

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: **CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

DATE: NOVEMBER 29, 2007

Committee Members Present:

Supervisors Tessier
Bentley
O'Connor
Kenny
Mason
VanNess

Others Present:

Kate Hogan, District Attorney
John Wappett, Public Defender
Amy Bartlett, First Assistant, County Attorney
JoAnn McKinstry, Commissioner of Administrative &
Fiscal Services
Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board
Supervisor Geraghty
Debra L. Schreiber, Legislative Office Specialist

Committee Member Absent:

Supervisor Stec

Mr. Tessier called the Criminal Justice Committee meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Kenny, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the October 25, 2007 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Privilege of the floor was extended to John Wappett, Public Defender, who requested a transfer of funds in the amount of \$7,314 to cover a shortfall in the 2007 Public Defender Budget with the source of funding to be determined. As discussed at the previous Committee meeting, he said, they continued to experience a twenty to twenty-five percent increase in clientele.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason and seconded by Mr. Bentley authorizing a transfer of funds in the amount of \$7,314.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. O'Connor, Mr. Wappett responded that any expenses relating to the recently publicized criminal case would be expended from the 2008 Public Defender Budget.

After discussion, Mr. Tessier called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to refer same to the Finance Committee for consideration. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Wappett requested permission to Fill the Vacant Position of 3rd Assistant Public Defender, Employee No. 11051, with a base salary of \$46,948, due to resignation, effective January 4, 2008.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Mason and carried unanimously approving the request as outlined above; and to refer same to the Personnel Committee for consideration. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position is on file with the minutes.*

Messrs. Geraghty and VanNess entered the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Kathleen Hogan, District Attorney, who distributed copies of her agenda to members of the Committee, *a copy of which is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Hogan informed the Committee that she had been able to significantly raise awareness to drug addiction when she asked two law enforcement officers, two members of the Drug Treatment Court and two recovering drug addicts to appear before the Queensbury Rotary Club relative to a proposal to legalize crack and heroin. As a result of that meeting, Ms. Hogan proposed to establish a mentoring program for individuals with drug addiction and the Queensbury Rotary Club had agreed to assist the Drug Treatment Court participants in locating work in an office-type setting.

With respect to Item 1 on the agenda, Ms. Hogan apprised that the Dunn Commission did not believe a District Court system would be established as it would require two votes for a Constitutional Referendum. However, she said, they recommended incentives for consolidation, such as dividing the northern portion of Warren County by region rather than by town. Ms. Hogan noted that the final report was expected to be issued in February 2008, approximately one month prior to the retirement of Judge Kaye, Chief Judge of New York State.

Ms. Hogan indicated electronic recording devices had been installed in many Warren County Justice Courts improving efficiency in the standards and goals on misdemeanors. Since the inception of a Public Defender Office in Warren County, she stated, the caseload had decreased significantly in both Departments, as well as the courts.

Referring to Item 2, Ms. Hogan said she made inquiry of the New York State (NYS) School Board as to whether the newly enacted Local Law No. 7 and No. 8 of 2006, regarding Establishing Residency and Employment Restrictions for Sex Offenders who have Committed Offenses Against Minors, impacted the rights of the citizens. She stated the NYS School Board offered to have their representative give a presentation on the obligations of the schools and how they interfaced with the Local Law and the general consensus of the Committee suggested inviting all supervisors, school superintendents and law enforcement officials to attend the next Criminal Justice Committee Meeting, which would be scheduled near the end of January, 2008.

Continuing on with Item 3, Ms. Hogan stated she received a proposal from Rist Frost Associates, P.C. for the construction/renovation of the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) which totaled \$254,998.65. She said they expected to have this project completed by volunteers, utilizing either B.O.C.E.S. (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) or trade union students and the County Department of Public Works (DPW) would oversee the work in progress. While the local Kiwanis Club assisted in the demolition of the building, she noted the Queensbury Rotary Club offered their help as well.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion by Mr. VanNess and seconded by Mr. Kenny, Mr. Tessier adjourned the meeting at 9:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Schreiber, Legislative Office Specialist