

MONROE COUNTY
COMMUNITY JUSTICE RESPONSE COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes
Monday, March 06, 2023, 4:30pm
Nat U. Hill Meeting Room, 3rd Floor Courthouse

These notes are not intended to be verbatim. For this purpose, a permanent recording of this meeting can be found [here](#).

Members Present (In Person):

April Wilson
Catherine Stafford
Darcie Fawcett
Jennifer Crossley
Julie Thomas
Lee Jones
Michael Hunt
Penny Githens
Peter Iversen
Ruben Marté

Members Absent:

Kate Wiltz

Meeting called to order 4:30pm.

Statement of Guiding Principles- Councilor Iversen

Recognizing our commitment to public safety, we will work collaboratively and transparently to:

- 1. Prioritize treatment over incarceration, when appropriate.*
- 2. Build a justice facility that meets constitutional standards and treats inmates with dignity.*
- 3. Address inequities in race, economic status, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, and gender.*
- 4. Reduce the number of people entering the criminal justice system and reduce recidivism for those who are/ were in the system.*

Updates

- The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) committee will be presenting their findings to the Board of Commissioners at their meeting on Wednesday, March 8, 2023. Commissioners plan to vote on whether to accept these recommendations at their meeting on Wednesday, March 22, 2023. The chosen company will then be invited to give a presentation to the CJRC at the meeting on April 3, 2023.
- Last week the Health Department applied for an additional one million dollars from the State through an opioid grant fund. This would allow for additional Stride Center staff and a vehicle to be used for transportation.

Public Comment

Micol Seigel, Member of Care not Cages

- Expressed concern regarding subgroups
 - Will they hinder public attendance?
 - Meeting times should be publicized, and public comment allowed.
 - Groups should report back to the whole (CJRC) regularly.
 - There should be a subgroup specific to bringing the current jail to constitutional standards.
- Fee for services
 - Why are we taking inmates from other counties (jails)?
 - Is this part of the reason we need to build a new jail?

Jaustan Huerta, Director of FOCUS Initiatives

- Spent fifteen years (non-consecutively) incarcerated for non-violent, minor drug charges.
 - He was never offered any type of drug treatment by the state.
- Members of FOCUS Initiatives reached out to him and showed him care and compassion. This enabled him to get better and stay out of jail.
- Incarceration is not the answer, it only compounds trauma.
- Supportive of the Senate Bill 1 – “Behavioral Health Matters”
- If the community comes together and shows it cares about the incarcerated and post-incarcerated population, recidivism rates will go down.

Sam Dixon, resident of Bloomington

- Learned about the proposal for a new jail through the reports by Dave Askins at The B Square.
- The city and county need to work to make the process more transparent.
- It appears the decision has already been made to build a new jail, but the committee should revisit the option of remediating the current jail.
- Asked the committee the following questions:
 - Why was a new jail proposed?
 - Why have remediation efforts of the current jail been abandoned?
 - What is going into the process?

Nicole Bolden, President of Monroe County Black Democratic Caucus

- Shared frustration at the treatment of the only two elected officials of color on this committee: Councilor Crossley and Sheriff Marté.
 - Urged other committee members to speak up when they see mistreatment.

Debbie Fish, Hope for Prisoners Task Force

- Echoed Micol Seigel's comments.

Jim Shelton, Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce, virtual attendee

- In support of building a new jail as soon as possible.
- A new jail should have facilities and amenities to allow for programming that will reduce recidivism.
- Programs should be created that will reduce the need to put people experiencing mental health issues in jail at all.
 - Partner with organizations like Centerstone, Indiana Recovery Alliance, Indiana University, IU Health system, and the City of Bloomington.
 - Find funding for the facility, as well as the salaries needed for people to work these services.

Kaisa Goodman, Public Engagement Director for the City of Bloomington

- Has asked repeatedly for the city of Bloomington administration, Bloomington City Council, and Bloomington Police Department to be brought to this table.
- The city's core message is that the conversation regarding the jail should be more holistic. It should be focused on:
 - Public health prevention
 - Diversion
 - Wrap around services
 - Comprehensive mental health and substance use disorder services
 - Immediate steps that can be taken to improve the conditions in the current jail.
- Quoted Mayor John Hamilton's State of the City speech:

"I challenge us in our highly over incarcerated country and state. Imagine if for every new dollar we propose to invest in needed jail and jail related services, we also invest a new dollar or more in prevention and pre and post incarceration services and facilities."
- No meetings or conversations have been planned or held between the city administration and the county regarding potential jail sites or other priorities.

Renee Miller, virtual attendee

- Thanked Nicole Bolden for pointing out microaggressions taking place during meetings.
- Thanked Jaustan Huerta for sharing his experience.
- The Advisory on Public Safety Commission gave a survey in which the first question was "Define what public safety means to you."
 - Responses were housing, having food and water, and having loving connections.
 - Asked the committee to define what public safety means to them.
- Believes the public should be involved in the discussions on subgroups.

Ashley Pirani, resident of Monroe County

- Echoed Nicole Bolden's statements.
 - Asked the Commissioners when they will be sharing their report on their visit to Maricopa County, AZ.
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Commissioners' Vision- 5:03 pm

Overall goal: To prevent and limit incidents of incarceration; for those who must be incarcerated, have a more humane facility that allows for programming, release/ re- entry planning, speedier judicial processing, and a focus on treatment (mental health, substance use disorder, physical health).

- Reduce and prevent recidivism
- Provide programming treatment
- Ensure there is accessible transitional housing throughout the community.
- A speedy (not hasty), efficient and effective development of a new facility.

Jail facility components:

By reducing recidivism, focusing on treatment (voluntary and involuntary), and improving the criminal justice process, a new jail would be able to house the same number of people, but moving forward should have a smaller inmate population.

Modern jail designs allow for expansion as needed and require less staffing.

- Ensure enough room for:
 - Moving inmates from one area to another
 - Any shifts in population
 - Separate areas for transgender individuals
- Larger jail footprint to include:
 - More recreation space (each pod could have its own)
 - More programming spaces
 - More meeting rooms
 - Larger day rooms (with showers)
 - Staff observation rooms
 - A larger sally port
 - Gardening space
 - A larger kitchen
 - Medical spaces
 - Intake spaces
 - Office spaces for case management
 - An exercise area for jail staff
 - Storage for inmate belongings
 - Space for one-on-one attorney- client meetings
 - Two court rooms; one for processing and one for hearings
 - Treatment wing
- Other features:
 - No elevator
 - Natural lighting

Programming/ Treatment:

- Medical
- Mental Health
- Job training and skills training
- Discharge release program
 - Space for service providers to meet with inmates

- Case Management
 - Begin with the arrival of an inmate to the jail and continue throughout their sentence.
 - Ensure inmates have access to necessary programming, education, training, and treatment.
 - Plan for an inmate's release
- Avoid junk fees: phone calls, contact with family and access to tablets should be free.
- Crisis center (similar to Pima County, AZ)
 - No wrong door facility
 - Voluntary and in voluntary patients
 - Used for short stabilizing stays (up to five days)
 - Available to juveniles and adults
 - Could be used in conjunction with the Stride center and 988 mobile crisis services.
- Alternative sentencing practices
- Transitional housing throughout the community
 - No- cost or low cost

Subgroups- 5:13pm

Commissioners believe subgroups would be beneficial considering everyone has their own areas of expertise. Quarterly meetings would still be held for the entire CJRC.

Subgroups recommended:

- Facility
- Judicial Process
- Treatment
- Release/ Re- entry

Concerns were raised by several committee members regarding the need for subgroups.

- Will this create obstacles for community participation?
- Will this worsen information silos?
- Subgroups can overlap, so having the entire committee present for all topics would be beneficial.
- Is it inefficient to expect community members and/ or committee members to go to multiple subgroups and the larger group to make recommendations?

Committee Discussion & Suggestions

- If the committee moves forward with subgroups, the entire committee should meet more than quarterly.
- Subgroup meetings should be public and allow for public comment.
- Subgroups will allow for involvement from the city of Bloomington, as well as any other individuals in the community with valuable knowledge on these topics.
- Is there other work that needs to be done by the entire committee before breaking into subgroups?
- Instead of subgroups, could the committee discuss each of the different topics intended for the subgroups at different meetings? (Ex. spend several meetings on treatment, then spend several meetings on release/ re- entry, etc.)

Discussion on different subgroups

Facility:

- Two responses to the RFQs included that their companies would engage in collaboration with stakeholders during their process. Would a Facility subgroup be duplicative of this?
- Should Sheriff Marté's input be included in the vision for a new facility as the custodial of the jail?
- Bed size recommendations were typically around 350-500 (Department surveys and previous studies).
 - Number of beds should be decided before location is chosen.
- Judge Stafford offered her own measurements for a new justice complex- she found that 9 acres would be sufficient for:
 - A single-story jail with the sheriff's offices, a 3-4 story building for courts and clerks, a 3-4 story building for the Probation Department, Prosecutor's Office, and Public Defender's Office, an acre of green space and an acre for parking.
 - The calculations for office spaces were measured by using the square footage of the current office spaces plus a factor of 30 %. The calculations for the jail were less exact, since the number of beds has not yet been decided.
 - These calculations give another number to go off (apart from the 25- acre estimate responses to the RFQs).
 - What is going into the 25- acre estimate that makes it vary from the 9- acre estimate?
- Monroe County should demonstrate its progressive values; inmates should not be hidden away from the city, far from services and support.
- Specific decisions about the design of the facility should be decided prior to the architect creating a design.
- Agreement between the Commissioners and Sheriff Marté that a new facility should have more space for programming.
- What questions does the County Council have when deciding whether to approve funds for a new facility?

Judicial process:

- Is this subgroup needed considering the Judicial Branch is a separate branch of government?
- Open door law does not apply to the Judicial Branch.
- Judicial processes are outlined extensively in the jail study.
- Ken Falk and Sheriff Marté have expressed that Monroe County Judges have helped to decrease the population of our current jail.

Treatment:

- The Health Department needs to be included in discussions on this topic.
 - Oversee a request for proposals from nonprofits and medical providers to begin treatment programming now
 - SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely) goals
- Treatment is a very broad topic.
 - How do we discuss it comprehensively and ensure that experts are present?
- What can be done to improve treatment support/ programming immediately?

Release/ Re- entry:

- Monroe County was awarded a grant that allows for the New Beginnings Program to begin in the jail.
 - What can be done to improve release and re- entry support/ programming immediately?
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Tentative plan for upcoming meetings

March 20- Discussion of previous facility visits

April 3- Presentation by RFQ committee

Agenda Requests

Co-Location:

- What departments should be co- located with the new jail?

Facilities:

- Gather recommendations from the reports and surveys that have been done.
 - Distribute a poll for committee members and the public.
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Meeting is adjourned 6:00 pm.