

**MINUTES OF THE ONEIDA COUNTY
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 13, 2022**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Kelly, Russ Fisher, Billy Fried, Chairman Mike Timmons (via Zoom)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Mitch Ives

OTHERS PRESENT: Heidi Ihn (DA Office), Shari Gorney (Corp Counsel), Medical Examiner Crystal Schaub, Patti Finlan (Branch II), Jean Meyer (Branch I), Clerk of Courts Brenda Behrle, Sheriff Grady Hartman

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Timmons called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. at the Oneida County Courthouse, Committee Room #2, stated the meeting notice had been posted and mailed in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law and noted accommodations would be made for handicap accessibility.

APPROVE AGENDA

MOTION: To approve the Agenda (Fisher/Kelly, PASSED).

APPROVE PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the December 9, 2021 Committee Meeting Minutes (Kelly/Fried, PASSED).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

SCHEDULE COMMITTEE MEETING DATE(S)

The next meeting was scheduled for February 17, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. Timmons noted that he would like the meetings to move back to the 3rd Thursday of the month.

BILLS, VOUCHERS AND LINE ITEM TRANSFERS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS

MOTION: To approve the bills, vouchers, line item transfers and personal expense vouchers for Public Safety Departments (Fisher/Kelly, PASSED).

CORPORATION COUNSEL

WCA Legislative Exchange, February 7-9, 2022 in Madison, WI

Shari Gorney represented the Corporation Counsel Office. Mike Fugle is traveling with Dave Hintz, Lisa Charbarneau, and Ted Cushing to this meeting. Money is in the budget and LRES committee has approved attendance.

MOTION: To approve Mike Fugle's attendance at the WCA Legislative Exchange February 7-9, 2022 in Madison, Wisconsin (Kelly/Fried, PASSED).

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Relief Funding Fiscal Impact Form review

Tabled until a later date per request of ME Schaub.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Discussion on Staffing Shortage in Corrections Division

Sheriff Hartman stated this was just informative at this point, but the Oneida County Jail is very short staffed. There typically are 24 employees (sergeants/Corrections officers) and they are currently down seven employees. The 4th senior employee just left for a job at a bank, 5th senior left to drive garbage truck, another left for a federal prison job, two have been promoted to deputy, and one has gone back to school. Currently there are employees with COVID and inmates with COVID, but they are working through this, with some COVID positive employees continuing to work, but separated from others. Hartman noted he is nervous about the staffing levels.

Kelly asked what the number for rock bottom was, for the safety of employees and inmates. Hartman stated they were almost there. Hartman stated they were going to have a meeting and possibly move deputies into the jail, playing the shell game to stay afloat.

Hartman noted that he worked hard with Carlson-Dettman to get Dispatch/Corrections/Technical Support all on the same pay grade level, as they have similar duties. Hartman said other counties are offering sign on bonuses. Hartman did not think money was the answer for the hiring problem. Fisher agreed that money was not the factor, and in the private sector now, people can pick and choose their shifts. Fried asked if placing deputies in corrections then the department short on the road. Hartman stated it did.

Fried asked if Hartman did exit interviews, as he thought the benefit package the county offered was good. Hartman stated he did not do exit interview, and the benefit package does not keep people any longer. There was discussion on what the benefit packaged used to be compared to now, how other places offer 401(k) with up to 6% match, health insurance, etc. There was discussion on how much stress there was for corrections, dispatch, and deputies weighed in with the trauma they see/deal with 24/7, working holidays/weekends, etc. and how there is a lot of "why work here when I can work for \$19/hr hauling garbage or at Walmart for \$15/hr and have no stress?"

There was discussion about working with other counties if Oneida gets to the critical level. Fried stated money was a factor, and they could easily argue for a strategy just for Hartman's department to enhance those positions to make it more attractive. Hartman noted he did not come today to ask for anything, this was just to keep the committee informed of a potentially serious problem that may arise in the future. Hartman stated he was working on different options, but did not have all the details worked out yet. Hartman wanted this committee informed, to use this information when dealing with other committees.

Fried believed Hartman would be backed by this committee if Hartman were to go above and beyond the level of pay, etc. to hire the needed employees. Fried commented that they want Oneida County to be a leader, make Oneida County "the" place to work. Hartman asked how the committee felt about protected status for corrections officers and explained what protected status was. Hartman stated this was more advantageous to someone who was just starting their career and there were maybe 8-12 counties in Wisconsin with protected status jailers. Fried commented that this could solve one problem, but create another when jailers will want to retire early. Timmons stated the committee was hearing Hartman, that he needed to work it out in his mind, and the committee will need to work it out and get it done.

Hartman noted the goal today was to bring this to the committee's attention, to work it out and get the thought in their mind of what needs to happen. Hartman stated they just interviewed five people for corrections and only one worked out. There was discussion on how people are interviewing to get the box checked on their unemployment form, that there are many jobs, but no people, good pay out there, but no one wants to work nights/holidays, how this was the way things were headed, and COVID just moved it along faster.

Timmons stated the best thing to do is for Hartman to keep working on ideas, keep the committee informed, and for committee members to share their ideas.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Ambulance Negotiations, Relief Funding

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 9:57 a.m.

Mike Timmons, Chairman

Andi Seidel, Committee Secretary

Russ Fisher, Vice-Chairman