



Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee Minutes

Tuesday July 20, 2021 at 10:00 am in the First Floor
Conference Room of the Otsego County Library
700 S. Otsego Ave Gaylord, MI 49735

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order 10:00 am

Roll Call- Present: Doug Johnson, Paul Liss, Rob Pallarito, Rachel Frisch, Vicki Courterier, Sheriff Matt Nowicki, Undersheriff Matt Muladore, Capt. Brian Webber

Others Present: Dr. Stacey Chipman (NCCMH), Matt Barresi, Melissa FitzGerald, Thom Marquard, Ken Glasser, Henry Mason, Jim Flint, Paul Sopsich, Mel Maier, Jeff Proux, Stephenie Jacobson

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Rob Pallarito to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2021, motion carries unanimously.

III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. None

IV. NEW BUISNESS

A. Otsego County Jail – presentation of updated plan

Ms. Frisch notes that County professionals have received extensive feedback from the community after the May 4th Justice Complex proposal. In addition, the County conducted a survey to add feedback as to why the millage failed. This feedback has been analyzed and summarized. The size and cost of the proposed Justice Complex were the main reasons cited. It was made clear taxpayers want to scale back and focus on the needs of the jail only.

Next, the Fall 2021 Project Approach was reviewed. Post- COVID, construction costs have increased. Ms. Frisch reviewed the 2019, then the 2020 project proposals and compared them to the new 2021 Fall Proposal which is for a jail only. Ms. Frisch reviewed the new square footage and cost estimates. Additionally, Ms. Frisch reviewed the site plan for the jail and that the location has not changed. The new 2021 Fall Proposal reduces the number of jail beds from the previous proposal, 120 beds down to 96 beds. This new proposal would focus on the County's current needs and not account for projected future population growth. If there is a need to expand there is room on the proposed site available to do that at a later date, but expanding is not in current plans. An updated debt schedule from the bond counsel was presented. Ms. Frisch noted a slight increase in interest rates was expected. Ms. Frisch also noted this does include operational costs.

Lastly, the final summary page compares the previous complex with the new Jail/Sheriff Department only proposal. Bringing everything together costs are reduced by approximately \$20 Million Which allows the County to reduce the millage request to 1.15 mills.

Captain Webber discusses the jail bed need as well as how we were able to arrive at current proposed bed number of 96 beds (this does not include holding cells). The calculation is 3.1 jail beds per 1,000 county residents. The best practice standard is to operate at 80% capacity, which results in the 96-bed figure. This would allow for room to segregate inmates when needed – segregate by gender, violent vs non-violent offenses, and to separate those with mental health issues that may need space. Ultimately, providing a safer facility. Currently, there is the capability for little to no rehabilitation inside the jail. There is no room to conduct such counseling or education.

These challenges were reiterated by Dr. Chipman of North Country Community Mental Health (NCCMH). Dr. Chipman then praised Otsego County for working very closely with NCCMH on alternative programs when feasible, working with the challenges due to lack of space in the jail.

Recent reports from the National Institute of Corrections and the State of Michigan Jail Reform Commission were discussed because they indicate a movement toward implementing ways to reduce actual jail time by implementing alternative programs. Ms. Courterier, Court Administrator, discusses the ways that Otsego County already uses jail as a last resort and provided several examples. Ms. Frisch notes that our local Judge Mertz was a part of the Jail Reform Commission and has indicated that the recommendations that came out of that report were implemented in Otsego County years ago due to the chronic overcrowding of the jail.

The attendees ask questions which were discussed and answered during the meeting.

Sheriff Nowicki motions for 1.15 mills for 20 years to build a 96-bed facility. Ms. Frisch seconds the motion. All say aye, passes unanimously.

B. DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Department heads provide brief updates.

V. ADJOURN

Mr. Johnson adjourns the meeting at 11:35 am.