

Call to Order: The Courthouse Security Committee met Tuesday, March 12, 2024, in the County Board Room the Richland County Courthouse. Judge Lisa McDougal called the meeting to order

Present: Lisa McDougal (Circuit Court Judge), Debra Schwarze (Family Court Commissioner), Stacy Kleist (Clerk of Court) Sara Ehrhardt, (Chief Deputy Clerk of Court), Randy Nelson-(Maintenance supervisor), Jennifer Harper (District Attorney) Andrea Fields (Victim Witness Coordinator) Eric Flansburgh, Court Security Officer, Aaron Wallace (Chief Deputy to Sheriff), Devon Rupnow (Jail Administrator), Jenifer Laue (Register in Probate/Judicial Assistant/Juvenile Clerk) Candace Pesch (County Administrator) and Marty Brewer (County board supervisor) joined during the meeting.

REMINDER: This committee is advisory to the public safety committee. The purpose of this committee to determine goals and priorities including funding as we implement the Supreme Court Rule 68 (Court Security, Facilities and Staffing) Most funding will be done through Capitol Improvement Projects.

Incident Reports: A report was given by Sara Ehrhardt and Stacy Kleist: Following discussion, a procedural suggestion was adopted: A meeting will take place with Candace, Clay Porter, Aaron Wallace, Devon Rupnow and the person filing the report. It will be determined by this group, whether all courthouse personnel or others should be alerted regarding the incident.

Candace reiterated that a single entrance to the courthouse would greatly improve security for the courtrooms and all departments including those working in the justice system.

Wanding is taking place by courthouse by court security: Eric Flansburgh reported that wanding is work in progress. It is difficult as people are coming and going in and out of the courtroom. Bags and purses are being checked, he is also helping with assisted listening devices and handing papers to parties/defendants at the tables. It was noted that other counties have at least 2 court security officers.

Discussion continued regarding the small courtroom and limiting access to that side of the large courtroom.

Judge McDougal pointed out that it is too disruptive and unacceptable for people to be crossing the large courtroom when a jury trial is taking place.

Jennifer Harper brought up that the large courtroom can be locked and there are times it should be locked. Discussion took place regarding adding signs "No admittance" to areas. Randy Nelson suggested that a retractable strap limiting public access could be added at the staircase on the second floor.

A courthouse security assessment will be conducted by Tammy Johnson, Former Supreme Court Marshall and current liaison. She now works for Capitol Security and is federally certified. Following that, the judge will coordinate a visit from Greg Pitts, a court security officer from Iowa County who was instrumental in the Iowa County remodeling project and implementation of security measures they have in place.

Candace stated there will be a kickoff meeting for the Campus reconfiguration committee and that all staff will have an opportunity to meet regarding the needs assessment. It was communicated they will also be determining viability of the building including an assessment on the structure of the building, environment, HVAC, electrical, etc. We are to focus on what is not working for us.

Metal Detectors:

Aaron reported that metal detectors range from \$1500 - \$6,000. A scanner may run near \$20,000.00 Candace brought up the possibility of someone in plain clothes working the entrance with that person having “use of force training” versus law enforcement. Aaron expressed concerns.

Tabled: Signage regarding photography and recording to be drafted by Attorney Windle, Funding to be determined.

Discussion on previous courthouse security meetings: Stacy stated there is a policy that was created regarding a Courthouse Building Emergency Plan. Following the meeting, Stacy emailed the committee information which included two policies previously adopted by the Courthouse Security Committee and Sheriff’s department.

Continued Agenda items:

- Wandering of persons enter the courtroom and bags –ongoing update
- Update on cameras being added between the courtrooms
- Signage: Upon entering the building and the courtroom
- Signage addressing restricting photographs and recording-Atty Windle
- Purchase of metal detector
- Staff for metal detector

Motion to adjourn by DA Harper, second by Deb Schwarze.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jenifer Laue

Courthouse Security and Facility Meeting:

RECOMMENDATIONS TO PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

(This list will be added to over time and is not inclusive or ending-it is work in progress)

1. Additional Signage for the building
2. Purchase of a metal detector – determine funding, get bids
 - Determine if funding can be done in 2024 or 2025, seek approval of purchase
3. Hiring of staff at entrance of the building to for implementation of the metal detector
 - Determine position: law enforcement vs other staff options
4. **2025 Capitol Improvements for the Courthouse** would include a Kiosk for the Court Security Officer. This would have wireless monitors and would need coordination with the access point, which affects our WIFI in between the courtrooms.

5. 2025 CIP purchase – Scanner for bags and purses