

**TUESDAY, MAY 8, 2007**

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING HELD**

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)  
DODGE COUNTY)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE  
MANTORVILLE, MN**

**2007-09 C.O.W.**

The Dodge County Commissioners met in Committee of the Whole May 8, 2007, in the Commissioner's Room at the Dodge County Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 9:00 a.m. CDT. Don Gray opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. CDT.

Meeting Convened

The Chair acknowledged those present:

Those Present

Members present: Klaus Alberts District #1  
Lyle Tjosaas District #2  
David Erickson District #3  
Don Gray District #4  
David Hanson District #5

Members absent: None

Also present: David McKnight County Administrator  
Becky Lubahn Deputy County Clerk

Three Dodge County Superintendents met with the Board to discuss the future of the School Resource Officer Program.

SRO Program Future  
Discussion

The County Administrator has discussed with the Board the funding for this program starting with the 2008-2009 school year.

Mr. McKnight shared with the superintendents the Board's willingness to pay up to 60% of two SRO Officers in the future. The superintendents proposed that the county pay for 100% of one SRO Officer, but the Board's desire was to see a partnership in the funding of this position in the future even if it is just one officer.

Further discussion took place between the superintendents and the County Board.

Robert Kelly the Superintendent for Triton School District stated that his school board is concerned about funding. Mr. Kelly indicated that the school board likes the program as long as they are not paying for it. Superintendent Kelly informed the Board that if the Triton school district has to start paying for the SRO Program, they may choose to opt out of the program.

Ron Evjen the Superintendent for the Hayfield School District commented that they do not understand why the board would want to pay more for the program when it would cost the county less to continue funding one position at 100% rather than adding another person and funding both at 60% each.

Commissioner Alberts stated that he feels the schools have more coverage and better coverage by adding two SRO Officers. Mr. Alberts commented that they weren't necessarily looking for the cheaper route.

Commissioner Erickson expressed concern with setting precedence for hiring additional SRO Officers in the future. Mr. Erickson commented that if the county continues to fund 100% of the current position now and then decides to add additional SRO Officers in the future, the county may be expected to pick up 100% of any additional SRO Officer expenses.

SRO Program Future Discussion - Continued

Mr. Erickson questioned what input the schools would have in the program if they do not contribute financially to the SRO Program.

It was Commissioner Erickson's opinion that the SRO Officer is currently being spread too thin.

Superintendent Kelly commented that he would like to have three SRO Officers in Dodge County, but the budget is a concern.

Superintendent Evjen discussed the proposed cost for adding an additional SRO Officer. Mr. Evjen reported that the proposed expense would take over half of the money the Hayfield School District has received from the Crime Levy. Mr. Evjen noted that the money in this fund is already spent.

Commissioner Alberts commented that in his opinion he feels stronger about the SRO Program than the superintendents do and questioned what the school districts spend their Crime Levy funding on.

Mr. Kelly informed the Board that Triton School District is spending their Crime Levy money on crime prevention in the schools.

Peter Grant the Superintendent for the Kasson-Mantorville School District reminded the Board that the Crime Levy money comes from the state and that the state can turn it off at any time. Mr. Grant reported that the K-M School Board would rather cut an SRO Officer rather than a teacher which would result in increased class sizes.

Commissioner Erickson further discussed the SRO Officer position and reported that commissioners have not discussed additional funding options for this position as a Board.

Commissioner Tjosaas stated that he agrees that the SRO Program is a great program and that we need to determine how we are going to fund it. Mr. Tjosaas commented that he thinks that safety and the position within the school is very important.

Robert Kelly indicated that he would like to see the program left as is.

Commissioner Tjosaas reiterated that the schools need the program and that the county and schools need to find out how they are going to fund the program.

Commissioner Hanson stated that he believes the SRO Program is a tremendous benefit to the schools.

Mr. Hanson agreed that one SRO Officer in every school would be wonderful and noted that he would prefer two SRO Officers be available in Dodge County schools instead of just one.

SRO Program Future  
Discussion -  
Continued

Commissioner Hanson questioned how closely the school boards have worked with the School Resource Officer and if they know the benefits of having a SRO Officer in the schools.

Ron Evjen informed the Board that the Hayfield School District has conducted a survey and everyone agrees that the SRO Program is a valuable program.

Commissioner Alberts reported that some of the duties for the SRO Officer include teaching classes and dealing with unruly students. It was Mr. Alberts' opinion that the school districts need to help find a way to fund this program.

Commissioner Erickson noted that the SRO Officer is a Dodge County employee and that it is not uncommon for this person to come in contact with students who attend schools in Dodge County but live in another county.

Mr. Evjen wanted to know how much input the school districts have in the SRO Program if they put money into it. Mr. Evjen stated that the school districts will want to have a say in the SRO program if public funds that they are responsible for are spent on this position.

County Administrator David McKnight stated that in 2008-2009 the county needs to start funding the position differently. Mr. McKnight commented that the county wants to create a partnership between the county and the school districts for the SRO Program. The County Administrator reported that the county could fund the SRO Officer position for the 2008-2009 school year with the understanding that the county will be looking for financial help from the schools with the position after that.

Commissioner Erickson noted that the agreement needs to spell out who the individual will answer to.

Commissioner Gray commented that the schools will have to have input for scheduling purposes.

Commissioner Hanson reported that he agrees with the County Administrator's recommendation.

Sheriff Gary Thompson stated that the SRO Program is an awesome program and that he would hate to see it go away. Mr. Thompson informed the Board that one officer is spread too thin but believes two officers could do a good job in the three schools. The Sheriff reported that the SRO Officer works under the Sheriff's Office labor contract and that he is open to input from the schools regarding the position.

Superintendent Kelly commented that the school boards agree that if they are contributing financially to the SRO Officer position, that they would want input. It is Mr. Kelly's belief that responsibility for the SRO Officer needs to stay in the hands of the Sheriff's Office. Mr. Kelly also noted that money the schools are being asked to contribute towards this position would have to come out of the general revenue fund.

Superintendent Evjen acknowledged that if the SRO program expands the three entities need to get involved financially.

SRO Program Future Discussion - Continued

Mr. Evjen agreed with the Sheriff that the SRO Officer is spread thin.

Superintendent Evjen stated that the school board needs to decide whether the SRO Program is important to them.

It was commissioner Gray's opinion that they need to keep the communication wide open between the county and the school districts on this subject.

Commissioner Erickson commented that the Board is in the middle of budget discussions now and they need to decide whether or not they can budget for the SRO Officer.

It was the consensus of the group that this is a good program and that they need to find a way to budget it.

Commissioner Alberts discussed the kid's reaction to the SRO Program.

Ron Evjen acknowledged that because of the SRO Program officers are able to build a rapport with kids.

The Board thanked the superintendents for coming.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:30 a.m. CDT.

Meeting Adjourned

**ATTEST:**

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DON GRAY  
CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD

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BECKY LUBAHN  
DEPUTY CLERK

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DATED: