

## MINUTES

### JAIL STUDY ADHOC COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, April 15, 2021

TIME: 9:00 am

LOCATION: Courthouse – Room 114

Members Present: Laura Valenstein, Jake Hahn, Adam Fischer, Lee Thao, Al Breu and Dave LaFontaine

Members Present Virtually: John Hokamp

Others Present: Reuben VanTassel, Ed Newton, William Winch, Shawn Becker, Quentin Ellis, Ted Ashbeck, Susanna Pearson, Dennis Polach, Bill Clendenning, John Cain, and Mike Feirer

Others Present Virtually: Jason Demarco, Ray Bossert

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. Chair Valenstein pointed out a correction on the spelling of Karen Flynn's name. Motion by Fischer and seconded by LaFontaine to approve the minutes. Motion carried by voice vote.
4. Operating costs of the existing jail and a potential new jail were discussed. Sheriff Becker indicated the current operating costs of the jail are around \$4.1 million annually. In order to operate a new facility, there would need to be an increase in staff. That cost is approximately \$660,000 for additional corrections and maintenance staff. After accounting for staff costs and potential contracted service cost increases, the Sheriff's Department estimated the operating costs would be approximately \$489,000 less than that of the current facility as out of county housing and transport costs would be eliminated.

Supervisor Hahn asked about current maintenance costs and how they may compare to costs for a new facility. Reuben Van Tassel explained that efficiencies in the new facility could offset any cost increases in maintenance from our current facility, keeping costs relatively similar. John Cain of Venture Architects offered that their building standards often attain LEED certification "silver standards" though they don't pay to have that designation confirmed.

5. Discussion was held regarding financing/borrowing for a new jail. Chair Valenstein reviewed documents previously provided by Baird. She discussed the county's projected remaining borrowing capacity of approximately \$202 million that would be available after a jail project was borrowed for.

Chair Valenstein relayed she and Ed Newton had recently had conversation with Justin from Baird. She indicated the maximum mill rate increase as a result of borrowing for this project would be \$.35

per \$100,000 of value per household. With the average priced home in Wood County being \$130,000 to \$140,000, the mill rate increase would result in an approximate \$40 increase per home.

Ed Newton discussed the length of borrowing term. If the entire amount is borrowed at once, unused funds could be deposited and interest could be potentially used to offset some project costs. He also explained local financial institutions could be included in the borrowing/lending opportunity.

The County's current municipal bond rating AA1. Financing the jail project would likely drop our rating to an AA2 or even AA3. Ed explained this rating drop could result in an estimated 1% increase in future borrowing rates. Discussion was held regarding if our rating could return as the financing gets paid off. It is hard to tell if it would, or if so, when.

At this time, Ray Bossert made comment on finding an effective way of messaging tax increases to the public. Supervisor Feirer discussed rating levels and effects/results he's seen in Marshfield.

COVID funding was discussed. Supervisor Fischer said the Operations Committee would be discussing how these funds can be used at an upcoming meeting.

6. John Cain from Venture Architects presented on the jail project description, concept, images, and capital costs. He discussed the design capacity and operational capacity of the proposed facility. The jail could house 225 to 300 inmates by design. Operating capacity would be between 180-240 inmates depending on whether cells were built for double occupancy. Cain discussed the evolution of the design and explained that by "stacking" the pods, many square feet were saved. This plan will not require any acquisition of the neighboring residential properties. The layout and potential appearance was discussed. The cost is estimated at \$56,220,000. Construction costs are estimated at \$46,850,000 with a spring of 2022 bid. Samuels Group would oversee the construction. \$9,370,000 in costs would be associated with Venture Architects and other costs directly involved in the project.

Supervisor Winch requested the cost of the 60 foot walkway that would connect the new facility to the courthouse. Cain explained that while he didn't have a cost specific to the walkway, it was included in the total cost provided.

Supervisor Breu and Supervisor LaFontaine led discussions regarding material costs and availability as well as potential timelines associated with the borrowing, planning, and building. Cain explained that if a decision would be reached this summer, the project could move on with a spring of 2022 start.

7. The upcoming Ad hoc Committee Schedule was discussed. April 29, 2021 the committee will tour Eau Claire County's jail. Some members will be picked in Marshfield. May 13, 2021 the committee will meet to discuss a recommendation to County Board. May 20, 2021 the committee will meet to address concerns raised and address messaging strategies.
8. The next meeting date was set, Thursday, April 29, 2021, the committee will tour Eau Claire County's jail. Some members will be picked in Marshfield.
9. Chair Valenstein adjourned the meeting at 10:16 AM.

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