



Jail Planning Meeting Minutes
January 7, 2014 at 6:00 pm

Members Present: Daniel Ward, David Berry, Edward Philpot, Alida Millham, Miller Lovett, Steve Nedeau, Maggie Pritchard, Brian Loanes, , and Gary Goudreau. (Debra Shackett, Craig Wiggin and Angela Bovill arrived late following the public hearing).

Commissioner Philpot, Chair called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

Commissioners reported their visits to the local governing body's (Select Boards) has had mixed reviews regarding the discussion of the Community Corrections Planning Progress. They have attended 6 to date. There has not been much community input at these meetings.

M/Nedeau, S/Thomas to suspend the Community Corrections Planning Committee Meetings at this time. Commissioner Philpot feels the right thing to do is to continue this process. Commissioner Thomas said the response he always hears is that the cost is way too much. Ms. Millham was opposed to the motion and suggested the committee move to a new approach/new plan. Perhaps get consultants back here, rethink the plan. The Delegation appears to agree on a renovation, but not the price. Superintendent Ward was opposed to the motion as well, understanding whom he works for, and noting that he will do what he is directed to do. Superintendent also reviewed the purpose and intent of securing temporary housing for renovations as well as for new construction. Soon he will have another full year of stats that may help to give everyone a better understanding of the needs and demands. The length of stay has gone up 20% in the last year. This is up 11 per day over the previous year. Ms. Pritchard was also opposed to the motion indicating that we have come way too far and done too much to suspend now. Mr. Lovett agrees with Ms. Pritchard and asked what kind of a jail do we support? If we were able to get the temporary units approved, how long can it last; to do something with the old jail is a waste of money. How can we get adequate housing? Mr. Goudreau cautioned that there is a real danger in trying to do this in pieces. The end project will not necessarily be what is wanted; not with the efficiency, not the programming. **Motion was denied.** 1 –Y (Nedeau) all others voted – N.

Mr. Loanes says that there is frustration in the education piece of all of this. That the public is not well informed, and that communities are not aware of how much they are affected by offenders and the system. The Bennett report is a reminder of this. The report also warned “if we did nothing”, and here we are now faced with the scenarios he said would occur. The Bennett report and the data that was gathered, was used to project the size for the future and planning. The data exists, so we can re-assess and overlay new information.

Superintendent Ward stated that the 20% length of stay increase last year coincides with 16 consecutive years of increases in the facility. Paired with the additional inmates from drug/recovery court, and longer more creative sentencing to the county jail, it is a real challenge.

The ADAPT program has been very successful in the jail with great participation. One volunteer spoke to how she believes that the Correctional officers in the facility are heroic to do what they do with what they have. Many people want to volunteer, but there is only one room available right now for programming. “We need to educate and work with these inmates, they’re human beings and we need to help them be successful and give them the tools they need to succeed and to prevent re- incarceration.” She knows that most people don’t understand why we would want to help these offenders. She pointed out that the inmates usually have children, and they are our neighbors, and their children are involved in the system. Incarceration has a broad effect. Superintendent Ward thanked all the volunteers that come into the jail. They could not do what they do without them!

Superintendent Ward said that it is not looking good right now and that he has big concerns. The Bennett report was based on programming and community corrections. Without the programming, we are not able to drive the numbers down. Superintendent Ward will overlay his numbers with the Bennett report to show this. Mr. Grenier asked why more inmates were not out on the bracelet program. Superintendent Ward stated that they only have one community correctional officer covering all of Belknap County. Currently there are 14 inmates being monitored electronically and 16 more on work release, some even live outside of the county, but we are required to supervise them.

Committee discussed how to get the information out to communities effectively. Superintendent Ward also shared that they have had 96 graduates of the GED program in the jail, and will reach over 100 this year! This is a great success story and they will be tracking it. Commissioner Philpot wanted the committee to bring back any ideas for alternatives and information sharing in this process. He asked that the Superintendent and Ms. Pritchard meet to review the Bennett report and to look for noted opportunities to impact those currently incarcerated with mental health needs. Ms. Pritchard also agreed to look at the last couple of years of patients who also had BCC stays.

Unanimous Motion to adjourn at 6:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Maggie Pritchard