

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**(REMOTELY)
THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2020
3:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Kevin W. Hines, Chairman
Thomas Faggione, **Kevindaryán Luján**,
Kathy A. Stegenga, John S. Vero

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel
Katie Bonelli, Majority Leader
Leigh J. Benton, Legislator
Barry J. Cheney, Legislator
James Kulisek, Legislator
Janet Sutherland, Legislator
Steven M. Neuhaus, County Executive
Harry Porr, Deputy County Executive
Karen Edelman-Reyes, Senior Assistant County Attorney
David M. Hoover, District Attorney
Brendan R. Casey, Commissioner, Emergency Services
Carl E. DuBois, Sheriff
Kenneth T. Jones, Undersheriff
Lawrence Catletti, Jail Administrator
Derek Miller, Director, Probation

Chairman Hines opened the meeting at 3:37 p.m. and asked that everyone stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislators Sassi and Sierra who were absent.

County Executive Neuhaus addressed the committee with a brief update regarding COVID-19 in Orange County. He explained that he updates the county daily which includes the number of cases, recoveries, and hospitalizations and is starting to see them plateau as well as trend in a positive direction. The county is heading in the right direction even though the numbers fluctuate each day. This week the Army National Guard has been offered to us and was in touch with the Health Department, PPE has been ordered from multiple vendors, and a roll-out of businesses will be discussed. Furthermore, there has been a lot of cooperation from legislators and community leaders which he appreciates.

Mr. Hines mentioned that the other day at the Health and Mental Health Committee meeting, Mr. O'Donnell pointed out how disappointed the legislature is regarding Valley View and how they took several COVID patients. It put the staff in jeopardy; therefore, they would like to send a consent resolution to the State Health Department and the Governor stating that it is unfair, dangerous and the most vulnerable population has been put in jeopardy as well as the people who take care of them. He stated that they have caused a crisis in Orange County and he knows Mr. O'Donnell feels the same way. He asked County Executive Neuhaus if he will support the resolution.

County Executive Neuhaus replied when this first happened, the first outbreak in Orange County was at the New Windsor nursing home facility and Mr. LaDue was the person giving the advice on how to handle it. He stated that he has a lot of faith in Mr. LaDue and the statement is correct, people were hospitalized with COVID-19 and directed to Valley View. At the end of the day, it is unarguable that it did not make our situation worse. Furthermore, there are plenty of other nursing homes off the radar, but we will all see the situation unfold within the next few days.

Mr. Hines commented this will be a lesson learned that everyone could look back on.

Chairman Brescia stated that he spoke to Mr. O'Donnell who will be working on a memorialization to send to the state opposing their methodology.

The next agenda item was a departmental update from Commissioner Casey for the Emergency Services Center. He explained that they have been working since the beginning of this and a pandemic is not something they are used to; however, there is a plan in place. All the hospitals and all major healthcare providers were bought into the EOC as well as purchasing, so they were able to combine all these resources to attack this the best way they could. He added the Health Department put the EOC in the best position as possible because they stockpiled N95's while other counties did not have any. They have all worked seamlessly and PPE is the main focus.

Mr. Hines thanked Mr. Casey for all his efforts.

Mr. Hoovler addressed the committee with his department update. He stated the District Attorney's Office is running perfectly. They have done exactly what needs to be done and asked if anyone has any questions regarding the power point presentation (see original minutes).

With no questions from the committee, Mr. Hoovler added the court system would like to reopen on May 30th for regular business. He does not think they will see jury trials for a long time and when they reopen for regular business, they will have 5,500 to 6,000 cases back logged.

Mr. Hines clarified the DA's office has 2 vacancies.

Mr. Hoovler stated that is correct.

Mr. Hines then clarified that they would have a surplus in the budget.

Mr. Hoovler stated he thinks they will be by a few percent, but it depends on what happens with the court system as well as what happens in the fall.

The next agenda item was a departmental update from Mr. Miller regarding the Probation Department.

Mr. Miller explained they were able to hire a few new officers, but in the middle of physicals and trainings, the pandemic hit. The Probation Department has been thrust by the State into the middle of a lot of things such as Raise the Age and Bail Reform. With the courts closing, the number of cases has decreased which will cause a pent-up demand. He stated the case load remains steady and the office schedule is staggered with a few delivering Meals on Wheels to the seniors. There were eight officers tested for the virus with only one who contracted it. Furthermore, they are prepared for this and everyone is doing a great job.

Mr. Hines asked Mr. Miller to convey thanks to all his staff on behalf of all the legislators. They have gone above and beyond.

Sheriff DuBois addressed the committee with his departmental update for the Sheriff's Office and the Orange County jail. He stated between his office and the jail, they have had 25 to 30 cases where people have been out for a long period of time, but nothing was serious. Most of those employees are back to work except for a few who are recovering and due back to work soon. The jail was the first facility in the state to shutdown contact visits on March 7th and to this date there have been no inmates who tested positive for COVID-19. Furthermore, most of the inmates are receiving the best care they've ever had, and others are receiving the only care they have received in their life. Any new inmates that would come in were quarantined for 14 days and they have stopped taking ICE prisoners as well as Marshals. Furthermore, the Sheriff's Office has received several donations from all over which he is very grateful for.

Mr. Hines thanked Sheriff DuBois for taking early actions to shut down contact visitations at the jail because it made a huge difference.

Mr. Faggione moved to approve the request to accept and appropriate funding from DCJS for use to assist in purchasing Fingerprint Equipment and software, \$21,000.00, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Undersheriff Jones stated this request is for DCJS funding that comes through grants which is applicable to their office. They secured \$21,000.00 for an electronic fingerprinting station.

Mr. Hines asked if the funding is received every year.

Undersheriff Jones replied grants are released on regular basis.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Faggione moved to approve the request to accept and appropriate funding from the NRA Foundation. The funding would be used to purchase ammunition to be utilized for training purposes only, \$1,679.00, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Undersheriff Jones explained they apply for the grant every year and it provides ammunition for their robust training.

Motion carried. All in favor with the exception of Legislator Lujan who voted against and Legislators Sassi and Sierra who were absent.

Ms. Stegenga moved to discuss the Corrections Report (February and March), seconded by Mr. Faggione.

Mr. Catletti stated as of this this morning the facility headcount was at 458, of that 146 are ICE detainees and 93 are Marshals. The total revenue as of February 29th is \$1,668,690.00.

Mr. Hines asked if video visitation is available.

Mr. Catletti replied there is a system they use for the attorneys and they are having limited access with the courts. He stated they are working on expanding it across the board as it is a slow process.

Mr. Hines commented this may help the morale of the inmates knowing they cannot have visitors and can be helpful to the overall population.

Sheriff DuBois stated they are working with the vendor to issue small tablets, so the inmates can have some time.

Mr. Catletti moved on to the March Corrections Report. As of today, the facility headcount was 409, of that 114 are ICE detainees and 92 are Marshals. The total revenue through March 31st is \$2,671,484.00.

Mr. Hines clarified that the significant drop is due to COVID-19.

Mr. Catletti replied it is a combination of releases that has come across from the federal detainee side as well as the decrease in arrests.

Sheriff DuBois pointed out that they are not taking any ICE prisoners now, it has been shut down. He stated the health of the inmates will take precedence over money at this point.

Ms. Stegenga moved to discuss the Sheriff's Report (February & March), seconded by Mr. Faggione.

Undersheriff Jones stated in February they were still in full operation and there is nothing in particular that stands out.

Mr. Hines noticed there were 28 U.S. Customs and ICE officers at the shooting range and asked if they pay for it or it is a service, we provide for them.

Undersheriff Jones replied they are partners in the expansion of the range; therefore, they have access to it for a long period of time.

Mr. Hines asked if they put any money into it being it's not complete.

Undersheriff Jones replied no because the contract is still pending for their range which will be constructed next to the Sheriff's range.

Mr. Hines clarified they are being provided a courtesy at this point.

Undersheriff Jones stated they have committed to significant funding that would approve the range, so he does not look at this as charity, it is a partnership.

Sheriff DuBois added they will be furnishing the building and will also supply mechanical equipment; therefore, it will more than pay for itself.

Mr. Hines agreed they will be making a big investment.

Undersheriff Jones moved on to the March Sheriff's Report. He stated there was drop-in activity because halfway through the month is when the lockdowns began.

Mr. Hines clarified that the Sheriff's staff has been healthy.

Sheriff DuBois stated they had a few people test positive mostly because they have been exposed by family members, but most of them are recovered and back to work.

Mr. Hines thanked everyone for keeping themselves healthy because it helps keep others healthy including the jail.

Before adjourning, Sheriff DuBois stated that in the future, the legislators will be faced with some decisions regarding budgetary concerns that will include weighing issues with the Sheriff's Office and revenue. The County Executive gave all the departments a target of reducing their budget by 15% which is \$11.25 million for the Sheriff's Office. It something he would like everyone to think about when budget review takes place later in the year.

The meeting adjourned at 4:28 p.m.