

Garland County
Public Health, Welfare & Safety Committee Meeting

Minutes

July 22, 2019

Members Present: Chairman Larry Raney, Vice Chairman Jimmy Young, Justices Esther Dixon, Matt McKee, Jason Braziel, and Thomas Anderson

Members Absent: Jimmy Sorrells

Also present: Legislators, Citizens, Elected Officials, Staff, and Media

A meeting of the Garland County Public Health, Welfare & Safety Committee was held July 22, 2019, at 5:30 P.M. in room 201 of the Garland County Courthouse.

Chairman Raney called the meeting to order and asked Justice Thomas Anderson to give the opening prayer.

Chairman Raney then introduced the first order of business, an ordinance to amend the current Conceal Carry Ordinance O-16-70. County Attorney John Howard stated that the ordinance had been revised to say that Justices of the Peace and employees of third parties that have an office located in a government building are qualified to carry a weapon as well as elected officials and county employees. Justice McKee made a motion for a do-pass, seconded by Justice Young. Chairman Raney asked for questions or discussion. With none, the motion was approved without opposition. Justices McKee, Young, and Anderson requested to be sponsors on the amended ordinance.

Chairman Raney introduced the next order of business, a presentation from Sheriff Mike McCormick and Chief Steven Elrod. McCormick started the discussion by stating that a lot of the concern about the Detention Facility had been based on misinformation. McCormick stated that he would like the opportunity to provide accurate information so everyone can assess the situation based on the facts. With that said, McCormick turned the floor over to Chief Deputy Elrod, who supervises the adult and juvenile detention facilities. Elrod explained the training he had received in Direct Supervision and Corrections and noted that he is one of three Jail Certified Managers in the State of Arkansas. Elrod stated that during the transition period, he was assigned to write all the policies and procedures that would be used at the new facility.

Elrod then started a PowerPoint presentation about the detention facility and its operations. Elrod stated that the Detention Facility is a 42 million dollar project on 57 acres of land and has an operating budget of around 8 million dollars. The building covers 168,000 square feet, built for a capacity of 482 inmates, and the current daily average population is approximately 350 inmates.

Three years ago, Elrod stated that he noticed an increase in inmate population and moved inmates from a smaller pod to a larger pod to accommodate for the increase without the need for additional funding. Elrod then showed a layout of one of the Detention Facility housing units and explained that the facility is designed to be under the philosophy of Direct Supervision. Elrod stated that the facility has eight housing units, and supervisors are spread throughout the building to maintain staff and inmate accountability. Elrod also stated that the housing units are designed to limit inmate movement and noted that inmates receive medical care, food, programs, video visitation, etc. without leaving the unit.

Elrod then explained the definition of Direct Supervision, which is managing inmate behavior versus physical containment. Elrod noted the deputy's workstation is positioned inside the unit which gives the deputy face-to-face contact with the inmates so he can effectively monitor all the inmates in that unit. Elrod also noted that one deputy would monitor 60 to 70 inmates.

Elrod then moved the discussion to the programs offered at the facility. He noted that the programs are a useful tool to help inmates become productive members of society. Elrod stated that the mission of the Detention Facility is to protect and enhance the quality of life in the community. Elrod noted that by demonstrating innovative, cost-effective operations, the facility plans to exceed the expectations for state jail operations through qualified staff and professional services. Elrod stated that the Detention Facility plans to expand those expectations to the region and be among the top 3% in the nation through service, honor, integrity, and professionalism.

Elrod stated the goals and objectives for the upcoming year, which are listed below:

- Pursue the American Correctional Association (ACA) national accreditation pursuant to the Adult Local Detention Facilities (ALDF) standards and noted that the Detention Facility is working toward a mock audit through ACA.
- Strengthen staff retention efforts and the ability to ensure adequate levels are maintained. He stated that the Detention Facility continues to enhance training and retention efforts.
- Become a model Detention Facility in the region and noted that the facility is the only one in the state with Certified Jail Managers.

Elrod also stated that the Detention Facility had received national and state recognition, which are listed below:

- Captain Belinda Cosgrove received national recognition for the American Jail Association 2018 Supervisor of the Year.
- Adult and Juvenile facilities are the first detention facilities in Arkansas to become fully compliant with the Department of Justice, Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) standards.
- Lexipol, who is the leading provider of public safety policy and training for law enforcement, used training videos featuring Garland County in 18 different states and an estimated 200 agencies.

Elrod stated that the Detention Facility hosts community leadership programs, such as the Citizens Police Academy and Leadership Hot Springs through tours of the facility and information about its operations. The facility is also the demonstration site for the University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture.

Elrod then introduced Captain Belinda Cosgrove, who supervises the Detention Facility programs. Cosgrove stated that she has 164 volunteers that come in weekly to help with the programs. Cosgrove talked about the programs listed below:

- Substance Abuse
- Veterans Unit
- Adult Education General Education Development (GED) --Partnering with National Park College
- Workforce Alliance
- Getting Ahead While Getting Out -- Most successful program
- Anger Management
- Parenting -- Love and Logic Program
- Work Readiness

- Celebrate Recovery
- And many more

Elrod stated that Arkansas is number five in the United States with the highest incarceration rates and noted the re-entry programs offered to inmates are an integral part of the Detention Facility's success to help build a better community.

Elrod noted the support that the facility has received this year.

- Congressman Bruce Westerman attended the graduation ceremony for the "Getting Ahead While Getting Out" re-entry program.
- Pastors from various churches visited for "Coffee with the Pastors" program
- Bridgeview ministries offered worship service to the female population.

Elrod ended the presentation by stating that the Detention Facility is here to support the community.

Chairman Raney asked for clarification on the Arkansas incarceration rate statistic. Elrod stated that high incarceration rates are a national problem, and the Detention Facility is continually looking for ways to mitigate the inmate population. Elrod noted that the programs offered at the facility are an excellent way to try to alleviate the problem. Raney also asked what the Detention Facility and the Quorum Court had done to follow the recommendations from the jail assessment that had been completed earlier this year. Elrod stated that one of the suggestions was to hire a Finance Manager. After an extensive interview process, Elrod said that Andrew Pennington had been selected and would be a great asset to the facility. Elrod noted the facility has also expanded the new hire recruitment and retention by providing an orientation process that includes information and tours of the facility.

Elrod also stated that the Quorum Court had approved salary increases for detention deputies and that the Detention Facility should be a career path and not a stepping-stone to other departments. Justice McKee asked about the jail certification training deputies receive. Elrod stated that the training consists of ACA best-known practices and the Direct Supervision philosophy. Justice Owen asked how the classification of an inmate is determined. Elrod stated that the process operates on a point additive system and is completed within 72 hours upon incarceration at the facility. Elrod noted that this system is based on criminal charges, history, and behavior from prior incarcerations in the facility. From that point, the inmate's classification is based on behavior assessments completed after 60 and 90 days of confinement. McKee asked if the housing units were being used to their full potential. Elrod stated that the National Institute of Corrections recommends that to operate a housing unit safely and effectively, 15% of the bed space should be available for classification purposes. Elrod noted that all possible space had been utilized. Justice McGrew asked about the jail assessment recommendation to form a committee and asked what is being done to alleviate the jail population. Elrod stated that ankle monitors are used for inmates that can afford to pay for the service and equipment. He also noted that a Criminal Justice Advisory Committee had been formed to discuss the Detention Facility problems and to come up with solutions to solve those problems. Elrod clarified that this committee is only used in an advisory capacity. Elrod stated that during that advisory meeting, he said that if no options to alleviate the jail population could be presented, he would need to talk to Sheriff McCormick about closing the jail. Elrod clarified that the committee did not make that recommendation. Elrod also noted that the investigator assigned to the Detention Facility had been assigned the responsibility of case expeditor. This investigator looks to see who is a candidate for alternative sentencing and recommends different placements for inmates.

Judy Coleman, a Garland County citizen, asked about how many 309 Arkansas Department of Corrections (ADC) inmates are housed at the facility. Elrod stated that the facility is currently holding 23

ADC inmates, 21 of those inmates are probation/parole violators. He also noted that Act 570 allows them to serve their 90 days sentence at the facility if no bed space is available at ADC. Elrod discussed the 309 programs at the Detention Facility and noted that an analysis of the programs offered had been completed. Elrod noted that in the period from 2015 through 2019, the facility had a 72% to 99% reduction in kitchen maintenance due to a new female 309 program operating within the food services department. Elrod noted in February of this year, the facility starting using a 309 female inmate, trained as a seamstress, to repair inmate linens, blankets, towels, and uniforms, etc., which has saved the facility \$7,574.00. Elrod also stated that the 309 inmates used to maintain the grounds had saved the facility an estimated \$57,000 a year.

Elrod stated that only three deputy positions remain vacant due to the concentrated recruiting efforts, and if the inmate population continues to increase, the Quorum Court might need to consider opening another pod.

Chairman Raney thanked the legislators and the public for coming to the meeting.

A motion to adjourn was made by Justice McKee.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lanie Martin", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lanie Martin
Garland County Finance Director