

Minutes of the Wood County Public Safety Committee

DATE: January 8, 2018

PRESENT: Mike Feirer, Dennis Polach, Joe Zurfluh, Bill Winch

EXCUSED: Brad Hamilton

OTHERS Bill Clendenning, Lori Heideman, Kelli Trzinski, Nanci Kinney, Steve Kreuser,

PRESENT: Sarah Christensen, Dara Hamm, Randy Dorshorst

LOCATION: Wood County Annex and Health Center - Marshfield

1. Call to Order:

Mike Feirer called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. Review minutes of December 11, 2017:

Motion by Zurfluh, second by Winch to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2017 meetings as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Public Comments:

No public comments

4. Courthouse Security Issues and Updates:

Bill Clendenning gave updates on security. He stated there will be a presentation by Judge Brazeau at an upcoming county board meeting.

Education Reimbursement Policy:

Discussed the policy.

Motion by Polach that the Public Safety Committee does not support using County funds to pay for employees to obtain an advanced degree. Job related continuing education as approved by department head will be considered. Second by Zurfluh. Motion passed 3 yes to 1 no vote.

5. Discuss railroad crossing time limits in the City of Wisconsin Rapids:

Chief Deputy Randy Dorshorst explained the laws and talked about past issues with enforcement. Amy Sue Vruwink from Senator Kind's office will be invited to the March meeting to discuss these issues.

Discussion was had on whether to move forward with Amish buggy concerns. Shawn Becker and Steve should go to the February Public Safety meeting and give a history on the talks they had with the Bishops. Steve will bring the Amish Bishops to that meeting.

6. Emergency Management Department:

a. Communications December 2017 Claims:

The Committee reviewed the Communications December 2017 claims.

b. Communications Report:

Steve discussed another bullet hole was found in a cable at the Nekoosa tower. It was an Alliant Energy cable.

c. Emergency Management December 2017 Claims:

The Committee reviewed the Emergency Management December 2017 claims.

d. Emergency Management Activity Report:

The Committee reviewed the Emergency Management activity report. Talked about the trailer for Farm Tech days.

7. Dispatch Department:

a. Dispatch December 2017 Claims:

The Committee reviewed the Dispatch December 2017 claims.

b. Dispatch Report:

The Committee reviewed the Dispatch Report as presented. Lori talked about the new staff and that they are doing well. Lori is hoping to have an offer out for the last position open this week. Lori answered questions on a training bill.

8. Set date, time and location of next meeting:

**February 12, 2018
1:00 pm
???**

9. Humane Officer:

a. Humane Officer Report:

The Committee reviewed the Humane Officer report.

b. December 2017 Claims:

The Committee reviewed the Humane Officer December 2017 claims.

10. Coroner:

a. Coroner Report:

The Committee reviewed the Coroner report.

b. December 2017 Claims:

The Committee reviewed the Coroner December 2017 claims.

11. Sheriff's Department:

a. Correspondence:

Dennis Polach asked if the Sheriff's Department still operated their own kitchen. Chief Deputy Randy Dorshorst explained the Department started contracting food services through CBM Services due to difficulties finding and retaining staff. The new company is currently working well.

b. December 2017 Claims:

The Committee reviewed the Sheriff's Department December 2017 claims.

c. Bond Electronic Monitoring:

None

d. Updates:

Crimestoppers: See Report.

Safe Ride Initiative: None.

Criminal Justice Task Force: None.

K9: See Report.

Courthouse Security: None.

e. Jail Items:

All jail reports were reviewed.

12. December 2017 Claims: Dispatch, Communications, Emergency Management, and Sheriff:

Motion by Zurfluh, second by Winch to approve the December 2017 claims of all Public Safety Committee Departments. Motion carried unanimously.

13. Agenda Items:

14. Adjourn:

Motion by Zurfluh, second by Winch to adjourn at 2:48 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes taken by Wood County Sheriff's Department.

Electronically Signed by William Winch

Bill Winch, Secretary
Public Safety Committee

January 7, 2018

Last month the Wood County Board met and one of the agenda items pertained to establishing regulations for the use of animal-drawn vehicles so as to protect public safety. Since that meeting I've had numerous constituents ask me questions regarding this issue. These inquiries prompted me to explain the history and facts leading to ordinance# 17-12-1 and resolution# 17-12-2.

The animal-drawn vehicle safety issue started about 5 years ago. Myself and others started getting calls about near accidents with Amish buggies, children playing on the roads, as well as other issues. At that time we had a meeting with one of the Amish bishops to discuss our concerns. This meeting consisted of the Sheriff, Undersheriff, Emergency Management, and the chairman's or a representative of the towns of Hansen, Sigel, Sherry, and myself. Our biggest concern was the visibility of buggies and complying with traffic safety laws. Later there was a meeting at the Town of Hansen chairman's farm with a group of Amish. This meeting included representatives from the villages of Vesper and Arpin, townships of Arpin, Hansen, Sigel, and Sherry, and also Wood County. As a result of these meetings, the county installed signs warning the public about Amish traffic and their schools.

Because we continued to get calls of concern regarding this safety issue from county residents, I was asked by the County Board Chairman to bring an ordinance and resolution to the Wood County board. These regulations were drafted by the Wood County attorney, myself, and other county board members with ideas coming from the state of Wisconsin statutes, Farm Bureau, a Wood County pamphlet, and buggy manuals from three counties and the University of Ohio. There was nothing in the proposed legislation that isn't required of any other vehicle operator in the state.

The ordinance and resolution were endorsed and signed by three county committees – Public Safety (5-yes 0-no), Judicial and Legislative (5-yes 0-no), and Highway and Recreation (4-yes 1-no). The total vote in favor of this proposal was 14-1. It's hard to believe that not one of the thirteen committee members who initially voted yes to this proposal didn't second the motion so it could be voted on or amended. We're talking about saving lives. It's been said that if we had passed this ordinance the Amish would leave. Think about it. If we made it safer for them maybe more would come.

In Wood County alone there have been numerous accidents, several of which yielded no injuries. However, these collisions have also resulted in death, killing four Amish. *How many more people must die before we do something to improve the safety of all county residents, especially the Amish.* In the case of an accident with a 5,000 pound automobile or an 80,000 pound loaded truck, an animal-drawn vehicle's chances are little to none. The Sheriff's Department, Emergency Management, and Health Department continue to meet with the Amish community about this safety issue. Let's all work together to keep our county roadways safe.

William Winch
Wood County Board Member – District 9
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