

**Minutes
Public Safety Committee
Monday, October 4, 2010**

Approved

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Nathan Shinagawa	Chair	Present	
James Dennis	Member	Present	
Leslyn McBean-Clairborne	Member	Present	3:57 PM
Brian Robison	Member	Present	
Peter Stein	Member	Present	3:40 PM

Legislator: M. Robertson

Guests: D. Dietrich, Director, Opportunities, Alternatives and Resources; K. Lansing, Candidate for Sheriff

Staff: B. Buechel, Director of Probation and Community Justice; P. Meskill, Sheriff; S. Cook, Chair of Criminal Justice Advisory/Alternatives-to-Incarceration Board; J. Mareane, County Administrator; M. Lynch, Public Information Officer; S. Zhang, County Administration Intern; M. Pottorff, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature; A. McElwee, Assistant District Attorney

Call to Order

Mr. Shinagawa called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

Changes to the Agenda

Ms. Buechel asked to provide a brief update on the recidivism study.

Chair's Report

Mr. Shinagawa had no report.

Report from the Sheriff

Sheriff Meskill reported the population at the Jail is holding its own and the variances are working well. A couple of inmates are being boarded out to other facilities due to mental health issues. He said the Jail re-entry report has been provided to the Committee and reported this voluntary program has been working well. Mr. Robison said some of the people involved in the program are repeat offenders and asked what the advantage is to an individual to participate in the program. Mr. Meskill explained it is an option to individuals to take advantage of a program that will help them better themselves.

Ms. Robertson said it appears the individuals in the Re-entry Program have had many chances to go through other alternatives but who have ended up in Jail. She said in looking at the re-arrest and re-incarceration figures it appears that a lot of people who would have already cycled through have not been re-incarcerated; this leads her to believe the program is working well. Sheriff Meskill agreed and said it is a small program that is only one component of the criminal justice system.

Mr. Meskill reported the Sheriff's Office has completed its Fall firearms evening Low Light shoot this month and it went quite well. He has put together a couple more training sessions for the law enforcement side and has scheduled the trainings in a way that minimizes overtime.

Lastly, Sheriff Meskill reported he made a presentation to the Expanded Budget Committee on the Sheriff's Office budget for 2011.

Update on Drug Court Recidivism Study

Ms. Buechel provided the following update on the recidivism study:

- All letters that need to be written have been and Deana Bodnar has been approved as a researcher through the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS);
- Waiting for the Office of Court Administration to release information to DCJS on the Ithaca City and Felony Drug Court participants;
- Working on establishing the control group and looking through existing Probation files to match up demographic criteria such as age, sex, race, and the top criminal charge;
- Ms. Buechel does not expect the study won't be done until 2011

Mr. Robison asked if this information can be captured locally on an ongoing basis. Ms. Buechel said since DCJS will no longer do studies she thinks this is possible and would be a good idea.

Ms. Buechel was asked to contact Legislator Proto and provide him with the above information.

Report or Discussion Item (DOC ID: 2220): Secure Communities Program of INS and ICE

Mr. Shinagawa said this has already passed and states are being placed into the program automatically. He said once a state opts in the law enforcement officials of a particular community can choose to send the fingerprints of whoever they arrest to immigration officials regardless of whether they are convicted of a crime. This program has been a way for some communities to do racial profiling and to round up those who they think are illegal immigrants. Once the fingerprints are run and there is a "hit" in the system, the individual is detained at the cost of the local government until the deportation proceedings happen. Mr. Shinagawa said when this was originally created the purpose was to target serious criminals. Unfortunately, it is targeting many more people than the violent criminals it was intended to target.

Mr. Shinagawa said ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency) has said that only five percent of the people submitted to the database are actually United States citizens. This results in racial profiling because fingerprints are not being submitted for everyone who is arrested but just for those who have been arrested and who have a particular appearance.

Mr. Robison said INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) does not have a fingerprint database, this information is all held by the FBI. He said the fingerprints of everyone arrested, whether a misdemeanor or felony, are sent to the FBI. He disagreed with Mr. Shinagawa's statement that only certain fingerprints are submitted. Sheriff Meskill agreed with comments made by Mr. Robison. Mr. Shinagawa said he would look into this.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne arrived at this time.

Mr. Shinagawa said the reason why New York State and other states have not opted in to this is because attorney generals and court systems have concerns. Many communities are opting out because of the significant costs that are incurred by local governments. He said New York State has not opted into this program yet but when it does there will be an opportunity for counties to choose whether or not to participate. He suggested everyone do their own research on this in order to make an informed decision when that time comes.

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Minutes Approval

It was MOVED by Mr. Dennis, seconded by Mrs. McBean-Clairborne, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the minutes of August 2 and September 7, 2010 as corrected. MINUTES APPROVED.

Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Michelle Pottorff, TC Legislature Office

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