

**Law Enforcement and Public Safety Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes**

DATE & TIME: March 2, 2015 – 5:30 PM
LOCATION: COB, 6th Floor, Karen Binder Library
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chairman TJ Briggs
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Jay Mahler, Deputy Clerk/Confidential Secretary
PRESENT: Legislators Fabiano, Ronk and Wishnick
ABSENT: Legislator Provenzano
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes
OTHER ATTENDEES: From the Sheriff’s Office: Sheriff Van Blarcum, Under Sheriff Freer, Major Becker, From the District Attorney’s Office: Mr. Mike Kavanagh, From the Probation Department: Ms. Melanie Mullins

Chairman Briggs called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM.

Motion No. 1: RESOLVED To Approve the Minutes of the February 3, 2015 meeting

Motion Made By: Legislator Ronk
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Wishnick

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote: No
Voting In Favor: Legislators Briggs, Fabiano, Ronk and Wishnick
Voting Against: None
No. of Votes in Favor: 4
No. of Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Carried

Motion No. 2: Resolution No. 106 – March 17, 2015

Text of Motion: **Resolved to approve Resolution No. 106** – 2015
Appropriation For The Walker Valley Chemical Engine No. 1

Motion Made By: Legislator Ronk
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Wishnick

Resolution No. 106 Summary: This resolution authorizes the Commissioner of Finance to pay the Walker Valley Chemical Engine No. 1 \$10,000.00 to be expended towards costs associated with purchasing heat resistant wall panels for the Walker Valley Fire District burn tower.

Discussion:

Legislator Ronk reminded the committee that the funds to purchase the burn panels for the Walker Valley Fire Company's Burn Tower were included in the 2015 Budget. He added that out of the 4 burn towers in the county, Walker Valley is the only one currently allowed to be used.

Roll Call Vote: No
Voting In Favor: Legislators Briggs, Fabiano, Ronk and Wishnick
Voting Against: None
No. of Votes in Favor: 4
No. of Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Carried

Motion No. 3: Resolution No. 124 – March 17, 2015

Text of Motion: **Resolved to approve Resolution No. 124** – Establishing Capital Project No. 449 For The Purchase Of Aegis Mobile For The County Sheriff's Office – Ulster County Sheriff's Office

Motion Made By: Legislator Ronk
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano

Resolution No. 124 Summary: This resolution amends the 2015 – 2020 Capital Improvement Program to increase the 2015 project cost of the Purchase of Aegis Mobile from \$294,970 to \$312,970.00 to cover the costs associated with finalizing installation and implementation.

Discussion:

Under Sheriff Freer explained that the funding will update the computer software in the Sheriff's patrol cars including the installation of a field reporting system allowing deputies to fill out arrest reports, case reports, accident reports, etc. from their vehicles. He added that Supervisors will also gain the ability to review the reports in real time speeding up the reporting process and furthering the Sheriff Office's goal of moving to a paperless system.

Roll Call Vote: No
Voting In Favor: Legislators Briggs, Fabiano, Ronk and Wishnick
Voting Against: None
No. of Votes in Favor: 4
No. of Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Carried

Motion No. 4: Resolution No. 126 – February 17, 2015

Text of Motion: **Resolved to approve Resolution No. 126** – Authorizing The Chairman Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute A Memorandum Of Understanding Between The New York State Division Of Criminal Justice Services And The Ulster County Sheriff’s Office For The DCJS Missing Person Clearinghouse Project Lifesaver Program – Ulster County Sheriff

Motion Made By: Legislator Ronk
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano

Resolution No. 126 Summary: This resolution authorizes the Chairman to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Criminal Justice Services to provide the Sheriff’s Office with 11 Project Lifesaver transmitter kits (valued at approximately \$3,300) to deploy to families with children with cognitive impairments.

Discussion:

Sheriff Van Blarcum explained that Project Lifesaver provides an electronic tracking bracelet for individuals who might have a tendency to walk off and get lost. He gave the examples of an individual suffering from Alzheimer’s or a child with wandering autism. Legislator Wishnick asked how the program was publicized. Sheriff Van Blarcum responded that information about the program is on the Sheriff’s website and Facebook page and is discussed at the numerous events that he attends during the year. He added that the program was highlighted at the recent Alzheimer’s awareness fundraising event, Subzero Heroes jump, which he participated in.

Roll Call Vote: No
Voting In Favor: Legislators Briggs, Fabiano, Ronk and Wishnick
Voting Against: None
No. of Votes in Favor: 4
No. of Votes Against: 0

Disposition: Carried

Motion No. 5: Resolution No. 127 – February 17, 2015

Text of Motion: **Moved Resolution No. 127 FOR DISCUSSION** – Urging New York State to Fund Probation Departments 100% for Costs Related to Raising the Age of Criminal Responsibility to 18 Years of Age

Motion Made By: Legislator Ronk

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano

Resolution No. 67 Summary: This resolution calls on the State Legislature to support the Commission’s recommendations to use state resources to cover 100% of all new costs associated with changing the age of criminal responsibility from 16 to 18 to avoid financial burden on counties.

Discussion:

Chairman Briggs informed the committee that there was a letter from District Attorney Holley Carnright included in their meeting materials detailing his concerns with the resolution. He explained that the resolution was a memorializing resolution asking for support of something that would be based on the outcome of the yet to be determined NYS Budget.

Ms. Melanie Mullins from the Probation Department informed the committee that she attended the meeting to respectfully request that the resolution be withdrawn. She added that the resolution was proposed when funding for the Probation Department was uncertain. She was advised last Wednesday evening that funding had been restored and that it was not an issue anymore.

Legislator Ronk added that the committee should have a conversation about whether they support the idea of increasing the age of criminal responsibility to 18. He continued by saying that there are a number of concerns, including the prospect of eliminating legal professionals from the process of deciding whether an individual should be tried in criminal or juvenile court.

Ms. Mullins added that the decision of where to try an individual accused of a violent crime would remain with the District Attorney, but that nonviolent crimes of 16 or 17 year olds would be tried in Family Court. She concluded by saying that New York is one of only two

states that consider 16 the age of criminal responsibility and that the Governor's Budget Bill includes a provision that raises the age of criminal responsibility to 18.

Chairman Briggs joined with Legislator Ronk as the sponsors of the resolution and withdrew the resolution. He added that he wanted the matter included on the agenda for the April Committee meeting for discussion if the State Budget passes.

Legislator Wishnick asked for the Sheriff's opinion on the topic. Sheriff Van Blarcum said that it is always his desire to keep people out of jail, but that transport of juvenile offenders would fall to him and he asked where the funding for that would come from. Ms. Mullins advised the committee that the state says that any costs incurred due to the change would be covered by the state. Sheriff Van Blarcum added that he was also concerned about DNA collection as the Probation Department does not collect DNA on juveniles.

Chairman Briggs asked if there were any other questions on the subject and thanked Mr. Kavanagh from the District Attorney's Office for making himself available to the committee.

Disposition: Withdrawn by Sponsors Legislators Briggs and Ronk

Sheriff's Report

Sheriff Van Blarcum shared his February monthly Board In and Telephone Revenue report stating that they were ahead for the first two months of the year. He let the committee know that Dutchess County was opening their new housing units in March and said that he would be touring them sometime in March. As a result of the new housing he expects the variances on the report to go down as the year progresses.

Legislator Ronk asked the Sheriff what his thinking was in regard to where the +/- 50 inmates that could not be accommodated in Dutchess would go. The Sheriff replied that it was his understanding that all of the Dutchess inmates that could not be housed in county would be boarded in Ulster as opposed to Albany. Legislator Ronk advised the committee that Dutchess County Executive Molinaro supported that by saying in his state of the county address that boarding inmates closer to their families reduced recidivism rates. Sheriff Van Blarcum advised the committee that it will take 6-7 years for Dutchess to complete their jail, adding that if things stay the same in both counties Ulster can expect to continue to Board +/- 50 inmates from Dutchess for that time.

Legislator Ronk asked what the ability would be to Board inmates from Sullivan County, whose jail, he pointed out, was in dire need of replacing. Sheriff Van Blarcum advised

the committee that the number would only be 4 or 5 a day and that it might be advisable to look at Greene County instead.

Legislator Wishnick asked the Sheriff for his opinion on what went wrong with the system that allowed a woman from Esopus to violate an Order of Protection four times within a few days; as was reported in the arrest report recently provided by the Sheriff. Sheriff Van Blarcum replied that, in this case, the system worked exactly as it was designed to. Every time the woman was arrested for violating the Order of Protection she bailed herself out. He clarified for the committee that the last two times she was arrested for violating the Order she did so via telephone, not in person. He added that it is fairly common for individuals to violate Orders of Protection twice, but rare that it happens four times.

Old Business

Chairman Briggs brought everyone attention to the Correctional Medical Care, Inc. (CMC) report and let the committee know that it contained a lot of information on the quality of care at the facility, the number of times care was given, etc. He encouraged the committee to read it. Sheriff Van Blarcum added that they have quarterly meetings with CMC and that the committee is welcome to attend.

New Business

Chairman Briggs asked the committee if there was any new business. Sheriff Van Blarcum offered that his yearend report will be out by the end of the month and that it will be shared with the committee before it is sent to the full legislature.

Legislator Wishnick asked the Sheriff if the weather has impacted the crime rate at all. Sheriff Van Blarcum replied that there is an annual trend of crime reduction during the winter months and that once the weather breaks, crime picks up. He added that law enforcement agencies have remained busy during the winter months responding to a number of accidents and other weather related emergencies. Legislator Wishnick said that he expected there would be an increase in domestic violence occurrences. Sheriff Van Blarcum encouraged Legislator Wishnick to take a look at the District Attorney's yearend report as it may contain statistics on domestic violence occurrences, but that he has not noticed an increase in arrests for it.

Chairman Briggs asked if there was any other business; hearing none.

Adjournment

Motion Made By: Legislator Fabiano

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Ronk

No. of Votes in Favor: 4

No. of Votes Against: 0

TIME: 5:51 PM

Respectfully submitted this 6th day of April, 2015

Jay Mahler, Deputy Clerk

Minutes Approved: April 6, 2015