

BROOKINGS COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING

MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2017

The Brookings County Board of County Commissioners met in special session on April 3, 2017 with the following members present: Larry Jensen, Lee Ann Pierce, Stephne Miller and Ryan Krogman. Mike Bartley was present via telephone.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Jensen called the meeting to order.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda for the April 3, 2017 Commission Meeting was approved without objection.

SCHEDULED AGENDA ITEM

As scheduled at 7:00 p.m., the board held a public hearing on the Brookings County Detention Center Expansion Project.

Sheriff Martin Stanwick said the detention center was first built in 1975 to house 30 inmates. In 2000, the detention center was remodeled; housing a maximum of 54 inmates. Currently, Stanwick said the detention center houses 35 inmates daily.

Stanwick said it used to be a lot of misdemeanor offenses so it was easy to house those inmates, but those times are changing. He said they are now seeing more methamphetamine use, sexual and domestic assaults, and more cases of mental illness. Stanwick said you have to house those inmates according to their classification and, unfortunately, they are running out of room.

Stanwick said the expansion will be roughly 17,000 square feet. It will be able to house 84 inmates. Currently, Stanwick said the jail is a linear design making it very difficult to see the inmates unless you physically walk up and down the hall. Stanwick said the new design will have "pods" instead of cell blocks making it much more efficient.

Stanwick said property taxes will increase if the expansion moves forward. He said the board is looking at a 20 year bond.

Chairperson Jensen opened the public hearing and called for opponents. Hearing none, Chairperson Jensen called for proponents.

Kathleen Holleman with the Brookings Empowerment Project asked what kind of housing plan will be available for juveniles. Holleman also asked Stanwick about the proposed safe room in the new design. Stanwick said they are looking into something for juveniles, but he does not want to keep them for long periods of time. Stanwick said the only safe room they have is at the hospital and that is an examine room. He said the safe room in the new design will not be cell-like; it will have a softer look to it.

Brookings County resident Debra Moore asked how proactive Brookings County will be at helping inmates with mental health issues get the right resources. Right now, she said jail seems to be a reactive response; there needs to be more support for these individuals. Commissioner Pierce said the County entered into an agreement with the city and school on putting together a task force to look at different resources that are available in Brookings County. Sheriff Stanwick said most of his staff has had training on mental illness; he said they want to do more.

Brookings County resident Carey Bretsch said he is a proponent of the project. Bretsch asked about the capital costs for the project, such as additional help and the operation and maintenance of the expansion. Currently, Stanwick said the Correctional Officer/Inmate ratio is 1:20; with the new expansion the ratio will be 1:40. Stanwick said each Correctional Officer carries a set of keys; with the new design there will be a control room. Stanwick also said the 24/7 program pays for itself. It pays for all of the supplies and employees' wages.

Brookings County resident Robert Burke said he's had a chance to observe the jail for the past six months and is also a proponent of the expansion. Burke asked the board to consider the staff's safety. Burke said they are working in tight, cramped quarters. He said the inmates also need to be safe; there are different kinds of people, different personalities, and mental illnesses. Burke said overcrowding is an issue. Burke also said opportunities are lost in the current jail. There isn't much space for a counselor, minister, or other additional help.

Brookings City Police Chief Jeff Miller said he was a Correctional Officer at the detention center in 1971 and there was some remodeling done. Miller said the safety for staff and the inmates is a big issue. He said he supports the addition; it is the right thing to do.

Brookings County Correctional Officer Kevin Murfield said he has been employed with the Sheriff's Office for two years and safety is key. Right now, Murfield said they do the best they can with what they have. Murfield said recreation for the inmates is offered one hour a day and those inmates can either go outside in a small enclosed area or downstairs in the basement. No matter what, Murfield said those keys that are on each officer are in arm's length of the inmates. Murfield said this expansion would be a huge boost for the staff.

Moody County Sheriff Troy Wellman said Moody County does not have a jail and they struggle to find places to house those individuals. Wellman said he transported one prisoner for sixteen hours just to try and find a place for him to go. Wellman said he supports Brookings County and the expansion project.

Chairperson Jensen closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Krogman thanked everyone for coming and expressing concerns. Krogman said the board will be discussing and taking action at the April 4th Commission Meeting. Chairperson Jensen also thanked everyone for coming.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Pierce, seconded by Krogman to adjourn. Motion carried. The next regular scheduled meeting is Tuesday, April 4, 2017 at 8:30 a.m.

It is the policy of Brookings County, South Dakota not to discriminate against the Handicapped of Employment or the Provision or Service. The County of Brookings is responsive to requests for communication aids and the need to provide appropriate access, and will provide alternative formats and accessible locations consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Jenna Peterson
Finance Assistant II
Brookings County

Published once at the approximate cost of_____.