

Minutes
Law Enforcement/Emergency Management Committee
September 21, 2011

Members present: Rob Reichwein, Dick Miller, John Aasen and David Suchla

Also present: Sheriff Richard Anderson, Chief Deputy Brian Puent, Lt. Tonya Niederkorn, Emergency Management Director Dan Schreiner, and Dave Steinhoff and Steve Dubberstein with Communications Service.

The meeting was called to order by Reichwein at 2:32 p.m. stating proper posting and notification has met open meeting requirements. Motion by Aasen and seconded by Miller to approve the amended agenda as posted. Motion carried 4-0.

Motion to accept the August 24, 2011 meeting minutes as submitted. Motion carried 4-0.

Emergency Management Regional Director Lisa Olson-McDonald

Schreiner introduced Lisa Olson-McDonald who is the new Regional Director for the West Central Region. Olson-McDonald is here to answer questions regarding EMPG Reimbursement. The discussion was in regards to moving Emergency Management into the Sheriff's Office.

Miller questioned if other counties have similar relationships between the Sheriff's Office and Emergency Management. Olson-McDonald advised it varies by county but there are other agencies with similar arrangements. There was further question if clerical time could also be included in the reimbursement rate. Olson-McDonald advised that as long as it is documented that the duties the individual was completing was for EMPG purposes 50% of their wages for the time spent on EMPG would be reimbursable.

The committee further advised that merging Emergency Management into the Sheriff's Office would actually result in a reduction to the county levy.

Reichwein questioned if the stand alone department or merging with the Sheriff's Office seems to work better. Olson-McDonald advised it really depends on the county. Miller advised that after experiencing three different Emergency Management Directors merging the two departments would improve continuity. Continuity is not an issue with the current relationship at this time but there have been issues in the past.

Merging Emergency Management into Sheriff's Office

Motion by Suchla and seconded by Aasen to support the merge of Emergency Management into the Sheriff's Office. Motion carried 4-0

Communication Project Update

Schreiner advised that the project is moving forward fairly well. There are tentative agreements for the Verizon and Tri-County Communication tower sites. Once there is a signed lease with Verizon Schreiner will contact the Highway Department so they can begin work on the road.

The shelter has already been ordered for the Verizon site. Once the road is finished they will move forward with the underground items as soon as they can. At this time we are looking at late November /early December to go live with these two sites. They are looking to go live with the other sites in mid October.

Convene to Closed Session per Wis State SS 19.85(1)(c) to consider the compensation of a public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility.

Motion by Suchla and seconded by Aasen to enter into closed session. Motion carried 4-0. Suchla, yes; Miller, yes; Aasen, yes and Reichwein, yes.

Reconvene into Open Session

Motion by Miller and seconded by Suchla to reconvene into open session. Motion carried 4-0. Suchla, yes; Miller, yes; Aasen, yes and Reichwein, yes.

Office/Fiscal Manager Personnel Requisition

Motion by Suchla and seconded by Aasen to approve the personnel requisition for the Office/Fiscal Manager position. Motion carried 4-0.

Move Dispatch to the Second Floor

There are no updates at this time. This item will be tabled until the next meeting. Motion to table by Suchla and seconded by Miller. Motion carried 4-0.

Bids and Potential Locations for Moving Equipment for Jail Camera System

Sheriff Anderson advised it is his understanding that the first step would involve the county's decision on air conditioning for the equipment room. This decision will impact the location and potential costs associated with moving the equipment for the jail camera system.

The committee reviewed some of the initial estimates that were received for this process. Sheriff Anderson has spoke with Cheline about the two estimates. Cheline has expressed some concerns and does not feel that the estimates are comparable and would require more details for accurate bids.

The committee requested the Sheriff's Office to continue to explore specifications and the bid process.

Detective Take Home Vehicles

Suchla questioned the need for detectives take home vehicles. He questioned how many times they leave their residence to come to Whitehall and how many times they leave their residence to respond to a call or case follow-up / investigation.

Sheriff Anderson advised they have three detectives who live throughout the county. When there is a need to call out a detective on nights/weekends they look at the location of the call and determine what detective would have the most efficient response times. Sheriff Anderson further advised that he does not see a costs savings. He further advised that they have an excellent working relationship with the detectives and they are willing to come out when they are needed on nights and weekends.

Sheriff Anderson advised if there was a huge savings he may understand. However, savings are not the only thing it is also the need and the response time involved. Miller further clarified that if they were called out and had to respond to the office to pickup their squads they would be paid overtime to pickup and return their squads.

Suchla further advised that this goes even farther. He also mentioned administration and the DARE officer. Sheriff Anderson advised that administration puts in more than an eight hour day. They drive to the office and home on their own time. He further advised that administration is also subject to call out for investigations.

Suchla questioned if these individuals are allowed to take their vehicles home they should not be on the clock at the time that they leave their house. He advised that they should not be on the clock until they arrive at the office or until they are sent to a call.

Miller advised it is his opinion that a change would result in a substantial decrease in productivity rather than having the opposite effect.

County Wide Law Enforcement

Sheriff Anderson advised that this item was placed on the agenda at the request of a County Board Member. This is a question that has come up periodically for several years. Sheriff Anderson further advised that he has also been approached by various Cities/Village regarding the concept. Even though the concept may have been explored several years ago the idea has not gone any further within Trempealeau County. There are numerous concerns / questions that will need to be considered regarding this concept.

Some of the questions / concerns include:

1. Would the plan be to abolish City/Village Departments or would City/Villages would contract for services with the Sheriff's Office.
 - a. Cities over a certain population must establish law enforcement per State Statute.
2. Staffing Structure

- a. How would we absorb the Chiefs / Officers from the current City / Village departments?
 - b. Increase in Administration, IT Person, Clerical, Detectives and Deputies.
 - c. Would we assign zones / precincts to ensure coverage needed throughout the county and within Villages / Cities?
 - d. How many deputies would be on at one time and in which areas?
3. How do citizens get assessed for their share of law enforcement?
- a. Is each Village / City / Township assessed based population, square miles or level of service needed?
 - b. How do we ensure that charges are fairly assessed?
 - c. Considerations for Cities / Villages that request to contract services.
 - i. Charge per hour fee (Cost per hour)/
 - ii. Full or part-time officers
 - iii. Number of hours per week.
4. Equipment / Maintenance Equipment
- a. Computers / Software
 - b. Squads
 - c. Uniforms
 - d. Radios
 - e. Would we absorb equipment currently used by local Cities / Villages?
5. Training Costs
6. Enforcement of Village / City Ordinances.
- a. Vary by Village / City
 - b. Who would enforce these ordinances?
 - c. How would the ordinances be enforced?
7. Establish sub-committee to review concerns, thoughts and receive input.

Miller advised there are numerous things that would need to be taken into consideration. He further advised that maybe we are at the point where this something worth looking into with an exploratory committee.

The consensus was that county wide law enforcement may impact response times within City / Village limits. Sheriff Anderson advised we have excellent mutual aid agreements with the municipal agencies and this has been a benefit on response times and service throughout the county.

County wide law enforcement cannot be mandated by the county. The Cities / Villages would each need to make their own decision on whether or not they wanted to maintain law enforcement within their jurisdiction.

There was also discussion about sending out a questionnaire to the Cities / Villages to determine what their opinion is on the subject. Suchla further advised that this topic came up as a result of discussions with representatives from some Cities. Suchla advised it is not only about reducing costs but it is also about increasing services.

Suchla requested that Sheriff Anderson and Chief Deputy Puent develop a questionnaire to be presented to the Village and County Boards. Although apprehensive, Sheriff Anderson advised that they will work on developing a questionnaire once they are able to get through the current transition.

There was also concerned expressed regarding the ability to enforce local ordinances. Sheriff Anderson advised we are a unique county and this will be something to look into more in the future.

Discussion of Monthly Department Activities/Concerns

Questions Regarding Monthly Vouchers – The committee reviewed the vouchers as submitted.

Sheriff Anderson advised that the department has recently received a grant through Office of Justice System. This will allow us to tie our dispatch center into WISCOM which is the statewide radio system. The Sheriff's Office has qualified to receive equipment that will be installed in dispatch. There is not a dollar figure but they will provide the equipment needed to tie into the WISCOM system.

Discussion of Monthly Issues and Concerns in Jail

Jail Population Statistics – Electronic monitoring and out of county populations have been increasing.

Electronic Monitoring Options – There are no updates at this time. Sheriff Anderson advised at this time they are going to stay with the current system.

Suchla requested a current list of jail repairs. Lt. Niederkorn advised that Sgt. Koval has been working on that list. Suchla asked to have this included on the next agenda. He advised that if some of these items are not getting done the county will need to pay someone from the outside to get them done. Suchla advised that he has seen repairs that need to be addressed within the jail and throughout the courthouse.

Sheriff Anderson advised that the repair needs have been addressed with the Property Committee. Their recommendation was to keep them informed and maintain a log regarding repairs. Suchla advised that they will bring a copy of the repair needs to next month's committee meeting.

Miller advised that in the recent months they have not heard anything about repair needs. He further advised that in order to hold people accountable they need to be informed of the issues that continue to exist. Reichwein advised that as a committee they also need to consider where employees priorities need to be. Miller further requested that the Property Committee be kept apprised of repair needs.

Set Next Meeting Date/Time

The monthly Law Enforcement/Emergency Management Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 19, 2011 at 2:30 p.m. in the Tremplo Room.

Reichwein adjourned the meeting at 4:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
John Aasen
Secretary, Law Enforcement/Emergency Management Committee