



HENDRICKS COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER BOARD

MINUTES OF THE JULY 20, 2017 MEETING

**Hendricks County Government Center
Commissioners' Meeting Room
355 S. Washington Street
Danville, IN 46122**

CALL TO ORDER

The Public Defender Board met at 9:00 AM on Thursday, July 20, 2017 in the Commissioners' Meeting Room at the Hendricks County Government Center, with the following in attendance:

David Coleman	Hendricks County Public Defender Board, President
David Lawson	Hendricks County Public Defender Board, Member
R. Todd McCormack	Hendricks County Public Defender Board, Member
Jeremy P. Gooch	Hendricks County Chief Public Defender
Mila M. Larose	Hendricks County Administration & Public Affairs

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

President David Coleman opened the meeting with a quorum of three members in attendance and presented the minutes of the April 20, 2017 meeting of the Public Defender Board. David Lawson moved to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2017 meeting of the Public Defender Board as amended. Todd McCormack seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously 3-0-0.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER

David Lawson moved to confirm the acknowledgment of the appointment of Jeremy Gooch as the Hendricks County Chief Public Defender. Todd McCormack seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously 3-0-0.

PROGRESS UPDATE BY THE CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER

Jeremy Gooch presented a PowerPoint progress update to the Board, which included the proposed Public Defender Needs Assessment that complies with the Indiana Public Defender Commission to qualify the County for reimbursements, the proposed 2018 Budget of \$1,600,000.00, and the proposed Public Defender Contracts.

Jeremy Gooch advised he is developing a form establishing some criteria to assist with qualifying a defendant for Indigent Counsel. The defendant would be provided the form to complete under oath requesting Indigent Counsel, putting accountability onto the person requesting Indigent Counsel, and cutting down on the number of unqualified people being appointed.

Jeremy Gooch advised he is submitting reimbursable items to the Indiana Public Defender Commission, requesting special consideration for reimbursement, due to when Jeremy Gooch became the Chief Public Defender.

Todd McCormack stated the number of people being appointed a Public Defender drives the number of needed Public Defenders, increasing costs to the County. Todd McCormack stated by providing the Judges and Magistrates with quality information regarding the financial means of the defendant requesting Indigent Counsel, an informed decision regarding the defendant's eligibility could be made, hopefully reducing the number of unqualified people being appointed. Todd McCormack reported the Probation Department has received a grant and plans to use the funds to hire an employee who will meet with defendants to complete a Risk Assessment that will be used to establish bond amounts based on their financial means. Todd McCormack noted it may be possible to have this person also gather financial information to assist the Judges and Magistrates with the appointment of Indigent Counsel.

President David Coleman expressed concerns that this process will slow down the court procedure, if Indigent Counsel is not appointed during the initial hearing. Todd McCormack advised that the plan is to have the assessments completed and available to the Judges and Magistrates prior to their initial hearing, to avoid slowing down the court procedure.

Jeremy Gooch stated Mila Larose found a study conducted by Marion County in 2013, analyzing the determining factors used to qualify a defendant for Indigent Counsel on three levels; the first level they automatically qualified if they received certain benefits/assistance and the second and third levels each had different variables factored in for qualification. Jeremy Gooch plans to utilize this information to assist him with developing the form the defendant will fill out, under perjury, to determine their eligibility for Indigent Counsel.

David Lawson inquired if Jeremy Gooch had reached out to one of the Chief Public Defender applicants, Dorie Maryan, in regards to signing one of the Public Defender Contracts. Jeremy Gooch advised he attempted to visit Dorie Maryan's Indianapolis office, but discovered it is a virtual office and not a physical office, and plans to keep reaching out to her.

David Lawson inquired if the current Public Defender Contract holders have shown interest in the new Public Defender Contracts being offered. Jeremy Gooch confirmed the current Public Defenders are interested in continuing their contracts with the County and negotiations are ongoing with them and new prospects. Jeremy Gooch stated he has approximately twelve to thirteen attorneys committed to signing a Public Defender Contract.

Jeremy Gooch stated that under the Indiana Public Defender Commission standards, if his office has a clerical person and an investigator in place, he can increase the caseload of a few felony Public Defenders because they would be able to utilize those two staff members to assist them. This would save approximately two to three Public Defender Contracts for felony cases. Jeremy Gooch stated his goal is to have all cases appointed to the Chief Public Defender's Office; the clerical staff would appoint a Public Defender to each case, enter the appearance, and then scan the electronic case file to the appointed Public Defender.

David Lawson stated this process would enhance the Public Defender System and the clerical position for the Chief Public Defender's Office is an essential person to the system. David Lawson stated he hopes the Commissioners and Council will see the importance of this clerical person to the new process being implemented by the County, and will approve Jeremy Gooch's request.


DISCUSSION OF FUTURE MEETINGS


It was the consensus to hold the next Public Defender Board Meeting on Thursday, October 19, 2017 at 9:00 AM; unless changed by the Chief Public Defender.

ADJOURN

Todd McCormack moved to adjourn the Public Defender Board meeting at 9:47 AM on Thursday, July 20, 2017. David Lawson seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously 3-0-0.


David Coleman, President


David Lawson


R. Todd McCormack