

CLARK COUNTY CORRECTION FACILITY ADVISORY COMMISSION

Clark County Council Chambers Public Service Center
1300 Franklin Street

April 24, 2018
3:00pm – 6:00pm

Attendance

Commission: County Chair Boldt (Clark County), Commission Chair Craig Pridemore (At-Large), Commission Vice Chair James McElvain (City of Vancouver), Tony Golik (Clark County DA), Vanessa Gaston (Clark County DCS), Louis Byrd (Byrd Legal Services), Steve Stuart (City of Ridgefield), Eulalia Soto (League of United Latin American Citizens), Greg Thornton (City of La Center), Judge Kelli Osler (Clark County District Court), Kim Mosolf (Disability Rights Washington), Eric Holmes (City of Vancouver), Peter Seeley (Providence Hospital), Carmen Carabello (Esther Short Neighborhood), Anne McEnery-Ogle (City of Vancouver), John Moren (Community Services NW), Judge Scott Collier (Clark County Superior Court), Kate Budd (Council for the Homeless), Melissa Smith (City of Camas), Roger Entrekin (Meadowglade Neighborhood Association), David Scott (City of Washougal), Bob Carrroll (IBEW 48), Bob Richardson (City of Battleground), Scott Weber (Clark County)

Staff/Interested Parties: Marlia Jenkins (Clark County), Ric Bishop (Clark County), Jim Rumpeltes (Clark County), Lindsey Shafer (Clark County), Erik Jensen (Jensen Strategies), Jeff Aprati (Jensen Strategies), Alice Cannon (Jensen Strategies), Sean Philbrook (Identity Clark County), Alan Melnick (Clark County)

Welcome/Opening Remarks

County Chair Boldt convened the meeting and welcomed Commission members. Chair Boldt introduced the opening video, titled "Change- Help Restore Lives." The video showed several inmate mug photos followed by "after" photos of inmates who had succeeded after incarceration. Chair Bolt explained that the County established the Commission to assess the need for an improved correctional facility; assess community service level expectations; and offer a recommendation on how to best address the facility needs. Chari Boldt then introduced meeting facilitator Erik Jensen and his team members Jeff Aprati and Alice Cannon.

Agenda Review and Meeting Objectives

Meeting facilitator Erik Jensen welcomed the Commission and reviewed the agenda with the group. Jensen stated that the purpose of the meeting is to review the Commission process and timeline; offer an overview of the current jail challenges; summarize recent Commission interviews and survey results conducted by Jensen Strategies over the previous month.

Self-Introductions

The group progressed around the room for self-introductions. Jeff Aprati took notes to capture commission members' expectations for the group:

- Meet needs of community;
- Lower recidivism;
- Evaluate affordable jail options;
- Commissioners need to be educated;
- Helping inmates for re-entry to community;
- Constructive dialogue;
- Willing to learn;
- Find the "sweet spot" for the cost of services;
- Find the best location for the jail;
- Maximize opportunities for service organizations to be aligned with jail;
- Best practices should be incorporated into the process;
- Meet the needs from a jail facilities standpoint;
- Incarceration isn't always the best option. Seek other opportunities;
- Efficient process to provide a strong recommendation to County Council;
- Pursuing the best opportunity for Clark County citizens;
- Think about the "system" as a whole;
- Consider facility operating life-cycle cost;
- Engage the community;
- Focus on diversion efforts to reduce the jail population;
- Address ALL issues relating to jail services, especially for non-English speakers;
- Solutions should be humane, fair, and just;
- Innovative strategies before, during, and after jail;
- Need the support of voters; and
- Align with efforts to keep people out of jail

By-Laws Highlights/ Q&A about Commission Goals

Question: Will Participants be allowed to call-in to meetings?

Answer from staff: Yes, County staff will make arrangements for this at future meetings.

Question: Will the Commission be considering best practices to avoid incarceration?

Answer from staff: The courts have programs to avoid incarceration.

Question: Can participants bring guests to the jail tour?

Answer from staff: No, tours for guests can be arranged separately

General Comments:

The group needs to stay focused on the facility needs of the jail.
The group needs to consider facility alternatives.

Orientation, Clark County Jail Overview and Challenges

Clark County Corrections Chief Ric Bishop outlined that the City currently has two jail facilities. One is the main jail and is a maximum-security facility. The jail was originally designed with 300+ beds, with a maximum occupancy of approximately 550 inmates. The average daily population for the main jail in 2017 was 621.

The second jail facility in Clark County is the Jail Work Center. This facility provides inmate labor to prepare meals and laundry service for the main Jail. The average daily population for this facility in 2017 was 82.

Chief Bishop described the Constitutional issues that inmates and correction officers face when managing a jail. Bishop also presented inmate re-entry statistics. A Commission member stated the he believed these rates were too high. Bishop said he would check the statistics.

Chief Bishop welcomed participants to request data as he made his presentation. The Commission requested the following information during the presentation:

- Incarceration rates by race, gender, mental health status, alcohol and drug dependency, and disability;
- Statistics on why people are incarcerated;
- Statistics on repeat offenders and their charges when re-incarcerated; and
- The percentage of mentally ill and drug dependent inmates in the current jail population

Bishop outlined these current challenges facing the Clark County jail:

- Increasing Jail population;
- Reduced government revenue;
- Inmate health care needs;
- Chronically ill inmates;
- Aging jail population;
- Disabled inmates and
- Aging facility

Chief Bishop asked for nine volunteers to participate in an exercise to highlight challenges associated with jail overcrowding

Commission Interviews and Survey Summary

Erik Jensen summarized the issues raised in recent Commission interviews with Jensen Strategies, showing the highlights in a slide presentation.

Questions/Comments from the Commission about the Interview and Survey Summary

Jensen asked if the interview and survey summary results seemed accurate and sought additional comments and questions from the Commission concerning the work program for the Commission in the coming months. Commissioners offered the following questions and comments:

- **Comment:** Video Appearances in court may experience some push-back by the Superior Court, impacting the workload of corrections staff.
- **Comment:** A Commission member asked for a summary of legal issues and challenges that the jail has faced.
- **Question:** Are the current trends with Clark County jail operations consistent with national incarceration trends? How do these trends influence the work of this Commission?
- **Question:** Can the Bylaws be amended to incorporate a revised scope of work or Commission purpose?
- **Comment:** The Commission needs to hear from experts regarding the differences between providing inmate treatment in the jail versus treatment in community-based behavioral health programs.
- **Question:** How can community-based treatment programs help reduce inmate re-entry?
- **Comment:** A Commissioner expressed concern that conversations about mental health programming may be outside the scope of this Commission and could lengthen the work program and timeline for the Commission.
- **Comment:** The Commission requested to receive information about the housing status for inmates.
- **Comment:** It may be better to spend money on housing rather than jail beds.
- **Comment:** The Commission should also consider cost-effective alternatives to jail expansion.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:47 pm