



**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
RESEARCH DIVISION**

117 WEST DUVAL STREET, SUITE 425
4TH FLOOR, CITY HALL
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202
904-255-5137

SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO REVIEW JSO PRIMARY FACILITIES

Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2023

9:00 a.m.

Location: Lynwood Roberts Room, 1st 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 Stephen Libby – Legislative Services Division; Jeff Clements – Council Research Division; Eric Grantham – Public Information Division; Mary Staffopoulos and Carla Lopera – Office of General Counsel; Bill Delaney – Mayor’s Office; Phillip Peterson – Council Auditor’s Office

Meeting Convened: 9:01 a.m.

Chairman Boylan convened the meeting and thanked the many attendees for being interested in and willing to join the work of the special committee. Council President Salem said he is very confident that the interest of so many stakeholders will produce a very valuable work product. Mr. Boylan reviewed the charge of the special committee and said that the current conditions of both the jail and the Police Memorial Building that he witnessed during his recent tours tell him that consideration needs to be given to improvements needed immediately in those facilities while planning for the future goes on because both will continue to be occupied for some time.

Mr. Boylan reviewed the agenda for the day, which will primarily be reports from the working group chairs about what they have accomplished thus far, their identification of subject matter experts to speak at future meetings, and planning for working group meetings (how many, when, scheduling). Mr. Boylan said his plan is to hold an interim meeting of the full Special Committee in mid-January to get a progress report from each of the working groups and to begin consideration of a final report.

Comments regarding judicial officers' involvement

Fourth Circuit Court Trial Administrator Eve Janocko said that several judges are interested in participating in the work of the special committee as their schedules permit. They are happy to provide tours of the courthouse as desired. Chief Judge Lance Day requested that the committee let the desired form of new facilities determine their location, not the other way around.

Working Group reports

Administrative Facilities (Police Memorial Building)

CM Boylan is the Chair of this working group and has selected Ryan Sitnik of the Gilbane Building Company as the Co-Chair. Other members include Director Larry Schmidt, Chief Deloris O'Neal, Chief Bill Clement and Facilities Manager Ben Carder of the Sheriff's Office and Jeremy Wright of the Public Buildings Division of the Public Works Department.

Scope of Work - Public needs: topics include ample and well-marked parking; identifiable and accessible entrance; citizen friendly access to police services.

Scope of Work - Operational needs: topics include anticipated agency growth; ADA compliance; addition of an emergency operations center, media briefing room, communication center, etc.; reliable environmental/technical systems.

Scope of Work - Existing Facility Repairs: topics include parking gates and gas pumps, restricted visibility at the vehicle exit on Bay Street; helicopter pad and roof leaks.

Scope of Work – Existing Facility Improvements: parking; emergency generator; HVAC; elevators.

Mr. Boylan plans for 6 meetings of the working group, meeting every 2 weeks. Meeting topics: 1) what needs to be done about the current facility (punch list); 2) priority list for new facility; 3 & 4) review of recently completed facilities in other cities; 5) lessons learned – draft of required needs; 6) review and finalize required needs; proximity and location discussion.

Adjudication/Intake/Rehabilitation/Recidivism (AIR)

CM Peluso reported that he had an organizational meeting of his working group last week. The Vice Chair is Fourth Judicial Circuit Public Defender Charlie Cofer and working group members include Assistant State Attorney Coral Messina; JSO Chief Kina Paschal; Moné Holder, Director of Advocacy and Programs for Florida Rising; Reggie Fullwood, President and CEO of Operation New Hope; Circuit Court Judge Anthony Salem; and Trial Court Administrator Eve Janocko. Tyler Nolen of the Northeast Florida Regional Council will be staff to the working group.

Meetings will be held from 9 to 11:30 a.m. on the Fridays of non-City Council weeks for a total of 6-8 meetings. The first 4 meetings will discuss intake and adjudication, the last 2-3 will discuss rehabilitation and recidivism. The first meeting will be on Friday, September 22nd. The working group will analyze the roles that JSO, the courts, and community partners play in assisting individuals when exiting the judicial system.

Custody and Housing

CM Miller thanked the President for creating the special committee to be forward-thinking and proactive in tackling this issue. He invited participation from anyone interested in this working group. JSO Assistant Chief Adrian O’Neal, Chief Lance Judge Day, and Judge Anthony Salem will serve on the working group. Mr. Miller said he will be looking for a co-chair with experience in the corrections field and will be inviting the participation of representatives of several companies that are in the business of constructing correctional facilities to discuss the current state of the art in the industry. The group will look at the current situation in the jail and what could be done to make improvements in the short term, then look longer term at a future new facility. They will also look at best practices in operations of detention for the many different populations being housed (violent, non-violent, physical health issues, mental health issues, males, females, juveniles, short-term, long-term, etc.). Mr. Miller said he is planning on at least 4 working group meetings, starting next Friday at 10 a.m. and then at 8:00 a.m. thereafter every 3 weeks. The first 2 meetings will address the current situation, meetings thereafter will focus on future facility needs.

Chairman Boylan said he hopes that the activities of the previous Special Committee on Quality of Life Issues and this Special Committee on JSO Primary Facilities will be models for how the council tackles important issues in the future.

Existing Facility Improvements

CM White said he has 3 working group meetings scheduled. The Co-Chair will be JSO Assistant Chief R.W. Long, and group members will include JSO Sergeant Park, representatives from the Public Works Department, JEA, and private contractors representing several fields (mechanical, HVAC, elevator).

Health and Well-Being Services

CM Johnson said he will be using the title Holistic Facilities Working Group to examine the health and well-being of everyone involved in using the facility – inmates and JSO employees alike. The work will look at 3 different facets of well-being - physical, mental/behavioral, and spiritual - and will focus on assessment, data collection, and policy development and advocacy. Numerous aspects of each of the 3 facets will be examined. The group’s first meeting will be on September 29th, with future meetings scheduled on Fridays from 1-3 p.m. Mr. Johnson said he sees a need to look at both physical facilities and the programs operated in those facilities. He will be inviting various clergy to participate to discuss the spiritual aspects of incarceration.

Principal Stakeholder Comments

Carolyn Hillhouse-Jones, a mental health counselor, said national accreditation standards should be used in the design process of new facilities.

Working Groups Discussion

CM Peluso said lots of working groups seem to be focused on Friday meetings and questioned if the meetings overlap. Chairman Boylan said the Northeast Florida Regional Council will help with staffing along with the Council Research and Legislative Services Divisions, but the workload will be heavy with

so many meetings, so the working group chairs need to be cognizant of that in their scheduling. CM Peluso said his group will be touring the courthouse next week.

Public Comment

Bruce Fouraker said that the parcel of property at 424 Pearl Street downtown, owned by BellSouth, may be available for acquisition, which the City could use as a prisoner holding facility connected to the courthouse via a secure walkway or possibly as the site of a new JSO headquarters. He noted that when Congressman John Rutherford was the Sheriff, he talked about perhaps locating a detention facility near Baldwin.

Carnell Oliver said he wants the federal government to change the law regarding criminal records because those records currently prevent people from getting jobs, getting housing, etc. He wants to get rid of the not-for-profits that are making money from the current contracting situation and instead invest directly in getting the job done, not supporting non-profits.

Madeline Rubin, a clinical social worker, related the experience of an acquaintance of hers released from the jail late on a Sunday night without his glasses (confiscated and lost in the jail) and with no money. This kind of treatment leads to tragic outcomes if the person being released doesn't have a support system of family or friends to help them transition safely out of incarceration. There needs to be more progress made in dealing humanely and empathetically with inmates. She urged that the work of the Special Committee focus on policies and practices over facilities.

Meeting adjourned: 9:57 a.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research Division
jeffc@coj.net 904-255-5137
9.14.23 Posted 4:30 p.m.