

MINUTES OF MEETING OF JUDICIARY & LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE
on March 4, 2026
KCAB 2ND FLOOR COUNTY BOARD COMMITTEE ROOM

Members Present: Laura Belsky, John Franco, Keith Gray, Frederick Brookhouse, YIG Dylan Hood

Excused Members: Felix Garcia, Aaron Karow, John Morrissey, YIG Sasha Stroncsek

Others Present: Rebecca Matoska-Mentink, Patrice Scypta, David Lux, Jim Kennedy, Jason Rossell, Marlene Tach, Brian Sheffler, Bethany Lofgren, Shannon Ddamczyk

Meeting Called to Order: 6:00 p.m. by Chair Belsky

Citizen Comments: 6:00 **Jim Kennedy of 7819 5th Avenue**
Mr. Kennedy addressed the committee regarding the 287(g) agreement between the Kenosha County Sheriff's Office and the U.S Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).
Mr. Kennedy expressed concern over the agreement, stating it deputizes select county employees to operate under ICE authority within detention facilities at the county's expense and under ICE supervision. While the Sheriff indicated the agreement would target only violent criminal offenders already in custody, Mr. Kennedy argued that ICE's broader mission does not align with that limitation. He cited research showing that approximately 5% of individuals in ICE detention have violent criminal records, while 70–75% have no prior convictions. Mr. Kennedy recommended the committee require the Sheriff to clearly define "violent criminal offenses" and limit cooperation accordingly, as well as mandate regular public reporting on detainer requests, individuals transferred to ICE custody, activities performed under ICE supervision, and the financial impact of the agreement, including detention costs and personnel expenses. He concluded by thanking the committee.

Supervisor Comments: 6:05 None

Chairman Comments: 6:06 Chair Belsky clarified that under Wisconsin law, the Sheriff is a constitutional officer with independent authority over operational law enforcement decisions, and the 287(g) agreement is executed solely between ICE and the Sheriff's Office without requiring County Board approval. As such, the committee does not have the authority to amend, rescind, or direct the agreement. It was further explained that the agreement applies only within the jail to individuals already in custody, does not permit street-level immigration enforcement, and requires participating personnel to be trained and operate under ICE supervision. Chair Belsky also addressed common questions, noting that the County Board cannot override the agreement, offense limitations are determined by the Sheriff under the federal agreement, and while the county bears personnel and related costs, fiscal oversight remains within the Board's authority. Additionally, transfers to ICE occur at scheduled release unless specific conditions justify extended detention, and the agreement includes complaint and civil rights provisions. Chair Belsky emphasized that the committee's responsibilities are focused on budget oversight and maintaining transparency through informational updates.

Approval of the Minutes from the Meeting on February 4, 2026: 6:10
Motion by: Brookhouse **Seconded by:** Franco **Approved:** Unanimously

Clerk of Circuit Court – Rebecca Matoska-Mentink

6:11: Clerk of Circuit Court Rebecca Matoska-Mentink, accompanied by Judge Rosell, presented a comprehensive report highlighting that the office is projected to be approximately \$500,000 under budget for 2025 due to increased court support grants, improved collections, and streamlined processes. She outlined upcoming legislative changes, including a bill expected to take effect July 1 that increases court fees and expands small claims limits, which is anticipated to raise filings and workload, with preparations already underway. The report also noted potential expansion to an additional circuit court branch by 2028 pending approval. Statistical trends showed criminal filings stabilizing post-COVID, civil filings increasing, family cases declining, and probate cases remaining relatively stable, while backlog and delays were attributed largely to attorney shortages and delays in appointing counsel, with Judge Rosell citing 967 pending cases compared to 487 in 2018, reflecting a broader statewide issue. The judge explained case prioritization requirements, legal constraints, and consequences for missed deadlines, while also clarifying bail considerations and differences between state and federal systems. Operationally, the office has been fully staffed since September, is evaluating internal restructuring, and may require additional staffing in the future. Guardian ad litem services remain stable despite reduced staffing, and courthouse restoration efforts are progressing on schedule with technology upgrades improving functionality. Committee members concluded by expressing appreciation for the transparency, thoroughness, and use of visual data in the presentation.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:47 Motion made by Supervisor Gray; seconded by Supervisor Brookhouse.

A recording of the meeting is available online at kenoshacounty.org

Respectfully Submitted,

Breanna Oseguera