

MINUTES  
JAIL STUDY ADHOC COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, March 18, 2021

TIME: 9:00 am

LOCATION: Courthouse – Room 114

Members Present: Laura Valenstein, Jake Hahn, John Hokamp, Adam Fischer, Lee Thao, and Dave LaFontaine

Members Present Virtually: Al Breu

Others Present: Reuben VanTassel, Ed Newton, William Winch, Shawn Becker, Quentin Ellis, Ted Ashbeck, Dennis Polach, John Cain, Kurt Berner, Mike Feirer, and Joe Terry

Others Present Virtually: Lance Pliml, Amy Kaup, Bill Clendenning, Justin Fischer, Emily Kent, along with 2 others that did not sign in.

1. Chair Valenstein called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.
2. There was no public comment.
3. The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed. Motion by Breu and seconded by LaFontaine to approve the minutes. Motion carried by voice vote.
4. Justin Fischer from Robert W. Baird & Co., Inc. presented on different financing options based on borrowing all at once or in segments as well as current and historically low lending rates. He explained the effects each scenario would have on mill rates and the additional costs to borrowing in segments. As stimulus funds become available, the interest rate will most likely rise. Rates we based on a 20-year loan.

Plan 1A was based on a 2.5% interest rate and resulted in a \$.35 impact on mill rate.

Plan 1B was based on a 3.75% interest rate and resulted in a \$.47 impact on mill rate as well as an estimated \$11 million in increased costs.

Plan 2A was based on split borrowing over time and resulted in a \$.25 impact on mill rate.

Plan 2B was based on a 3.5% interest rate and resulted in a projection of \$9 million dollars in cost increase.

He also explained the County could incur fees during project finalization before borrowing was finalized. Currently Wood County has up \$200 million borrowing capacity if you include the jail project. Timing and interest rates a favorable for the jail project. Justin Fischer answered questions and explained the County could borrow in 2021 if it chose to even if the project would not begin until 2022.

5. John Cain of Venture Architects presented two different options for 2-pod jail facilities. The main differences between the two options were that "Option 5" had pods side by side and required the acquisition of at least one property. "Option 7" stacked the two pods to create a smaller footprint and does not appear to require the acquisition any neighboring residential property. Kurt Berner of Samuels Group discussed rough costs for each option. Option 5 was \$56,941,154 and Option 7 was \$57,506,922. He also discussed the progression of design development and budget refinement. Issues with moving the new jail construction closer to the courthouse building were discussed. The issues include: issues with relocating/access to existing transformers, parking, and other maintenance access.
6. Sheriff Becker discussed soft costs and operational costs associated with the two pod designs presented. The Sheriff's Department anticipates needing to add 8 corrections officers and a maintenance worker for either of the two pod designs. The cost of these additions was contrasted with the cost of out of county housing contracts to hold inmates. Sheriff Becker pointed out the staff cost is significantly less than money spent on out of county housing. Kurt Berner explained that the money saved in this area could be used to offset portion of the increased borrowing. Sheriff Becker answered questions, explained the Department's preference for Option 7, and also explained he is against acquiring residential property for this project.
7. The upcoming Ad hoc Committee Schedule was discussed.
8. Discussion regarding structural/mechanical issues in the current jail were discussed. Reuben VanTassel explained the costs/need for some of the projects would be less if the area was being used for a different purpose. This topic was suggested to be added to a future agenda. Kurt Berner explained that the cost to completely demolish the existing jail would be similar to that of "leaving it shelled out."
9. Joe Terry, Wisconsin Rapids Director of Public Works discussed the County's potential acquisition of Avon Street for a jail project. He explained the process and duration of doing so. He discussed potential zoning changes that would be required. He explained the impact on various utilities under Avon Street, but offered that he didn't think there were a lot of issues to be had as the utilities mostly served just the courthouse already. He explained the utility connections to the courthouse and any new jail facility would need to be addressed in building design.
10. Discussion on design options was held. LaFontaine made a motion, and Thao seconded, to move forward with exploring Option 7. Discussion was held regarding programming approaches/needs/space, corrections trends, classification of inmates, community group involvement, technology, as well as the potential cost of the project without including the Sheriff's Department portion. The motion carried by voice vote.
11. The next meeting date was set, Thursday, April 1, 2021, 11:30AM, Wood County Courthouse, Room 114.
12. Chair Valenstein adjourned the meeting at 10:48 AM.

Minutes taken by Quentin Ellis, Wood County Sheriff's Department, and are in draft form pending approval of the committee.