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**SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO REVIEW JSO PRIMARY FACILITIES  
WORKING GROUP ON HOUSING AND CUSTODY**

**Meeting Minutes**

**October 13, 2023  
1:30 p.m.**

**Location:** Don Davis Room, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, City Hall

**In attendance:** Council Members Chris Miller (Chair), Michael Boylan, President Ron Salem (arr. 1:50); Assistant Chief Adrian O’Neal; Dan Lee – Perry McCall Construction

**Also:** Council Member Michael Boylan; Assistant Chief Adrian O’Neal – JSO Department of Corrections; Lt. Michelle Fletcher – JSO Correctional Facilities Programs; Charles Cofer – Public Defender; Jeff Clements – Council Research Division; Steven Libby – Legislative Services Division; Eric Grantham – Public Information Division; Tyler Nolan – Northeast Florida Regional Council; Claude Cofer – Court Administration; Mike Smith – 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court Technology Officer

**Meeting Convened:** 1:31 p.m.

Chairman Miller convened the meeting and said the focus of the meeting is the current situation regarding programs being conducted at the jail. The attendees introduced themselves for the record. Special Committee Chair Michael Boylan said he has been attending all of the special committee working group meetings and has been observing a great deal of cross-over among the work of the various groups. The Adjudication, Intake and Recidivism working group meeting this morning discussed the need for an infirmary at the jail. He said is open to extending the deadline for completion of the Special Committee’s work beyond mid-January if more time is needed to complete the charge of the committee. Mr. Miller recommended touring the jail for those who have not done it yet. He said that overlap among the work of the groups is beneficial because it ensures that there are no gaps that aren’t covered.

Assistant Chief O’Neal said the jail is currently ADA compliant after considerable work to ensure that compliance. A new jail should ideally contain infirmary facilities for males and females, and most new facilities are being built that way. In response to a question from the Chair about inmate population projections, Assistant Chief O’Neal said JSO has projected through 2045 using state population growth

projections of 3% per year. The department currently holds 3,500 inmates at its 3 facilities. The pre-trial detention center was built to hold 2,100 inmates and currently holds about 2,600.

The Chair asked for information on food preparation and service. Assistant Chief O'Neal said the biggest current issues relate to repairs of old equipment like dishwashers and ovens. The building's plumbing problems sometimes back up into the kitchen area which impacts on meal preparation. In response to a question from CM Boylan, he said a larger kitchen facility will be needed when a new, larger jail is built. Dan Lee said he learned from the tour that as the building ages, the maintenance staff has been reduced from 30 personnel to only 8. Chief O'Neal said the current number is actually 5 people, not 8, and they are only on duty from 6 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. so have to be called in for emergency duty after those hours.

Chairman Miller said the jail is required to provide schooling to juvenile inmates. Lieutenant Michelle Fletcher, head of inmate programs for the JSO's three correctional facilities, said the state is transitioning to on-line education classes and testing which is problematic since JSO can't allow any access to the internet through its dedicated law enforcement computer servers. Wifi connectivity is sporadic throughout the building. The capacity of in-person classrooms has been reduced since the COVID pandemic from 25 to 15 people. Lt. Fletcher said there are 35 different educational programs offered to both juveniles and adults (i.e. GED instruction). Mr. Miller asked for a report on the numbers of inmates taking part in all kinds of educational programs. Because Duval County Public Schools is short of teachers overall, that shortage has impacted on the availability of teachers at the jail. Lt. Fletcher said a mental health clinic is needed as well as safe housing for inmates with mental health issues. President Salem said he has been told that as much as 40% of the jail population is using some type of psychotropic drugs due to mental health issues. CM Boylan recommended that this working group concentrate on housing for the traditional jail population without special needs and let another group deal with the mental health population. President Salem said jail inmates who have physical or mental problems are taken to UF Health for treatment and they are charged to the City's indigent care contract. He is interested in finding out what percentage of the indigent care funding is going to inmate care costs.

Lt. Fletcher said job training and skills development are needed to prepare inmates for life after release. A number of agencies have approached the JSO about bringing various kinds of training programs to the jail but there is no funding to make those programs possible. Chairman Boylan cautioned against too much discussion of programs when the working group should be focusing on facilities. Lt. Fletcher said much more space will be needed for classrooms and training rooms and internet access will need to be provided through a system completely separate from the law enforcement networked computers. The Chair asked Lt. Fletcher to research the number of students and the state standard for square footage for numbers of students in a classroom. Lt. Fletcher said JSO operates an entrepreneurship training program at the Montgomery Correctional Center but in a very small classroom. The Community Transition Center also has a very small room that is shared for multiple purposes. CM Boylan asked for schematic drawings of the correctional facilities to get a feel for the layouts and room sizes.

Chair Miller said that the next meeting will look at medical/dental/mental health issues. Chief O'Neal described the use of portable beds to handle overflow populations by sleeping them in the day room of a dorm and the concurrent need to empty a cell of inmates to provide the portable bed inmates with the ability to use that sink and toilet. Chief O'Neal said the jail's laundry facility is sufficient to keep clothing and linens cleaned if everything is working properly, but when any of the machines break down then staff must work at night and weekends to catch up with the workload.

Assistant Chief O'Neal described the recreational facilities in the jail and the state mandate for 3 hours of outdoor recreation per week, weather permitting. The only facilities are 2 basketball hoops for males and one basketball hoop and a volleyball net for the female yard. Chairman Miller asked about visitation policies and facilities. Chief O'Neal said that since COVID, families can visit their inmate remotely via a

computer tablet. Inmates' attorneys are allowed into the jail and communicate with their clients via a phone system. Charles Cofer said there are 2 concerns with visitation. The current process takes 20-30 minutes from the time an attorney arrives at the jail until they actually begin communicating with the inmate because of the time it takes to register, establish a computer link to the appropriate floor, and get the inmate to the appropriate location. He said the Public Defender paid for the entire system of polycom units, wiring, etc. to make that system work. They installed 60 units and that is very insufficient for the need and is restricted just to Public Defender clients. Private attorneys need an equivalent system to talk to their clients. Lt. Fletcher said the current scheduling system is not as useful as the previous system in terms of showing when appointments are ready. Mike Smith, the Court Technology Officer, said he has been asked to develop a scheduling program for JSO, which is close to activation, that will allow JSO to inform attorneys when staff capacity is available to transfer inmates to polycoms for meetings.

Chairman Miller asked what facilities are needed for correctional officers. Assistant Chief O'Neal said more parking is needed for staff – some employees are currently parking across the street in the Shipyard West lot (somewhat displaced by the Fire Museum and Orleck facility). They need no less than 300 spaces to accommodate everyone, and preferably more to accommodate shift change overlap. CM Boylan said the DIA has offered garage parking at the Yates Building or the Arena garages. Lt. Fletcher said an employee lounge would be much appreciated. Assistant Chief O'Neal said the existing employee locker room is on the lowest level of the building and frequently suffers from the recurring flooding problem. He said 500-600 lockers are needed to serve everyone; currently they are using added portable lockers to cover the shortfall. The emergency release system (unlocks banks of cells in an emergency) is not currently functional; a new facility will need for that system to be more robust.

Mike Smith said more attorney interview rooms are needed. Claude Colvin with the Clerk of Courts office said there is a need to connect the computer systems of the Clerk of Courts, JSO, Public Defender, and State Attorney so there's not so much duplication of work and handling of paper documents. Someone needs to get the technology figured out well in advance of building a new jail so officials don't have to learn that technology from scratch at the same time as they are learning a new jail building and its procedures. Dan Lee said his jail tour was eye-opening – he was astounded at the amount and continued use of duplicative paper records.

CM Boylan said the working group meeting this morning talked about where intake hearings should be held – in the courthouse or in the jail. Representatives of the Mental Health Offender Program (MHOP) were there to talk about diverting mental health patients from housing in the jail to an alternate secure location.

Chairman Miller asked about storage and refrigeration capacity in the jail. Lt. Fletcher said JSO has emergency supplies and extra materials for the jail stored on Catherine Street in a facility that needs to be bigger. The kitchen is poorly designed and needs to be redone. The hot bar line is not currently working and more equipment is needed. The Chair asked JSO to come back with specifications for what a new fully functional kitchen would need to be – how big, what equipment, arranged how to meet future growth needs? He also asked for the same type of information for employee facilities, parking, and other needs. What do we have now, what is the inmate growth projection, what do we ideally need in a new building? An audience member asked about the expected lifespan of a new facility. CM Boylan said it should be for the foreseeable future, preferably with capacity for expansion if needed later. An audience member said the private sector can supply a useful project approach to planning for a future facility - a deliberate framework for how to plan for a big multi-faceted project.

The working group's next meeting on November 3<sup>rd</sup> will hear from private sector construction companies about what is the current state of the art in jail construction, especially as it relates to the issues and concerns raised by the working group thus far.

An audience member asked about the current jail population issues. Assistant Chief O’Neal said the jail is overflowing with violent felons and misdemeanor inmates. Small dorms hold 36 beds (they were built for 24), larger dorms have 72 beds (built for 48). They currently have direct supervision for juveniles and close observation populations.

Public Comment

Marie McGrath Wood suggested looking at federal standards for model jail facilities and for federal grants availability. She said Los Angeles does lots of recidivism reduction via education and other programming which has reduced their inmate population substantially. GED and vocational education programs could help provide skills for jobs and improved futures after release.

Carnell Oliver said a new facility has to be planned holistically. The Florida Department of Corrections is moving toward a more Norwegian model for its correctional facilities – rehabilitation is the key. He recommended getting FSCJ to partner on educational initiatives because that’s something the correctional system could do with inmates that would be useful.

The next meeting will be on November 3<sup>rd</sup> at 8 a.m.

**Meeting adjourned:** 3:12 p.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research Division  
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