

April 27, 2015

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

A Public Safety/Justice Facility Committee meeting was held on Monday, April 27, 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, Circuit Judge Doug Schrantz, Circuit Clerk Brenda DeShields, Assessor Linda Hambrick, Legislature Dan Douglas, City of Rogers Councilman Marge Wolf, JP's Sandlin, Easley, J. Harrison, Meyers, K. Harrison, Comptroller Brenda Guenther, Administrator of General Service John Sudduth, Administrator of Public Safety Marshal Watson, Director of Information Technologies Eddie Maher, Hight-Jackson Associates Director Gary Jackson, Jay Allen - Walton Family Foundation, and Brenda Anderson - Downtown Bentonville, Inc.

Media: Tom Sissom

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

### **Public Comments:**

City of Rogers Councilman Marge Wolf stated that she had mixed emotions to keep the courts facility downtown. She expressed her concerns for the merchants in the downtown area.

Acacia Stenant, Bentonville, stated that the Benton County Bar Association has expressed their opinion to keep the courts facility downtown.

Shelly Simmons, Siloam Springs, urged the court to keep the courthouse downtown.

Troy Callaway, Bentonville expressed his concerns of the financial impact to the downtown area if the courts facility is moved out of the downtown area.

Circuit Clerk Brenda DeShields expressed her concerns about keeping the courts facility downtown.

### **EMS Update**

Administrator of Public Safety Marshal Watson briefed the Justices on the process to replace the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) now provided by Springdale to nearby areas in southern Benton County. He stated that the City of Springdale officials have given the county notice that their Fire Departments will cease serving areas outside the city as of January 1, 2016, but that they will be flexible, if we get a plan in progress.

Lengthy discussion was held on the time frame to find a provider for EMS service in the unincorporated areas in Benton County.

Marshal Watson stated that he would like to transfer funds in Dept. 0502, the Benton County Fire Services, Fund 1000 to purchase extraction equipment for the Gallatin and Piney Point Fire Dept.

JP Allen made motion to approve and forward an appropriation ordinance request to the May 7, 2015 Finance Committee meeting, seconded by JP Anglin

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands.

**Presentation – Walton Foundation – Court Facility Expansion**

Jay Allen, spokesperson for the Walton Family Foundation, stated that the Benton County Feasibility study established seven goals for the new court facilities, and that the new facility should be designed to reflect these goals.

- Goal I  
The Court facility should convey an image of dignity and solemnity, and a sense that the facility is where justice is done. The architecture throughout the interior and exterior of the court facility should convey the image of the judicial system: dignity, strength, respect and a sense of importance of the judicial system in the community.
- Goal II  
The court facility should represent careful thought and consideration of the court's operational and spatial needs.
- Goal III  
The Court facility should maintain flexibility to accommodate both short-and long-term space needs and contribute to the effective administration of justice.
- Goal IV  
The Court facility should offer an environment that is user-friendly and easily accessible to the public.
- Goal V  
The Court facility should offer a safe and secure environment for all citizens who utilize the facility as well as for the judges and court facilities who work within the facility.
- Goal VI  
The Court facility, including all courtrooms, offices and other functional space, should be equipped with advanced technologies to facilitate the efficient administration of justice and improve the quality of service to the public.
- Goal VII  
To embody the ideas of sustainable design practice and incorporate green building strategies.

Jay Allen stated that these goals can and should be addressed by either facility option. He stated that High Jackson Associates has been developing and refining a specific plan, the G-2 plan with the current estimated costs of \$26.3 million including the \$4.9 million in actual and offered grants from the Walton Foundation. He added that the G-2 plan represents approximately 119,000 square feet of

facility space, 70,000 in the new building and 49,000 in existing buildings and also includes necessary property donations on NE 2<sup>nd</sup> street to accommodate the new building. Jay Allen stated that there is additional available space of approximately 12,000 square feet in the Old Jail for possible future use.

Lengthy discussion was held on the G-2 plan for the downtown Bentonville location with the estimated costs of \$31.2 million which includes the renovations to the courthouse and the courts annex included.

County Judge Bob Clinard stated that this is not us versus them; he stated that it is his job to figure out what is the best facility to serve the county. He stated that the plan that was presented at the March 16, 2015 Public Safety meeting, would consolidate all Benton County operations located in Bentonville into two campuses, Downtown and Highway 102. He said that the potential budget impact for the relocation plan, and the estimated sales proceeds from three buildings would be \$2,400,000. He stated that he would like to see the Historic Courthouse re-purposed and made more open to the public. County Judge Bob Clinard stated that when we talk about comparing the two; it is comparing a new facility downtown, but also incorporating the old courthouse as part of the circuit court system, and the old post office into part of that system.

County Judge Bob Clinard presented the power-point presentation made at the March 16, 2015 Public Safety meeting, showing his comparison of the two location options as designated by Option 1 located in downtown Bentonville and Option 2 located Hwy 102 in Bentonville.

Further lengthy discussion was held on the two location comparison options presented to the committee, but no action was taken.

### **Public Comments**

None

JP Jones announced that a Public Safety/Justice Facility meeting will be held Monday, May 11, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

### **Other Business**

None

After motion and second meeting adjourned at 9:26 p.m.