

COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: Finance, Tax & Budgets
CHAIRPERSON: John Creighton
DATE/TIME: Thursday, February 27, 2003. 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Berlage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hasken	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Schultz
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carroll	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Potter	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Creighton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Schubert	

Other Board members: Bill Cooper, Dane Jackson, Margie Montelius, Terry Stoffregen, Sally Toepfer, Jack Zillig

Others: Duane Olivier – County Administrator, Diane Williams – COA Secretary, Dick Veith – 15th Circuit Court Administrator, Tim Stephenson – Chief Probation Officer, Sharon Wand – Clerk of the Circuit Court

**SUBJECT OF MEETING: Special meeting for departmental program review
MINUTES**

1. County Department/Office Program review

- a. Dick Veith clarified for the committee that the **15th Judicial Circuit** includes Lee, Ogle, Jo Daviess, Carroll and Stephenson counties. He commented that Jo Daviess County has the smoothest running system and has the highest rate of collection in the Circuit.
 - i. In response to questions by board members, Dick elaborated on juvenile detention and how kids are scored to determine if detention is needed. The Circuit has received a 3-year grant program to develop alternatives for secure detention and some funding was extended to a fourth year. This is the only circuit to get more than one grant year.
 - ii. The law library is open to the public and most sources are accessed using the Internet. Nearly all of the budgeted expenses are to purchase books, but some of the books in the library came free from the State. Revised statutes are only purchased every couple of years.
 - iii. Discussed automation and the need to stay up-to-date with technology.
- b. The **Public Defender's** office currently has one full-time and two part-time attorneys. The circuit is working toward making them State employees. The space in the courthouse allotted to this department is very small and the attorneys generally use their own offices and secretaries to perform their duties as public defenders.
- c. The **Probation** department consists of the Chief Probation Officer, a secretary and four probation officers. Tim Stephenson reviewed the different types of cases that the office handles and that the state determines how many credits each duty earns.

- i. Additionally, the Probation Department manages money for their clients and collects a fee.
 - ii. Only Probation can detain a juvenile. The detention costs in 2002 were considerably lower than in 2001. Jo Daviess County has a contract with Mary Davis House in Galesburg for juvenile detention that also takes care of transportation costs. Anyone through the age of 16 years old is considered a juvenile.
 - iii. Caseload has been fairly consistent for the last three years.
 - iv. The Probation Services fund is used for computers and equipment. Because of budget shortfalls this year, the State may allow those funds to also be used toward operational expenses such as mileage and office supplies.
 - v. Four years ago an officer was added and also two years ago. The current staff is sufficient. The most pressing issue is space and security.
- d. **Circuit Clerk's** office has 5 employees in addition to the Clerk, Sharon Wand. It is a high volume, high stress office environment. When people are in there they are not very happy and have to pay money.
- i. The office is on an AS400 network that connects the court related services in the courthouse. Through a service called Judici, court information is available on the Internet. Automation has made it easier for the public to run background checks and taken the burden off the circuit clerk's office.
 - ii. The greatest space need is for an evidence room. The office is required to keep evidence for 30 days past a verdict, or as long as required by the judge. Sharon is usually able to destroy or return exhibits that were used in a trial.
 - iii. Sharon has a high rate of collection because they calculate the court costs before the defendant is able to leave. Especially in the case of court supervision, it isn't granted unless the defendant pays that same day. Child support is now paid and distributed through a State Disbursement Unit (SDU) in Wheaton, but since many small employers are not required to use the SDU those funds still go through the Circuit Clerk's office.
 - iv. The office works with grand, petit and coroner's juries. Grand jury meets one time per month to help the States Attorney determine if charges should be pressed. A coroner's jury is called in the event of any unattended death.
 - v. The Circuit Clerk also writes checks for the Probation department because Tim is not bonded.
 - vi. The Circuit Clerk's office has a microfilm camera and has microfilmed records from 1965 to 1990 and destroyed the originals. One copy is kept here and one is sent to Springfield. Sharon also indexes them for easier retrieval.
 - vii. In response to questions, Sharon noted that the fees charged by her office are not a part of the current fee study. But there is a bill in

e. **State's Attorney** review was rescheduled to March 19.

John Creighton thanked the departments for their efforts.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.