



**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
WORKING GROUP ON ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

Meeting Minutes

**September 29, 2023
9:30 a.m.**

Location: Don Davis Room, 1st floor, City Hall

In attendance: Council Member Michael Boylan (Chair), Ryan Sitnik (Co-Chair)

Also: Council President Ron Salem; Director Larry Schmitt – Department of Police Services, Delores O’Neal – Chief of Services, Assistant Chief Scott Dingee – General Support Section, Ben Carder - Facilities Manager – Sheriff’s Office; Steven Libby – Legislative Services Division; Jeff Clements – Council Research Division; Eric Grantham – Public Information Division; Carla Lopera – Office of General Counsel; Chris Birbal – Public Buildings Division

Meeting Convened: 9:30 a.m.

Chairman Boylan convened the meeting and reviewed the agenda for the day. Mr. Boylan said his role is to facilitate the work of the subject matter experts who work in the Police Memorial Building (PMB) or in the field of public buildings and know what needs to be done. He hopes that recommendations can be produced sooner rather than later and that improvements can start being made, if possible, even before the Special Committee finalizes its report.

Chairman Boylan said he met yesterday with the Dean of the Jacksonville University College of Law to discuss how their law students could be involved in the work of the Special Committee and can particularly look at the larger issue of how the state’s Government in the Sunshine Law impacts on the ability of City Council special committees and subject matter experts do their work within the context of that law.

Parking

Regarding parking, the Police Memorial Building has 215 spaces in the basement, 250 spaces in the adjacent parking lot shared with the jail, and overflow parking along the river on the former Shipyards property south of Bay Street. About 700 people work in the PMB, and the parking facilities must serve their needs plus all of the jail employees plus visitors to both facilities.

Lori Boyer, CEO of the Downtown Investment Authority, discussed parking issues related to the PMB and jail. DIA operates the City's public parking function and also governs the vacant parcels of land currently being used for parking. Construction on Shipyards West Park will start next summer and parking will need to be relocated from that site starting approximately in October 2024. Work will start at the west end of the site at Catherine Street and work to the east toward EverBank Stadium. Ms. Boyer said she has done research and found that about 50 cars regularly park in the Shipyard Park lot. There is available parking in the City's Yates Building parking garage that would incur a user charge and there is capacity in the Arena and Sports Complex garages that are about 3 blocks from the jail. DIA will be installing gates to allow operation of those garages on weekdays in addition to being open just during Sports Complex events. A shuttle service from those garages to the PMB could be an option, budgeted in the FY24-25 budget. President Salem asked JSO to begin identifying different classes of parkers and who would be best accommodated in closer or more remote parking. Ms. Boyer said the current overflow parking on Bay Street is about 2 blocks from the door of the PMB (which is actually around the building on Forsyth Street) and the Yates Garage is about the same distance to the west on Forsyth Street.

Government in the Sunshine Law

Carla Lopera with the Office of General Counsel gave a brief overview of Florida's Government in the Sunshine Law and its application to this working group which has 2 voting members who are covered by the law. The subject matter experts who are not voting members are not covered by the law. She did say that the public records law applies to all participants, voting or not, so any documents, emails, texts, etc. need to be retained and must be disclosed to the public if requested.

Subject Matter Expert comments

Co-Chair Ryan Sitnik introduced himself to the group and described his background with Gilbane Construction, a large builder of correctional facilities nationwide that has a "center of excellence" focused on its correctional facility business. The company will bring in some industry experts in working group meetings 3 and 4 to share their expertise.

Mr. Sitnick introduced several subject matter experts from his company and other companies in attendance in the audience. Mr. Carder suggested inviting several companies that have done recent work in the building to future meetings. Chairman Boylan asked him to extend invitations to the relevant companies.

JSO Presentation - Existing Facility and Conditions

Director Schmitt made a presentation on the current state of the Police Memorial Building and its immediate repair and upgrade needs. The building opened in 1978 and has an average annual maintenance cost of \$359,000 (excluding routine cleaning, electric and water bill, etc.). The PMB has 165,000 sq. ft. of conditioned space and houses over 730 employees spread over multiple shifts, including nights and weekends.

Ben Carder, PMB Facilities Manager for the JSO, reviewed the list of the PMB's needs. JSO meets monthly with the City Public Buildings Division to discuss the list of needs and building conditions. Urgent issues include: 1) emergency generator; 2) HVAC system and controls; 3) building envelope/helicopter landing pad/skylights; 4) security/safety improvements at public entrances; 5) parking

space. Longer term issues include: 6) parking lot; 7) flooring; 8) restrooms; 9) elevators; 10) roof; 11) landscaping refresh.

Mr. Sitnik said that enhanced security at entrances is standard procedure in new construction, including both the pedestrian entrances and the strength of walls adjacent to roads and parking lots. Access control also needs to be considered, controlling who gets into the building in a secure fashion. Regarding parking, there are some marked handicapped parking spaces but the demand for those spaces and compliance with City code have not been evaluated yet. The City's Disabled Services Division can be a resource to help in this area. PMB restrooms were renovated 10-12 years ago and could use some refreshing, particularly the flooring. The estimated cost to modernize the elevators is \$120,000. The roof is estimated to have 8-10 years of life remaining, and the estimated cost of replacement is \$1 million. Landscaping around the building has been ignored for many years.

President Salem asked about budgeting for the building's needs. Mr. Birbal said it would be budgeted in the Public Buildings Division budget. Mr. Carder said a list of priorities has been presented to Public Buildings since 2017 and some issues have been addressed while those on the list presented today still remain. Mr. Salem said a recent change in state law has given the Sheriff great authority to transfer funds within his budget without further action by City Council. Director Schmitt said that operating funds cannot be transferred to capital projects but can be shifted within the operating budget to address needs as they arise. He said it would be difficult to find capacity in the existing operating budget to do much in the way of facility improvements on the building. Mr. Salem said the highest priority needs have to be taken care of sooner rather than later, not waiting until plans for a new facility are well underway. He asked JSO to prioritize the top needs for the PMB and develop cost estimates for those needs. Scott Dingee said JSO and Public Buildings already work together to identify funding for pressing needs as they arise.

Mr. Sitnik said the list appears to be mostly deferred maintenance items and asked how those items are impacting JSO operations. Assistant Chief Dingee said personnel are shifted around within the building and to off-site locations as functions grow and needs change. Numerous functions have been moved out of the PMB to other locations because of the lack of space in the PMB.

President Salem asked that JSO and Public Buildings develop a list of the most vital needs for work over the next 5 years so that the most important work is done to keep the building usable while plans for a new facility are developed. Director Schmitt said that none of the items on the needs lists are frivolous or cosmetic – they are necessary for the safety and comfort of the employees who work there every day.

Mr. Sitnik asked if the condition of the PMB has an effect on recruiting and retaining good employees. Director Schmitt said there are very few windows in the building so the sense of isolation is a real concern and potential employees coming for interviews notice the building and HVAC conditions which can be a deterrent to hiring.

Public Comment

Bruce Fouraker asked if JSO is willing to share the Shipyard West parking area with the USS Orleck visitors. Director Schmitt said JSO doesn't object to sharing, but the lot is not under their control. Mr. Fouraker suggested asking Public Buildings to do something about the landscaping around the PMB in the short term. He asked if the gas pump in the PMB for JSO vehicles is under a maintenance contract. Chief O'Neal said the pump is under the jurisdiction of the Fleet Management Division of Public Works.

A speaker from the audience asked if an air quality evaluation has been done on the building? Mr. Carder said it had, after the implosion of the nearby Berkman II tower several years ago

Council President Salem asked if the PMB was built specifically as the JSO headquarters. Director Schmitt said it was, but seems to have been designed more like a museum than an office building with few windows, indirect lighting, etc. Mr. Sitnik said the building was designed in a different age for a different style of policing. Director Schmitt said the use of technology has exploded in several ways which has changed some law enforcement practices and the way a headquarters building is used.

Chairman Boylan said the next meeting will discuss a priority list of needs and preferences for the new replacement headquarters facility. He asked the group for their ideas on how best to develop a useful product to plan for a future facility. Mr. Sitnik suggested having a designer who has designed several recent buildings come and talk to the group. He recommended taking the community's needs and expectations into account, such as was done in the construction of the new Gainesville Police Department headquarters which has a public meeting room at the front of the facility which can be used for multiple community purposes. Chief O'Neal said she and Assistant Chief Dingee have visited several facilities already and will visit more to gather ideas. The Special Committee needs to get the Sheriff's input on what his vision may be. Mr. Boylan said the next meeting will discuss the vision for what a new facility should be. President Salem recommended looking at police departments of similar sized cities to see what new facilities have been built recently and how satisfied those departments are with what was built and what they would change if they could.

Next Meeting

October 19, 9:30 a.m. JSO will report back on what functions it wants to see in a new building – what offices should return in-house, what functions can remain remote, what is the Sheriff's vision for a facility, etc. Mr. Carder said they need to look at the future of the workforce and how much space they need and that will take more than 3 weeks to analyze. The Chair asked that JSO rank the urgent needs list by highest priorities and provide cost estimates for those projects. Director Schmitt said there are 2 models for police department facilities: an all-in-one campus (one or several interconnected or clustered buildings in proximity), or a central administrative building and satellite locations for different functional areas. There are pros and cons to each model.

Meeting adjourned: 10:49 a.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research Division

jeffc@coj.net 904-255-5137

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