

April 07, 2015

## **PUBLIC SAFETY/JUSTICE FACILITY COMMITTEE REPORT**

A Public Safety/Justice Facility Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, April 07, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in the Quorum Court Room, County Administration Building, Third Floor, 215 East Central, Bentonville, Arkansas

Committee Members Present: Jones, Adams, Allen, Leadabrand, Anglin, Shadlow, Moehring

Others Present: County Judge Bob Clinard, District Court Judge Ray Bunch, District Court Judge Paul Bridges, JP's Sandlin, J. Harrison, Meyers, Comptroller Brenda Guenther, Administrator of General Service John Sudduth, Captain Jeremy Guyll, and Director of Information Technologies Eddie Maher, Debbie Matteri – Vice President – Downtown Bentonville Inc.

Media: Tom Sissom

JP Jones called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **Public Comments:**

Debbie Matteri, Vice President Downtown Bentonville Inc. expressed the concerns and desires of merchants in the downtown area to keep the courts facility downtown.

Attorney Chip Stacy, Bentonville, voiced his opinion to keep the courts facility downtown.

District Court Judges Ray Bunch and Paul Bridges reported on the problems that the district court judges are experiencing because of crowded conditions at the county jail. Judge Bridges stated that that they are unable to have defendants from their courts sent to the jail and their defendants know that.

Lengthy discussion was held on turning away misdemeanor inmates because of the available space used for felony offenders, and the overcrowded conditions in the county jail.

### **Presentation: Jail Expansion Proposal**

Captain Jeremy Guyll noted that whenever defendants violate their parole, their parole officer issues a white warrant, they are arrested, a hearing is set and then those inmates come back into our custody. There are a lot of times they will sit six months in the county jail before they get a bed in the prison and then when they are taken to prison, they are processed out and back on the street.

County Judge Bob Clinard gave a PowerPoint presentation detailing the F-Pod of the county jail. He stated that the F-Pod that was built to hold misdemeanors, but about two-thirds of it is currently being used for administrative purposes. He stated that if they were to add on to the F-Pod and use that space for misdemeanors, it would add approximately 90 beds. He said construction is currently underway converting a section of F-Pod that will house 18 misdemeanors and that section should be ready for occupancy in approximately 30 days.

Captain Guyll stated that they have also moved out of the area that was previously the staff break room, and with that renovation process, an additional 14 inmates will be housed giving us a total of 32 bed spaces.

Further lengthy discussion was held examining the possibility of a larger expansion plan to the jail costing about \$1.8 to \$1.9 million, and if approved by the justices of the peace the expansion would add an additional 60 beds for misdemeanor inmates and 12 cells for women at the jail.

Captain Guyll stated that the expansion would also add space for training and administrative offices being moved to make room for misdemeanor inmates.

County Judge stated that his thought is that they should hire an architect to design an expansion to house misdemeanor and women inmates.

After some further discussion, JP Adams made motion to forward to the May 7, 2015 Finance Committee meeting a recommendation to finance the finishing of the F-Pod to house all misdemeanor prisoners and to include moving the Sheriff's Office training and briefing rooms into a separate structure, seconded by JP Anglin.

After further discussion was held to have Judge Clinard proceed with hiring an architect to design the expansion for misdemeanor and women inmates, JP Adams withdrew his motion and the second agreed.

JP Allen stated that he would like to see a study to make recommendations on long term expansion for the jail. JP Moehring stated that he agreed with JP Allen that he would also like to see a study on the long term expansion for the jail.

JP Allen made motion to authorize the County Judge to include in the request for qualifications (RFQ), to seek consultation to include a long term design for the jail, seconded by JP Shadlow.

Judge Clinard stated that they will hire an architect with this RFQ proposal to design this expansion and also to include in the scope of work for the future possibility of a felony pod. He stated that the RFQ's are not scheduled to go out until Friday morning and that he will have the architect for the project include the conceptual work of adding another pod to the jail that would increase its capacity by 150 to 200 inmates.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

JP Moehring made motion to table Judge Clinard's presentation of courthouse location options and the financing options until the next Public Safety/Justice Facility meeting, seconded by JP Shadlow.

After some discussion on whether to have Judge Clinard proceed with his presentation, JP Jones called for the question to table.

2 in favor: Shadlow, Leadabrand  
5 against: Jones, Adams, Allen, Anglin, Moehring

Motion to table, failed.

District Court Judge Paul Bridges thanked the members of the court for listening and stated that he applauded them for the quick action.

JP Jones called for a 5-minute recess.

Meeting reconvened.

### **Courthouse Location Options**

County Judge Bob Clinard gave a Power-Point presentation of the two location options for a new courts facility, Downtown vs. Highway 102 and stated that this is his opinion of some of the key elements for a new courts facility for Benton County. Judge Clinard stated that he had graded the two proposals on a ranking of “A” being excellent, “B” being good and, “C” being above average. He said that he had ranked the plans on issues from traffic and parking to “constructability,” disruption of court operations during construction, and the future expansion possibilities and the future use of the existing courthouse, and gave the 14<sup>th</sup> Street location a higher grade.

Judge Clinard stated that the Highway 102 location has an estimated cost of \$24 million and the downtown location has a \$31.2 million cost when renovations to the courthouse and the courts annex are included. He said the construction costs for the downtown project is about \$24 million. He added that given the limitations of the downtown area that he could not see spending that kind of money when you can get more for your money in a different location.

Judge Clinard stated that he did not think that there was any question that this will affect the downtown economy when it comes to restaurants and businesses in the downtown area. He stated this does not do any disservice to all of the efforts that have been made by the Walton Family Foundation and others that have supported the downtown location over the years but that this is his opinion from a contractor’s functional standpoint.

### **Public Comments**

None

JP Jones announced that a Public Safety – Justice Facility meeting will be held Monday, April 27, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

### **Other Business**

None

After motion and second meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.