

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY
COURTHOUSE SECURITY COMMITTEE MEETING**

April 10, 2019 Minutes
Noon

Location: Room 500

Committee Members Present: Judge Karen Seifert, Clerk of Courts Melissa Pingel, , Sheriff John Matz, Lieutenant Bill Anthes, Family Court Commissioner Lisa Krueger, Victim Witness Coordinator Terri Vandellen, County Board Vice Chair Tom Egan, Facilities Director Mike Elder, District Court Administrator Jon Bellows, State Public Defender Linda Meier, District Attorney Christian Gossett

Committee Members Not Present: Attorney Ed Jelinski, Attorney Rebecca Castonia, County Executive Mark Harris and Emergency Management Director Linda Kollmann

Others Present: County Board Member Robert Keller & Clerk of Courts Administrative Assistant Sheri Gotto

1. **Minutes:** The committee members present approved the minutes from the last meeting; Mike Elder abstained due to not attending the last meeting.
2. **Body Cameras on Deputies in Courthouse:** Lt. Anthes reported that the body cameras for the Courthouse Deputies are ordered and the WCSO will need further instructions from the Judges once they get them with regard to when and where the Officers should be wearing them in the Courthouse. Lt. Anthes reached out to other Counties and there are no other Counties that they know of now that currently have Deputies in the Courthouse wearing body cameras. Judge Seifert asked for a proposed policy from the WCSO that she can present to the Judges; once she has the proposal Judge Seifert will bring it to Judges and report back to the Security Committee in July.
3. **Fire or Emergency in the Courthouse & Plan for Handicap:** This topic has been held over for discussion with regard to what the plan should be if there are handicapped people in the Courthouse during a fire or other emergency. Mike Elder said he talked to the Fire Department and they recommended that if there are handicapped people in the Courthouse and there is a fire or emergency people should get out and put the handicapped people in restrooms and then tell professionals (police/fire department) where the people are located. This was not a well received idea by anyone present. Lt. Anthes suggested getting “chairs” for evacuation similar to what is used at the Menomonie Nation Arena for these types of evacuations. Mike Elder was not in favor of that idea because the concern is that the staircases would get blocked during the evacuation and more people would be harmed. The other concern was who would be responsible to use these chairs if an emergency did happen. A question was raised about having marked “evacuation areas” like they do in schools. Mike Elder said we do not

have anywhere to put these evacuation areas. Judge Seifert asked for something in writing from the Fire Department regarding this policy; Mike Elder said he doubted it would be put in writing.

4. **Alert Sense System:** Judge Seifert asked where things with the Alert System offered by Emergency Management for alerts to go to those working in the Courthouse and Orrin King in the case of an emergency like an active shooter. Melissa Pingel said the last she had heard about it was when she referred Linda Kollmann to HR if the intent is that both the Courthouse and the Orrin King Building Employees would be included in the Alert Sense System so she could make sure she had all the Department Heads included because Linda indicated only wants to have one meeting with all involved. Matz said that probably would not happen. Melissa Pingel said she is not responsible for managing the Alert Sense System maintenance beyond her office so if others wanted to do it that was ok but each Department would need to manage their own. Judge Seifert asked Melissa Pingel if she would work with her on an email about setting a training time for those department heads. Melissa Pingel said yes.
5. **Security Issues:** Judge Seifert reported that there were no security issues since the last meeting.
6. **Jury Trial Escorts and Closing Courthouse:** Judge Seifert raised the question regarding the policy on how a jury should be escorted out of the Courthouse at the end of the day as well as when it is appropriate to “close” courthouse down to the public after hours. There were a couple issues that recently came up with trials going into the evening hours; there needs to be clarification between the Courts and Security on procedure. The Courthouse must legally be open while “court is in session.” Christian Gossett asked what does “court in session” mean? Judge Seifert looked into what the current policy is and right now a policy is only in effect when there is a defendant in custody that the jurors be escorted out after hours. Gossett asked about is this for every trial after hours or is this discretionary by the Judges? SPD asked what about civil trials? Judge Seifert said they Judges will not always know if there is a threat so the policy would likely have to be for all after hour trials. WCSO said they would straighten the policy out and let Judge Seifert know. The two particular instances that raised these questions are as follows:
 - a. One instance involved Judge Jorgensen’s trial where the jurors were not escorted out and some of the jurors were threatened during and after the trial. Lt. Anthes said he looked into this situation and it was not as bad as reported. Judge Seifert asked Lt. Anthes to talk to Judge Jorgensen about this situation because apparently one of the jurors was threatened on the way out.
 - b. The other instance came up with a trial in Judge Seifert’s court where there was a trial that went into the evening and only one WCSO Deputy was on duty. The issue was getting the Courthouse closed and also escorting the jurors out of the Courthouse. In this instance once Judge Seifert accepted the verdict her staff

informed the Deputy he could close down the courthouse and then he came to escort the jurors out.

7. **Security Manual:** The Courthouse Security Manual has been updated; Lt. Anthes sent it to Melissa Pingel. Melissa Pingel will send it to Judge Seifert but would like an opportunity to compare it to the Courthouse Emergency Reponse Plan Binders that the Courts and Court Staff have in the case of emergencies as well as the Color Coded Emergency Number Guide that is being updated for every employee to have at their desk for reference.
8. **Orrin King Building:** Facilities found a homeless person in the basement after hours. Discussion if that should be swept at the end of the day.
9. **Security Conference:** No one from the Committee went to the Annual Security Conference this year in March. However; some deputies from the Sheriffs Office did go this year according to Lt. Anthes.
10. **Courthouse Security Committee:** Melissa Pingel asked the Committee if other Department Heads in the building should be invited to the Courthouse Security meetings. The meeting is an open meeting and no one disagreed that we should not invite others that are affected by the policies and procedures the Committee works on. Others in the Courthouse either do not get the information or it has to pass through Melissa Pingel. These Departments do not fall under the Clerk of Courts or Courts so it is appropriate they know what is going on with regard to safety. She would like them to be invited so they can be informed for their Departments. Invites should be extended to Family Court Services Director Chris Demos; Register in Probate Sara Henke; Child Support Attorney Kathleen Diedrich; Child Support Office Supervisor Julie Mabry; Conflict Resolution Director Mike Rust. No one had an issue with inviting these Department Heads and Judge Seifert said she would likely send them an email about the meetings and let them know why they are getting invited.
11. **County Boardroom Drawers:** County Board Vice-Chair Tom Egan requested the keys back for the drawers that are at each County Board members seat/desk in the County Board Meeting Room/Branch I. There was a "history" of Judge Woldt taking the keys away because things that could be used as weapons were being left in the drawers and the County Board members were leaving the drawers unlocked. Sheriff Matz interjected and said he would not recommend the drawers being unlocked again based on things coming back to the jail (weapons, drugs, etc.) Tom Egan said he would report back to the County Board.
12. **Video Conferencing:** There is an ongoing discussion of cost of Video Conferencing upgrades and maintenance in the Courthouse. Lt. Anthes is doing an analysis of which courts are using the video conferencing and will report back to the level of usage. DCA Bellows suggested the updates are necessary because the Judges do change over and it is better to keep them all with working systems. According to the Sheriffs Office some

Judges are not using the VC. Further discussion after Lt. Anthes informs the Committee of a cost analysis. The current one quoted for Audio and Video Conferencing for Branch V is over \$70,000 per Melissa Pingel.

13. Next Meeting July 17, 2019 at Noon –Courthouse Room 500

Respectfully Submitted by Melissa Pingel, Clerk of Circuit Courts