

Courthouse Security and Facilities Committee Minutes
April 24, 2013

Location: Rick Meyer Room Sheriff Department

Next Meeting: July 10th, 2013 First Floor of the Orrin King Building

Present: Judge Seifert, Melissa Konrad, Sheriff Matz, Joe Kroncke, Christian Gossett, Lisa Krueger, Tom Chalchoff, John Bermingham, Bill Wingren, Mark Harris, Jon Bellows, Mike Elder, Linda Meier, Linda Kollmann

I. Update on Active Shooter Training held January 21, 2013 at the Courthouse:

Sheriff Matz gave an update on the active shooter training done at the Courthouse in January. The training raised the level of awareness in the building regarding security. The officers now have keys to all rooms in the building. Everything that has been done thus far has been done with little to no cost. The training went well and the Sheriff's department will try to do one training a year for staff. The next training will be on personal safety and security.

II. Power Point Presentation: The Sheriff and Emergency Management put together a presentation to be presented to the Facilities and Judiciary and Public Safety committees on options with regard to Courthouse security. The presentation included 6 different ways to increase the safety and security of the Courthouse. The purpose of the power point was because at this point funding will be necessary to do anything further. The Sheriff has a statutory duty to protect the courts. There have been eight studies done on the courthouse since 1999 with regard to space needs and security. All studies point out that the Courts need more safety and more space. In 2012 the Supreme Court gave guidelines that counties should be following on Courthouse security. Winnebago County is not complying with many of the best practices given by the Supreme Court. The Courthouse is on the National Historic Register's list of historic buildings so little to nothing can be changes to the building without being in violation of the historical society rules. The Sheriff showed three separate videos of Court related violence from other courts that were caught on courthouse cameras, which Winnebago County currently does not have.

III. Options Presented:

A. Training and Awareness: This option is to do nothing structurally to the building and continue with training and awareness. The pro to this is it costs the County little to no money, however, there is potential liability to the County to do nothing knowing we have a safety problem. This also does not address the space problems.

B. Single Entrance/Screening at the front door: This option will cost 200,000-280,000 annually for the staffing of the machine. There are still holes in this option as someone could still let someone in the side door. This plan would not screen staff members or others with badges in efforts to keep the lines down on the front approach especially with bad weather. There is also the cost of the machine to do the screening. This would be a better option than what is currently in place as right now anyone can walk in the courthouse with a weapon.

C. Technology Upgrade: The Courthouse is very outdated as to technology because the technology did not exist when the building was built in the 1930's. There are issues because some employees are on State equipment and some on County equipment. Upgrade costs are not in yet for a replacement PA system, panic buttons, cameras, and personnel. The current PA system does not work in some places, and cannot be heard from many areas of the building, which was learned after the active shooter training and the recent tornado drill. The panic buttons the Judges have do not work. There are cameras in the courthouse and they are non-operational.

D. Build a Welcome Center: This plan is to basically build an area out on the platform of the courthouse entry for screening all people who come into the courthouse. This will eliminate the lines to get in the courthouse in inclement weather. This option would include scanning all people entering the courthouse. This will cost roughly 1 million dollars to build, that does not include staffing the machines.

E. Staff to Supreme Court Guidelines: This would include 37 more deputies at the Courthouse and Safety Building, this would cost the county 3.7 million dollars annually. The Sheriff hopes to take other safety measures so this is not necessary

F. Construct a New Facility: This is the only option that would give the Courts the level of security recommended by all eight studies done since 1999. The costs are unknown at this point. By moving the Courts to a different facility the Sheriff could give the level of security necessary for the Courts and Court related functions. This would make more room in the current facilities for Child Support to grow, for VIP, Teen Court, Veterans, and Family Court Counseling to move in to the building and move out of the Veterans building and rented City of Oshkosh building.