

**Public Safety Committee
March 16, 2007
3 p.m.
Scott Heyman Conference Room**

Approved 4-20-07

Present: L. McBean-Clairborne, R. Booth, M. Koplinka-Loehr, M. Robertson, M. Hattery
Legislators: T. Joseph
Staff: S. Whicher, P. Younger, M. Lynch, County Administration; P. Meskill, Sheriff; L. Shurtleff, Director of Emergency Response; S. Cook, Chair, Criminal Justice Advisory/Alternatives-to-Incarceration Board; M. Pottorff, Legislature Office; P. Carey, Commissioner of Social Services
Guests: D. Dietrich, Director of OAR; J. Crawford

Called to Order

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

Changes to the Agenda

A report on the Jail Re-entry program was added to the agenda.

Comments from the Public

No member of the public wished to speak.

Approval of Minutes of February 2, 2007

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Booth, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the minutes of February 2, 2007. MINUTES APPROVED.

Sheriff – Jail Statistics

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne asked if there were any comments the Committee wished to make on the jail statistics that were distributed with the agenda. Ms. Robertson said although she knows this is something that needs to be worked on continuously, she is glad to see boardout numbers are down at the present time. She said she is also pleased to hear the work on pulling together Jail data is moving forward. Mr. Hattery was reassured by the Sheriff that the Committee would continue to receive the jail population data that it presently receives, and that any other information would be in addition to that.

Jail Re-Entry

Ms. Carey briefly reviewed the history of the 3-4 month pilot project that was undertaken by the Sheriff, Department of Probation and Community Justice, OAR, and DSS. She said at the end of the pilot they have statistics but didn't have enough information to make any real firm decisions. From this pilot they learned there is value to having something in place that would allow for planning with inmates for reentry into the community and as a result of a number of meetings with different service providers, a plan was developed to have a community re-entry program. She said different staff people have been identified who will be assisting people who are being released from the Jail.

Sheriff Meskill said there will be a core group of service providers that will meet on a weekly basis to try to develop resources and referral help from different segments of the community for the purpose of assisting individuals who are returning to the community.

Ms. Dietrich said the role of OAR in this process would be like that of a case manager -- someone who will help a person navigate the services they need. She is excited about working on this inter-agency project and will be performing most of the additional OAR duties herself. Ms. Dietrich said she is not asking for an expanded contract from the County at this point. If there are issues about capacity that arise in the future it will be addressed at that time. She said she would like to evaluate the data over the first few months and then will report back to the Legislature. Ms. Carey said there are presently several providers that go to the Jail to visit with inmates; the intention of this is to streamline the process and to identify the needs of inmates.

Mr. Booth asked if a County assumes it is preparing a comprehensive plan for people re-entering the community upon release from Jail, if the County would be exposed to any liability if any of the programs failed. Ms. Carey said she believes the County is always exposed to some sort of liability regardless of what it does; however, she is confident this does not expose the County to any additional liability because the entire program is voluntary. She said she understood Mr. Booth's comments but will confirm this does not create any additional liability for the Tompkins County.

Criminal Justice Advisory/Alternatives-to-Incarceration Board

Susan Cook, Chair of the CJA/ATI Board, provided the Committee with a historical overview of the Board's Strategic Action Plan. She said in April, 2006 the CJA/ATI Board began an extensive review of Jail statistics from the point of arrest through to the point of sentencing. In an effort to make the existing system more efficient they tried to identify places where they could reduce jail days.

They came up with 17 initiatives that were combined into five objectives, each being led by a facilitator. Those five objectives were as follows:

1. Increase the use of ATI programming through expanded education and outreach efforts (targeted specifically to local town and village justices). There was a concern that maybe the magistrates may not be familiar with the ATI programs and not utilizing them as much as possible.
2. Refine processes for ensuring comprehensive substance abuse assessments at the local jail (to design a comprehensive re-entry process), including substance abuse issues (i.e. alcohol and drug). This was led by Rich Bennett and ended up being rolled into number three.
3. Design a comprehensive reentry program plan for defendants returning to the community from jail.
4. Increase the utilization and effectiveness of the Ithaca City Treatment Court (ICTC) program. Mr. Joseph said they looked at what could be done to make the drug court more effective and more heavily used. It appears the drug court is being underutilized when compared to its past history. He said it was evident early on in the process that there was not agreement within the group on what the issues were. A survey of the team was conducted to get consensus on what issues needed to be dealt with; however, consensus was never reached on what problems existed and what should be done about them. The team did, however, agree on what should be done. They agreed to seek technical assistance for the National Drug Court Institute and to create a more formal Countywide screening process for determining what cases are appropriate for drug court. Kathy Leinthall and Gwen Wilkinson are working on this.
5. Conduct an assessment of the need and feasibility of a Defender-Based Advocacy (DBA) program.

Ms. Cook said although this is a plan of work for 2007, it is not the only thing that is being worked on. They will be looking at ways to get offenders to stop offending as well as trying to prevent the juvenile population from being admitted into the Jail.

Ms. Cook said with Paula Younger's guidance, they were able to move through these objectives in a systematic way. She stated that by working through the process they were able to identify questions as well as information that will help justify what is presently being done. Although this may not have

been the best way to address all of the issues, it was an opportunity to bring together all of the people who work together but don't necessarily plan collectively.

Mr. Joseph said because the term "planning" has been used in many different contexts and meanings, he stressed this is not like the County's Comprehensive Plan where a great deal of time was put into it, was adopted by the County, and becomes a guide for where the County goes over the next several years. He said this is more of an attempt to develop a plan that includes some work that is already being done.

Mr. Joseph said the purpose of the Re-entry program is to reduce recidivism. Ms. Dietrich said that while there will be some measurements along the way, the bottom-line measurement will be a determination of if the ATI programs ultimately reduce recidivism.

At this time the Committee discussed ways in which data is tracked and how recidivism numbers are determined. Mr. Booth asked why there is no clear answer on what the recidivism numbers are. Mr. Joseph said counting statistics can be complicated because there is no clear factor by which to count. Numbers could be determined by several things, including number of arrests, jail days, convictions, etc. There are also some inmates who leave Tompkins County or who have been arrested in a different county previously, leaving in question how these numbers should be included.

Sheriff Meskill said the real question should be "how do we reduce the Jail population and keep the community safe?" He stated this is different than recidivism. He spoke of the inmate population in Tompkins County compared to other similar-size counties and stated other counties have many more individuals incarcerated than Tompkins County. Mr. Booth said one factor that could be considered in this comparison is the number of prosecutors a County has; those having more prosecutors are likely to have a higher jail population.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne asked why usage of the drug court has been down lately. Ms. Carey responded that the Day Reporting numbers are going up at this time. Mr. Joseph said the drug court participant numbers were down at one point but they have gone back up, although not as high as they have been.

Mr. Booth spoke of the survey that was conducted and made a general comment. He said if a statement were to be made that an individual should or should not be a Judge in a particular court that is not, in his opinion, the role or anything the County Legislature should involve itself in. Mr. Joseph said that was not what the survey was about. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said the Legislature should be concerned with the effectiveness and efficiency of the drug court and not about who is running it.

Mr. Hattery asked if this group was assessing or evaluating the performance or working relationships with the Judge. Mr. Joseph responded that the survey was about a broad range of areas and while it may provide some indication of performance, that was not the purpose of the survey. He noted the Judge was part of the group.

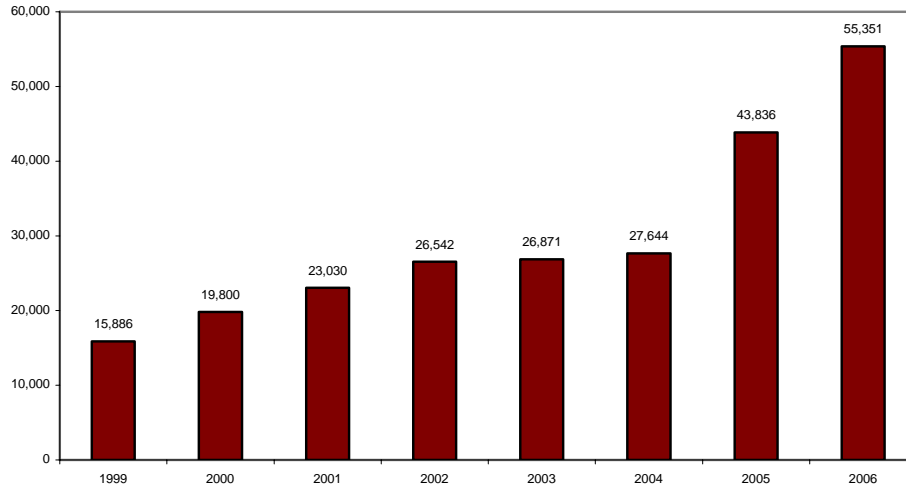
Department of Emergency Response

Dispatch Operations

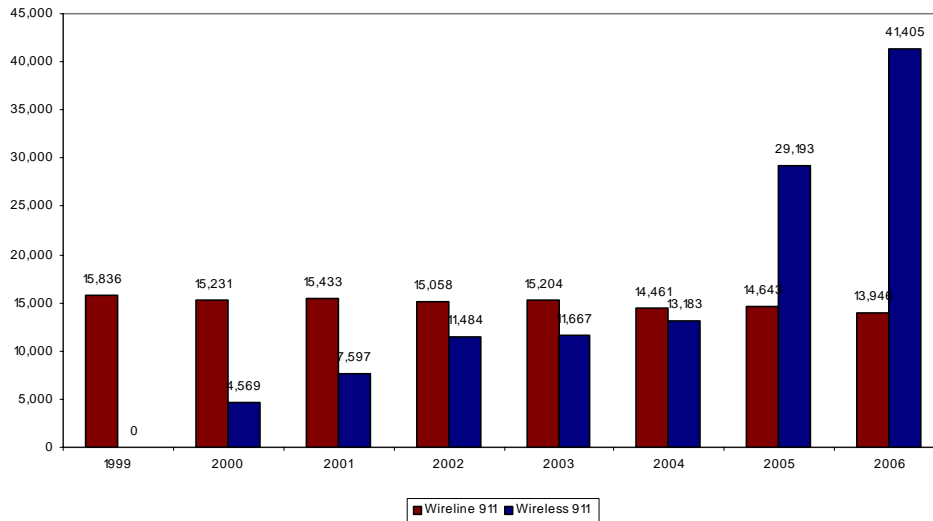
Mr. Shurtleff reported on Dispatch Center operations. He distributed a summary of the volume of call traffic into the summary over the last eight years, noting that landline calls are decreasing and wireless calls are expanding tremendously. He stated that although the number of calls have increased, the number of incidents have remained the same. The reason for this is because of the duplicate calls being received as a result of increased use in cellular phones. He explained that there will often be several callers reporting an incident to the Dispatch Center.

	911	Wireless	911 Total	8000	Emergency Total	Admin	IPD	County PD	Incoming	Outgoing
1999	15,836	0	15,886	7,845	24,278	27,252	547	0	51,530	0
2000	15,231	4,569	19,800	6,466	27,152	30,084	886	0	57,236	15,959
2001	15,433	7,597	23,030	6,007	30,448	30,285	1,411	65,951	126,684	41,128
2002	15,058	11,484	26,542	5,839	34,833	29,107	2,452	73,440	137,380	41,470
2003	15,204	11,667	26,871	6,231	36,142	29,235	2,740	71,757	137,134	40,161
2004	14,461	13,183	27,644	6,075	35,510	31,002	2,476	71,846	138,358	47,860
2005	14,643	29,193	43,836	6,816	50,652	29,880	37,607	66,521	184,662	45,435
2006	13,946	41,405	55,351	6,496	61,847	29,587	35,464	68,012	194,910	43,525

911 Volumes - Wireline & Wireless Combined



911 Volumes - Wireline & Wireless Breakdown



Mr. Shurtleff said over the last couple of months that have begun emergency medical dispatch and are handling emergency medical calls in a structured manner. They have taken approximately 2,000 calls over a three month period during which they have gone through a structured questioning of the caller, a classification of the call, delivery of pre-arrival instructions to the people on the phone when necessary, and a follow-up quality assurance process. He said this is a major change in the way

emergency medicals have been handled in the past but has resulted in some positive results. The Committee will be receiving reports and regular updates on this.

He reported the City of Ithaca Police Department recently reorganized its committees and the Chair of the Emergency Communications Committee is J.R. Clairborne. One of Mr. Clairborne's goals for the year is to review the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and County and to talk further about the services being provided. Mr. Shurtleff said efforts to improve communication with the City are moving forward and he believes progress has been made.

Mr. Shurtleff was asked to provide the Committee with an additional report on the number of incidents, not numbers of calls.

Mr. Shurtleff said there have been periodic meetings held to review the contract and at the last meeting City fire and police chiefs were charged with helping to develop some performance measurements.

There was discussion about dispatch operations and what feedback Mr. Shurtleff has received from calls. Mr. Shurtleff said the added attention combined with the regular call reviews have helped and he has not received any complaints recently. He said citizens are able to look at call reviews.

Communications Project

Mr. Shurtleff reported civil work has been completed and tower installations are complete. There will be some structure work that has to be on the WHCU tower in Newfield. Shelters and generators are in place and electricity has been hooked up on most sites. He said they have been installing antennas for several weeks and radio equipment began being delivered to sites this week. He said they expect the microwave system to be installed in April and to move to the paging system shortly thereafter. The communications system itself will be phased in over the summer months with testing being done in June or July. Mr. Shurtleff said the project is still on target for timeline and budget.

Mr. Shurtleff said at this time they are turning the focus onto the operational aspects of the project and are planning for transition and training.

Subscriber Equipment

At the last meeting Mr. Shurtleff discussed the subject of portable radios with the Committee and reported the project as a whole is moving forward. There is a subcommittee of the Emergency Communications Review and Oversight Committee that has been working on coming up with a projection of how much equipment and what type of equipment is needed. He distributed a draft estimate on equipment he thinks is needed to make the system operational. He said he has forwarded recommendations to the Emergency Communications Review and Oversight Committee as to what level and tier of equipment will meet the users needs. He said there are some issues relating to functionality of the equipment and subscribers have asked for another meeting with the County's Consultant, Tom Schuler, and Motorola to get their questions answered. Mr. Shurtleff provided the Committee with VERY DRAFT budget estimates and said he expects to have a closer estimate on these numbers at the next meeting. Many factors were taken into consideration when developing the estimates and those will be refined in the next few weeks as well.

The Committee discussed payment of subscriber equipment with Mr. Shurtleff and he stated there are many potential funding sources, including the following:

- \$1 million available in grant monies;
- Savings that can be identified in overall project expenses;
- Funding of \$100,000-\$300,000 in the New York State Budget;

- Reimbursement funding for 911 expenses (approximately \$100,000); and
- Interest funds and co-location fees

Mr. Shurtleff said based on these potential funding sources he would like direction from the Committee on what type of ownership/payment scenarios members would like to see.

The Committee asked Mr. Whicher and Mr. Shurtleff to prepare a variety of arrangements/proposals for payment and ownership of subscriber equipment to be accompanied with a list of pros and cons for each. Included will be proposals for the County to purchase the equipment up-front and then turn to users with an annual charge that will go towards support of the system as well as replacement when needed, and also a proposal for a percentage basis. Mr. Booth said the Committee should first be presented with all of the information and an explanation before a recommendation is made.

Mr. Shurtleff said the Emergency Communications Review and Oversight Committee will be making a recommendation upon conclusion of its review.

Mr. Whicher said the ultimate goal is to build a system that is self-supporting.

Ms. Robertson said she would like to see a few options recommended by Mr. Whicher and Mr. Shurtleff, along with pros and cons of each.

Mr. Hattery said he thinks it would be unfair if the County is not in a position to front-end some of this equipment. He asked Mr. Shurtleff if he would be going back to police and fire departments to find out if the volume of equipment he has estimated is correct. Mr. Shurtleff said he will be reviewing his equipment list with the departments and will present the Committee with the difference if there is one. Mr. Hattery would also like to see a list of funding sources.

Mr. Whicher clarified that the County has an obligation to purchase the mobile radios in the vehicles and municipalities and fire companies have an obligation to purchase pagers. He said portable radios are the only thing that has been up for debate and that there has never been any communication from the County that there was an intent by the County to pay for those. It has been stated since the beginning that is a political decision that will need to be made by the Legislature. This total expense is approximately \$1 to 1.5 million of the total expenditure for the communications system.

Mr. Joseph said when someone receives something for free people have less respect for it, wants more of it, and doesn't treat it very well. While he would support the County bearing the cost for this he thinks the users should have enough investment to encourage good treatment of the equipment. Mr. Meskill said the County would need to address ownership of the equipment because that could impact how well users maintain the equipment.

Resolution Adopted by Erie County Legislature

The Committee had a brief discussion of a resolution adopted by the Erie County Legislature on January 18th pertaining to computer sex crimes committed against children. It was the consensus of the Committee that the information presented needs further review and that action was not desired at this time. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne will discuss this with District Attorney Wilkinson to see if there was an interest by her to pursue this further.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.