

Wyoming Court Security Commission

Record of Proceedings

Supreme Court Building, Room 237

Cheyenne, Wyoming

December 5, 2013

I. Call to Order

The Wyoming Court Security Commission public meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m., December 5, 2013, by Chairman Guy Cameron at the Supreme Court Building, Room 237, in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

II. Roll Call and Introductions – Chairman Guy Cameron

In Attendance:

Commission Members:

Director Guy Cameron – Wyoming Office of Homeland Security

Judge Denise Nau – Laramie County Circuit Court

(VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE)

Judge Jeffrey Donnell – Second Judicial District Court, Laramie, WY

(VIA TELECONFERENCE)

Justice William Hill – Wyoming Supreme Court

Jeani Stone – Campbell County Attorney

Lt. Mike Thompson - Casper Police Department

Representative Kendell Kroeker – Wyoming House of Representatives

Commissioner Mike Colling – Converse County Commissioner

Sheriff Skip Hornecker – Fremont County Sheriff

Absent:

Senator Drew Perkins – Wyoming Senate

Ex-Officio Commission Members:

Joann Odendahl – State Court Administrator, Supreme Court

Joe Hartigan – Court Security Officer, Supreme Court

Also Attending:

Joe Moore - United States Marshal
Pete Obermueller – Executive Director, Wyoming County Commissioners Assoc.
Pam Eisenach – Wyoming Office of Homeland Security
Doug Gumm – Wyoming Office of Homeland Security

III. Approval of July 17, 2013 and September 5, 2013 Minutes

Chairman Cameron entertained a motion to approve the Wyoming Court Security Commission Meeting Minutes of July 17, 2013 and September 5, 2013. Sheriff Hornecker made a motion to approve the minutes and the motion was seconded by Judge Donnell. The motion was voted on and carried.

IV. Wyoming Court Security-A Matter of Time Video – Chairman Guy Cameron

Chairman Cameron thanked Chief Justice Kite and to everyone who participated in the development of this court security video. This video addressed threats that are faced in court settings and courtrooms, as well as courthouse buildings. This video has been distributed for review to the governor, governor’s staff, the Wyoming Bar Association and members of the Wyoming Legislature. Chairman Cameron indicated that this court security video will help the legislative efforts during the 2014 Legislative Session.

Joann Odendahl indicated Chief Justice Kite forwarded this court security video to the judicial branch. Joann also indicated a comment received expressed concern that state funds were being used as a lobbying tool. Joann explained that was not the intention of the video. The video was intended for all citizens to understand the concerns of security within courthouses and especially in courtrooms. This video was used as an information tool and not a lobbying tool. The \$2,000 cost for the video was paid from the State Supreme Court budget. The YouTube video link can be found on the State Supreme Court Website.

V. Legislative Overview and Governor Mead’s Budget Message for Courthouse Security – Chairman Guy Cameron

Governor Mead assigned a priority to courthouse security in his budget message for the 2014 Legislative Session:

“Courthouse security has recently become a topic of major concern. It gained urgency when the courthouse in Riverton was shot at and rounds passed through the walls. Each county has dealt with courthouse security differently and each county has unique challenges. There are policies to be considered and details to discuss. I will work with you to develop a plan that improves safety and treats counties equitably. I recommend

\$10 million effective immediately as a place to start. We can continue to work with the court security team and develop a mechanism to assess needs and distribute funds during the session.”

Chairman Cameron reported Judge Donnell and the subcommittee prepared a draft bill to be presented to the Governor’s Office as well as the Joint Appropriations Committee. The highlights of this bill provide supplemental grant funding for counties through an application process submitted by the local court security management teams. The grant funding provides on-going court security staffing, court security equipment, construction, training of local court security teams and emergency court security needs.

Grant funding shall be used to fund counties that meet certain criteria. The grants will not exceed fifty percent of the proposed project costs and the remaining balance will need to come from other sources at the county level or from some other source.

Currently the bill sets the administrative review of the grant applications with the Wyoming Court Security Commission to make a recommendation based on those applications.

Grants shall be used to fund counties with the most need and meet at least two of the following criteria for evaluation purposes:

- Counties in which the total population is below the state median
- Counties in which the property tax revenues are below the state median
- Counties in which the total county population is living below the federal poverty level
- Counties in which there have occurred recent and serious security breaches or issues
- Counties which are assessing their full authorized mill levy
- Counties in which the local court security team has adopted a complete operational plan for court security with commission standards
- Counties which demonstrate a previous financial commitment to court security initiatives

Joann Odendahl, State Court Administrator, reported she attended the Joint Appropriations Committee Meeting in Casper in October. The Joint Appropriation Committee discussed the proposed bill and this bill was passed out of the Joint Appropriations Committee to move forward. The fiscal note has been received and is moving forward as a separate bill. The Joint Appropriation Committee will forward this bill as a committee bill.

VI. Courthouse Violence in 2010-2012 Lessons Learned – Joe Hartigan, Supreme Court Security Officer

The National Center for State Courts prepared the report, “Courthouse Violence in 2010-2012 Lessons Learned.” Representatives from six courthouses – judges, law enforcement officers and court administrators met in Denver, Colorado. These representatives met to share their collective experiences, to identify lessons learned and to offer their hard-earned advice to their counterparts in courthouses throughout the country. As a result of this meeting, a guideline was made to prepare judges and court staff how to react during a courthouse incident. Lessons learned from these incidents are:

Lesson #1: Everything during a violent courthouse incident happens unbelievably fast.

Recommendation: Training, practice and communication.

Lesson #2: It may not be possible to prevent a violent incident, but there may be “indicators” to look for in advance of the incident.

Recommendation: Maintain a heightened awareness, look for indicators and trust your instincts.

Lesson #3: There are obvious needs for certain security measures, and courts need to be proactive in making sure those measures are in place.

Recommendation: Rigorously pursue and obtain the implementation of certain essential security measures.

Lesson #4: These violent incidents have significant impact on court staff and their families.

Recommendation: Pay attention to concerns of staff and their families.

Although it is apparent there is not one simple answer or solution, there are directions that can be taken to improve court security in this country. These directions included: (1) accepting the challenge that doing nothing is not an option; (2) obtaining additional funding to improve staffing and equipment; and (3) coordinating and support court security programs.

Joe Hartigan indicated that all judges and sheriffs in the state, as well as all members of this commission have received a copy of this report.

VII. High Profile Cases – Joann Odendahl, State Court Administrator

Chairman Cameron gave background information regarding the request from Judge Thomas Campbell and the Laramie County Commissioners for assistance securing court security funds for a high-profile case in Laramie County scheduled in February 2014. The grant request in the amount of \$53,824 was approved by the Wyoming Court Security Commission. This is the first request in securing court security funds for a high-profile case that was provided by the Wyoming Legislature in the amount of \$100,000.

Joann Odendahl thanked everyone on the commission for quickly responding to to this request. This request was unanimously approved by this commission. Joann also indicated if approved, the 2015-2016 biennium will replenish this fund up to \$100,000.

VIII. New business

Chairman Cameron thanked everyone for the good beginnings, dedication and momentum of this commission. Please participate in the 2014 legislative session as a voice for court security and the commission.

US Marshal Moore indicated that the US Marshal's Office will be conducting classes on court security at the Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy February 4-10, 2014. The deadline to register for this class is January 15th.

IX. Next Meeting

Chairman Cameron will contact commission members regarding scheduling the next meeting in 2014.

X. Adjournment

Chairman Cameron thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.