

COURTHOUSE SECURITY COMMITTEE MEETING  
7.19.17  
Minutes

Location: Room 500 in the Courthouse

**Committee Members Present:** Judge Karen Seifert, Clerk of Courts Melissa Pingel, Sheriff John Matz, Lieutenant Bill Anthes, Facilities Director Mike Elder, District Attorney Christian Gossett, Victim Witness Coordinator Terri Vandellen, Attorney Rebecca Castonia, County Board Chairman David Albrecht, District Court Administrator Jon Bellows, State Public Defender Linda Meier and Emergency Management Linda Kollmann.

**Others Present:** Judge Daniel Bissett

- I. **Minutes:** The minutes from the January meeting were approved by the members present.
- II. **Security Forum:** Judge Seifert asked if everyone had a chance to log in to the National Security forum. The information was sent to you by Melissa Pingel. If you have problems logging in contact Jon Bellows or Melissa Pingel and they can provide the information.
- III. **Verbal Judo Training:** The Sheriffs office put on a verbal judo training for the Courthouse (CH) employees in June. Melissa Pingel attended and said the program was well received and that her employees would like to continue getting training on how to deal with difficult people or other topics that would help in day-to-day life.
- IV. **Security Checkpoint:** There has been positive feedback from Child Support regarding the Security Center since it is up and running. Judge Seifert also noted there was an article about the opening of the Security Checkpoint in the Northwestern.
- V. **Exemption from Security:** The Sheriff told the Courthouse Security Committee (CSC) that the Judges, DA's, and Commissioners are exempt from screening. Discussion about why the Commissioners are exempt. DA's and Judges are exempt by Statute, Commissioners are not. Discussion regarding exempting elected officials and employees in the future. Melissa Pingel noted that she has an access card where she can access the CH 24/7, as do many others. The question is why do those with access to the CH outside of the 8-4:30 workday need screening during the day. At the onset of discussions of the building of the Checkpoint the understanding was that the employees were not going to be screened as well as possibly having a separate entrance. Then at some point, the Facilities Committee said everyone needed to be screened, without the input of the CSC. Sheriff Matz said this can be looked at again.

- VI. Memo:** Judge Seifert told the CSC that one of the Judges questioned if a memo should be sent to employees in the Courthouse regarding who is exempt and why due to some comments made early on by the employees. The CSC agreed that it is not necessary at this time.
- VII. Courthouse Usage:** Melissa Pingel asked that there be a discussion of other entities using the Courthouse facility. For instance, Federal Bankruptcy Court uses this CH at least 5 times a month. Melissa Pingel noted this is bringing in 50-100 people to the CH each time. She also noted that having outside entities coming to the Courthouse does have an impact on the employees in the CH; for instance they all need to come through security, the scheduling of those dates is done by the Courts, signage is done each time by the elevators on all floors, and the people coming into the CH are often lost and need help finding where to go and the employees help them find the correct location. A while back, this questioned was raised at a County Facilities Committee meeting and the consensus there was the decision should be an administrative decision. Melissa Pingel will contact Mark Harris as to who should be using the Courthouse facility.
- VIII. Security Checkpoint Update:** Lt. Bill Anthes let the CSC know things are going well; there have been a few County Board meetings and there have been no complaints per Mark Harris.
- IX. Package Delivery:** Discussion regarding the policy on delivery companies coming to the CH and not completing deliveries. Since the Security Checkpoint opened Fed Ex, UPS, etc. are no longer delivering packages to the appropriate department. What is happening is the delivery company is giving the package to Security to sign for, then Security calls General Services to get the package, then General Services has to figure out where the package goes. Lt. Bill Anthes will talk to the Security employees and the companies and let them know they need to go through security and deliver packages to the appropriate department like they had done before. Melissa Pingel noted that General Services is a one-person operation and she does not have the time to make these deliveries, nor should she.
- X. Safety Concerns with Exits:** Melissa Pingel asked for a discussion of the glass doors on the first floor of the Courthouse. It had come to her attention that the glass doors on the first floor are locked; these doors will not open, even in the event of an emergency. Mike Elder told the CSC said that to meet code the building only needs 3 fire exits and those exits need to be signed as fire exits, which the building has now. Mike Elder said the exits of concern are not emergency exits and they do have signs on them that read "No Exits." Mike Elder said these signs comply with "Life Safety Standards". Melissa Pingel asked if the doors could be alarmed so if the door were exited that Security would be aware which door was opened. Melissa Pingel expressed concern that if, for instance, there was a fire with a lot of smoke, a person trying to get out of the CH would likely go towards any light they see, in that case on the first floor they would get to the glass doors and would be trapped.

- XI. Security Policymaker & Emergency Exits:** Judge Bissett was at this meeting and wanted to know who is in charge of making Courthouse Security policy. Is it the Judges, County Board, County Executive, Facilities, Sheriff's Office? Judge Bissett did some independent research and was unable to get a clear answer on who is responsible for making Courthouse Security policies. Judge Bissett contacted Corporation Counsel, John Bodnar, on this matter and it was his opinion at that time that the Judges were the policymakers. Judge Bissett said that he did not make these policies and does not want to be held accountable for the decisions that have been made. Dave Albrecht said it was his understanding that making policy was completely the Sheriff. Sheriff Matz said it is his duty is to "attend to the courts". The meaning of "attend to" is not clear. Then the question was who made the decision to lock the glass doors on the first floor so someone cannot exit even when there is an emergency? The consensus was the CSC did not make the decision. Sheriff Matz and Mike Elder said they collaborated together to make this decision. Sheriff Matz said this issue be looked at again.
- XII. Security Policymaker & Tunnels:** Judge Bissett also wanted to know who makes the policy regarding the tunnels between the Courthouse and the Public Safety Building (PSB) and the Orrin King Building. Judge Bissett would like this policy to be looked at with regards to the access to and from the PSB, and DA Gossett would like the tunnel between Orrin King and the Courthouse to be looked at as well. Judge Bissett strongly disagrees with the tunnels being closed especially with regard to the handicapped, inclement weather and safety. Sheriff Matz said that in his research it is clear when a secondary entrance is available, bypassing security, there is an opening for a breach in security. Judge Seifert said that the decision regarding screening employees was made by the County Board. Judge Bissett noted this is inconsistent with the Sheriff being the policymaker for security. Melissa Pingel suggested that the CSC give suggestions as to what each member thinks should happen with regard to emergency exits, screening of employees and what is allowed into the CH. ie. butter knives, nail clippers. Dave Albrecht told the CSC that he goes though the security center several times a day and has no issues. DA Gossett suggests that the CSC make a motion that Corporation Counsel be asked to write an opinion on who does have the authority to sets the policy in regards to Courthouse Security. Judge Seifert will ask Corporation Counsel for an official opinion.
- XIII. Intake:** The CSC was informed that when Judge Bissett was on intake last he called over for security at 4:00p.m. and no one was available to come because the Security Checkpoint needed to be covered and the other deputy was gone for the day. OPD ended up attending to the situation. Judge Seifert wanted to know if there needs to be a policy on what to do if there a deputy is unable to be sent over. Sheriff Matz let the CSC know that the officer's hours are staggered so that there is coverage from 7-5. The deputy's are still under a union contract with regard to work hours. Melissa Pingel inquired why the Security Checkpoint opens at 7, to her knowledge all departments in the CH open at 8 a.m. She asked if it would help if the hours were changed to 7:30a.m? Sheriff Matz will ask the morning deputy to do a count on

which departments are entering before 7:30 a.m. Judge Seifert suggested that the Sheriff may need to contact OPD in the meantime and have OPD on notice during that 4:00 period where a deputy may not be available.

- XIV. Security Center Traffic:** There was a question whether the traffic into the CH will be significantly less once the relocation of offices is complete. Judge Seifert said there will be more traffic when the other departments from the PSB are moved in to the CH largely due to the Court Commissioners heavy court calendar.
- XV. Municipal Court:** Dave Albrecht asked if the City of Oshkosh was going to be creating their own municipal court. The City had contacted the Clerk of Courts several times last year about this matter and financially it was better for the City to not pursue their own municipal court at this time.
- XVI. Remodel/Relocation Update:** Mike Elder informed the CSC that all a lot of work is being done at the Administration building so that the functions on the first floor of the CH can be moved there. Once that is complete, construction will begin on the first floor of the CH for the Child Support Agency and Clerk of Courts. The construction and relocation is projected to be complete by April 2018.
- XVII. Security Incident:** Judge Seifert said there was one incident in Branch IV since the last meeting. The incident involved a youth with mental health issues, he was upset in court and said was going to blow up the Courthouse.
- XVIII. Passports:** The Clerk of Courts informed the CSC that effective September 1, 2017, her office will no longer be processing passports. This will bring the Security Checkpoint traffic down at least some.
- XIX. Agenda Items:** Please let Judge Seifert know if there are agenda items you would like to discuss at the next CSC meeting.
- XX. Next Meeting: November 1, 2017, at Noon – Room 500 of the Courthouse.**

Respectfully Submitted by Melissa M. Pingel, Clerk of Courts.