

## Minutes of Winnebago County Public Safety Commission

Meeting date: Feb 16, 2016

**Call to order:** A regular business meeting of the Winnebago County Public Safety Commission was held at the Winnebago County Court House in Forest City. The meeting convened at 4:31 p.m. Chairman Andy Buffington presiding and Jennifer Ackerman Secretary.

**Members in attendance:** Terry Durby – representing Winnebago County , Thomas Montgomery – representing Forest City, Candy Hanna – representing Lake Mills, Dan Swearingen– representing Thompson, Carla Langfald – representing Scarville, Phil Benn– representing Rake, Troy Armstrong – representing Buffalo Center.

**Members not in attendance:** Representative of Leland

**Others present:** Dave Thomas – Lake Mills Police Chief, Eric Guth – Winnebago County IT Director.

**Approval of minutes:** Mr. Buffington requested a motion be made to approve the agenda and minutes of the last regular business meeting of the Commission on Oct 29, 2015. Mr. Armstrong made a motion, Mr. Durby offered a second. All voted aye, motion carried.

**Election of Vice Chair:** Mr. Buffington acknowledged that being the Communications Director he is also the Chairman of the Commission as per the Public Safety Commission By-Laws. Mr. Buffington asked if anyone would like to nominate someone as Vice Chair. Ms. Hanna nominated Mr. Durby. No other nominations were offered. Mr. Buffington asked for a motion to accept Mr. Durby as Vice Chair. Ms. Hanna made a motion, Mr. Armstrong offered a second. All voted aye, motion carried. Mr. Durby is the Vice Chair.

**Update on Public Safety Center:** Mr. Durby advised the County is taking bids and there has been a lot of interest in bidding and they anticipate the bids to come in under the 4.7 million dollar bond. He advised the bid letting is set for Feb 18<sup>th</sup> and they will be approving the bids the following Tues the 23<sup>rd</sup> and expect to break ground in the spring. It is possible to have the project complete within a year.

**IT Issues:** Mr. Guth advised he continues to work with Next Generation Technologies (NGT) to move towards cleaning up the server and the plans that had been budgeted for this fiscal year are still moving forward. Mr. Guth advised because the Sheriff's Department agrees to house communications it would make sense that it would also house the IT part as well. He proposed after this purchase that the county IT be in charge of purchasing equipment moving forward and the Public Safety Commission to continue to pay for software and maintenance agreements as it always has, this way there is less confusion with planning and budgeting, etc. He would also work on making the system redundant to back up the court house and vice versa.

**Budget 2016/2017:** Mrs. Ackerman presented the proposed 2016/2017 budget. Mr. Buffington advised he and Mrs. Ackerman are asking for a 3.5% raise in salary. He advised the dispatcher's salary increase is 2.25% per the union contract. He advised \$2,500 has been budgeted for Labor Relations as the contract will be up at the end of the next fiscal year so negotiations will begin in the fall of this year. Ms. Ackerman advised the IT budget as presented is the same amount that was budgeted for the current year and asked Mr. Guth if he thought that much would be needed. Mr. Guth advised the Data Processing Equipment line item at \$48,000 could be lowered significantly as the purchase for equipment will take place in this fiscal year and would not be

needed in the next. Mr. Buffington asked Mr. Guth if he thought \$15,000 would cover that line item. Mr. Guth agreed that amount should be fine. Mr. Buffington suggested subtracting \$33,000 from the budget, bringing the total Communications budget from presented total \$443,016 to \$410,016.

Mr. Buffington asked if there were any other questions on the 2016/2017 budget. There were none. Mr. Armstrong made a motion to accept the budget with the change made to the Data Processing Equipment line item. Ms. Hanna offered a second. All voted aye, motion carried.

**Operations Handbook Update:** Mr. Buffington advised the dispatch daily operations handbook is updated throughout the year to accurately reflect how dispatch operates. Ms. Ackerman advised everyone should have gotten a copy of the changes prior to the meeting, everyone present advised they did receive the copy of the changes. Mr. Buffington asked if anyone had any questions about the changes. Mr. Durby asked if any changes affected the labor contract. Mr. Buffington advised the changes did not. Mr. Buffington asked for a motion to approve the changes to the operations handbook. Mr. Durby made a motion, Mr. Armstrong offered a second. All voted aye, motion carried.

**Courthouse Closings:** Mr. Buffington advised recently the court house closed due to weather conditions. Court house employees are still paid the hours not worked during a court house closing. He asked if the board would like to make it equitable for those who work 24/7 and whose offices cannot close due to weather. Perhaps offer the dispatch employees comp time for the hours the court house is closed. Mr. Thomas advised when the court house employees don't come to work and are paid, it does not cost the county extra. If the court house closes and we offer the dispatchers 8 hours of comp time, we then have to pay extra for someone to cover their shift when they take their time off. Mr. Durby advised this is a topic that may be best visited at a later date. No action was taken at this time.

**Jail Staff Concern:** Ms. Ackerman advised the dispatchers have all come to her with concerns about their liability with jail duties due to the decrease in jail staff. Ms. Ackerman advised she is concerned as well; nearly half of the days in February jail staff are only scheduled for 8 hours a day leaving 16 hours for dispatch to perform jail checks. During busy shifts jail checks suffer because the dispatchers priority is to officer safety, public safety and basically doing their main job, dispatching. Mr. Buffington advised this came to a head when there was an inmate that was placed on suicide watch which requires 15 minute jail checks and there was no jail staff on duty. Communications was under the assumption that under the previous jail administrator it was made policy that dispatcher's did not do suicide watch because that was the practice at the time. Apparently that was not made a policy and the current jail administrator was not aware that dispatchers do not do suicide watches, jail staff was brought in on that particular occasion.

**Other business:** There was no other business.

**Adjournment:** Mr. Armstrong made a motion to adjourn, Ms. Hanna offered a second. Meeting adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Jennifer Ackerman

2/16/2017

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**Secretary**  
**Winnebago County Public Safety Commission**

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**Date of Approval**