

## Waukesha County Board of Supervisors

### Minutes of the Judiciary & Law Enforcement Committee Friday, February 16, 2024

Chair LaFontain called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

**Present:** Supervisors Jacob LaFontain, Mike Crowley, Johnny Koremenos, Tom Schellinger, Terry Thieme, Matthew Weil. **Absent:** Robert Kolb

**Also Present:** Chief of Staff Sarah Spaeth, Legislative Policy Advisor Sarah Fraley, Administrative Specialist Barbara Hollander, District Attorney Sue Opper, Office Manager Julie Moelter, Support Staff Supervisor Rebecca Gifford, Budget Manager Bill Duckwitz

#### **Discuss and Consider Ordinance 178-O-092 Modify The 2024 District Attorney's Office Budget For Justice Premiere Software And Appropriate Additional Expenditures**

Opper presented that this ordinance modifies the 2024 District Attorney budget by increasing operating expenses by \$48,319 and increasing the use of General Fund balance by \$48,319 to pay for the first-year subscription for the Justice Premiere software. This contract is expected to increase in cost 4% annually. The department intends to fund this subscription beginning in the 2025 budget through a combination of staffing level adjustments and reductions to operating expenses (e.g., physical evidence storage, such as thumb drives, and transcription costs) that are expected to be possible in part due to efficiencies gained from this software. Department management indicates that the plan to absorb these costs will be refined as system functionality is implemented.

**MOTION:** Thieme moved, second by Weil to approve Ordinance 178-O-092. Motion carried 6-0

#### **Presentation on Body Cameras**

Opper, Gifford and Moelter gave a presentation on body cameras for law enforcement. Some of the key points included:

- Better transparency for law officers, more efficiency for courts and added integrity to the system
- Only a matter of time when a major incident would occur in the county where body camera footage would be crucial
- Around 10 to 15 years ago, a law was passed that all interrogations had to be recorded. This has changed Opper's job tremendously for the better. Defendants can no longer make false claims regarding their rights being violated; or being threatened by law enforcement.
- Jury can watch video and determine for themselves if things were done legally
- They can use video at trial if witnesses withdraw testimony and back out of the statement that was given to law enforcement on the scene
- Helpful in reckless driving cases because it shows what happened and who the driver was
- Body camera footage is the expectation of juries and the public at this point
- Biggest selling factor is the confidence of the public to dispel false accusations of the use of unnecessary force

Opper noted that she believes the Waukesha Sheriff's Department is the last major agency in Waukesha County to not have cameras. Opper stated her opinion that body cameras should have been used on the Waukesha Sheriff's Department five years ago, and she endorses their use by all Waukesha Sheriff's deputies.

Discussion ensued on the direction the committee should take to show support for the use of body cameras by the Waukesha Sheriff's Department. Schellinger recommended drafting a resolution as a committee in support of body cameras. This resolution would then go the full board to determine their interest. Crowley suggested the resolution state all the presentations/discussions the committee has heard to date and get that resolution out before the April election so the information will be passed along to the new Judiciary and Law Enforcement Committee. Spaeth provided reasons why the committee may not want to pursue a resolution, and recommended the committee work toward identifying funding sources to include in the 2025 budget process.

Thieme voiced his concern with taking deputies off patrol to review/edit video footage in the office. He also suggested that the initial costs be funded as a Capital Project, and ongoing costs be provided for in the Sheriff's Department budget. Schellinger concurred that the Sheriff's Department shouldn't have to pay for all of it.

Spaeth will research funding options and report back to the committee.

**Motion to Allow Secretary Thieme to Approve the Final Set(s) of Committee Minutes on Behalf of the Committee**

MOTION: Crowley moved, second by Schellinger to allow Secretary Thieme to approve the final set(s) of committee minutes on behalf of the committee. Motion carried 6-0

**Approve Minutes of December 19**

MOTION: Thieme moved, second by Crowley to approve the minutes of December 19. Motion carried 6-0

**Next Meeting Date**

March 15

**Executive Committee Report of January 22**

LaFontain reported that the committee upheld a decision on a Prohibited Dangerous Animal Declaration, approved two ordinances and one appointment, and heard an update on the county's internal audits.

**Legislative Update**

Fraley reported that she just returned from the NACo conference in Washington D.C. and had the opportunity to talk to staff from Congressman Fitzgerald's office and Senator Baldwin's office about pursuit of congressional directed spending to help with the deficit in the Moorland Road project.

**Future Agenda Item**

- Body cameras (funding options)

MOTION: Crowley moved, second by Weil to adjourn at 9:08 a.m. Motion carried 6-0

Respectfully submitted,



Terry Thieme

Secretary - Judiciary & Law Enforcement Committee