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

NOVEMBER 9, 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
Honorable Pam Childers, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
Wesley J. Moreno, Interim County Administrator
Alison Rogers, County Attorney
Anthony Bowens, Administrative Assistant, County Administrator's Office
Krykyt Fisher, Office Assistant IV, Clerk and Comptroller's Office

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

Report prepared by: Krykyt Fisher

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

   Chairman Bender called the Committee of the Whole (C/W) Workshop to order at 10:54 a.m.

2. Was the Meeting Properly Advertised?

   The Board was advised by Krykyt Fisher, Office Assistant IV, that the meeting was advertised in the *Escambia Sun Press* on November 4, 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. Cost-Sharing for the New District One Medical Examiner Services Facility

A. Board Discussion – The C/W:

(1) Was advised by Dan Schebler, Medical Examiner's Office Operations Director, that:

- The District One Medical Examiner Services (DOMES) Board met and discussed funding for the new Medical Examiner Facility.
- Consideration is being given to move the facility to a more central location.
- The original consideration was to fund the new facility based on operating costs, which is how the medical examiner services are funded annually.
- An idea was brought forward by a Santa Rosa County Commissioner to equally fund the facility as it is needed by all four counties that are served by the district.
- At this point, the cost share for construction is being negotiated and Okaloosa County agreed to increase their percentage up to 30% from 25%; Santa Rosa County is expected to pay 22% and donate land with a value of $350,000; Walton County will pay 13%; and the expectation is for Escambia County to fund 35%.
- Fifty percent of cases received at the Medical Examiner's Office come from Escambia County; this would be a reduction overall in the cost share model but an increase from the equal split.
- Mr. Schebler is asking for support on behalf of Dr. Oleske, Interim Chief Medical Examiner, to move the project forward.
- The Medical Examiner's Office received $250,000 from the Legislature last year, which is the first time a District Medical Examiner Office has received funding from the State.
- Santa Rosa County is submitting a small special appropriations request this year for additional funding for planning and design; the total cost for planning and design is about $1.5 million
- The cost for building a new Medical Examiner facility is unknown, but Mr. Schebler is using $20 million as a planning figure based on construction costs and his observations around the State.

(2) Heard comments of concern from Commissioner Bender regarding the cost share, currently based on case load, and Walton County's portion of the cost, as well as the possibility of working out a separate MOU with Walton County and charging them for services; and

(Continued on Page 3)

AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

4. Continued…

I. Continued…

(3) Heard support from the Board to continue negotiations, especially concerning cost share and procurement; and

B. Board Direction – None.

II. Jail Medical/Healthcare

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

(1) Briefly discussed educational opportunities for inmates, such as welding certificates, and whether there was the potential for follow up case management;

(2) Was advised by Chief Powell that:

- The Sheriff's office has returned $7.8 million to the general fund that was budgeted but not expensed in the last 3 years.
- As shown in the backup, the FY22 Budget was forecast based on inmate population, with an increase of 23.26%; this increase was driven by a mid-year forecast in cost and inmate population growth in addition to the opening and operation of a 300,000 square foot facility.
- The driving factors of concern in projecting medical expenses are inmates with significant external physician/hospital care costs, staffing costs and vacancy back fill using staffing agencies, and inmate psychiatric service; however, in FY21, staff was able to negotiate substantial savings with regard to the external care.
- Baptist and Sacred Heart Hospitals bill at 110% of the Medicare allowable rate.
- Most, but not all, of the external physicians that inmates are sent to for specialty care are billing at 100% of the Medicaid/Medicare allowance in accordance with Physician Services.
- A local partnership with local dialysis facilities achieves a 94% reduction rate on dialysis costs.
- Bills are checked against the CMS website to ensure that billing isn't any higher than allowable rates.

(Continued on Page 4)

AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

4. Continued…

II. Continued…

A. Continued…

(2) Continued…

- There are control measures in place within the medical budget such as management of pharmaceuticals, initial medical assessments, continuity of care, and competitive bidding for medical equipment and supplies.

(3) Heard comments from Commissioner Bender concerning Medicaid being revoked from prisoners prior to their day in court, which leaves the County responsible for costs, as well as possible salary increases for medical staff to potentially lower the cost of having to use staffing agencies;

(4) Upon inquiry from the Board, was advised by Chief Powell that the current pharmacy budget is $2.016 million;

(5) Was further advised by Chief Powell that:

- An unsolicited proposal was received by Naphcare, Inc. for providing correctional health care services; the cost plan by Naphcare provided for some services, but other services are 100% pass through cost reimbursement by the County, and some services are the direct responsibility of the County; a list of services can be seen in the backup.
- A cost comparison of the use of Naphcare services as opposed to County services revealed that the County would have paid approximately $2.3 million more with Naphcare when using the actual cost for Fiscal Year 2021.
- The next steps include assessment through an RFP on contracted medical services and continued enhancement of recruitment for medical staff with a review of local competitive salaries.
- Heritage Health Solutions is conducting a sample review of medical billing practices to assess whether additional savings can be identified.

(6) Heard comments of support from the Board regarding the benefits of moving forward with an RFP as a way of discovering potential savings at a minimum of the exact current services; and

(7) Heard a brief update regarding inmate commissary as well as inmates who have signed up to receive the COVID-19 vaccination and current cases; and

B. Board Direction – None.

AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

4. Continued

III. Charter Government

A. Board Discussion – The C/W :

(1) Heard a presentation from John Peacock regarding a request to potentially form a commission to study charter government in Florida, and if deemed appropriate, draft a charter document for review by the Board of County Commissioners, the Florida legislature, and the voters; currently only 20 of the 67 Florida counties have a charter government, but over 75% of Florida residents live under a charter government; and

(2) Heard comments of support from Commissioner Bergosh for a charter government, his belief that a charter government would empower voters, as well as his lack of support for a county mayor; and

B. Board Direction – None.

5. Adjourn

Chairman Bender declared the C/W Workshop adjourned at 11:44 a.m.