



# MIDDLE RIVER REGIONAL JAIL

Serving Staunton, Waynesboro, Harrisonburg and  
the Counties of Augusta and Rockingham

February 1, 2022 2:00 p.m.

Augusta County Government Center  
18 Government Center Lane  
Verona Virginia 24482

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

Upon determination of a quorum, Mr. Hamp, Chairman, called the February 1, 2022 Middle River Regional Jail Authority Board meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

### Members Present:

Michael G. Hamp, Waynesboro City Manager (Chairman)  
Stephen King, Rockingham County Administrator (Vice Chairman)  
Timothy Fitzgerald, Augusta County Administrator  
Leslie Beauregard, Acting Staunton City Manager  
Ande Banks, Acting Harrisonburg City Manager  
Jennifer Whetzel, Augusta Assistant County Administrator  
Cameron McCormick, Waynesboro City Finance Director  
Phillip Trayer, Staunton City Finance Director  
Larry Propst, Harrisonburg City Finance Director  
Patricia Davidson, Rockingham County Finance Director  
Christopher Johnson, Waynesboro City Sheriff  
Andy McFarlane, Captain, Staunton City Sheriff (via video)

### Members Absent:

Chris Hartless, Staunton City Sheriff  
Bryan Hutcheson, Rockingham County Sheriff  
Donald Smith, Augusta County Sheriff  
Kelly Warner, Harrisonburg Police Chief

### Facility Staff:

Jeffery Newton, CJM, Superintendent, Middle River Regional Jail  
Eric Young, Deputy Superintendent, Middle River Regional Jail  
Lori Nicholson, Director of Support Services, Middle River Regional Jail  
Tony Heflin, Director of Operations, Middle River Regional Jail  
Jeannie Colvin, Finance Director, Middle River Regional Jail  
Jeff Gore, MRRJA Legal Counsel (via video)  
Tina Reed, Recorder, Middle River Regional Jail  
Suzette Anthony, Assistant Recorder, Middle River Regional Jail

**Others Present:**

Tyler Moses, IT MRRJ  
John Lilly, Chief of Programs, MRRJ  
Misty Cook, Augusta County Finance Director  
Faye McCauley, Legal Liaison, MRRJ

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Fitzgerald made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 7, 2021 meeting. Mr. Banks seconded the motion. Approval was **unanimous**.

**3. CITIZEN COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no citizens in attendance. No comments were made.

**4. COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS OR LEGAL COUNSEL**

No comments at this time.

**5. FINANCE REPORT**

- a. **FY 2022 Budget Update** – Ms. Colvin stated that the FY 22 is in line. We are recouping vacancy savings to cover areas where needed.
- b. **FY 2023 Proposed Operating Budget** – Ms. Colvin reviewed the proposed FY 2023 budget with the Board.
  - a. The FY 2023 Budget proposes 2 nurses, 1 part-time teacher (funded with the inmate accounts).
  - b. Mr. Newton informed the Board that the legislature is considering raises. This could impact the proposed budget.
  - c. Mr. King asked if the issue with Highland County had been resolved. The MOU with them has been prepared. They have housed inmates with Augusta County / MRRJA since 1984. They are not a member jurisdiction. The annual contribution amount will still be based on the average inmate account for the past three years. Based on the proposed draft FY2023 budget Highland County would pay a rate of .034% or \$56,000.00 for the next fiscal year.

**6. REPORTS AND BRIEFING**

Major Young reviewed the following reports:

- **Population Report** – Major Young reviewed the Executive Summary. As of February, 2022, there are a total of 740 offenders being housed by MRRJ in-house. We are housing 40 at RSW and 10 at Southside.
- **Community Corrections Report** – Major Young reviewed the Executive Summary. As of February 1, 2022 there are 43 offenders on HEI/HEM.
- **Staff Vacancy Report** –At this time there are 31 Officer and 6 Nurse vacancies. At this time, we can safely cover through schedule adjustments, overtime, etc. All daily functions are being completed.
- **Superintendent's Report** – Superintendent Newton review the Executive Summary
  - Middle River Regional Jail continues to offer COVID-19 vaccine to staff and the inmate population. (347 inmates are vaccinated) Periodic clinics have been conducted since June 2021.

- MRRJ has about 59% of staff that report being vaccinated.
- MRRJ has been asking new intakes vaccine status, since March 3, 2021, as a part of the initial medical assessment. Of more than 2,783 inmates processed only 511 indicated that they had taken the vaccine; of those 511 only 321 could be verified through the Virginia Department of Health.
- MRRJ has experienced a significant number of positive cases of COVID-19 in the inmate population since the December meeting. On top of this challenge there is a lack of rapid test kits. We are treating all inmates with symptoms as though they have Covid 19.
- MRRJ has experienced a significant number of staff testing positive for COVID-19. 32 since December 1, 2021. This has created a number of operational challenges but staff have done a professional job meeting all requirements.
- The Deputy Superintendent and I met with the Commonwealths Attorneys concerning restart of residential work release. This would be male inmates only and only 24 at the most. In order to have a larger program we would need to board more inmates. At this time, we can't re-start female residential work release. At this time, we do not have the capacity for females. By re-starting residential work release we may lose support for house arrest. Still working on this issue.
- **Operational procedures:**
  - MRRJ continues to maintain a step-down screening process for new intakes that was implemented February 1, 2021.
  - MRRJ continues to maintain a staff monitoring program effective February 15, 2021. All staff rapid tested for COVID-19 once per week.
  - MRRJ was able to obtain a large block of Covid 19 rapid test kits. From the Commonwealth. We have been informed no additional tests will be able for the near future. If we can find the tests on the open market, a 30-day supply costs more than \$2,000.00.
- **Additional Items:**
  - Mr. Newton informed the Board that he has appointed Eric Young as Deputy Superintendent and Tony Heflin has been promoted to Major/Director of Operations.
  - As of this date 11 inmates have been transferred to the DOC.
  - There are 10 staff members quarantined as of today. 60% of staff are vaccinated.
  - We are not conducting visitation or programs at this time. As of today, we have 8 units under quarantine.
  - Mr. Newton is very concerned about Covid 19. Anyone on residential work release would have to be vaccinated. He does not recommend re-starting the program at this time. The pressing issue at this time is population numbers. Mr. Fitzgerald would like a goal to re-start the program at some point in the future. Mr. Newton cautioned that it is premature to re-start while we are short staffed. Mr. King and Mr. Hamp would like to see program re-started as soon as possible but by first considering all of the issues that have been raised.

**7. OLD BUSINESS - Jail Renovation:**

Superintendent Newton noted that due to the fact that the proposed renovation does not provide the facility any more beds, it may be time to reconsider. Superintendent Newton recommends that the Board reconsider the timing of the decision on renovation/expansion.

1. The impact of Criminal Justice Reform has yet to be determined.
2. The impact of Good Time Reform effective July 1, 2022 has yet to be determined.

3. Renovation now without beds may impact MRRJA's ability to add beds in the future.
4. Any delay may result in having to conduct a new Community Based Corrections Plan.

Superintendent Newton noted there are some projects included in the proposed renovation/expansion that are needed and can be funding through the annual operating budget as a capital project. Any proposed project would be reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee.

Mr. King noted he would like to move forward with improvements to the jail. He added that no one wants to expand the jail however data tracking needs to be done in order to prepare for that eventuality.

The Board agreed to delay further consideration of renovation/expansion until CY 2023.

**8. NEW BUSINESS:**

There is no new business to discuss.

With nothing further to discuss Mr. King made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. Approval was **unanimous**. Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

**The next Authority Board meeting is scheduled for April 5, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.  
Location: Augusta County Government Center Smith West Board Room.**

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Michael Hamp, Chairman