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**SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO REVIEW JSO PRIMARY FACILITIES**

**Meeting Minutes**

**August 16, 2023  
9:00 a.m.**

**Location:** Lynwood Roberts Room, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, City Hall

**In attendance:** Council Members Michael Boylan (Chair), Randy White, Rahman Johnson, Chris Miller, Jimmy Peluso

**Also:** Council President Ron Salem; Merriane Lahmeur and Maritza Sanchez – Legislative Services Division; Jeff Clements – Council Research Division; Phillip Peterson – Council Auditor’s Office; Mary Staffopoulos and Carla Lopera – Office of General Counsel; Brittany Norris – Mayor’s Office

**Meeting Convened:** 9:00 a.m.

Chairman Boylan convened the meeting and Council President Salem gave introductory remarks. He noted the importance of public understanding and input into the process. There is a buzz in the community about the jail replacement, both positive and negative. He expressed great confidence in CM Boylan to lead the study with skill and fairness and he welcomed the other members of the committee. Mr. Salem said his expectation is that the Special Committee will lay the groundwork for the eventual issuance of an RFP for a new facility after it is determined what is needed and potentially where it should be located. The committee members introduced themselves for the record and all indicated that the jail is a priority issue because of the current conditions and the age of the facility. Both short-term maintenance and long-term replacement need to be addressed.

Committee Charge and Process

Chairman Boylan reviewed the agenda and the committee charge. The charge of the committee is to draft recommendations regarding efficient and effective management of the facilities and the safety and well-being of those who use those facilities and to address the needs of the Sheriff and his staff with regard to those facilities.

### Working Group Process

The Chair said that 4 or 5 working groups will be established to delve into specific issues in detail, each of which will be chaired by a special committee member and supported by the staff of the Northeast Florida Regional Council. Meetings will begin the week of September 14<sup>th</sup> and will meet as often as necessary. The Special Committee will meet periodically to get updates from the working groups. The Chair asked the working group chairs to recruit interested stakeholders with relevant knowledge to act as co-chairs of their groups. He would like to see the working groups to hold fact-finding meetings and hear from other stakeholders and interested parties and to examine best practices from around the country. The working groups will then develop recommendations to the Special Committee for its consideration and final action. The Chair proposed the following working groups: Intake and Adjudication; Extended Detention; Behavioral and Mental Health Services; Improvements to the Existing Facility; and Administrative Offices.

President Salem asked that general health care in the detention facilities be included in one of the working groups because that is such a big issue. He also asked that a working group consider potential new locations for a replacement detention facility. Chairman Boylan said his preference would be to leave the location discussion until the end of the committee process when other determinations and recommendations have been made about what is needed to meet the community's needs. CM Johnson said he thought that location may need to be discussed before the end of the process because it has bearing on what sort of facility(s) would be considered (i.e. vertical vs. horizontal construction, how many facilities). CM Peluso said that rehabilitation and recidivism should be a consideration, perhaps as another working group. Chairman Boylan suggested adding that topic to the Intake and Adjudication Group.

### JSO Primary Facilities Overview

JSO Director of Corrections Kevin Goff introduced his management team. Jails Division Chief Paul Restivo gave an overview of the John E. Goode Detention Facility, its age, size, capacity and workforce. The facility currently houses about 2,600 inmates spread over 7 floors. Those inmates represent a variety of specialty populations (mental health issues, administrative confinement, disciplinary confinement, juveniles) in addition to the regular jail population. Chief Restivo said the area surrounding the facility (streets and parking lots) is subject to flooding from nearby Hogan's Creek during heavy rain events. Because the building is old the air conditioner chillers are problematic and mold infestation has resulted. Plumbing problems are constant. Overall maintenance and repairs to the jail costs about \$3 million per year. The mechanical problems have caused a need to constantly relocate prisoners from one area to another as work is performed and that is a major logistical problem. CM Peluso asked how many inmates are in the jail because they can't make bail. Chief Restivo said he can find out how many people have a bond amount and he recommended speaking to the local Bail Bond Project which works in that area. In response to a question from CM Johnson about juvenile females, Chief Restivo said they have very few and they are problematic to house because of the required separation from the rest of the jail population and the need to detail female correctional officers to supervise them.

Deloris O'Neal, Chief of the Support Services Division, introduced Chief Scott Dingee, Assistant Chief of the General Support Section, to discuss the Police Memorial Building (PMB). Chief Dingee said there are approximately 739 employees in the PMB representing 5 different departments/divisions. Concerns include flooding in the area around the PMB from Hogan's Creek and space constraints given the number of employees. There are only 215 spaces in the internal parking garage for over 700 employees so some are sharing a grass surface lot across Bay Street with corrections officers from the jail. The Chief discussed the current pending legislation to rent office space in the Florida Blue building on Riverside Avenue to house several departments. The PMB was opened in 1978 and has experienced electrical, plumbing and roof issues as well as air conditioner repairs. The helicopter landing pad on the roof needs \$400,000 of work to remain safely usable. There are several ADA accessibility issues with elevator

locations, parking, and access to public areas. The annual maintenance cost for the building runs about \$360,000, not including the emergency repairs. In response to a question from CM Peluso, the Chief discussed the potential for flooding to seriously impact JSO operations should the basement parking level flood since the electrical equipment on that level serves both the PMB and surrounding areas of downtown. CM Johnson commented on the importance of proper employee workout and personnel support facilities.

#### Principal Stakeholder Comments

Brittany Norris said the Mayor's Office is grateful for the Council's work through this Special Committee and is ready and willing to provide whatever support is necessary. Public Defender Charles Cofer thanked the committee for inviting the participation of the courts in the process and said he is willing to participate in the working groups and provide his insight from over 40 years working in the judicial system. Jody Phillips, Clerk of the Courts, said the jail project is long overdue and much needed. He and his staff are happy to host tours of the courthouse and explain the role of the Clerk's Office in the court system as it relates to the jail. He said the first appearances before a judge following arrest are handled via video link from the courthouse rather than in person at the jail since the COVID pandemic. When they were in the jail pre-COVID, the conditions were deplorable and improvements are desperately needed. His office stands ready to help in any way possible. Eve Janocko, Trial Court Administrator, echoed Mr. Phillips' comments about the interconnection of the courthouse and the jail, the transport of inmates, and the current state of the data sharing among all the parties involved. She and Chief Judge Lance Day are fully committed to assisting the Special Committee's work. Chairman Boylan thanked Chief Judge Day for devoting so much time to his courthouse our yesterday. In response to a question from CM Johnson about whether the remote first appearance hearings will remain online rather than in person, Ms. Janocko said they will.

#### Working Groups Discussion

Chairman Boylan said he was agreeable to adding recidivism as a topic to the Intake, Adjudication and Recidivism Working Group, which CM Peluso will chair. CM White volunteered to chair the Improvements to Existing Facilities Working Group. President Salem cautioned about considering making too many long-term improvements to a facility that is going to be replaced in a few years. Extended Detention will be expanded to the Extended and Diverse Detention Working Group to specifically address issues related to juvenile and female inmates. CM Miller said he has numerous contacts around the state with people who build corrections facilities and is happy to leverage those contacts to help provide information on trends and best practices. Chairman Boylan appointed CM Miller to chair the Extended and Diverse Detention Working Group and CM Johnson to chair the Behavioral and Mental Health Services Working Group. Mr. Boylan will chair the Administrative Offices Working Group.

In response to a question from CM Johnson, Chief Goff said the deaths in the jail this year are not greatly in excess of the normal pattern but are getting more media attention. He said that a number of the deaths this year are attributable to fentanyl use prior to admission to the jail.

Mr. Boylan announced that there are sign-up sheets at the door for attendees to indicate their interest in participating in the working groups.

#### Public Comment

Carnell Oliver said conditions in the jail are getting worse for African Americans. He would like to see more pre-release programs such as civil citations to keep people out of the jail. He does not believe in outsourcing jail health care to private companies that have poor records in other cities. It's important for the Special Committee to get this process right because it is so important.

**Meeting adjourned:** 10:22 a.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research Division  
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