

Report to the People #32 by Philip W. Chapman, County Board District Three

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County Board District Three

The purpose of this is to provide information to Madison County citizens and aid with transparency of government activities. This Special Report to the people contains a thumb nail sketch of criminal justice trends and proposed budgets for our citizens' consideration.

Planning and Development Committee

I attended the Planning and Development Committee 9/7/17. I moved to demolish unsafe buildings and structures at 119 Kinder Lane and 5120 Lakeview Drive. The motion passed unanimously. I voted for the following FY 2017 Supplemental Grants Alton Township \$14,850,(their match \$20,100) Village of Glen Carbon \$15,000, (their match \$4,000) Holiday Shores Association / Moro Township \$15,000,(their match \$3,000) and Roxanna Community Park District \$15,000. (their match \$3,103) Alton project funds a Vermicular Food waste Recycling Project, Glen Carbon will remove and replace four (4) non compliant ADA sidewalk ramps along Meridian Road, assistance with the Holiday Shores Association and Moro for funding reduction of silt within their lake, and Roxana Community Park District will use money for water and energy efficiency upgrades in two (2) Roxana Park Buildings.

Madison County Criminal Justice System (MADCO CJS)

Felonies Increased from 2012 to 2017

Felony figures from 2012 to 2017 reveal a disturbing trend. Felonies in 2012 totaled 2,639 vs. 3,914 in 2017 for a sixty nine percent (69%) increase. The judiciary, Public Defender's Office, States Attorney's Office, and Sheriff's Department report working very hard.

Factors Impacting Jail Census Increases

Jail figures remain alarming. The jail built for 312 inmates sometimes holds as many as 361. Sheriff Lakin wisely compared the jail to 'a basin collecting offenders with a spigot and drain the Sheriff's Department doesn't control.' Based on conversations with the Sheriff and his staff the following factors appear to impact the increase in our jail population. (1) Changes in law which makes some crimes previously considered misdemeanors felonies. Felons can't be as easily returned to the community as those charged with misdemeanors can. (2) Inmates 'gaming the system' seeking to do time in the county rather than state facilities by switching defenders. (3) Defense Attorneys seeking to slow the time to trial thus hoping to reduce sentences through plea bargaining. (3) The heroin epidemic continues. (4) Incarceration of inmates with psychiatric problems which could be housed elsewhere. (5) St. Louis people with criminal life styles cross the river and prey on Madison County residents. (6) A lack of personnel in the Public Defender's or States Attorney's Office to handle cases to move them more rapidly through the court system.

Public Defender's Office Preliminary Budget

Looking ahead new state laws will increase the CJS workload. For example, the new Illinois Bail Reform Act takes effect. Due to this state mandate, the Public Defender will

be automatically appointed and now must argue bail. Initial appearances will be held 6 or 7 days a week. Inmates not making bail in 7 days will have a mandatory court appearance. None of this must now occur. The office will need to begin working 6 to 7 days a week. Mr. Rekowski, Public Defender asks for an increase of thirteen percent (13%) to hire two (2) new attorneys and to provide his investigator a \$5,000 raise. The total increase totals one hundred and sixty thousand dollars (\$160,000). Unfunded State of Illinois mandates continue to impact local government.

Sheriff's Office Preliminary Budget

Sheriff John Lakin cites the increased jail population as the reason for desiring an increase in his budget by twenty percent (20%). His FY 2018 proposed budget includes additional personnel; (a) one (1) Booking Clerk, (b) four additional (4) Deputies, and, (c) eight (8) Jailers. No additional information was available at the time I met with the Sheriff and his staff.

State's Attorney's Preliminary Budget

State's Attorney Tom Gibbons office employs thirty seven (37) full time and part time State's Attorneys. In addition to prosecuting felonies his office provides legal assistance to county departments, elected officials, enforces child support obligations,, handles misdemeanors and traffic matters, conduct over 800 interviews for the Child Advocacy Center, assists with Domestic Violence Accountability Court, provides an on call State's Attorney to local law enforcement, and responds day or night to major case squad investigations. Mr. Gibbons noted; "experienced and competent attorneys are hard to keep in the Prosecutor's Office. The loss of skilled attorneys is devastating to holding offenders accountable. Over the last several years, we have seen the departure of several senior and mid-level attorneys who left the office for substantially higher salaries." He noted Madison County also pays entry level attorneys many thousands less than competing jurisdictions. Therefore, the State's Attorney desires to increase his budget ten (10%) to raise salaries. In addition, he desires funding to replace aging computers and server outside of warranty. The total increase comes to two hundred seventy thousand four hundred and two dollars. (\$270,402)

Conclusion

Looking at the competing needs of the MADCO CJS and state unfunded mandated programs the county must develop a hierarchy of priorities and make decisions concerning spending. Initiatives to move offenders more quickly through the jail might reduce food, medical, and overtime costs.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip W. Chapman

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