

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Date:** Monday, March 24, 2008  
**Time:** Called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Chairman Santore.  
**Location:** Oswego County Public Safety Center

**1. Attendance:**

**Present:** Chairman Paul Santore, Vice Chairman James Bryant, Legislators Margaret Kastler, James Oldenburg, Arthur Ospelt, Mary Flett, and Lee Walker Jr.  
Also present: Legislators Arthur Gearsbeck, Milferd Potter

**Staff/Others:** **Probation:** Director Barbara Schuler  
**Emergency Management:** Director Patricia Egan, Terry Bennett  
**Sheriff's:** Sheriff Reuel Todd, Undersheriff Robert Lighthall  
**E-911:** Director Michael Allen, Telecommunicator Helen Buske  
**County Administrator:** Phil Church

**2. Minutes:**

**Motion:** To accept the minutes of the March 20, 2008 meeting  
**Made by:** Legislator Walker  
**Seconded by:** Legislator Oldenburg  
**Vote:** 6 ayes, 1 abstention (Legislator Bryant). The minutes were approved as presented

**3. Emergency Management Office (presented by Director Egan)**

**a. Urban Area Security Initiative Grant:** Director Egan reported that the federal Department of Homeland Security grant program will provide opportunities for Oswego and Madison counties because they are adjacent to the Syracuse metropolitan area. Director Egan and several other county departments have been sitting on subcommittees on the regional grant application, which is due to be submitted within the next couple of weeks. As a result, Oswego will receive assistance in citizen preparedness and awareness informational packages, training for all law enforcement agencies in improvised explosive devices, vehicle radiological detection devices, and a plate reader for each law enforcement agency in the county. One of the biggest benefits would be the implementation of national mutual aid radio frequencies in the county to ensure radio interoperability among jurisdictions. Director Egan noted that Oswego and Madison counties are part of the process and will reap the rewards without a lot of work, and that Syracuse would not have the opportunity to apply for UASI funding without the participation of the two counties. The grant is based on the protection of citizenry against terrorism.

**b. Personnel Restructure:**

**Motion:** To change one full-time typist position in the Emergency Management Office into two part-time positions (15 hours and 20 hours per week).

**Made by:** Legislator Kastler

**Seconded by:** Legislator Oldenburg

**Discussion:** Director Egan requested approval to move from one full-time typist position to two part-time positions, one 15 hours per week and one 20 hours per week. The move would meet department needs while resulting in a budget savings of approximately \$3,000 for the remainder of 2008. Director Egan explained that a full-time typist is retiring at the end of this week, but wishes to return to work part-time, at 15 hours per week. While the retiree's request means the department will not lose the skills and knowledge, Director Egan said the department needs the full-time hours. The addition of a 20-hour per week position will allow the retiree to train the second position, and will accommodate the additional work loads during drills and actual activations of the Emergency Operations Center.

**Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried.

**4. E-911 Communications Center** (presented by Director Allen)

**a. NENA Conference Report:** Director Allen noted he had attended the National Emergency Number Association Conference recently in Washington, DC, as the New York State Representative. In his report, Director Allen said the conference was very informative and allowed him to interact with government officials across the country. He also had an opportunity to brief Congressmen McHugh, Walsh and Arcuri on the State Chapter of NENA position on an equitable funding solution for E9-1-1, an independent study on the “Health of E9-1-1,” and appropriations requests submitted earlier that ask for additional funding in aid to improve communications systems.

**b. PSIC Grant:** Director Allen reported that NYS Office of Homeland Security’s review of Public Safety Interoperable Communications grant applications, submitted by the county earlier this year, has been delayed due to a backlog of applications, and notification of awards will not occur until mid-summer.

**c. Monthly Report:** Director Allen advised that due to a computer software glitch, his monthly report is not available. He will provide the report at the next Public Safety Committee meeting.

**d. Telecommunicator Proclamation:** Committee Chairman Santore announced that Legislature Chairman Barry Leemann has signed a proclamation declaring April 6 – 12, 2008 as E-911 Telecommunicator Week. He noted the proclamation brings to light a group of people who work behind the lines that we don’t get to see very often, and asked Director Allen to bring back the committee’s thanks to the telecommunicators. Director Allen and Telecommunicator Helen Buske accepted the proclamation from the committee and a photo was taken.

**5. Sheriff** (presented by Sheriff Todd)

**a. Staffing update:** Sheriff Todd reported that three deputies have returned from 42 weeks training at the police academy. Two others are still out on 207c leave, and another is expected to retire soon. Three others are pursuing law enforcement opportunities elsewhere. This summer, six more become eligible to retire. At the jail, two officers are out on medical leave, one is out on 207c, and four will become eligible to retire.

**b. Department re-accreditation:** Sheriff Todd announced the Sheriff’s Department has been notified it has been re-accredited by the New York State Sheriff’s Association for another five years. The department is among those that have been accredited the longest in the state. Committee Chairman Santore noted that the accreditation procedures are very difficult, and that it speaks well of the sheriff and the staff to maintain the status.

**c. Prisoner transport assignments:** Legislator Bryant asked about the prisoner transport assignments stated in the February minutes as a contributing factor to officers leaving the Sheriff’s Department. Sheriff Todd noted that deputies would rather be out protecting people rather than spending time transporting prisoners to court appearances, which can take a great deal of time. Transport must be done by trained law enforcement officers, and the sheriff said judges could find him in contempt of court if his department does not follow the court order. County Administrator Church noted that adding positions to handle the transports in this year’s budget would require funding from an already-hit contingency budget or fund balance, and the personnel costs would have to be added to future budgets. Legislator Walker said the safety of the county must come first and that he would support a motion for the sheriff to have additional personnel. Legislator Ospelt noted the issue will take some time to resolve.

**6. State Budget update:** County Administrator Church reported that as of today, the State Senate and Assembly have produced their own versions of the state budget. One of the versions restores funding for youth detention for probation departments.

**8. Adjournment:**

**Motion to adjourn:** 2:58 p.m.

**Made by:** Legislator Walker

**Seconded by:** Legislator Oldenburg

**Vote:** Six ayes, 1 nay (Legislator Bryant). Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Bennett  
Emergency Services Program Coordinator  
Oswego County Emergency Management Office