

Executive Committee
Rock Island County Board
SPECIAL MEETING April 25, 2011

The Executive Committee of the Rock Island County Board held a special meeting on Monday; April 25, 2011 in the conference room of the County Board Office. Chairman James E. Bohnsack called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

Committee Members Present: Bohnsack, Banaszek, Loftin, Meersman, Rockwell and Wonderlich

Committee Members Absent: Ballard, Brandmeyer and Freeman

Others Present: Sheriff Jeff Boyd, Captain Steve Dean, Captain Richard Fisher, Captain Bill Kauzlarich and Captain Gerry Bustos

Sheriff Boyd stated that he is willing to make himself available and talk about any amount spent. He turns in every receipt and documents what is spent. He is not willing, however, to let go of his role as Sheriff and determining of where the budgeted funds are spent. The issue is \$75 for sympathy flowers sent for a 6 year old boy, the son of a long time correctional officer, who died of brain cancer. He feels that sending the flowers was the right thing to do personally, governing and politically. The correctional officer is a 17 year employee whose son had been battling cancer since he was 23 months old. Sheriff Boyd feels that this is what was right to do.

Ms. Wonderlich stated that the committee is looking at the claim to do what's right and as setting a precedent. She added that it is not the committee so much, but the way the press has been picking on the County, we want to make extra sure that taxpayer money is spent appropriately.

Sheriff Boyd mentioned that the former Sheriff did not turn in receipts for various purchases and that the committee didn't question this. Mr. Rockwell stated that the purchases Sheriff Boyd are referring to such as training, uniforms, etc. were all budgeted items with line items that had sufficient appropriations. It is a crime to spend money without an appropriation. Other governmental units have a "sunshine fund" or something similar where staff actually donate to the cost of flowers, retirement parties and such. Sheriff Boyd stated that if it is a crime, then prosecute me. It was for a 6 year old boy. He ultimately decides how to spend his budget. Mr. Rockwell corrected the Sheriff. The County Board appropriated and tells the Sheriff and all other Elected Officials and Department Heads what general categories they can spend in.

Sheriff Boyd did not understand how the former Sheriff got away without turning in receipts. He added that he (Sheriff Boyd) came to members of the Board and advised them that with just 28 days left in his term, the former sheriff attended training at a cost of \$1500. The Committee advised that the training was a budgeted expense.

Sheriff Boyd is willing to go before the County Board and explain the purchase. Ms. Wonderlich stated that she would have done the same thing. Mr. Meersman stated that since Sheriff Boyd is willing to defend the purchase, if he were to put it in writing that it was his discretion. He agrees with what the Sheriff did in principle.

Sheriff Boyd felt that the sympathy flowers were similar to the longevity awards. Mr. Rockwell responded that longevity awards are budgeted as such. Additionally, these awards are a reward for their service. Sheriff Boyd stated that he is honoring the service of a 17 year employee whose son died of brain cancer. He added that just a week ago, he honored a correctional officer who died of cancer with another floral arrangement. He cannot make staff participate and not everyone can afford to either donate or send their own memorial.

Captain Fisher stated that he attended the Administration and Finance Committee's and no one said a word about this claim. He wondered if the Board was waiting for a bigger audience. If there were questions, they should have been presented at the committee so that he could have taken the matter back to the Sheriff. Captain Fisher stated he was made to feel stupid.

Mr. Meersman stated that he knows what the support of co-workers means. He lost a child at the age of 4 years old. If the Sheriff would provide a letter, he would appreciate it. He added that the Sheriff did what he thought was right.

Mr. Rockwell is ok with the Christmas cards as he feels they are being used to market the jail for additional inmates. Captain Dean added that the department has always sent Christmas cards and flowers and have never had an issue with the County Board. Sheriff Boyd added that he sees why the former Sheriff did not turn in any receipts; you don't have to go thru this. He will write a letter. The proposed credit card policy has not been adopted and Sheriff Boyd stated he is trying to do what is right and is not hiding anything.

Mr. Rockwell stated that we have to draw a line somewhere. The Christmas Cards are necessary as we are asking for more "business" in the form of housing more Federal inmates and for overflow from other Counties. Flowers for bereavement he feels are necessary because our employees are our greatest expense but also our greatest asset. He is doing what he can to show all the

employees that he cares. Mr. Rockwell added that we are not unusual in this request. Many other governmental units have flower or "sunshine" funds. Sheriff Boyd replied that he is not aware of what other governmental units do, he is only aware of what has been done here in Rock Island County. Using the experience of all the Captains he is following past practice. A uniform policy is needed to ensure that like amounts are being sent to immediate family only. Chairman Bohnsack added that it is a morale booster as well. Mr. Banaszek added that you can pass the hat and most people will be willing to give out of their own pocket. He is adamantly opposed to using taxpayer money.

Sheriff Boyd stated that everyone has their own opinions and where do you draw the line with taxpayer money. Who determines how it is spent? He stated that he makes those decisions with what is best for his office. Captain Bustos stated that the recent obituary for the correctional officer who passed away mentioned her pride in being a RICO Correctional Officer and her uniform was on display at the visitation. Her family was very appreciative of the flowers.

Sheriff Boyd stated that the Board will have to trust the Elected Officials especially when they are willing to take the heat for their purchase decisions. Mr. Rockwell stated that his private citizen opinion of Christmas Cards is different than his opinion as an elected official. Sheriff Boyd advised that he sends New Years cards as a way to thank federal officials, ICE, and others. He also sees the value in taking those folks out to lunch. Chairman Bohnsack added that those types of marketing efforts are done at Hope Creek Care as well to keep our name in front of the case managers. Mr. Meersman agreed that we are trying to generate revenue and these are different than other entertainment. Sheriff Boyd looks at this as a cost of doing business.

Mr. Banaszek stated that every year he distributes Christmas cards with money from his own pocket. Sheriff Boyd stated that he pays for his political stuff with his own money and never wants his political lines to cross.

Mr. Meersman felt that Sheriff Boyd is trying to show some solidarity and that he needs a cohesive team. He is trying to bring the morale up. Any inquiries that Mr. Meersman receives regarding this claim will be directed to the Sheriff. We still need to have lines, Mr. Rockwell stated. There should be no birthday cards/cakes.

Ms. Loftin stated that after hearing this, it concerns her why if the other Sheriff was allowed to do this for so long, why are these items now a concern? Sheriff Boyd stated that the former Sheriff bought items at the FBI Academy on the County's card. These are items that could be used again personally by the Sheriff. If Sheriff Boyd is fortunate enough to attend the FBI Academy, he will purchase the necessary uniform pants with his own money as they will be able

to be worn later. No one questioned the former Sheriff's purchase. No receipts were turned in. He does not want the County Board to micromanage his department. Mr. Rockwell stated that he must've taken it out of the appropriate line item and it had sufficient funds available. Additionally, the Board reviews over \$1.8 million claims each month. Sometimes, inappropriate claims will get by them. That is why there is a staff in the Auditor's Office to catch questionable claims or those that do not have sufficient funds. Sheriff Boyd stated that he knows why the former Sheriff did not turn in receipts.

Mr. Banaszek stated that we need to be specific on what is and is not allowed. Chairman Bohnsack instructed the Sheriff to send a letter explaining the purchase and it will be placed on file. The policy will be developed to take these issues into consideration.

Motion: Mr. Meersman moved, Ms. Wonderlich seconded to pay the claim thru the TD process. Carried with Mr. Banaszek voting no.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 4:12 PM.

Shelly Chapman

Minutes completed 04-28-11 at 1013AM