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

MARCH 10, 2022

Present: Commissioner Jeffrey W. Bergosh, Chairman, District 1
Commissioner Douglas B. Underhill, Vice Chairman, District 2
Commissioner Steven L. Barry, District 5
Commissioner Robert D. Bender, District 4
Commissioner Lumon J. May, District 3
Wesley J. Moreno, Interim County Administrator
Alison Rogers, County Attorney
DeLana Allen-Busbee, Administrative Specialist, Clerk and Comptroller's Office
Heather Mahoney, Official Records Manager, Clerk and Comptrollers' Office
Shamara Jernigan, Agenda Program Coordinator, County Administrator'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 Bergosh called the Committee of the Whole (C/W) Workshop to order at 9:06 a.m.

2. Was the Meeting Properly Advertised?

   The Board was advised by DeLana Allen-Busbee, Administrative Specialist, that the meeting was advertised in the *Escambia Sun Press* on March 3, 2022, in the Board's weekly meeting schedule.

3. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

   Commissioner Bergosh led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

4. Board Items

   I. Jail Discussion

      A. Board Discussion – The C/W viewed and discussed a PowerPoint presentation, which was also provided in hard copy, titled *Jail Facilities*, presented by Interim County Administrator Wes Moreno and Stephan Hall, Finance Department Director, and the C/W:

         (1) Was advised by Interim County Administrator Moreno that:

         - Staff has put together a strategy to vacate the old jail as much as possible, as soon as possible, due to unacceptable conditions
         - Part of the strategy is to harden the Fairfield Drive annex over the next seven to eight months at a cost of approximately $1 million
         - An RFP (Request for Proposals) is going to Purchasing to hire a consultant to get the design for the hardening
         - A notice has been issued to the State Department of Corrections that the County intends to take the "L" Street Work Release building back in roughly 5.5 months, at which time the facility will be hardened to house inmates
         - By close of business Friday, close to 200 inmates will be moved from the old jail to the new jail
         - The larger discussion is how to move forward long term

         (2) Heard inquiry from Commissioner Underhill regarding the impact on the workforce that the short-term strategy will have and was advised by Interim County Administrator Moreno that it will require an orchestration to implement, but that the intent is to recruit more officers;

         (3) Was advised by Interim County Administrator Moreno that a Memorandum of Understanding was being voted on by the union, which will significantly increase pay for officers; was further advised that in the long-term, building phase two of the new jail could take 5-6 years;

         (4) Discussed concerns over maximizing available resources with existing facilities, including the road camp, as well as officer-to-inmate ratios and whether they meet guidelines;

         (5) Was advised by Chief Rich Powell, Corrections Director, that while there are exceptions, the ratio of officers to inmates is close to ideal and that staff balances numbers where and when needed;

(Continued on Page 3)

AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

4. Continued…

   I. Continued…

      A. Continued…

         (6) Discussed cell configurations in the new and old jail, ideas for maximizing space in the new jail to get as many inmates out of the old jail as possible, and safety concerns for officers in the new jail due to a more open floor configuration;

         (7) Extensively discussed options and alternatives for the old jail, including temporary repairs to house remaining inmates and moving inmates to another county, among others; was provided a brief overview of the minimum level of repairs needed for the old jail by Facilities Director Rob Hogan;

         (8) Heard comments from Commissioner Bergosh regarding his lack of interest in spending money repairing the failing old jail facility and heard comments from Commissioner Bender concerning the need to review cost options before making a decision;

         (9) Heard majority support from the Board regarding building the new wing for the new jail facility and ultimately tearing down the old jail;

         (10) Heard the Board's request for an analysis and options for housing the inmates remaining in the old jail to be brought to the next Regular Board Meeting for further discussion;

         (11) Extensively discussed alternatives to incarceration, the need for preventative and rehabilitative measures, and ensuring that relationships with the judiciary and State Attorney's office are managed to help with cases where incarceration can be avoided;

         (12) Discussed concerns with vacancies in Corrections, possible incentives to encourage retention and boost morale for current employees (and possibly tying incentives to attendance), and that there are more issues than just salary and benefits at play;

         (13) Discussed whether plans going forward should include planning for growth in inmate population and tied that discussion back to the need for finding incarceration alternatives; also briefly discussed extending an invitation to Sheriff Chip Simmons for jail discussions;

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AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

4. Continued…

I. Continued…

A. Continued…

(14) Discussed whether a stand-alone medical wing would have any cost benefit, the levels of security among incarcerated individuals, and the need to review implementation of the rest of the plan that was created when the previous phase of the new jail was built, which was referred to as the County's "largest public works project";

(15) Discussed the previous Department of Justice Report and was advised by Chief Powell that from his readings of the report, all objectives have been met; and

(16) Heard support from the Board for staff to move forward with the short-term plans on moving inmates to other facilities, the RFP, and bonding the money for phase two of the new jail, and was advised by the Board that once an analysis and options were reviewed, a decision would be made concerning how to handle the old jail; and

B. Board Direction – None.

5. Adjourn

Chairman Bergosh declared the C/W Workshop adjourned at 10:35 a.m.