

**Safety & Justice Roundtable**  
**Jan. 23, 2008**  
**Greene County Historic Courthouse, Room 300**

MINUTES

Roundtable members present: Bob Cirtin, John Holstein, Jim Huntsinger, Steve Ijames, Yolanda Lorge, Bernie McCarthy, Stephanie Montgomery, Nate Quinn, Michael Ramon, Mark Skrade, Robert Spence, Brad Stokes, George Templeton, Jean Twitty

Roundtable members absent: Ron Baird, Jim Cook, Jill Elsey-Stoner, Matt O'Reilly

Others present:

Judge Don Burrell, 31<sup>st</sup> Circuit, Div. 1

Jeff Reinold, Greene County Budget Officer

Cindy Stein, Greene County Auditor

Collin Quigley, Springfield City Manager's Office

Mike Brothers, Springfield Public Information Office

Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Greene County Public Information Officer

Didi Tang, Springfield News-Leader,

Photographers from KY3, KOLR, KSPR

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1. Call to order and welcome- Robert Spence and Jean Twitty
  2. Self-introductions
  3. Approval of Dec. 19 meeting minutes. Minutes were approved as is.
  4. Jean Twitty introduced Judge Don Burrell, 31<sup>st</sup> Circuit Div. 1, who has recently been appointed to the Missouri Southern Court of Appeals. Jean Twitty emphasized the importance of taking good notes and discussing a possible rating system for issues the Roundtable studies.

Don Burrell said he appreciates the opportunity to address challenges: "There are several areas I'd love for you all to look at, but I don't have solutions for.

"One is information technology. Greene County was one of the first Missouri courts to go to computer docket system. Now we are required to go live with statewide system in April. This will be a new system. It will challenge size of clerk staff, require more time up front in uploading information.

“Another issue is determining who shows up at the jail daily. Whenever someone comes into custody, they need to see a judge. Judges have no way of knowing who has been booked. The system doesn’t notify judges, but they need to see a judge by the next day- sometimes it’s several days before this happens.”

On the issue of judges’ caseload, “In other parts of the state where judge/case ratio is better, court dates revolve faster. In Greene County, it takes a while to get the cases resolved, resulting in more inmate time in the jail. 95 percent of cases are going to be a guilty plea, but we don’t know which until when the case is set. We need a smaller number of cases set each week, so we have more of a sense of which need urgency. Statewide weighted workload study shows Greene County needs another seven judges. Nowhere else was it that high of a recommended percentage increase. I think we can function with fewer than seven new judges, but we do need more judges.

“I’m an attorney and a judge, but not a business manager. Kalmanoff (report) recommended a Court Manager (administrator) to do that, to weed through cases and prioritize and manage caseload.

“Security issues: there is no secure parking for judges. This leaves judges vulnerable to attack. I’d like to see that improved. There are not enough security people in jail, bailiffs or courthouse security. (In the Judicial Courts Facility) only one line runs through the metal detector and in the morning, the line runs out the front door. If a fight erupts outside, security can’t respond, because they’re guarding the door. There are not enough personnel in the jail to bring prisoners into the courtroom and supervise them while in court.”

On physical building space: “There’s a bill before the state legislator asking for additional family court judges, but we have no courtroom space for them. The county has long-term plans for addressing this, but we are out of space now, especially in juvenile building. The idea is to build a bridge building between judicial facility and juvenile, but there’s no money for it. Space is a definite challenge.”

Judge Burrell said he was open to questions.

Michael Ramon: “When people are booked into jail, how is the court notified?”

Judge Burrell: “I’m not sure, and I’m shocked inmates don’t complain more. Numbers are jumbled up within daily census, sometimes people get sent to the wrong courtroom or on the wrong date.”

Michael Ramon: “In terms of Information Systems, is there a coordinating committee to make sure judges, jail clerk and all online?”

Judge Burrell: “In a sense, yes, and we have high hopes.”

Bernie McCarthy: “What is county funding in courts system?”

Judge Burrell: “The county provides building space, bailiffs’ salaries. State of Missouri pays salaries of judges and clerks and staff.”

George Templeton: “Is all the space utilized?”

Judge Burrell: “We once had extra courtrooms but not anymore. And now we have no room for visiting judges. We have to juggle and post signs for any visiting judges and sometime there is simply no courtroom space. We have one courtroom per judge.” Judge Burrell continued to explain the circumstances in which retired judges, senior judges, need courtrooms. “Senior judges offer extra help and get orders from the Supreme Court to handle certain cases, then they move around instead of remain on salary.”

Mark Skrade asked about software systems. “Is there an integrated system available, and is it cost-prohibitive?”

Judge Burrell: “If there is an integrated system, I don’t know it. Now, the Prosecutor has a system, the sheriff has a system, but they’re separate smoke stacks. We’re moving paper back and forth through system. We can’t do that anymore and we just patch the systems together instead of having an integrated system.”

Mark Skrade: “What is the cost of the inefficiency and could that be addressed?”

Judge Burrell: “I don’t know.”

Robert Spence asked about the court administrator position.

Judge Burrell: “ It depends on applicants, corresponding pay grades. An office manager would bring different skills than an attorney. Right now, nobody is the manager, nobody to take on all these challenges because judges are busy with court.”

Jean Twitty: “Has there been this position before in Greene County?”

Judge Burrell: “Not that I’m aware of.”

John Holstein: “ The county could look at St. Louis County for an example of this position.”

Judge Burrell: “Yes, and I like Boone County as well. This is not a brand new concept.”

Robert Spence: “Who pays for this position?”

Judge Burrell: “It will be paid for by county, reports to Court en Banc.”

Jean Twitty: “Can you prioritize your top three priorities?”

Judge Burrell: “I’d rather you all do that but I’ll do the best I can. Number One is court administrator, but that’s going to happen later this year. Number Two: we need more judges,

and, therefore Number Three: more courtroom space. We almost got another judge last year, we've made our case to the legislator, but I just don't know how to get more bodies and space."

Bernie McCarthy: "How does a two-year wait (on a trial) affect justice?"

Judge Burrell: "Justice delayed is justice denied. People die, move away, go to Iraq, forget details. Sometime cases have to be dismissed because major people have disappeared. The passage of time hurts. The crime lab would help. The Public Defender's caseload is also a bottleneck for us."

Michael Ramon: "Has there been a ratio study of judge/caseload upon the remainder of (law enforcement) system? How does an extra judge affect rest of the system?"

Judge Burrell: "Not that I'm aware of. But that would be great. (State) Office of Courts Administrator does a lot of studies, but I'm not aware of that one."

Jim Huntsinger: "How do you get around delayed cases?"

Judge Burrell: "After 180 days, you have to have a Disposition of Retainer. If we have a case not under that act, it gets bumped in favor of Disposition of Retainer. The 'Right to a speedy trial,' that's a loose term. We do the best we can do. We try them as quickly as we can."

Jean Twitty asked if there were any more questions. She encouraged the Roundtable to keep notes, and asked Jenny to find out more about Boone County Court Administrator position and the recent weighted workload study.

Jean Twitty asked who the new circuit clerk would be.

Judge Burrell said the governor would appoint it. "There is a proposal that Mike Carr supports to make that an appointed person and not elected."

John Holstein: "Historically the circuit clerk's association has opposed that position being appointed."

Judge Burrell: "Yes, although there are some proposals that would have it appointed only in more populated counties."

Jean Twitty thanked Judge Burrell for coming and welcomed Greene County Budget Officer Jeff Reinold and Greene County Auditor Cindy Stein to present a county budget overview.

Jeff Reinold: "Thanks, and Judge Burrell has been wonderful to work with and this is a big loss for Greene County. (He distributed budget and Powerpoint documents, and apologized that the computer was not working for his Powerpoint presentation. Going through the budget documents, he described the following funds.)

On Revenues: “Our main sources are sales taxes. Intergovernmental: that’s grants, transfers from other funds, contractual agreements with City of Springfield, etc. Fees and licenses- is exactly what is says. Biggest remaining: interest income and other small revenues.

“Next chart: 2008 and 2007, percent of total revenue. Sales tax is the single largest item. Estimated growth for 2007 was estimated at 3 percent. Last year, sales tax took a nosedive. We ended up with 2.1 percent growth. That’s a rough start for 2008. Sales tax as a whole is 30-35 percent of whole budget.”

On expenditures: “Compensation and benefits in staffing is the single largest expense for county. Cost of living and step increases are budgeted for this year. Health insurance costs are stable. I have 72 new requests for full time staff last year. Most of them are in law enforcement, and the sheriff needs those positions. We need more patrolmen, detectives, prosecutors. We funded 17 new positions: Prosecutor has three, Courts had four, including Court Administrator which will be advertised within next few weeks. That will be coming soon, to give judges relief. We also pay LAGERS pension fund, 7-percent of salaries, paid by county.”

On Law Enforcement Sales Tax (LEST): “Tax was approved by voters in 1997, it generates \$12 million (this year) but about \$8 million goes to other municipalities-- most of it to Springfield (\$7.2 million.) Out of the \$4 million Greene County keeps, we pay for the countywide trunk radio system, so all law enforcement can talk to each other. We’re still paying a bond issue on that. The remainder is salaries- jail, sheriff, prosecutor.”

On Capital Improvements: “Most of it is in the Road & Bridge fund. Also, this year is a comprehensive accounting software system. Currently the auditor, treasurer, budget office, and purchasing all use different systems. We can’t talk to each other. In the jail we’ve implemented a new records management system, but it takes time to work the bugs out. We went live in October. Still, it will be difficult to communicate, logistically, between our records management system and the state court computer system. It can be done but it’ll be difficult. Also, money is appropriated every year to renovate the Historic Courthouse.”

On the Parks Sales Tax: “This is another tax in the county budget where we don’t keep all the revenue. We receive \$1.7 million from it and it all goes to stormwater mitigation. The remainder goes to Springfield-Greene Co Park Board.”

On county budget policies: “County policy is that reserves has 3 months of operations. This budget meets that requirement, but it’s very slim. Also, the county’s liability reserve account is \$1 million. We get sued by people in our jail. We have put cameras up in booking, which tends to be most volatile location. (Another policy is) our operating budget: projected revenues exceed expenditures.

“The book you have in front of you is the complete 2008 budget, also the Kalmanoff Report and details of what we’ve don’t with that.

“Kalmanoff was hired in 2002 to help us become more efficient. We had a brand-new jail and it was already full. Kalmanoff recommended about 60 items, and we’ve looked at and

implemented most of them. Some don't fit for Greene County, but most have been implemented to some extent.”

“In the county's Juvenile Office, significant changes have been made to the number of detainees, as recommended. This saves the county and the state money.

“Another success: we've implemented a pre-trial release program. It was a slow start, but we're now saving 170 bed spaces per day. That's 170 people kept out of the jail who don't need to be there. It's saved the county thousands of dollars, created a safer environment for corrections officers and inmates. Most inmates in our jail are awaiting trial. If we can get them out of the jail while waiting for court date, that saves money. We monitor them on ankle bracelets, other methods.

“Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee: this was formed after Kalmanoff, to meet quarterly to share ideas, issues. It's been very beneficial. We were not regularly speaking to each other before. Now there is communication, and this court administrator will help too. The county agreed that we need this new position.

“The Kalmanoff report has challenged us, caused us to look at what we're doing and see what we can do better.

“Other things: there's lots of talk about federal inmates, and some have criticized the sheriff for this. It costs \$46 a day to keep an inmate. The state reimburses us \$21.25. The federal government reimburses \$53. It makes financial sense. When we reduce federal inmates we lose revenue. We're not here to make money, but we do have bills to pay. It's a delicate balance.

The Kalmanoff report is about 200 pages for you to thumb through. I'm happy to answer any questions on it. Also, included in your book is your appropriated budget summary. The second page is just funds Greene County controls-- it excludes library, senior service, developmentally disabled- funds we can't touch. So the second page is just county funds. Next page is just law enforcement-related expenses: \$38 million. Includes sheriff, courts, 911, med examiner, juvenile courts. It's the largest part of our budget, more than Road & Bridge.

Jean Twitty asked if anyone had questions.

Michael Ramon: “In the circuit court, budget shows 8 employees- I thought Judge Burrell said those were state employees?”

Jeff Reinold: “Those are Bailiffs.”

Mark Stokes: “Can you send a copy of the Powerpoint to us?”

Jeff Reinold: “Yes.”

Bernie McCarthy: “Are these fees and licenses all governed by state?”

Jeff Reinold: "Almost all fees and licenses are."

Mark Skrade: "Could you elaborate on the new computer system, interconnectivity?"

Jeff Reinold: "The issues Judge Burrell raised are being addressed. When a suspect is arrested, they are booked on the scene from patrolman's vehicle. This reduces booking costs and time. That booking report will be going to prosecutor and Public Defender-- that's going to happen, but it takes time. Once we work through the new Sheriff and Jail records system and make sure they are working properly, we'll bring Prosecutor's Office online so they can work paperless. It won't be completed in 2008, but we are taking steps toward it."

Bernie McCarthy: "Is there a booking/arrest ID number can you retain that for jail, prosecutor and booking, or does the ID change?"

Jeff Reinold: "I don't know for sure. But not all municipalities are on the same records management system, and these may assign different numbers. But once they're in the jail they get an ID that everyone can use."

Bernie McCarthy: "Will the new system help notify judges when new inmates have arrived at the jail?"

Jeff Reinold: "We're working through that issue right now. Communication between county and state system is difficult. We're trying to build a bridge between the two, and we're working on that."

Jean Twitty: "Thanks, Jeff. We need to wrap up. This information has been very helpful to us. Questions may come through Jenny, Jeff, Judge Burrell-- we'll get those e-mails."

"One housekeeping issue: we need a ratings system. Does anyone have suggestions for quantifying the information we're hearing? That would be very valuable. I'd love to form a subcommittee to discuss that process."

Jean Twitty asked about preferred meeting times, said the next date would be sent via e-mail.

Jenny Edwards: "Jill Elsey-Stoner requests a move to evenings, and Matt O'Reilly requests more advanced notice of meetings, perhaps a regularly scheduled time and date."

The meeting was adjourned.