



MEETING DOCUMENTATION

Planning • Architecture • Engineering • Interiors • Facility Management

PROJECT: Richardson County LEC – Citizens Committee Kick-off Meeting

LOCATION OF MEETING: Falls City, NE – County Courthouse - 3rd Floor Court Room

PROJECT NO.: 211210 **DATE:** January 19th, 2022 **TIME:** 6:30 PM

PERSONS INVOLVED:

Committee Members:

Jerry Duerfeldt
Ray Joy
Charlie Fiegener
June Bowers
Austin Duerfeldt
Jake Ankrom
Phil Bloetcher

County Clerk:

Mary Eichkoff

Commissioners:

Rick Karas
John Caverzagie
David Sickle

Staff:

Kristen Morehead
Rick Hardesty

Prochaska & Associates:

Linda Quistad
Bill Huey
Curt Field

Absent:

Mark Joy
Trent Phillips

COMMUNITY/ORGANIZATION:

Jail Advisory Committee (Falls City)
Jail Advisory Committee (Falls City)
Jail Advisory Committee (Dawson)
Jail Advisory Committee (Falls City)
Jail Advisory Committee (Falls City)
Jail Advisory Committee (Falls City)
Jail Advisory Committee (Falls City)

Richardson County Clerk

Richardson County Commissioner
Richardson County Commissioner
Richardson County Commissioner

County Jail Administrator
County Sheriff

Prochaska & Associates (P&A)
Prochaska & Associates
Prochaska & Associates

Jail Advisory Committee (Humboldt)
Jail Advisory Committee (Falls City)

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DISCUSSION:

Because the three County Commissioners were in attendance, constituting a quorum, the Meeting was opened as a Board of Commissioners Meeting, with all Commissioners and the Clerk in attendance. Commissioner Dave Sickle turned the meeting over to Curt Field, who began with a PowerPoint Presentation, following a printed Agenda which was handed out to everyone. The following Points were recorded:

1. The allowable procedure to begin discussion for an alteration or new facility for a County Jail in Nebraska must follow Jail Standards protocol. Two required steps taking place prior to tonight's meeting, or in the very near future, were a Letter of Intent, sent to jail Standards by the County, and a *Needs Assessment Update* document, which is presently nearing completion.
2. Curt explained that unlike the original 2013 Needs Assessment, which sought to project a 20-year future Inmate bed need, this *Update* version was to explore the Sheriff's request for a 40-bed Addition

to the existing Law Enforcement Center. The current 24-bed capacity has often been reached and exceeded during this last year, requiring expensive out-boarding and transport cost.

3. Sheriff Hardesty had previously spoken to the Jail Standards representative, Denny Macomber, of the 40-bed Addition concept, and had been encouraged to proceed, despite the likelihood that 40 beds would exceed the County's own 20-year future bed needs, due to extreme Inmate crowding across the entire state, and the strong likelihood that the additional beds would be filled from out-of-county Inmates.
4. P&A received authorization from Jail Standards to allow (1) the shorter Needs Assessment *Update* form, and (2) to begin a Citizen's Committee work *prior* to completion of the Needs Assessment. The Committee had been previously emailed a progress Draft copy of the *Update* document, as well as a completed 2013 Needs Assessment furnished to the County prior to the earlier Law Enforcement Center construction, which will be included in the present *Update* as an Appendix.
5. The Committee was shown a tentative Schedule depicting Committee processes and deadlines in the larger context of a possible Building project timeframe. To place a Bond issue on the May Primary ballot:
 - The Committee must notify the County Board either at the last Meeting in February (2-22-22), or the first Meeting in March (3-1-22).
 - If the Committee opts for a Bond recommendation, the Primary Election date is May 10th.
6. Prochaska was also originally hired to complete a *Feasibility Study*, to determine if a 40-bed Jail Addition could be placed on the existing Law Enforcement Center site. Two options had been previously presented and given preliminary approval by Board members and County staff.
7. Curt presented the two Feasibility Options to the Committee, suggesting this "starting point" could be a possible item for the Committee to consider for modification during a Pre-Design phase, to take place during the Citizen Committee's time of operation prior to a Campaign phase following March 1st.
8. Curt briefly reviewed the main points included in the Draft *Update* document, including 2013 and new County population projections, the statistical methods which were used to produce the 2013 Assessment's recommendation of 24 beds, as well as an updated projection, suggesting the County will now likely need at least 28 beds over the next 20-year period. *It is significant to note that the 2013 Document projected 24 beds by 2035, and thus recommended this capacity, which was designed into the current facility.*
9. Curt suggested that if the Committee recommends a Bond, many may want to remain involved in a subsequent Campaign phase.
10. Curt explained that the Current Needs Assessment document suggests that Richardson County may realize additional revenue if a 40-bed addition is constructed, since the Sheriff already has agreements to board inmates from other surrounding Counties, and has been approached by US Marshals suggesting they might easily fill 20 of those 40 additional beds.
11. The presentation also included a Planning-type Budget Projection, which was explained to the Committee in some detail. Consideration of as many issues as typically affect budgeting of projects has produced a current projected cost of around \$4.5 million for each of the two options. Curt explained how cost estimating has been made much more difficult since the recent COVID-induced inflation has had an impact, and further evaluations of these Budget projections will continue to be performed.
12. An example was presented for the new Adams County (Hastings, NE) Jail, which is a current project P&A is working on, and which recently completed a formal Needs Assessment projecting a 20-year need for 154 beds. The example document explained how over the next 20-yr period, boarding and transport costs, properly calculated, would actually total *over \$71 million*, and that their current Project, verified by a General Contractor at \$31 million, would stop that out-of-County transfer of funds. A

similar calculation will be performed for the Richardson County boarding and transport costs, with calculations for 20-years of normal (3%) inflation each year. *The Sheriff offered to furnish as many figures as possible to P&A, and it is hoped that this can be ready for presentation at the next Committee meeting.*

13. The PowerPoint presentation concluded with descriptions of other funding options open to the County, i.e., consideration of the “Nickel Tax” (no public bond), or via Special Election, if the March 1st due date is determined to be insufficient time.
14. Following conclusion of the PowerPoint presentation, the Committee members were asked if any had questions or comments:
 - Ray Joy asked: if the 2013 Assessment failed to predict an actual bed count, how can the County citizens get a more accurate projection? His question was: “Are 40 additional beds enough?”
 - Austin Duerfeldt commented that he knows of more sophisticated statistical analysis methods which *might* provide better data, but would require outside consultant assistance, and would also take a substantially greater amount of time than is available, if the goal is to make a recommendation prior to the March 1st deadline.
 - Curt offered the observations that:
 - i. The two methods used in the Prochaska reporting are the ones commonly used by the industry for Jail Bed projections, and that other unforeseeable factors are always possible to modify actual conditions (i.e., change of personnel, change of statutes, etc.).
 - ii. Getting a more precise projection might be less important if the proposal is for 40 beds, rather than for a more accurate 20-year projection, merely to avoid out-boarding costs.
 - Jerry Duerfeldt and Ray Joy asked for budget projections for Richardson County Boarding and Transport costs to be computed, similar to the Adams County example.
 - Curt offered to have Building Elevations (Exterior Views) drawn to see how the Addition might look if placed in the suggested location.
 - Jerry Duerfeldt commented on the surprisingly low projected cost. P&A will take another look at refinement of the current Budget projections, and this will be reported at the next meeting.
 - Clerk Mary Eichkoff offered the impact of a \$4.5 million project on the current property tax levy. More can be done with this figure as well, to determine the financial impact of the bond cost on the average County taxpayers. A bond banker could be invited as well to an upcoming meeting. *Possibly Mary could provide a better explanation to the Committee at the next meeting of the tax impact of a \$4.5 million project?*
 - Members were encouraged to review the Draft Needs Assessment Update, as well as look further into the prior 2013 document.
15. Ray Joy agreed to serve as Committee Chair, and June Bowers agreed to serve as Vice Chair.
16. The Committee was open to Zoom meetings in future, but it was determined that they preferred the next meeting to be in-person in Falls City, in the Courtroom on Wednesday, February 2nd at 6:30pm. The press, and possibly someone from the area radio station will be invited, for improved transparency.
17. Since the Press had been invited, but could not attend this kick-off meeting, the idea of a press release

was discussed. Mary Eichkoff suggested that the local Press might be given a copy of the current Meeting Agenda.

18. Although it not specified in the statutes, Mr. Macomber from Nebraska Jail Standards should be invited to the next meeting to potentially make a statement, and to observe the process being used, and the direction the conversation is taking.

19. The Board of Commissioners Meeting was officially closed.

BY: 
Curtis Field, AIA
Architect - Principal

January 20th, 2022
Date

If any of the parties present take exception to these meeting notes, please notify Prochaska & Associates within five (5) days of issuance for correction, or they shall be presumed to stand as written.

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