

Public Safety Committee Minutes
March 13, 2018 – 3:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Paul Lent; Supervisors Phil Barrett, Jack Lawler, Scott Ostrander, Tim Szczepaniak, Kevin Tollisen and Chairman of the Board Ed Kinowski; Spencer Hellwig, County Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Michael Zurlo, Rick Castle, Richard Emery, Sheriff; Karen Heggen, District Attorney; Carl Zeilman, Ed Tremblay, Emergency Services; Jason Hayes, Animal Shelter; Oscar Schreiber, Public Defender; Jessica Pinkerton, Shenendehowa High School Student.

Chairman Lent called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Mr. Szczepaniak, seconded by Mr. Lawler, the minutes of the February 13, 2018 meeting were approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Tollisen, seconded by Mr. Szczepaniak, to proclaim April 8-14, 2018 as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week . Unanimous.

Mr. Zurlo said that is in recognition of not only his department staff but Telecommunicators throughout the County. Last year alone they took in over 83K calls for service and answered close to 300K calls.

A motion was made by Mr. Szczepaniak, seconded by Mr. Tollisen, to authorize re-appropriation of unspent grant funds in the amount of \$44,457.12 in the Sheriff's Department and amending the budget in relation thereto. Unanimous.

Mr. Zurlo said that the funds are from a Homeland Security grant and a grant from Senator Marchione for senior citizen identification equipment.

A motion was made by Mr. Lawler, seconded by Mr. Tollisen, to proclaim April 8-14, 2018 as National Crime Victims Week. Unanimous.

Mrs. Heggen said that this year's theme is "Expand the Circle: Reach all Victims". A Crime Victims Vigil is scheduled for Sunday, April 8, 2018 and all Supervisors are invited to attend. The vigil will take place at the Baptist Church in Ballston Spa. Mr. Lent said that it is a powerful ceremony.

A motion was made by Mr. Szczepaniak, seconded by Mr. Tollisen, to authorize the acceptance of a Statewide Interoperable Communications Grant in the amount of \$834,169 from the NYS Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services and amending the 2018 budget in relation thereto. Unanimous.

Mr. Zeilman said that the funds are utilized for the County's communication system.

A motion was made by Mr. Tollisen, seconded by Mr. Ostrander, to authorize re-appropriation of unspent grant funds in the amount of \$402,387 in the Office of Emergency Services and amending the budget in relation thereto. Unanimous.

Mr. Tremblay said that they will be using these funds up this year.

Mr. Tremblay previously distributed his monthly report via email. There were 3 calls investigated by the Fire Investigation Unit in the past month.

Mr. Tremblay said that the fire investigator truck is at the highway garage, lettering has been completed, Buildings & Grounds staff are working on customizing a drop down table and storage areas. There is also another vehicle that he would like to use as a hazmat decontamination equipment unit.

Mr. Lent said that a Saratoga County Jail study report completed by Labella Associates was distributed last month. Colonel Emery gave an overview of the study.

The study was a directive of the New York State Commission of Corrections. The Saratoga County Jail was the first County in NY state to be allowed to double cell inmates and this was not long after the jail opened in 1987. Double celling inmates is not always needed however the variance beds have always been there in the event that population spikes from time to time.

The jail population as of today is 195 inmates, of which 23 are females. Mr. Emery said that they currently have more than enough room to house the inmates in the facility however they run into problems when there are minors in the facility and they have to be segregated from the adults or when the female count exceeds the 32 bed unit. The jail was approved for a variance recently that will extend the double celling until September 1. Included in the variance requirement is that the County will need to do more towards moving forward, including an assessment of the current plant to determine if there is something that can be done within the existing building footprint to increase the housing capacity.

Mr. Emery said that moving forward, a study of the physical plant should be done to identify what options may be available to provide additional cell space. There are some things that can be done internally to eliminate need for a variance which involves a reconfiguration of spaces used for activities other than housing the inmates.

Mr. Lent said that upon reading the report, the Saratoga County population curve is in sync based on the potential influx of inmates and that Saratoga County has a below average number of inmates when compared to counties of similar size. Mr. Lent said that the study also mentions other options such as the Alternatives to Incarceration Program. Mr. Emery confirmed that Saratoga County has one of the lowest incarceration rates in New York State. Counties of similar size have much larger facilities with 400-500 inmate facilities. Mr. Emery said that currently Saratoga County does not utilize ankle bracelets for electronic monitoring and that could be something to think about. This could also decrease the cost of housing, transportation and medical costs, for low level offenders. Bail reform, raise the age, parole reform, the opioid epidemic and general county population increase or decrease are all factors that need to be considered when moving forward. Mr. Emery said that any necessary reconfigurations could be completed by the end of 2018 if necessary, his estimate would be a cost in the neighborhood of \$40K - \$60K for these renovations. Mr. Emery said that they have just completed the jail

security system upgrade and jail management system and both are working very well. As a result of this, they were able to close six post positions in the facility. He said that no additional personnel will be needed as a result of the renovations. Mr. Lawler said that it would be helpful for the Sheriff's department to provide an analysis to the committee, a list of projects, costs and benefits, and prioritize the projects, to quantify what to send over to Law & Finance. Mr. Emery said that there are currently funds in the 2018 budget that were included for general upkeep of the facility such as shower areas that need to be refurbished. Mr. Emery said that the variance is up in September, he believes that they will get another 6-month extension, and said that if they can tell the Commission of Corrections that funds will be budgeted in 2019, a physical plant assessment could be conducted to see if the plant can accommodate an addition.

Mr. Szczepaniak commended Mr. Emery on taking a pro-active approach and considers a \$40-\$60K renovation cost a very conservative approach.

Mr. Barrett questioned how much of an increase in the maximum daily population would need to be experienced to get to a crucial level. Mr. Emery said that if the jail was consistently running at 230 inmates on a daily basis, at that point a discussion regarding an addition would need to take place.

On a motion made by Mr. Szczepaniak, seconded by Mr. Lawler, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board