M.

ADJOURNED: Joe made a motion to end the meeting and Kent seconded the motion.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cheryl Bradford
