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NEWS >>

GRUNDY COUNTY SHERIFF FORCES TEAMSTER CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS TO TRANSFER INMATES ALONE **Male and Female Correctional Officers Subjected to Unsafe Working Conditions**

Correctional officers represented by Teamsters Local 700 at the Grundy County Department of Corrections are being forced to individually transfer dangerous inmates in and out of the jail facility every day. Grundy County Sheriff Kevin Callahan is mandating the correctional officers to do these transfers alone, thus exposing the officers involved to very unsafe and unstable working conditions.

While Sheriff Callahan has the resources to send more than one officer on transfers, he refuses to do so. Both male and female correctional officers are individually put in charge of inmates and must get them into a van, and then drive them to another location without any assistance. The female officers in particular have told the union that they are afraid to drink any water while on the job because they cannot go to the bathroom and leave the inmates unattended.

The collective bargaining agreement Local 700 has with the Grundy County Department of Corrections states that while the employer can establish work rules, they must be reasonable.

“We find the Sheriff’s demand to send individual officers to do a job that should be done by a minimum of two officers is completely unsafe and therefore unreasonable,” said Teamsters Local 700 President and Teamsters Joint Council 25 Trustee Becky Strzechowski.

As Local 700 found the Sheriff’s department in violation of the collective bargaining agreement, the union filed a grievance on Aug. 24, 2016 regarding the issue of officers transporting inmates alone. Sheriff Callahan denied the grievance a week later on Aug. 31, 2016. Since then, the Sheriff’s office has continually delayed the process, cancelling two hearing dates that were set for September and November, respectively.

A Local 700 business representative met with Sheriff Callahan on Monday, Dec. 12 to discuss these issues without any resolve.

“These officers deserve to be safe while at work like the rest of us and we will not stand idly by as they are unnecessarily put in harm’s way,” said Strzechowski.

Teamsters Local 700 is an affiliate of Teamsters Joint Council 25, America’s premier labor union for Chicago, Illinois and northwest Indiana.