

Knox County Jail Study Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 28, 2006

Place: Training Room, Sheriff's Office

I. Call to order at 4:40 p.m.

Unofficial meeting, minimum number of committee members not present.
Committee members present: Don Choquette, Todd Butler and Tammy Swasey-Ballou, Mark Jensen D.O.

Ex-officio members present: Arthur Thompson SMRT, Dan Davey, Darlene McKenney, Lawrence Nash, Mason Johnson, Linwood Lothrop, William Post, Geoffrey Rushlau D.A., Anne Beebe-Center.

II. Discussion

Mr. Arthur Thompson presented SMRT's Architectural and Engineering proposal for the Knox County Jail Study dated June 14, 2006, a copy of the entire report will be part of the official meeting minutes.

Mr. Thompson will be the SMRT project leader and is a SMRT Principal. SMRT's focus is on criminal justice & public safety. Projects completed range from 28 to 100 beds. Rod Miller, a Correctional Planning Consultant is Mr. Thompson's project assistant. Miller's specialties include bed needs projections, inmate classification and development of mathematical models--Mr. Miller worked on the original Knox County jail in 1988.

Direct Supervision (DS) is in and Indirect Supervision (IS) is out--the Knox County Jail was constructed to IS specs. Direct supervision developed in the late 1970's as an experiment but was thought not to work at the time because the length of time of an inmates incarceration and was only measured in days. By the ends of the 1980's, jails again looked at DS and in the 1990's was adopted by the American Correctional Association (ACA) and is now the jail standard.

Direct supervision benefits:

- * Officers get to know the inmates better
- * More cost effective supervision
- * More humane environment
- * Reduces disruptive behavior and staff injuries

Mr. Thompson stated that his verbal conversation around the United States indicates that there is a lower noise level and the inmate's environment feels safer.

Phase One Program content will include:

- Bed needs projection, classification and peaking --projections to cover five, ten, fifteen and twenty years. Evaluate, “you build them and we will fill them” philosophy.
- Likely code updates issues and observable maintenance and repair needs.
- Review existing facilities --re, adding on, renovations and expansion. Females’ facility needs separation and cost analysis.
- Report space needs of Sheriff’s Department, Patrol and Communications.
- Describe extent of renovation.
- Diagram feasible expansion options.
- Establish projection direction.

Mr. Choquette asked what effect the change from indirect to direct supervision and a more efficient separation of female inmates would have on increased facility obsolescence costs and expansion costs. Would Knox County be better off to negotiate an agreement (long term?) with Two Bridges for boarding female inmates? Mr. Thompson stated that it would be hard to manage small groups of female inmates or to reuse these smaller parts of the jail. He also stated that a number of counties are looking at the same idea and it should be part of the analysis--and stated we need to consider that down the road beds will run out and then what do we do?

More intense treatment of inmates to be considered. As inmate population increases, the ratio of inmates to staff improves and is more cost effective.

Knox County staff will be interviewed. General descriptions of needs of Sheriff’s Office, Patrol and Communications to be developed--also suggested solutions to their problems--re, office space, storage space, training space, etc. Interviews will be conducted during the first half of July.

There was discussion about the length of time to complete Phase One - Ms. Beebe-Center asked the question. Phase One includes:

1. Project Kick-Off.
2. Prepare Inmate Population forecasts: Classification and Peaking Factors, Projected Population by Classification.
 - 2.1. Alternate: Update Profiles of the Detention Population, Admissions and Release (Not included in Basic Scope).
 - 2.2. Alternate: Identify the Current Use of Alternate Programs and Describe the Potential for Additional Alternative Programs and Criminal Justice System Process Improvements (Not included in Basic Scope).

Note: Complete detail provided in Section 2, Page 1 and 2 of SMRT’s proposal.

Mr. Thompson stated Phase One can be completed by the end of September. Phase Two cannot start until Phase One is completed and “the fee for this phase of the work can only be established after the scope of the effort was determined in Phase One”.

(Added note: Funding for Phase Two will not be available until the Knox County Budget for 2007 is developed and approved).

Mr. Thompson mentioned that Phase One is essentially data collection etc.--the development of gross space needs and that Phase Two entails the development and verification of brick and mortar estimates etc. -- the breakdown of gross space needs.

Mr. Post stated that one response had been received from his "RFP" solicitation--costs outlined in Section Six, Page One of the bid -- \$23,320.

Mr. Thompson stated that a deeper analysis of population characteristics needs to be looked at. Why do we have so many people locked up? What are we doing to move them through the justice system--to get them out? The analysis will "identify the current use of alternative programs and describe the potential for additional alternative programs and criminal justice system process improvements". Material covered in quote book--Section 2, Page 2, Alternates 2.1 and 2.2.

Mr. Thompson will use a total planning system approach.

Some talk about The Jail Control System which was recently replaced--a 30 year life was quoted and Sheriff Davey asked what a 30 year life means? Mr. Thompson said that control systems do not last 30 years--the system needs to be updated as time passes, it is more that just replacing relays etc.--needs and programs are constantly changing which affects the capability of this type of equipment.

SMRT is working on an 1880's jail in New York--use of new equipment is dramatic--swipe cards, bar card code bracelets make dramatic changes for inmate control and staff efficiencies.

Mr. Choquette asked if we used the pod system, could we get rid of the barb wire in the outside recreation area. Mr. Thompson said that the inside recreation areas have an open, secured ceiling, which gives inmates free access to the recreation area with fresh, outside air--Two Bridges uses this design--Thompson recommends it.

Mr. Choquette asked if minimum security prisoners would have the same "accommodations" as other prisoner or would the Two Bridges model be used? Mr. Thompson said that some inmates can have different access to prison facilities, some more restricted, some less. All depends on the inmate classification. Mr. Choquette said he wants a good discussion regarding this matter and Mr. Thompson agreed--at the end of the day the point is this will be your (Knox County's) facility.

Mr. Choquette said there is additional information in Section 2, Page 2, which describes Alternates 2.1 and 2.2; this information is invaluable and will help us --it is worth the extra \$6,000. We have a serious drug problem in Knox County and need a better way to handle it. Mr. Choquette also asked if it was safe to say that both phases would be completed by mid-September. Mr. Thompson said yes.

Cost of Phase One, including Alternates 2.1 and 2.2 is \$23,320. Phase Two cannot be defined until Phase One is completed.

Mr. Nash stressed that we need to keep moving as to not lose momentum and then have to start this project all over again.

Mr. Choquette wanted to know if we sign off today, do we still have flexibility to tweak. Mr. Thompson replied "yes".

Mr. Choquette noted that the inmate capacity of Two Bridges is 120 and includes a female cell block to handle 22 inmates. Mr. Thompson explained what would happen if a female capacity grows by using double bunking. Mr. Choquette asked "that if we had a large enough female population could we do a better job of taking care of them? What can we do and how can we do it?" Mr. Thompson explained an example was the female unit at Windham. The negative side is they are taken further from the community and their families. The positive side is to have a separate location. Mr. Choquette wanted to know what size population we should deal with.

Based on the March 31, 2006 YTD Knox County Jail Population report, the jail had a total of 87.2 inmates, 26.5 were boarded out. The total included 14.6 female inmates and 6.1 were boarded out--20.4 males were boarded out.

Sheriff Davey added that Knox County has an unusually high percent of pretrial inmates. Mr. Rushlau though this should be looked at.

Mr. Thompson said, do everything to avoid, "build it and they will come."

Ms. Swasey-Ballou said she sits on other committees that target child risk factors. When programs are initiated to address these problems, the numbers go down. When looking out 30 years from now--we will still see some of these people?

Mr. Rushlau said that Rockland has more Superior Court time than surrounding counties.

Talked about use of video communications--they are effective and being used--seems objections to use are fading.

Next meeting date was discussed--next meeting date will be Tuesday, July 18, 2006 at The Knox County Courthouse.

During the meeting, Mr. Post stated that the Commissioners would act on an award of the contract to SMRT for Architectural and Engineering Study for Knox County Jail at their July 11, 2006 regular meeting.

Mr. Choquette stated the sooner we get the study results from SMRT, the better.

Sheriff Davey asked about the formality of having District Attorney Rushlau as a voting member—consensus was to add DA. Clergy members have declined to join the committee, but Sheriff Davey will keep trying—item will be added to next agenda.

Comments were made that meeting with Mr. Thompson and his associates are crucially important. Mr. Thompson requested that managers talk to their employees about their needs and suggestions--be sure to get their input--we want them to be a part of the study. Getting this information through the Jail Study Committee is an integral part of the study process.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Darlene McKenney
Recording Secretary

Don Choquette
Chair, Knox County Jail Committee