

September 20, 2011

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT

A Public Safety Committee meeting was held on Thursday, September 20, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. in the Quorum Court Room, County Administration Building, Third Floor, 215 East Central, Bentonville, Arkansas

Committee Members Present: Winscott, King, Curry, Carr
Absent: Sandlin

Others Present: County Judge Bob Clinard, Circuit Judge Robin Green, Sheriff Keith Ferguson, JP Hawkins, County Attorney George Spence, Comptroller Richard McComas, Administrator of General Service Elizabeth Bowen, Administrator of Public Safety Marshal Watson. Information Systems Director Sidney Reynolds

Media: Tom Sissom

JP Winscott called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Public Comments

None

Discussion: Benton County Court House – Security Plan – County Judge Bob Clinard

County Judge Bob Clinard stated that the county received a \$15,000. grant for the new security cameras and that \$40,000 had been appropriated to install new security cameras in the court house. He stated that the Benton County Courthouse Security Committee had recommended and approved that the U.S. Marshall Service do a security review of the courthouse to improve court house security. County Judge Bob Clinard stated that Sheriff Ferguson reports that our courthouse is as secure as any courthouse in the State of Arkansas.

County Judge Bob Clinard stated that with the concerns for the Benton County Courthouse and the judges and citizens safety, that the U.S. Marshall Service study gave the following recommendations to improve the security in the courthouse: 1) Limit the number of weapons coming into the facility; except for law enforcement; 2) Control public access and limit the number of exterior access points; 3) Keys for judges, department heads or personal identification numbers (PIN) entry devices; 4) Increase exterior lighting; 5) Increase the number of security officers; 6) Install additional cameras; 7) Increase security at the main south entrance; 8) Create a Central Control room for camera feeds, and monitoring the door locks; 9) Employee identification key cards or key fob entry; 10) Additional security in the judges quarters.

JP Curry stated due to the recent tragedy in Van Buren; they now have just one entrance into their courthouse, and would that be an option for Benton County. County Judge Bob Clinard stated that the courthouse is not designed for the use of one entrance, but that changes to the courthouse entrance doors will be made to make it more secure with limited access, and security cameras.

Sheriff Keith Ferguson stated Benton County's courthouse security already meets or exceeds the levels found in courthouses and other facilities across the county, and that some of the recommendations addressed have already been initiated. He added that having a Central Control room would be a very good idea, and one of the biggest steps the county could take. He stated we bring 30-40 prisoners at a time into this courthouse two times a week, and that we are vulnerable.

Presentation: County Emergency Medical Services Study by Administrator of Public Safety – Marshal Watson

Administrator of Public Safety Marshal Watson presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Emergency Medical Services Operational Study of Unincorporated Benton County, Arkansas. He stated that currently there are eight (8) Emergency Medical Service Districts through out Benton County; Rogers, Bentonville, Gravette, Springdale, Siloam Springs, Pea Ridge, Bella Vista and the NEBCO (VAS) area. He added that Benton County does not provide a subsidy or other cost reimbursement to these municipalities for their services. He stated that calls for service in the unincorporated areas of Benton County made up about 10% of the calls in the county in 2010, and that the cost of those calls was estimated at \$1.8 million and that in 2011 the county reimbursed the Emergency Medical Services providers \$100,000. He stated that he plans to increase the amount to be reimbursed to \$150,000 in his 2012 budget request, and even that is just a token payment. He stated that some of the different service solutions are; 1) Contractual services with existing providers; 2) County based EMS Service; 3) Outsource to for-profit service; 4) Outsource for non-profit.

He stated that currently NEBCO collects a fee that provides the revenue to partially support the EMS service.

He stated that an Emergency Medical Service District could be established for the entire unincorporated area of Benton County, or a county-wide millage for support of the Emergency Medical Services.

Marshal Watson stated that The Ludwig Group, LLC of Hillsboro, Missouri has presented a proposal to do an Emergency Medical Service (EMS) assessment of Benton County for \$29,900. He stated that Gary Ludwig, Managing Director, of the Ludwig Group is a nationally recognized Fire and EMS expert, and currently is the Deputy Fire Chief for the Memphis Fire Department. He stated that Ludwig Group is interested in assisting Benton County by conducting an operational evaluation of the current EMS system and a strategic plan if it is determined that another delivery model could serve the needs of the county better. He added that there are a lot of issues to be addressed and that the current providers would like assistance.

Marshal Watson recommended that the county hire the Ludwig Group, LLC of Hillsboro, Missouri, to do an EMS assessment for the county. He added that the Ludwig Group, LLC proposes that they can do the study in 15 weeks and the study will provide a five-year plan for the court to consider.

Lengthy discussion was held on the Ludwig Group, LLC proposal for the EMS assessment of Benton County and the cost of the services provided to the county.

JP Carr made motion to forward a ordinance request for \$29,900 for a Emergency Medical Services assessment by The Ludwig Group, LLC to the October 4, 2011 Finance Committee agenda, seconded by JP Curry.

Motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.

Other Business

None

After motion and second the meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.