

General Services Committee
May 14, 2013
Minutes

Members Present: Committee Chairman Philip Reed, Legislators Michael Behling, Robert Ferris, Scott Gray, Jennie Adsit, Anthony Doldo, Vice Chairman Michael Docteur

Others Present: Legislators Robert Thomas, Allen Drake, Michael Montigelli, John Peck, County Administrator Robert Hagemann, Deputy Administrator Michael Kaskan, County Attorney David Paulsen, Probation Director Edward Brown, Treasurer Accountant Anne Converse, Watertown Daily Times Reporter Daniel Flatley, WWNYS7 Reporter Candace Dunkley, Senior Typist Torri Richmire

Chairman Reed called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and offered privilege of the floor. The minutes of the April meeting were approved without objection or correction.

Edward Brown, Probation Director, addressed the Committee regarding arming probation officers. He thanked Legislators, Administration, County Attorney, Insurance and Human Resources for their extensive time and effort in preparing the policy and procedures manual. He stated that the only purpose for this request is to maximize the safety of the Probation Officers, it will not affect the way they currently do business in any way all it does is give them one more tool to protect themselves if it is ever needed.

Mr. Brown stated that the law authorizes Probation Officers (PO) to carry hand guns with the Directors approval. PO would be required to take the same 47 hour course as is required by Police Officers with annual re-certification required by law.

Thirty-one other counties currently allow PO to carry hand guns with three others in the process. He stated that his department currently has five Glocks that were purchased a few years back for training purposes and he will be requesting another 13 guns to arm those PO that would like to carry. Currently his department of 31 has two firearm instructors on staff both being armorers and a defensive tactic instructor.

He advised that demographics have changed and it is more dangerous than in the 1970's. He stated that home visits are required by New York State and most are done solo, including evenings and weekends. Fifty percent of his staff currently have pistol permits to carry as a private citizen. All but one owns a 40 caliber Glock which is the weapon they are familiar with and will be carrying.

Mr. Brown addressed the issues that may hinder the acceptance of PO carrying weapons and his response to each:

- Safety - 40 caliber Glock has a three part safe action trigger, firing pin safety and drop safety all preventing inadvertent firing.

- Liability - PO carrying a weapon must successfully complete all training and annual updates and must pass the psychological exam.
- Firearm Security - Required to secure weapon on hip covered by a jacket or sweater and when not in use firearms must be secured in a designated area.
- Psychological Exams - Evaluations will be administered to every PO who carries a weapon.
- Union Issues - CSEA has sent a letter in support of PO carrying weapons.
- Schools - He has received letters from Carthage Central High School and Watertown High School stating that they grant permission for PO to possess a firearm pursuant to their duties while in or upon any building, grounds or school bus of the district.
- Financial Impact - Additional 13 guns \$450 each, night sites \$75 each, ammunition \$300, magazine pouchs, holsters and lockers \$1,000 per officer, additional insurance \$300 per year and psychological test \$300 each.

In response to a question from Legislator Gray, Mr. Brown stated that he does not make it mandatory to carry a weapon because employees were not hired with that expectation and he doesn't think it would be fair to require it. Those that choose not to participate sign a declination.

Legislator Doldo stated that he would like to see this move through the process as he believes that the PO has every right to carry a weapon to protect themselves.

Legislator Ferris stated that he is in favor of the proposal.

In response to questions from Legislators, Mr. Brown advised that they are seeing more criminals arrested for violent crimes and that employees would not be required to get a pistol permit, it would be carried under their PO badge.

Chairman Reed stated that he appreciates the Directors professionalism in wanting the blessing of this board before implementing the use of firearms.

Legislator Behling voiced his support of moving this forward sooner than later.

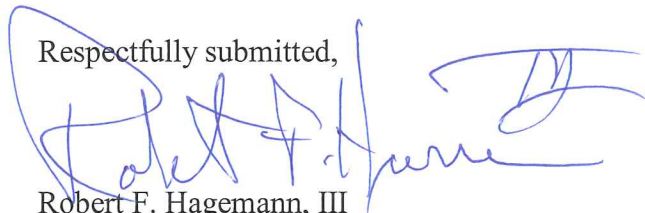
Mr. Hagemann advised that the involvement the Board will have is not on the policies but on the budgetary aspects which will amount to \$20,000 - \$22,000 if all eighteen who have shown interest in carrying a weapon are supplied. He also stated that the next step would be to prepare a memorandum of understanding with the Civil Service Employees Association but that is not necessary since Mr. Brown has already received a letter of support from them so they are able to proceed.

A motion was duly made by Legislator Behling and seconded by Legislator Ferris for preparation of a resolution allowing and supplying probation officers to carry a firearm to be brought before the Finance and Rules Committee. Mr. Hagemann advised that this has been a significant undertaking by many people to bring this to fruition and make it as tight as possible while still allowing some flexibility to manage the program. There being no further discussion, there was a consensus of the Committee to move forward with a resolution as discussed.

Mr. Brown thanked everyone for their support and stated that this is a big step and long overdue. Chairman Reed stated that the monitoring done by the Probation Department has saved the county millions of dollars and he wants to make sure that they have the tools to do their job.

There being no further business, on a motion by Legislator Doldo seconded by Legislator Ferris and unanimously carried, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert F. Hagemann, III
Clerk of the Board