

**Knox County  
Jail Study Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, September 7, 2006**

**I. Call to Order**

The Jail Study Committee met on Thursday, September 7, 2006 at the Knox County Administrative Offices at 5:00 p.m. Chair Don Choquette called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m. Committee members present were Don Choquette, Chip Laite, Chief Deputy Todd Butler, Tammy Swasey-Ballou, Dr. Mark Jensen, and DA G. Rushlau. Ex-Officio members present were Sheriff Dan Davey, Representative Chris Rector, Commissioner Lawrence Nash, Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center, Jail Administrator John Hinkley, and County Administrator William Post.

**II. Meeting Minutes.**

- a. Approve Minutes of May 17, 2006 Meeting.

Todd Butler motioned to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2006 meeting as submitted. The motion was seconded by Don Choquette. There being no discussion, a vote was taken with all in favor.

- b. Record for the record minutes of trip to Two Bridges Regional Jail (TBRJ) Construction Site, May 23, 2006 and addendum prepared by Chair.

Todd Butler motioned to record for the record the minutes of trip to Two Bridges Regional Jail (TBRJ) Construction Site, May 23, 2006 and the addendum prepared by the Chair. The motion was seconded by Chip Laite. There being no discussion, a vote was taken with all in favor.

- c. Approve Minutes of June 28, 2006 Meeting.

Todd Butler motioned to approve the minutes of the June 28, 2006 meeting as submitted. The motion was seconded by Geoff Rushlau. There being no discussion, a vote was taken with all in favor.

- d. Approve Minutes of July 18, 2006 Meeting.

Chip Laite motioned to approve the minutes of the July 18, 2006 meeting as submitted. The motion was seconded by Tammy Swasey-Ballou. There being no discussion, a vote was taken with all in favor.

**III. Election of Officers.**

- a. Vice-Chair

Don Choquette asked for nominations for vice-chair. Todd Butler volunteered and Chip Laite seconded the nomination. Don Choquette asked for further nominations. There were none and nominations were closed. A vote was taken with all in favor, Todd Butler abstained.

- b. Secretary

Don Choquette stated that it has been difficult pulling the minutes together, on a timely basis for the past meetings and he would like a secretary to be elected from the membership in order to help with this task. The Administrator has helped with the minutes as has the Jail Administration. He stated that it is a great deal of work, but the minutes are vital.

Chris Rector stated that staff should be provided to the committee to prepare minutes. Don Choquette stated that there is no budget for the committee and that the Commissioners' budget is absorbing costs associated with mailing and reproducing documents. Chip Laite stated that the Commissioners should find funding for staff to prepare minutes.

Anne Beebe-Center asked if the administrative assistant at the jail was preparing minutes. Hinkley replied that she was (a draft), but does not want to any longer.

Bill Post stated that he had offered to take notes at the meetings and prepare minutes, but that he would like a back-up in case he cannot attend every meeting. It is not the best use of his time, but he offered so a solution was present until the next budget year could include funding.

Tammy Swasey-Ballou volunteered to be secretary to back-up Bill Post. She stated that it is difficult to participate in a meeting and take notes at the same time.

Chip Laite seconded Tammy Swasey-Ballou nomination as secretary. There were no further nominations and a vote was taken with all in favor, Tammy Swasey-Ballou abstained.

**IV. General Discussion – Comments requested from Committee Members, re: what are your specific jail study priorities?**

Don Choquette stated that the committee has not had an opportunity to discuss what each of the members feel are the priorities for the committee. He would like each member to describe what their priorities are.

Sheriff Davey stated that he, Chief Deputy Butler and Jail Administrator Hinkley had met and discussed what their priorities are for the jail. Sheriff Davey read these to the Committee (See Attachment 1).

Tammy Swasey-Ballou stated that her priority is rehabilitation of the inmates using additional programs and training. The inmates need some type of program to teach skills that will prevent them from returning to jail.

Don Choquette stated that the problem is more than incarceration because inmates return to the jail after being released. Tammy Swasey-Ballou's point of providing programs means spending money up front to turn the inmates around so the county can save money in the future. This is difficult to sell to the public. He stated that some people believe that a jail is just bricks and mortar, but the value of the facility is in the people that run it. There are many pieces to the solution to the problem of overcrowding and they include adequate pay, training, policies, treatment of personnel and retainment of employees.

**V. Develop Mission Statement.**

Geoff Rushlau asked if the mission statement to be developed was for the jail or the Jail Study Committee. Don Choquette replied that it is for the committee.

Geoff Rushlau stated that he did not believe that the jail had a mission statement. John Hinkley handed a copy of the jail's mission statement to Geoff Rushlau (Attachment 2). Geoff Rushlau stated that the jail's mission statement seems too long and appears to discuss security for the public and rehabilitation for the inmates. He stated that the Sheriff's priorities are potential solutions to the problem. He suggested that a more philosophical mission statement should be created rather than the current one which is very pragmatic.

Don Choquette stated that he prepared a draft prioritized mission statement outline with six general topics Plus sub topics for each general topic. (Attachment 3)

Chris Rector agreed with Geoff Rushlau's comment that a mission statement should be philosophical and brief. Don Choquette agreed, but stated that the first step in creating a mission statement is to determine what the mission is and what steps are needed to achieve the mission.

Don Choquette stated that an idea was discussed before the meeting to elect a sub-committee to discuss and draft a mission statement over the next two weeks and then present it to the full committee. Anne Beebe-Center stated that it was a good idea for a sub-committee to work on the mission statement.

Geoff Rushlau stated that the mission of the Jail Study Committee is to make recommendations to the commissioners for the efficient management of the jail. He has heard that the jail is seeking a variance to house more people and it seems that would be defeating the purpose of rehabilitating the inmates. John Hinkley stated that the variance is a short-term solution to the overcrowding issue. The variance is a stop-gap measure to eliminate the cost of boarding inmates.

Todd Butler stated that the mission statement should include something about long-term solutions. The committee needs to address space needs for not just housing inmates, but also for programs. His opinion is that Knox County should already be negotiating with Two Bridges Regional Jail (TBRJ) for another wing. Chip Laite stated that TBRJ is an option and it could be a good option. Todd Butler stated that it should be considered while the variance allows the jail to solve the overcrowding issue with minimal boarding. There were many reasons that a third county was not involved when Lincoln and Sagadahoc Counties created TBRJ, and part of that was a third county attempting to pass a referendum.

Mark Jensen stated that there is a similar train of thought in the medical world. There is a move towards centralizing and regionalizing medicine.

Chris Rector asked what incentive TBRJ would have of partnering with Knox County. Todd Butler stated that they have high costs that need to be paid, and Knox County could help them pay those. Knox County would still need to operate the current facility as a holding unit, or for programming.

Chip Laite asked what it would take to get an idea from TBRJ on a financial impact to Knox County. Bill Post explained that the county is currently in negotiations with TBRJ to provide bed space for inmates on a contract basis. TBRJ officials are pleased that Knox County is the first county that had formally met with them and that has initiated discussions around contracting. Discussions around joining with TBRJ have been informal, and they want to wait to open the facility and ensure it is operating correctly before deciding whether or not they want another county to join with them. But they have stated that it is a possibility.

Mark Jensen asked if it would make sense to use the current Knox County jail as a programming facility for other counties inmates, if Knox County joined with TBRJ. Anne Beebe-Center stated that would be a good idea.

Geoff Rushlau stated that the politics of adding a third county to TBRJ may be difficult as they had difficulty with the voters approving the facility and the cooperation between the two counties. Bill Post did not agree. He stated that he and Major Hinkley have had good discussions with members of the executive committee of the Jail Authority and appear to be in a good position. TBRJ is very interested in reducing the costs to both counties.

Bill Post stated that this committee should not move to fast as its duty is to provide recommendations for a solution to the overcrowding issue to the Commission.

Geoff Rushlau read a proposed mission statement: "It is the mission of the Jail Study Committee to provide recommendations to the Knox County Commission, based on the best available information, on how to accomplish on a long-term basis, the mission of the Knox County Jail to both ensure public safety and to provide rehabilitative services to inmates."

Todd Butler motioned to accept the mission statement as read. The motion was seconded by Tammy Swasey-Ballou. A vote was taken with all in favor.

## **VI. County Administrator William Post.**

- a. Update on Two Bridges Regional Jail Meetings (Done in previous discussion).

b. Update on Waldo County – Restart of their Jail Project.

Bill Post stated that Waldo County has restarted their efforts at building a new jail facility. There does not appear to be any sentiment in joining Knox County to research if a joint facility would be appropriate.

Anne Beebe-Center stated that Waldo County seems intent on building their own facility.

Geoff Rushlau stated that there was a jail referendum in Waldo County at the same time as Lincoln and Sagadahoc's. It was not passed in Waldo County. He stated that Waldo County's problems dwarf those of Knox County.

Chip Laite stated that he had talked with a Waldo County Commissioner about opening discussions with Knox County and there was no desire on his part to do that.

c. Update on DOT vacant property on Rankin Street – potential site for Communications Center.

Bill Post stated that the County is exploring whether the vacant MDOT building and property on Rankin Street is a viable option for relocating the communications center and the Emergency Management Agency. The City of Rockland is also looking at the property to see if it is feasible to relocate the police department and public works there. The County and the City are approaching the project both together and separately.

d. Jail Study Committee Financial Report as of September 1, 2006.

The Jail Study Committee does not have any funding in the current budget. However, SMRT's contract is for \$23,320, of which \$10,000 is from the Jail operating budget and \$13,320 from the Jail capital reserve account. Other costs associated with the committee such as mailings are being absorbed by the Commissioner's budget. He stated that he would be proposing some funding for the committee in the next budget.

**VII. Next Meeting (September 26<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m.)**

Don Choquette stated that the next meeting is scheduled for September 26<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m. at the same location.

**VIII. Adjourn.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Tammy Swasey-Ballou  
Secretary

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William S. Post  
County Administrator