

COUNTY FACILITIES COMMITTEE
JULY 21, 1994, 2:00PM

Members Present: Chairman Tom Bacote
Commissioner John Keefe
Others: Cliff Strassenburg
Sheriff Morris Bedsole
James Bowser, Sheriff's Department
Bob Stanger, County Engineer
Dean Chastain, Engineer
Dan MacMillan, Architect
Marsha Fogle
Press
Absent: Commissioner Billy King

Chairman Bacote called the meeting to order.

1. Discussion: Jail Overcrowding and Expansion

Sheriff Bedsole told the Committee he has exhausted all remedies in order to bring the jail population to an acceptable number, i.e. initiated the home confinement program, the pre-trial release program, and he is sending prisoners to Lumberton at a cost of \$40.00 per day per prisoner. He noted there are currently 314 people incarcerated in the jail today. There are 48 people under the home confinement program and 150 people are out on pre-trial release. He also noted there are 32 trustees being housed in the work release facility. The jail facility was built to house 288. The Sheriff noted he processed 950 through the system last month. Sheriff Bedsole stated that the court system is working with him in a very cooperative manner and he believes they are doing what they can to reduce the number of prisoners in the jail. He said the bottom line is "there are no beds for the people we have in the jail." He noted that about two years ago we instituted programs to help alleviate overcrowding to give us some breathing room to plan for a new jail facility. He urged the committee to take some action that will move us forward in addressing the need for a new jail. He noted that the study that was completed a couple of years ago stated the cost for a new jail to be \$40 million dollars. He said he did not believe it would cost that much to build a facility to house prisoners. He also said that he is going to need some type of short-term relief for the overcrowded conditions. The Committee asked him to see what he could come up with as far as recommendations to correct the overcrowding on an interim basis. The Sheriff said he would contact the State to see what they will allow him to do. He stated whatever options they have will cost money. The Sheriff noted that Durham and Union County have renovated some buildings as a temporary means to solve some overcrowding problems.

The Committee also discussed briefly what will happen to the space in the Law Enforcement Center when the Police Department moves into their new building. Mr. Strassenburg stated that a lot of

the space can be used for administrative offices. The Sheriff said that once a new jail is built, he thought it may be a good idea to keep some of the jail space in the law enforcement center. He said it could be used to house prisoners other counties don't have room for.

MOTION: Commissioner Keefe offered a motion to recommend that the Board of Commissioners authorize staff to issue requests for proposals from qualified architects to design a jail facility.

SECOND: Commissioner Bacote

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

2. Update: Fencing Project at the Law Enforcement Center

Mr. Bob Stanger reviewed the project with the Committee noting it should be finished by the middle of August. Mr. Stanger noted that a 10 foot high fence with barbed wire would be installed in the secured area and an 8 foot high fence with barbed wire will be installed in the work release area. He stated that the security gates will be operated from inside of the Law Enforcement Center. The Sheriff noted that in order to make the sally port secure, no cars will be able to be parked there. He said perhaps some motorcycles could be parked in that area.

3. Update: Fourth Floor Courthouse Renovations

Mr. Dan MacMillan, Architect, reviewed his plans with the Committee. Dan Ford's operation currently housed on the first floor of the courthouse will be moved to the fourth floor in order to provide space for our County Personnel Department. Initially, there was some thought to expand the Personnel Department to the fourth floor. However, it really is more practical to keep the Personnel Department together and also to keep it on the lower level of the building. The County Finance Department will be moving to the fourth floor, freeing up some space for our Data Processing Department, as well as some space for offices for Administration. Only a portion of the fourth floor will be renovated, leaving space for court expansion and offices for the District Attorney.

Commissioner Keefe objected to some of the plan noting it is his idea to put more movable partitions on the fourth floor as opposed to walls.

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In response to a question, Mr. MacMillan stated he was ready to present the plans to the Board of Commissioners for approval. Mr. MacMillan also inferred that the biggest problem in completion of this project will be coordinating times when the work can be done so it will not interfere with the court system.

The Committee discussed briefly where the county will store the records, furniture, etc. presently located on the fourth floor. It was noted that the Armory can be used as it really lends itself to storage, and we can also hold auctions there, without having to move furniture and equipment as we are currently having to do. It is estimated the Armory could be available to us by January, 1995.

Mr. MacMillan presented the following projected schedule for completion of the courthouse renovations:

September 26	Complete plans and specs ready for bidding
October 3	Complete review by the county. Put out for bids.
November 3	Open bids
November 15	Execute contracts/review by County Attorney. Start construction
June 1	Early date for completion of building based upon normal practices without interference from Courts
July 20	Late date for completion based upon working nights/weekends to meet the requirements of the Courts

MEETING ADJOURNED