

Court Committee Meeting Minutes
MIDC Michigan Indigent Defense Commission
Tuesday, October 19, 2021, at 4:00 p.m.
Howard Male Conference Room/Zoom Room

DRAFT

IN ATTENDANCE:

Kevin Osbourne, Court Committee Chair
John Kozlowski, Commissioner
Brenda Fournier, Commissioner
Bill Pfeifer, MAC Administrator
Barb Klimaszewski, MIDC State Grant Representative (by Zoom)
Russ Rhynard, County Legal Council
Mary Catherine Hannah, County Administrator
Lynn Bunting, County Board Assistant
Katy Conklin, Attorney (by Zoom)
Justin Wilson, Attorney
Richard Steiger, NEMI Chief Public Defender
Julie Miller, NEMI Chief Deputy Defender
Circuit Court Judge Ed Black
Elizabeth Skiba, District Court Administrator (by Zoom)
Cynthia Muszynski, Prosecuting Attorney
Megan McKeon, Prosecutor's Office

Chair Osbourne called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

INFORMATION ITEM: County Legal Counsel Russ Rhynard gave an update to the committee regarding the amendment to the attorney contract for 2021 reporting that he sent Attorney Cristi VanMassenhove the amendment for her review and to sign then return to him. Russ reported he has not heard back from Cristi at this time and will follow up with her. Russ reported that Cristi is willing to continue the LGAL into 2022, but only for LGAL for children and stated she does not want to be part of the defense portion.

INFORMATION ITEM: Barb Klimaszewski, MIDC Grant Representative, informed the committee that the state budget was approved for 2022 and will send a completed signed 2022 MIDC Grant Agreement to the Commissioner's Office. Barb reported that the County should receive 50% of the grant in within two weeks.

INFORMATION ITEM: MAC Administrator Bill Pfeifer gave an update to the committee reporting that he will file the report for the 2021 MIDC Grant before the deadline of October 31, 2021. Bill gave an updated financial status report and passed out a budget report to the committee showing the 2019 & 2020 Activity, 2021 Amended Budget and the 2022 Board Recommended Budget. Bill reported that whatever monies are left over in the grant expenditure and revenue line items for 2021 will roll over into 2022. Bill informed the committee that whatever grant revenue is rolled over into 2022 will be deducted from the FY22 MIDC Grant from the state.

INFORMATION ITEM: Bill reported he will be having a meeting in November with District Court Administrator Liz Skiba regarding jail/court/individual care in jail to discuss how to process quicker and have a better system.

INFORMATION ITEM: Northeast Michigan Public Deputy Defender Julie Miller informed the committee that the public Wi-Fi in District Court does not work well and asked if this can be resolved to help the Courts. Chair Kevin Osbourne reported that the IT Department is in the process of upgrades with no date set yet and have had a few setbacks with items on back order. Prosecuting Attorney reported no Wi-Fi issues in Circuit Court. Commissioner Kozlowski recommended this be discussed at the next IT Adhoc Committee meeting and to update the Court Committee.

INFORMATION ITEM: Discussion on elevator and ramp system for the courts in the County Courthouse in Circuit Court. Barb informed the committee that this is a state requirement to have access to the courts and need barrier free door with no steps first with a ramp by a door to allow entry for wheelchairs. County Administrator Mary Catherine reminded the committee that the County Courthouse is a historical designation and there are rules for additions to this building and may need to have an entry off the side or off the back of the building. Chair Osbourne reported that the DHHS building has 20,000 sq. feet and possibly a new location for the Courts and that the Commissioners have not made any decisions yet to the status of this building.

INFORMATION ITEM: County Legal Counsel Russ Rhynard reported he met with the attorneys via Zoom regarding the 2022 Attorney Contract for negotiation reporting that their main concern to continue for 2022 is the compensation and coverage for conflicts. Russ reported the language would be the same in the 2022 Attorney Contract as it is for the 2021 Attorney Contract.

Attorney Katy Conklin informed the committee that one of her concerns is the conflicts with finding coverage for Alpena and Montmorency County as there is a shortage of attorney's. Katy reported her second concern is the compensation reporting that this needs to be increased with the amount of work they do for this and to make it fair amongst all the attorneys.

Attorney Justin Wilson informed the committee that he met with Katy, Devin and Justin and discussed a possible second LGAL may help though Cristi mentioned she will do all the LGAL duties if the compensation is enough. Justin reported that all the attorneys are willing to continue if the compensation is \$3,500 each per month for 2022.

Discussion on possible 5th person for the 2022 Attorney Contract and will further discuss. Justin informed the committee that another person is not needed if compensation is total \$168,000 and work is divided amongst them and the LGAL duties are separate.

INFORMATION ITEM: Public Deputy Defender Julie Miller informed the committee that there is a grant through DHS that as a County are eligible and this is applied through EGrams. Julie reported this is a Federal Grant and mandated to send reports on a quarterly basis through EGrams and attorneys track their hours and enter the information into the grant system. Discussion on other funding sources. Julie reported she will send Mary Catherine the grant information and Mary Catherine stated she will research and see how the County can apply.

Russ reported he will contact Juvenile Officer Janelle Mott to reach out to Mary Catherine and to work with her and Judge Black on this grant.

NEW BUSINESS – Nothing to report.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Commissioner Fournier and supported by Commissioner Kozlowski to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

Kevin Osbourne, Court Committee Chair

Lynn Bunting, Board Assistant

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