

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WORKSHOP OF
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

SEPTEMBER 14, 2021

Present: Commissioner Robert D. Bender, Chairman, District 4
Commissioner Jeffrey W. Bergosh, Vice Chairman, District 1
Commissioner Steven L. Barry, District 5
Commissioner Lumon J. May, District 3
Commissioner Douglas B. Underhill, District 2
Wesley J. Moreno, Interim County Administrator
Kristin Hual, Senior Assistant County Attorney
DeLana Allen-Busbee, Administrative Specialist, Clerk and Comptroller's Office
Anthony Bowens, Administrative Assistant, County Administrator's Office
Heather Mahoney, Official Records Manager, Clerk and Comptroller's Office

Location: Ernie Lee Magaha Government Building, Board Chambers, First Floor
221 Palafox Place, Pensacola, Florida

Report prepared by: DeLana Allen-Busbee

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Chairman Bender called the Committee of the Whole (C/W) Workshop to order at 9:02 a.m.

2. Was the Meeting Properly Advertised?

The meeting was advertised in the *Pensacola News Journal* on September 11, 2021, in the Board's weekly meeting schedule.

3. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Commissioner Barry led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

4. Board Items

I. Redistricting

A. Board Discussion – The C/W viewed and discussed the 2020 County census data presented by the Honorable David Stafford, Escambia County Supervisor of Elections, and provided in hard copy, and the C/W:

(1) Was advised by Mr. Stafford that:

- Raw, aggregate population numbers were provided for each district.
- Numbers ranged at just shy of 6% above what is considered ideal (based on the aggregate population number divided by five) to approximately 5% below ideal.
- Census data is gathered and reported block-by-block, and the blocks contained within the single member districts are then aggregated according to district lines.
- The population is then broken down by demographic; a census selection of Hispanic or Latino is considered origin by U.S. Census, which means the individual can be of any race and should not be added to racial categories.
- A census selection of “2 or more” includes all populations of those who listed two or more races.
- Voting Age Population (VAP) is broken down into demographics by district; Aggregate Black VAP is cumulative and includes VAP Black plus VAP Black plus one or more races.
- The above demographics are commonly used when looking at final VAP of the Black population.
- As the Board considers changes to the districts, they are done census block by census block; as a block is moved from one district to another, it shifts the numbers in the respective districts.
- His office would be willing to attend community meetings, if needed, and provide a software interface with census data for the County’s use in the redistricting process.

(2) Heard comments from Commissioner Underhill regarding the interface/data, the importance of community input, and his intention to meet with his School Board counterpart and host town halls; Mr. Stafford advised that his staff would be happy to help as much as possible pending scheduling issues;

(Continued on Page 3)

AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

4. Continued...

I. Continued...

A. Continued...

- (3) In response to inquiry from Commissioner May, was advised by Mr. Stafford that generally the acceptable range outside of ideal population numbers per district tend to be plus or minus 5%, but that he would always defer to legal counsel, and that the previous round of redistricting had a more significant out-of-range spread compared to this period;
- (4) Discussed anticipating growth and overcompensating or underweighting districts;
- (5) In response to inquiry from Commissioner Bender, was advised by Mr. Stafford that majority/minority district considers VAP and that the population for ideal numbers in each district refers to the total population, while the demographic data deals with VAP; Mr. Stafford further advised that if the Commissioners individually have ideas for district changes, his staff would be able to bring the live program and make adjustments to the districts to see the effects of changes, but would need a starting point;
- (6) Discussed setting the District 5 line first and working out from there, and was advised by Commissioner Barry that he feels the changes in his district will be minor as there is only one precinct south of Nine Mile Road;
- (7) Discussed meeting the requirements for District 3;
- (8) Heard comments from Commissioner Bergosh regarding working with his counterparts from the School Board and ECUA and reviewing the district map from the year 2000; and
- (9) Heard comments from Commissioner Underhill and Commissioner May regarding Mayfair, the importance of doing what is best for the people regardless of district, and unique needs/equities of areas of their districts; and

B. Board Direction – None.

AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

4. Continued...

II. Global Tel*Link (GTL) Corporation Video Visitation

A. Board Discussion – The C/W viewed and discussed a PowerPoint presentation, which was also provided in hard copy, titled *Inmate Video Connection*, presented by Chief Powell, Corrections Director, and the C/W:

(1) Was advised by Chief Powell that:

- The old jail facility has extremely dated equipment that is over ten years old, but staff has a plan in place and is working with vendors to replace equipment.
- There are two primary systems used to facilitate video connections for the use of attorney visits.
- The first system is the Polycom System, which is primarily for Public Defender use, over 30 years old, managed by IT, and does not have usage statistics available.
- The second system is a video connection provided by GTL, which originally began with visits at the Video Visitation Center (VVC), but since March 19, 2020, there have been 15,364 visits conducted via video connections with attorneys or doctors, with many connections occurring remotely.
- Since January 1, 2020, 63,747 inmate video connections have been conducted, which is a staggering number compared to previous usage.
- The outdated equipment needs to be replaced and GTL is in the process of mapping the eight attorney stations in the old jail facility to bring them up to speed with the same new system put in at the new jail facility.

(2) Discussed the importance of addressing and resolving the issues with video visitation, the contract and costs with GTL, and who is responsible for the equipment and support;

(3) Discussed having GTL replace the equipment at their cost with a contract extension versus having the County cover the cost of the equipment;

(4) Upon inquiry from Commissioner May, was advised by Chief Powell that the County receives 88% of the commission of revenue generated by inmate phone calls , which amounted to approximately \$900,000 last year, but receives no portion of video visitation revenue;

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AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

4. Continued...

II. Continued...

A. Continued...

(5) Senior Assistant County Attorney Kristin Hual and Ashley Douglas, Account Manager for GTL, clarified that attorneys are not charged for video visitation, but other users do pay a fee if the service is used remotely;

(6) Was advised by Ms. Douglas that:

- The Federal Communications Commission dictates that, for the current size of the jail, the cost must be below 16 cents per minute for a phone call and the jail charges 15 cents per minute.
- GTL issues every inmate a free five minute phone call per week.
- Prior to 2020, all visitation was run on the County network, with GTL unable to triage support.
- All systems were then migrated over to GTL's network, so that their staff can ensure the system is running correctly.
- The hardware is still out of date and is the main concern; GTL can triage the system, but has been unable to replicate and test all issues.

(7) Discussed concerns regarding the longevity of the existing issues and the need to reach a resolution;

(8) Was advised by Chief Powell that GTL is currently replacing the equipment used for attorney/inmate conferencing at their cost and will cover the cost to replace the remaining outdated equipment (approximately \$200K) if their contract is extended for one year;

(9) Heard comments from Commissioner Underhill regarding the duty of the County to provide access and privacy for attorney/inmate counsel and upon inquiry, was advised by IT Director Bart Siders that the new jail was built with three separate, air gapped networks, and the intent is to do the same for the old jail;

(10) Was advised by Director Siders that there will still be occasional issues due to the nature of video conferencing;

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AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

4. Continued...

II. Continued...

A. Continued...

- (11) Discussed a reported issue in which an inmate's video call with their attorney was allegedly recorded and the importance/obligation of privacy for inmate/attorney conferencing, as well as safety measures to protect that obligation;
- (12) Was advised by Chief Powell that psychiatry is now available via TeleMed and by Ms. Douglas that the charge for a 30 minute video visitation is \$4.95;
- (13) Was advised by Commissioner Barry that he does not have an issue extending the contract, but the information regarding revenue generated by video visitations would need to be provided (as already requested by Commissioner May) as part of the contract extension;
- (14) Heard the request from Commissioner May for the correct cost of a video call and the request from Commissioner Underhill for the estimate of completion for enhanced privacy measures for attorney/inmate conferencing in the jail;
- (15) Heard support from the majority of the Board to extend the contract with GTL, with the additional information provided and a change in language stating that they "shall not" record officers of the court;
- (16) Discussed COVID-19 testing and treatment in the jail; and
- (17) Discussed the importance of protecting the civil rights of inmates in relation to comments provided by defense attorney Gene Mitchell regarding access to clients in the jail, and heard Commissioner May's request for Chief Powell to report back on Mr. Mitchell's issue; and

B. Board Direction – None.

5. Adjourn

Chairman Bender declared the C/W Workshop adjourned at 10:29 a.m.