

**Columbia County
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
April 10, 2023**

Present: Liz Miller, Theresa Valencia, Mike Weyh, Troy Ryan (left meeting at 10:04)
Excused
w/Notice: Keith Miller
Also Present: Chris Polzer, Denise Brusveen, Shonna Neary, Jessica Hale, David Drews, Bob Koch, Madeleine Groenier, Roger Brandner, Greg Bisch, Jonathan Stefonek, NaDeanna Giuffre

Monthly Agenda Items:

- 1) Call to Order. Meeting called to order at 9 a.m. by L. Miller.
- 2) Compliance with Open Meeting Law. Posting compliance was met per Open Meetings Law.
- 3) Approval of Agenda. *Motion was made by Weyh to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Ryan. Motion carried.*
- 4) Approval of Previous Committee Meeting Minutes. *Motion made by Ryan to approve the previous month meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Valencia. Motion carried.*
- 5) Public Input: n/a.
- 6) Approval of Expenditure Reports. Reports will be reviewed by each office.
- 7) Chair's Comments: Chair Polzer provided an update on Chair Keith Miller. L. Miller commented on how wonderful Jim Stilson's retirement gathering was.

Emergency Management. (Koch)

- 1) **Expenditure Report.** Expenditure report was previously provided to the committee via email, posted on CCBoard/Public Safety Committee, and made available during the meeting. *After a review of the Emergency Management expenditure report, a motion was made by Ryan to approve the report as presented. Seconded by Weyh. Motion carried.*
- 2) **General Review of Department Activities.** Supervisor Miller asked if the MIS passwords and dashboards have been given to EM and the sheriff's office. Sheriff Brandner advised that MIS is in the process of giving them and should have them this week. Activity report was previously provided to the committee on CCBoard/Public Safety Committee and made available during the meeting. Koch presented his report and highlighted ongoing and upcoming training, meetings, and projects for March and April. Koch advised the committee that one of the primary focuses of his office is severe weather and how well-attended the Storm Spotter training was. River gauge modem install, programming, and readings are underway. Koch advised that the MIS Department assisted with the new modems. Batteries are being replaced to assure proper functioning. Flood stages at minor to moderate levels were discussed. Successful evacuations of four individuals happened last week. Chair Polzer commended Koch for the great communication regarding flood and weather events as they unfold. A press release advising county residents of free sand and bags at the County Highway shop. Citizens are encouraged to phone first. More schools were added to the list for deputies to gain access to them in the event of a critical incident. Neighboring county agreements continue for joint warnings for weather or critical incident notifications to better allocate resources. Koch was selected to attend the upcoming Emergency Management Institute National Symposium.

Medical Examiner. (Groenier)

- 1) **Expenditure Report.** Expenditure report was previously provided to the committee via email, posted on CCBoard/Public Safety Committee, and made available during the meeting. *After a review of the Medical Examiner expenditure report, a motion was made by Weyh to approve the report as presented. Seconded by Ryan. Motion carried.*
- 2) **General Review of Department Activities.** Activity report was previously provided to the committee on CCBoard/Public Safety Committee and made available during the meeting. Groenier spoke about her

monthly report and that March had 48 calls to include one overdose (pending toxicology), one Covid19 death, one child death that was deemed natural causes, three autopsies, and six Versiti donations. Following her training, Deputy ME Courtney Peterson responded to her first solo call. Groenier announced that she successfully passed her ABMDI Certification exam. The Transitions Behavioral Health conducted their first NOK interview from the packets sent out. Both Groenier and Deputy ME Stock recently attended Homicide and Death Investigation virtual training.

Sheriff's Office/Jail. (Brandner, Bisch)

- 1) **Expenditure Reports.** Expenditure report was previously provided to the committee via email, posted on CCBoard/Public Safety Committee, and made available during the meeting. *After a review of the Sheriff's Office's expenditure reports, a motion was made by Ryan to approve the report as presented. Seconded by Valencia. Motion carried.*
- 2) **General Review of Department Activities.** Activity report was previously provided to the committee on CCBoard/Public Safety Committee and made available during the meeting in binders. The Sheriff advised of the tragic line of duty deaths that occurred over the weekend. He further offered condolences to the two law enforcement officers killed and advised that COSO would send deputies to the funeral. A question was raised about traffic stops and if officer deaths like this affect how we conduct them. The Sheriff stressed the training, following policy and procedures, how well-trained Columbia County and municipal officers are, watching for certain cues and noncompliance, and never being complacent in actions. Despite what occurred up north, the Sheriff's Office deputies continued to do their jobs with professionalism. Chaplain services are available for anyone who may be experiencing difficulties. The Sheriff then presented his report and highlighted a few topics to include a drug investigation and search warrant in Pardeeville where a deputy suffered a fentanyl exposure. Due to the new squads that were ordered in September 2022 and not here yet, costly repairs are needed to maintain the current vehicles until those new squads arrive. This will cost the county extra money to keep them on the road. A newly acquired deputy from Fall River also came with an additional K9 who was purchased for \$5,000 from Fall River Police Department with K9 donations. Jail staffing shortages continue. We are struggling getting candidates to apply. Recently all jail and dispatch candidates withdrew from our processes. Money and the commitment to work nights and weekends were factors in them backing out of the offer. It is becoming much more difficult to find candidates who are willing to work nights and weekends. The current staff continues to work short-handed and are getting tired. Most potential candidates want more money and more time off. Discussion on the status of the county-wide wage study that it must originate from the Human Resources Committee. The Sheriff thanked the committee for their continued support as the wage study process moves forward. The sheriff stated that this wage study is needed to show how underpaid our employees are. A question about state-allocated funds for law enforcement. The Sheriff advised that the Sheriff's Office was awarded approximately \$74,000 that will be used for more Cradlepoints for our deputies. Other grants are available, but because Columbia is not a high crime or heavily populated area, larger sum grant funds are not often allocated here. Protective status for county jailers was signed by the governor. This will give county jailers the option of becoming classified as a protective status position that will allow for duty disability insurance and earlier retirement due to the nature of their jobs. There will be no immediate increased costs to the budget if the jailer chooses these benefits. They will be the ones paying for this benefit. This will also make their wages go down and the county should consider a wage increase so they don't take a wage decrease with these benefits. Of the current eight Sheriff's Office command staff, six are in new positions. This makes for long hours of training in getting new admin staff comfortable with their duties. Following multiple 911 calls, the 911-only cell phone was found to be kids calling from a school bus. The new jail mail scanning, copying, and distributing process has begun. Inmates will no longer receive the actual mail sent to them from the outside. This will hopefully eliminate the contraband smuggling attempts to get drugs into the jail. Captain David Clark is the office's second staff member selected to attend the FBI National Academy in VA. The Sheriff's Admin is looking forward to his return in June. The Sheriff commended the fact-finding investigative work by the detective division on a recent death investigation. Two jailers suffered minor injuries following an inmate

fight. After an inmate was found choking, it was later determined by the body scan to be a coin that he swallowed. The Sheriff's Office Open House and K9 Fundraiser, including K9 demonstrations, dispatch tours, food, a variety of equipment, and a great opportunity to highlight our staff, is set for Saturday, 04/22/23 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Earlier this morning, the Sheriff's Office was involved in a high-speed chase that began with the suspect striking a Portage squad car, ultimately ended with an arrest in Baraboo. There were nine drug overdoses in March; eight were successful revivals with Narcan and one fatal loss.

- 3) **Inmate Count and General Review of Jail Operations.** Inmate Count: 148. There were 43 doctor visits, 577 nurse screenings, and seven ER visits. Jail staffing: five jailers short. We are losing revenue opportunities in the jail because of being short-staffed.
- 4) **Contracted GIS Services.** Sheriff Brandner recently met with Corporation Counsel Joe Ruf due to this issue becoming increasingly critical. Data is outdated and new homes and businesses are not getting updated into the database. Safety and liability are critical. The sheriff's office has been patient in waiting for the county to hire someone but cannot wait any longer as it has been 6 months. The sheriff said this is a major public safety concern. Hire vs. contract services. These duties are a unique skillset. Contracting will be expensive; however, the candidate who applied turned the position down. It was discussed that a firm be hired to update the database while continuing to seek out a new employee for the Land Information Department. The Sheriff recommends that contracted GIS services be done as soon as possible and then updated every three months until someone is hired. County funds will be needed as no monies were budgeted as this was a service that another department handled previously. The Land Information position and their duties are utilized by many departments within the county. ***Motion by Weyh to approve the seeking and contracting for countywide GIS services. Seconded by Valencia. Motion carried.***
- 5) **Nonsworn Shift Differential Adjustments.** The Sheriff explained that when promotions occur, internal eligible staff members are not willing to even apply due to the shifts are primarily on nights. More incentives are needed to both retain and to offer new candidates. New prospective employees tell us that our wage is too low. This is a small step to increase wages for employees that work those later shifts and miss family and school events. Proposal: Increase Night/PM shift differentials for Jailers from \$.45/\$.35 to \$2/\$1 per hour. Increase Night/PM shift differentials for Dispatchers from \$.45/\$.35 to \$2/\$1, respectively. Due to staff shortages over a large period of time this year, the savings from vacancies will offset this increase with no money needed in 2023 from the general fund. There will be an increase in the wages portion of the budget for 2024 and years after. ***Motion by Weyh to approve the Nonsworn Shift Differential Adjustments as presented to become effective on 06/01/23. Seconded by Valencia. Motion carried.***
- 6) **Dispatch Sergeants – Supervisory Reorganization and Compensation Review. ***
- 7) **Jail Lieutenant Compensation Review ***

**The Committee may go into closed session pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes Section 19.85 (1)(c) considering employment, promotion, compensation, or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility [Dispatch Sergeants-Supervisory Reorganization and Compensation Review; Jail Lieutenant Compensation Review]. If the Committee goes into closed session, it will return to open session.*

Motion by Valencia to enter closed session at 10:18 a.m. pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes Section 19.85(1)(c), considering employment, promotion, compensation, or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility [Dispatch Sergeants-Supervisory Reorganization and Compensation Review; Jail Lieutenant Compensation Review]. Seconded by Weyh. The Committee will return to open session following the closed session discussion. Roll call: L. Miller, Valencia, Weyh. Motion carried.

Closed session.

Motion by Weyh to return to open session at 10:39 a.m. Seconded by Valencia. Motion carried.

Action on Closed Session Items:

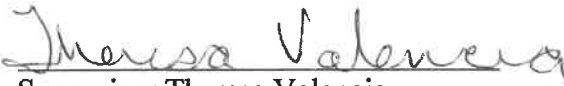
Motion by Weyh to approve the Dispatch Sergeants- Supervisory Reorganization and Compensation Review as presented and discussed in closed session. Seconded by Valencia. Motion carried.


Motion by Valencia to approve the Jail Lieutenant Compensation Review as presented and discussed in closed session. Seconded by Weyh. Motion carried.

Next meeting date: Monday, May 8, 2023, at 9 a.m.at the Columbia County Law Enforcement Center, John Roche Community Room.

Motion by Valencia to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 a.m. Seconded by Weyh. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,


Supervisor Theresa Valencia
Committee Secretary


NaDeanna Giuffre
Recording Secretary

cc: Public Safety Members; Chair Polzer, 1st Vice Chair Brusveen; 2nd Vice Chair Rohrbeck; Internet