

Jackson County Jail Task Force

Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2018

MARC Boardroom

Attendees:

John Fierro, Co-Chair
Alvin Brooks, Committee Member
Alissia Canady, Committee Member
Dr. Karen Curls, Committee Member
Niki Lee Donawa, Committee Member
Brandon Ellington, Committee Member
Joseph Megerman, Committee Member
Brent Morris, Committee Member
Ralph Monaco, Committee Member
Marshanna Hester, Public Information Officer
Angie Jeffries, Director of Communications
Brian Johnson, Department of Corrections
Ashley Burke, County Executive's Office
Brian Gaddie, Director of Public Works

Regrets:

Dr. Gayle Holliday, Co-Chair
Scott Burnett, Committee Member
Carol Coe, Committee Member
Capt. Doug Niemeier, Committee Member
Lisa Pelofsky, Committee Member
Mike Schumacher, Committee Member
Mike Sharp, Committee Member
Judge John Torrence, Committee Member

Meeting was called to order by Co-Chair John Fierro

Introductions by the committee members.

Approval of the agenda. Motion was made by Niki Lee Donawa. Motion was seconded by Dr. Karen Curls. All in favor for approval.

Approval of the minutes from the January 12 meeting. Motion was made by Dr. Karen Curls. Motion was seconded by Niki Lee Donawa. All in favor for approval.

Brian Johnson discussed the accumulation of data throughout the process and asked that committee members please submit their data requests through the co-chairs.

Brian also shared an update regarding the consultant for the master plan. The consultant has been recommended to the purchasing department. The next steps in the process are for the consultant to be given legislative approval and awarded the contract. The consultant chosen will be announced publicly at that point. Once awarded the co-chairs will then meet with the consultant to ensure that there is no overlap or duplication in effort.

Brian then went on to inform the group that JCDC has made many improvements relating to the facility structure. These improvements include plumbing approval, module and pod remediation, kitchen and locker room renovation. In the coming months more projects will be underway. The co-chairs have been invited to Capital Improvement meetings and can attest to the improvements and progress.

Alvin Brooks asked Brian Johnson when JCDC can increase the number of Corrections Officers.

Ongoing progress and something that was worked on in the first task force. The county is making progress in that area and provided an update to the original task force which is available on the county website. The Department of Corrections is continuing to attract Corrections Officers, retaining our current Corrections Officers, and the continued education and training of our Corrections Officers. The legislature approved the increase of the salaries for the Corrections Officers two weeks ago, but waiting on negotiations with their unions. The increase in salary is across the board, from entry level to those that have tenure in the department, it will be retroactive January 1st.

Co-Chair John Fierro asked that the sub-committee chairs give reports on their respective sub-committees:

Dr. Karen Curls, Offender Housing Sub-Committee

The sub-committee is in need of more data, and need to schedule a meeting with Brian Johnson to receive more data. The offender housing committee is looking at data from 2014-present regarding diverse populations, structure of service and deliveries, trends regarding populations in the American Corrections Associations requirements for housing and services. Those four areas will become the basis for the criteria of all the data that the sub-committee is starting to pull. The group has some real concerns regarding mental health, different types of populations in regards to the LGBTQ, as well as services for individuals with substance abuse.

Alissia Canady, Intergovernmental Concerns

Alissia met with the other sub-committee chairs this week to provide some insight on what the committee has done so far and provide some dialogue about the role of this committee. The data received from Brian Johnson is being sorted through and mostly comprises of who is in custody, for what, and how long they have been there. This committee's objective is to deal with policy, processes and procedures of different jurisdictions that effect those persons who find themselves incarcerated. Part of the data collection to get a sense of who is really in

custody. There are a lot of perceptions of who is in custody, but the committee wants to take a data driven approach. There still is a need to synthesize the information that was received before it can be put into a concise report form. For example, one defendant can have five or ten charges and these are all separate entries on the spreadsheet.

Brian Johnson's objective was to give the sub-committee the data in the raw format, but if there are some perimeters of how the committee would like to analyze that data then Brian would be able to help curate that data that is more visible to the committee.

Looking at the data surrounding bonds there are a number of individuals that would have low level offenses (D felonies), but their bond amounts are a much higher amount and serving a number amount of days in jail. Need to explore giving credit to offenders that serve time similar to what Kansas City does as a policy consideration. Alissia came across some research on how other counties deal with incarceration issues and essentially it really hinges on a collective dialogue about what time of offenses are not going to be prosecuted, a summons is issued instead of a warrant, or allowing to have a signature bond instead of being incarcerated. We need to figure out what low level offenses and decide if it makes sense to put some policy around these charges for Jackson County.

Discussed alternatives to incarceration such as house arrest. There have been delays in people being released, because trying to verify home plan and not all providers have land lines. Would like to broaden the type of plans that do not require a land line. All of these topics are being explored and hopefully within the next one to two meetings the committee can create a framework around those issues based on the data of who is in custody and how to reduce that number.

The sub-committee will also be working with focus groups of people that have been incarcerated in Jackson County in the past five years. Would like to get their suggestions on progress and changes that may need to be made as well. Would to coordinate this through Probation and Parole.

Ralph Monaco, Population Control

The population control sub-committee recently took a tour of the jail, and Ralph highly recommends the rest of the task force to take a tour of the jail. After taking the tour you will walk away with a better understanding of the population inside of the jail and what the issues are. Ralph applauds the County Executive's office and Department of Public Works for the improvements inside the jail. He was overwhelmingly impressed with the staff inside the jail. There are procedures and structural improvements that can eliminate one-on-one contact with those that are dangerous detainees.

From a population perspective the committee is seeking additional data. When we identified population when the jail was first opened you could say population was a gender, but now populations are changing. You need to consider the fact that there are defendants that are violent, non-violent, some that can't post bond, where do you house and how do you

distinguish the housing unit. Then you have the defendants that are charged with violent crimes housed in one location, but there's overflowing. There is also a lack of funding to help those with mental health problems. Didn't realize when you talk about population the totality of what is really there.

Co-Chair Fierro asked the Task Force if there was any questions regarding the future work of the task force.

Alvin Brooks asked if we are able to do projections of population in the future. What will Jackson County population look like 5 years from now? Ten years from now? Hoping someone is looking at these trends now. We ought to know what the population break down is and why?

Alissia asked if there was a decision to move forward with a new jail. How do we justify the money that is being used now to improve the current jail?

Brian Gaddie explained there are a series of initiatives that are being completed right now based upon priority. We are looking at health, life safety, and welfare items as being the highest priority. We are looking at short and long term as well. With the short term we are looking at how can we remediate and mitigate these high priority items that we have identified. As we are progressing in our longer term agenda that involves some of these more detailed studies we will address the other items in the future.