

LA CROSSE COUNTY NOTICE OF MEETING

COMMITTEE OR BOARD: **JUDICIARY AND LAW COMMITTEE**
DATE OF MEETING: **TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2023**
MEETING PLACE: **ROOM 1107 – ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER**
212 6TH STREET N, LA CROSSE, WI 54601
[Click here to join the meeting](#)
TIME OF MEETING: **3:30 P.M.**
PURPOSE OF MEETING: **MONTHLY MEETING**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Public Comment **Please see below on how to sign up for making public comment**
3. Approve Committee Minutes of March 7, 2023
4. Consent Agenda (informational):
 - a. [CJMC – March 15, 2023](#)
5. Conference/Meeting Report
6. Study Committee on Policing – Tara Johnson
7. Mediation and Family Court Services Report – Lisa Stablier
8. Child Support Services Update – Jill Sherry
9. Family Court Commissioner’s Annual Report – Elizabeth Wright
10. Resolution Re: Authorization to Receive 2023 Safe Communities Grant
11. Next Committee Meeting: May 9, 2023
12. Future Agenda Items
13. Adjournment

NEWS MEDIA

La Crosse Tribune
Other Media

DEPARTMENTS/STAFF

County Board Chair
County Administrator
County Clerk
Facilities
Emails:
Tammy Pedretti
Elizabeth Wright
John Siegel
Tim Gruenke
David Steinberg

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Margaret Larson, Chair
Dawn Wacek, Vice Chair
Robert Abraham
Dillon Mader
David Pierce

OTHERS

Emails:
Ryan Westpfahl
Bryan Jostad

MEMBERS: If unable to attend, call the County Clerk’s Office at 785-9581.

****PUBLIC COMMENT:** Individuals may make a public comment in person. For individuals intending on making a virtual public comment, **please register at least 24-hours** in advance by emailing publiccomment@lacrossecounty.org or leave a message at 785-9700. Please include your name and email address you will be using to connect with the committee, along with the name of the committee you would like to provide a public comment.

The Committee may receive information from the public, but the Committee reserves the right to limit the time that the public may comment and the degree to which members of the public may participate in the meeting.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITY: If you need accommodation to attend this meeting, please contact the County Clerk’s Office at (608)785-9581 as soon as possible.

DATE NOTICE FAXED/MAILED/POSTED: April 6, 2023

**This meeting may be recorded, and any such recording is subject to
Disclosure under the Wisconsin Open Records Law**

JUDICIARY AND LAW COMMITTEE
Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 3:30 p.m.
Administrative Center Room 1107

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Chair Margaret Larson, Dawn Wacek, Dillon Mader, David Pierce
MEMBERS EXCUSED:	Robert Abraham
MEMBERS ABSENT:	

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Margaret Larson called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 10, 2023 JUDICIARY AND LAW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MOTION by David Pierce/Dawn Wacek to approve the January 10, 2023 minutes of the Judiciary and Law Committee. **Motion carried with one excused – Robert Abraham.**

CONSENT AGENDA

- a. **CJMC – JANUARY 18, 2023**
- b. **CJMC – FEBRUARY 15, 2023**

MOTION by Dawn Wacek/Dillon Mader to approve the January 18, 2023 and February 15, 2023 minutes of the Criminal Justice Management Council. **Motion carried with one excused – Robert Abraham.**

CONFERENCE/MEETING REPORT

Dillon Mader reports he received the ACLU Report on jail voting from a La Crosse County citizen involved in the League of Women Voters. The report outlines how jails are implementing or not implementing procedures regarding people eligible to vote who are currently in jail. The report highlights La Crosse County Jail as a leader with implementing this procedure for inmates eligible to vote.

ATV/UTV SAFETY PRESENTATION – DNR WARDEN MATT GROPP

The presentation is to be rescheduled to a later date.

SECURUS UPDATE – JANE KLEKAMP

Jane Klekamp shared that the Sheriff's Office, finance staff and administration have reviewed the current Securus contract for recommendations to the committee to implement two free 15-minute phone calls each day. The Sheriff's Office is working with Securus for implementation as soon as possible. La Crosse County receives a commission on phone calls made by individuals incarcerated in the jail. Staff asked for some time to better understand the budget impact of declining the commission. The committee indicated it was in agreement but would like a report in July on the impact of the commission from phone calls. Staff will review the impact of the commission on the budget, along with providing headphones to those that are incarcerated free of charge. The committee indicated they are interested in all commissions to be waived.

Discussion ensued.

CJMC RESOLUTION RE: STEPPING UP INITIATIVE TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES IN JAILS

MOTION by Dawn Wacek/David Pierce to approve the resolution. **Resolution was adopted with one excused – Robert Abraham.**

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

- April 11, 2023, at 3:30 p.m.

SUGGESTED ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS – None.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, **MOTION** by Dillon Mader/David Pierce to adjourn at 4:36 p.m. **Motion carried with one excused – Robert Abraham.**

Disclaimer: The above minutes may be approved, amended, or corrected at the next committee meeting. Lisa Bruring, Recorder

CRIMINAL JUSTICE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Wednesday February 15, 2023
Law Enforcement Center Room 1615

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Tim Gruenke, Araysa Simpson, Michael Sersch, John Siegal, Jason Witt, Jenna Theler, Joe Packard, Tina Tryggestad, Suthakaran Veerasamy, Ramona Gonzalez, Margaret Larson, Monica Kruse
MEMBERS EXCUSED:	Vincent Loera, Jayne Rifenberg, Scott Horne, Dawn Wacek, Scott Alo, Troy Harcey, Heidi Allred, Kristina Fore, Andrew Alvaro-Rasmussen
OTHERS PRESENT:	Tonya Van Tol, Peter Nelson, Rachel Krueger, Emily Ruud

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Tim Gruenke called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

APPROVAL OF Fe 18, 2023 MINUTES OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

MOTION by ((Gonzalez/Tryggestad)) to approve the February 15, 2023 minutes of the Criminal Justice Management Council.

Motion carried unanimously: Loera, Rifenberg, Horne, Wacek, Alo, Harcey, Allred, Fore, Alvaro-Rasmussen excused

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

Presentation: La Crosse County Racial Equity Project Report- Orleny Rojas Center for Effective Public Policy: Orleny Rojas presented an overview of data that was collected and disaggregated to make determinations whether there are populations in La Crosse County who are experiencing racial disparities in their interactions within the criminal justice system. A target population analysis was conducted, and the final report was presented to the group. The data utilized for the report included information from: the La Crosse County Cumulative Disadvantage presentation that was presented to the CJMC in 2018, La Crosse County arrest data 2018-2021, drug arrest data from 2014-2017, and Justice Support Services program data. Utilizing a data reporting method known as Relative Rate Indices (RRI) CCEP found that La Crosse County has a disparity gap with the Black population as they were 10 times more likely than white individuals to be arrest in 2021. The arrest data indicates that there is not racial disparity with the Asian population as the arrest rate with this population is nearly identical to the white population. The following recommendations were made by CEPP:

- Identify partnership opportunities between criminal justice stakeholders to increase the number of Black people in pre and post charge diversion programs
- Increase the proportion of Black people in the JSS pretrial program by identifying barriers to access
- Gather additional data on pretrial, bond, and detention rates based on race
- Develop strategies that increase the referral of Black people to drug court and other treatment court programs

AGENCY UPDATES: None

INFORMATIONAL / MISC: The State of Wisconsin Chief Justice is holding Mental Health Summit in April. Representatives from Human Services, Law Enforcement, DAs office, and the circuit court will attend.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: None

ADJOURN: There being no further business Chair Gruenke adjourned the meeting at 6:31 p.m.

Disclaimer: The above minutes may be approved, amended, or corrected at the next committee meeting.

Recorded by Tonya Van Tol



**J & L Committee Meeting
4/11/23 at 3:30 p.m.
Child Support Agency Updates**

- We are staffed at 11 employees at this time. Breakdown is below. 1 open Administrative Associate position to fill-currently in process:
 - 8 Caseworkers
 - 1 Administrative Associate
 - 1 Supervisor
 - 1 Director
- In June, 2022 we resumed contempt court on Tuesdays in person. We have a process in place for determining which cases are appropriate to proceed on. Thursday establishment cases and paternities are heard via Zoom and that is working well.
- In September, 2022 we began texting reminders for court appearances and payment reminders as a communication tool. Participants see this as a helpful tool.
- In January, 2023 Jill Sherry, Director, was voted in and became a WCSEA Board Member-2 year term.
- We continue to work with our partners including Workforce Connections to assist participants with employment resources.
- From a performance standpoint, we held steady throughout the pandemic with no significant changes to % numbers to report.
- March 2023 #'s:
 - Court order establishment: 91.19%
 - Current Child Support: 74.33%
 - Paternity Establishment: 96.50%
 - Arrears Collection Rate: 65.70%
- Cash payments received to date: \$55,000.00. Last year was \$34,000.00 at this time.
- Federal Performance Incentive & total funding award amounts:
 - FFY20 for CY2022-\$185,959.00 TOTAL **\$671,000.00** (This includes additional 1 time funding received last year only (\$35,551.00))
 - FFY21 for CY2023-\$189,989.00 TOTAL **\$646,495.00**
- Governor Evers' proposed 2023-25 State Budget
 - Governor Evers put the Wisconsin Child Support Enforcement Association's ask in his budget which would increase state GPR funding

for child support by \$5 million per year, which would draw down \$9.7 million in federal matching funds each year.

- The bill has now been referred to the Joint Finance Committee and public hearings are set for April.
- The La Crosse County board recently passed a resolution in support of this ask along with 33 other counties and it is also supported by the Wisconsin Counties Association.
- If the full request of \$5 million amount was granted, La Crosse County preliminary funding would be approximately \$850,841 for CY24. No additional funding amount would be \$640,938.00.
- Jill Sherry will be attending WCA day at the Capitol tomorrow 4/12/23 to meet with Legislators to inform them about our additional funding request.

FAMILY COURT COMMISSIONER'S ANNUAL REPORT – APRIL 2023

This report presents information on the work of the Family Court Commissioners Office for 2022.

Overview of Family Court:

The Family Court Commissioner (“FCC”) presides over the Family Court and handles a wide variety of cases:

- Divorce;
- Paternity Actions (unmarried parents);
- Child Support/Maintenance cases involving married people living apart who haven’t filed for divorce; and
- Harassment and Domestic Abuse Injunctions.

Approximately 550 to 600 new Family Court cases are filed annually. Although these numbers may not seem substantial for a 12-month period, they join the collective of cases from previous years. Family Court actions have a long arc. Families turn to the court when they’re unable to resolve their disputes. The most common disagreements involve custody, placement and child support. These matters remain active until the youngest child graduates from high school. Other family court issues linger after the children emancipate (maintenance modification/arrears and child support arrears). Divorced couples without children often need the assistance of the Family Court after the final hearing. For example, a marital residence never got refinanced or an assigned debt wasn’t paid.

The Family Court maintains five-set calendars weekly. It hears injunctions twice a week, child support agency matters twice a week, and default divorces every Friday morning. Additionally, attorneys and/or litigants appear on the general calendar daily. The general calendar allows individual cases to be heard. Most of these hearings last one hour. The FCC hears nearly 1,000 individual cases each year. In short, the Family Court is always busy.

Pro se Litigants (self represented/no attorney): More litigants are proceeding without counsel. Some of these individuals are indigent and can’t afford an attorney. However, many have the means to hire counsel but choose not to do so. Some of these litigants have marital estates in excess of a million dollars. Self represented litigants have had a significant impact on courtroom and office time for a number of reasons:

- File more motions than those with counsel;
- File incorrect motion for relief sought;
- Don’t file proper documentation (no evidence provided);
- Want hearing even after behavior corrected (bill paid/additional placement given);
- Don’t understand due process and requirement of timely service of process;
- FCC prepares written orders whereas attorney(s) would prepare if on case; and
- Divorce documents are often incomplete and cause concerns related to domestic violence and/or unequal bargaining power given the agreed property division.

Court Sessions by Zoom, In-Person and Hybrid: We provide access to the Courts in a variety of ways. Zoom has been particularly beneficial for non-evidentiary hearings. This virtual option has allowed many to attend court who might not have otherwise due to lack of child care, transportation, or the inability to take a full or half day off from work.

Court Bench Remodel: In 2022, the bench in the Family Court Hearing Room was remodeled to provide improved form and function. The prior bench was a transplant from the old courthouse (circa pre-1997). The new bench upgraded the courtroom's professional appearance, which, in turn, reinforces the seriousness and importance of family court orders. Additionally, the new bench provides more space to accommodate all the necessary equipment (computers, monitors, keyboards, videoconferencing tablet, and other items) that were not commonplace in the mid-1990's or prior. The increased workspace also improves the commissioners' experience during hearings as there is now adequate room for multiple documents/court files and surface space for notetaking. This budget item was transformative and continues to be appreciated.

Family Court Commissioner Website: The website is designed to inform litigants about the most common actions and motions addressed in Family Court. The website highlights the value an attorney brings to a legal action but recognizes that self-representation is an increasing trend. The website provides general information from how to schedule a hearing to court room decorum. It offers details about divorce actions as well as the five major issues in family court actions—placement, custody, child support, maintenance, and property division. The website also focuses on post-judgment motions, such as modification of child support, maintenance, custody, and placement. Under this same heading, information is provided about motions to relocate and contempt actions. The website spotlights substantive and procedural information regarding domestic abuse and harassment injunctions. Finally, the “Forms” section was intended, among other things, to assist litigants to better understand and properly complete certain court documentation and to give shared placement parents a practical manner (charts) to reconcile variable costs and uninsured medical expenses.

To find this website, google “La Crosse County Departments,” then click on the “Family Court Commissioner” link. This website is a work-in-progress.

Change in Personnel: We are a two-person department. In December 2022, Sheri Atchison was hired to serve as Family Court Commissioner Judicial Assistant.

WI Association of Family Court Commissioners: This is a statewide organization. In 2022, I served as president. In 2023, I remain on the board as past president of this organization. This Association has conferences twice a year and provides excellent training relevant to Family Court work.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Wright, Family Court Commissioner



RESOLUTION # _____

TO: HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE LA CROSSE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ITEM # _____

BOARD ACTION

Adopted: _____
 For: _____
 Against: _____
 Abstain: _____
 Abs/Excd: _____
 Vote Req: _____
 Other Action: _____

JUDICIARY AND LAW COMMITTEE ACTION

Adopted: _____
 For: _____
 Against: _____
 Abstain: _____
 Abs/Excd: _____

RE: AUTHORIZATION TO RECEIVE 2023 SAFE COMMUNITIES GRANT

WHEREAS, the La Crosse County Sheriff's Office has been awarded \$82,030 through the State of Wisconsin's Department of Administration (DOA); and

WHEREAS, these funds will be allocated to purchase up to 14 new Mobile Audio Video systems and equipment for squad cars; and

WHEREAS, the new Mobile Audio Video systems will sync with the Body Worn Cameras which will help to alleviate any error in non-activation during an emergency situation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the La Crosse County Board hereby accepts the \$82,030 in grant funding from Wisconsin DOA; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Board Chair is authorized to execute any contracts or documents necessary to effectuate the purposes of this resolution, after approval by Corporation Counsel; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Finance Department is authorized to make any necessary and appropriate budget adjustments relating to accepting this additional state funding.

FISCAL NOTE: Total grant award is \$82,030, with no County match required, and the award period ending June 30th, 2023. The operating costs will be tracked under account 100.185.2140-66410.17 within the County financial system and overseen by the Sheriff's Department.

Date: _____

Date: _____

COMMITTEE CHAIR

Co. Admin. _____
 Fin. Director _____
 Corp. Counsel _____
 Board Chair MD
JK
MLK

Reviewed
Only

Recommended
JK

Not
Recommended

Requested By: John Siegel
 Date Requested: April 4, 2023
 Drafted By: Corporation Counsel

RECORDING CLERK

Adopted by the La Crosse County Board this _____ Day of _____, 2023