



MARATHON COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 3, 2021, at 1:30 pm
WebEx/Courthouse Assembly Room, (B105), Courthouse, 500 Forest St., Wausau

Members	Present/Web-Phone	Absent
Chair Matt Bootz	X	
Vice Chair Jennifer Bizzotto	W	
Brent Jacobson	W	
Bruce Lamont		Excused
Jean Maszk	W	
Allen Opall	X	
Vacant		

Staff and Supervisors Present: Kurt Gibbs, Lance Leonhard, Michael Puerner, Theresa Wetzsteon, Preston Vande Voort, Laurie Miskimins, Chris Dickinson, John Robinson, Sheriff's Office staff and other members of the public.

WebEx/Phone: Craig McEwen and Kim Trueblood.

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bootz at 1:30 p.m.

2. Public Comment (15 Minutes)

Judy Pagyrzinski, 226690 Blue Jay Lane, Ringle WI, President of the Rural Riders ATV Club offered comments in support of opening more county roads to ATV/UTV use.

Kevin Clint, 126725 STH 153, Stratford, WI offered comments in support of opening more county roads and increasing hours of operation to ATV/UTV use.

3. **MOTION BY MASZK; SECOND BY OPALL TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 7, 2021, PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING. MOTION CARRIED.**

4. Policy Issues Discussion and Potential Committee Determination:

A. Awards Presentation of Sheriff's Office Personnel by Sheriff Parks

- 1) Dennis Blaser was awarded the Sheriff's Commendation for his hard work and determination to solve a 2006 homicide case which resulted in a recent conviction.

Sheriff Parks also commended District Attorney Theresa Wetzsteon for prosecuting the case.

- 2) Mark Jacobson was awarded the Sheriff's Life Saving Medal for his swift action on saving an inmate's life who was trying to do self-harm.

- 3) Mark Wagers and Kyle McMullen received the Sheriff's Medal of Honor and;

- 4) Nathan Olig was awarded Sheriff Valor Medal of Honor

These three officers responded to an incident at a hotel in Rib Mountain and negotiated eight hours with an individual who was armed with a handgun and acting in a threatening manner. The incident resulted in these officers needing to perform lifesaving measures and saved this individual's life.

5. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution:

- A. Consideration of Proposed Amendments to Section 7.125 of the Marathon County Code Relating to the Designation of ATV/UTV Routes and Trails and Regulation of ATV/UTV Operations within Marathon County

Discussion:

At the last county board meeting, it was decided to refer this item to the Public Safety Committee to hear concerns from Sheriff Parks. Parks indicated discussions were had with the Traffic Safety Commission on road locations, terrains, speed limits and daily vehicle rates. They recommended opening many roads in Marathon County based on these assessments.

Other discussion points:

- Prefer only hours of daylight and opposed to opening heavily traveled roads

- Lincoln County opened some of their roads but then closed some sections due to high volume traffic on highways. Marathon County is considering opening sections in these locations.
- Use in northern Wisconsin are mostly off-road trail systems. Marathon County's use, would be on well-traveled roads and highways with a minimal trail system in place
- Enforcement concerns: Ability to set different speed limits for ATV/UTV and motor vehicles; the potential increase in call volume for accidents due to additional traffic. Sheriff Parks indicated the department is already short staffed with a minimum number of patrol cars on duty. They are already prioritizing calls.
- Currently, there are two designated recreational deputies for enforcement and patrol. One position is provided by grant funding through the WI DNR.
- Operations during hours of darkness is concerning
- Concerns with semi and dump trucks traveling on HWY N
- Supervisor Maszk supports adding safety measures into our ordinance, including a requirement of reflective tape, however, Corporation Counsel Michael Puerner pointed out state statute would supersede county ordinance
- Supervisors made comments about pursuing safety measures voluntarily promoted through ATV/UTV Clubs
- State legislators currently working on a speed limit bill; would like to wait for the outcome before proceeding
- ATV/UTV's cannot ride on the ditch and need to stay on the blacktop
- Supervisor Dickinson provided detailed ATV/UTV regulations.
- Chair Bootz expressed concerns with interfering with work of other standing committees.

Follow Up:

The committee recommends the Infrastructure Committee consider Sheriff Park's concerns on vehicle count and truck traffic on highways, hours of operation, connecting roads to other counties who have their roads closed, and keeping local control to townships.

6. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports

A. Update From Sheriff's Office Relative to Retention and Recruitment

Discussion:

Administrator Leonhard gave background relative to the current labor market and challenges he sees across the organization on retaining and attracting top talent for all positions. Chief Deputy Chad Billeb provided the committee with some examples of experiencing challenges in the Sheriff's Department specifically in the 911 call center and the jail.

Billeb understands administration would like to move forward on a full compensation study but fears it may take too long. He encouraged the committee to consider creative ways on how to retain good employees. He indicated that Shawano County gave out raises across the board to keep staff, and Manitowoc County will give raises through 2024 using ARPA dollars.

Billeb further explained that employees want more consistency and to know expectations of where they would be at certain points in their career. The Pay for Performance program isn't a future indicator for a long-term plan. He suggests during the compensation study we evaluate whether there is a way to supplement the Pay for Performance program focusing on exploring unique opportunities to retain staff.

Supervisor Opall pointed out 911 dispatchers should be classified as the first line of first responders. He suggests beginning conversations to address the pay scale to keep these people with Marathon County.

Administrator Leonhard implied if the 2022 Budget is approved, a Compensation Study RFP would be released in November.

Follow Up:

Not indicated.

B. Update from Sheriff's Office on Implementation of Body Cameras

Discussion:

Chief Deputy Chad Billeb reported body cameras are now in operation for all uniformed deputies, the detective bureau, the special investigations unit, and on all patrol cars. Next week the jail will go live with their cameras. The annual contract including but not limited to storing unlimited data, costs \$163,000. The District Attorney's office identified transcription challenges and how collecting data will require extra work hours. Transcription software will need to be explored to help create efficiencies to speed up the work.

Follow Up:

Data challenges will be discussed further at a future Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee.

C. Intergovernmental Agreement – Assignment of Addressing in Villages

Discussion:

Preston Vande Voort, Marathon County's GIS Specialist and Addressing Coordinator, explained the process of providing towns with addresses, and would like to implement an intergovernmental agreement to the same for villages.

Follow Up:

A draft Intergovernmental agreement will be presented to this committee soon.

7. Next Meeting Time, Location, Announcements and Agenda Items:

A. Committee members are asked to bring ideas for future discussion

B. Next meeting: **Wednesday, December 1, 2021, at 1:30 pm**

8. MOTION BY MASZK; SECOND BY OPALTO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 3:02 P.M. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted by,

Toshia Ranallo

[Click here to view the recording of the meeting.](#)