



MIDDLE RIVER REGIONAL JAIL

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

August 3, 2021 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. King, Chairman, called the August 3, 2021 Middle River Regional Jail Authority Board meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

Members Present:

Stephen King, Rockingham County Administrator (Chairman)
Steven Rosenberg, Staunton City Manager (Vice Chairman)
Timothy Fitzgerald, Augusta County Administrator
Michael G. Hamp, Waynesboro City Manager
Eric Campbell, Harrisonburg City Manager
Phillip Trayer, Staunton City Finance Director
Larry Propst, Harrisonburg City Finance Director
Jennifer Whetzel, Augusta Assistant County Administrator
Bryan Hutcheson, Rockingham County Sheriff
Donald Smith, Augusta County Sheriff
Kelley Warner, Harrisonburg Chief of Police

Members Absent:

Patricia Davidson, Rockingham County Finance Director
Cameron McCormick, Waynesboro City Finance Director
Matthew Robertson, Staunton City Sheriff
Joe Harris, Waynesboro City Sheriff

Facility Staff:

Jeffery Newton, CJM, Superintendent, Middle River Regional Jail
Eric Young, Director of Operations, Middle River Regional Jail
Lori Nicholson, Director of Support Services, Middle River Regional Jail
Jeannie Colvin, Finance Director, Middle River Regional Jail
Tina Reed, Recorder, Middle River Regional Jail
Suzette Anthony, Middle River Regional Jail
Jeff Gore, MRRJA Legal Counsel (Video)
Tyler Moses, IT MRRJ
Faye McCauley, Middle River Regional Jail

Others Present:

Jimmy Wimer, Captain, Rockingham Regional Jail
Misty Cook, Augusta County Finance Director
Megan Roane (VCSB)
Logan Roddy, Harrisonburg
Amanda Dameron, Citizen
Louella Hill, Citizen
Rae Kasden, Citizen
Andrea Jackson, Citizen

Approximately 18 citizens attended via Webex

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Whetzel made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 1, 2021 meeting. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Mr. Rosenberg abstained.

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Kasden agrees with improving the infrastructure of MRRJ, but, is opposed to expansion of the administrative space. Ms. Kadsen is concerned about the welfare of the inmates, the MRRJ mailroom the denied restriction policies.

Ms. Hill and sons Winston (12 yrs.) and Able (4th Grade) are opposed to expansion, The Hill family would prefer to use the money on programs and education.

Ms. Jackson is for reasonable renovation for a safe work place. Ms. Jackson would like to see the renovation budget lowered and would like to for the Administration square footage to remain in the same footprint, with the additional money to go into inmate programs.

Ms. Smart has concerns with money being spent for renovation without detailed quotes from contractors. Ms. Sharp also expressed a concern for the Mental Health needs, treatment of inmates and denied medical treatment for inmates.

Ms. Champ is concerned about the money being spent. Would like to see finalized quotes.

Ms. Timble, Ms. Henderson, and Ms. Wright, would like to see money spent on inmate programs not expansion of the Jail.

Ms. Cabbage voiced concern with MRRJ in general and the new digital mail system.

4. COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS OR LEGAL COUNSEL

Mr. Campbell introduced Kelley Warner, the new Harrisonburg Chief of Police.

Mr. Gore reviewed that previous legislative action had eliminated the ability for public employees to accrue compensation time. He noted that this prohibition had been corrected and that public employees could now earn compensation in lieu of overtime pay.

5. **FINANCE REPORT**

a. **FY2022 Budget Amendment #1 (Financial Management Software)**

Ms. Colvin discussed the proposed \$575,000 budget amendment for the purchase of financial software. She stated the finance committee had been discussing the software or possibly changing the fiscal agent over the past year. Rockingham County, Waynesboro and Staunton had considered trying to become the fiscal agent but were limited by their software to add a third employer to the system and the demands on their human resources offices. Ms. Colvin noted the Jail had already purchased separate procurement software to process purchase orders in a timely manner due to an audit comment and purchased KRONOS timekeeping software to report overtime for employees. She noted the procurement software was needed to comply with the purchasing procedures of processing purchase orders in a timely manner due to expediency of needing to order food, maintenance items, and medicine more often due to the Jail not having storage space to store bulk purchases. She stated the Jail was actually ordering food products, receiving the goods, and serving the food before a purchase order could be processed because of lack of storage space. She noted the Jail discussed this issue with Mr. Fitzgerald and Ms. Whetzel asking for their approval to purchase the software to comply with purchasing procedures because of no fault of the County, they were just operating on a different timeframe than the Jail's operations. She stated the software contract was available through Sourcewell, a national cooperative purchasing program which the Jail is a member. Ms. Colvin stated the software contract had been sent to Mr. Gore for his review of the contract and approval of the procurement process. Sheriff Smith asked why not wait until the budget process to request the software. Ms. Colvin noted that after the last year of the finance committee discussions and review, this was the time to move forward with the project. Mr. Newton responded the limitations of the Augusta County Human Resource system limited the Jail to only being able to hire employees twelve times per year versus hiring more frequently that a bi-weekly pay cycle basis would permit.

Mr. Rosenberg asked Mr. Gore if it was more common for fiscal agent services to be handled by the jail or the locality. Mr. Gore responded it is a mix that larger facilities are more typical to have their own finance department but definitely sees both approaches.

Ms. Whetzel said the finance committee serves as the oversight for finances meeting at least every other month.

Mr. King stated that Rockingham County really considered taking the fiscal agent duties but stated handling the human resources was the most difficult to handle. Mr. King also suggested investigating if the software could be utilized for services to the Juvenile Detention Center.

Mr. Rosenberg asked what was the budget impact in the future. Mr. Newton responded that the net impact included phasing out some part-time positions, that a full-time Director of Finance would replace the part-time Director and that over a two-year period the impact was adding approximately \$100,000 for new positions and \$50,000 for software license fees.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked if voting on the software approval also meant voting on the new positions for the finance department. Mr. King responded that the software project included the additional positions. Mr. Newton stated that we need the additional positions because we are creating a full-time Finance Department and the additional positions allowed for segregation of duties that good financial management requires.

Mr. Trayer commented he believed this was a waste of money and is concerned that the salaries stated for Human Resources Director and Finance Director were too low.

Mr. Hamp made the motion for approval of the budget amendment for the purchase of financial software. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. Mr. Trayer opposed the motion. All others voted yes.

b. MRRJ Independent Participation in SAW Consortium

Mr. Newton stated the Jail would like to become an independent member of the SAW Health Consortium. It would potentially save money in premiums for the employees and the Authority. He commented that the consultant has completed the analysis which showed an approximate 10% decrease in rates. He commented that the motion to approve the membership would be contingent upon the SAW Health Consortium Board members approval on August 5, 2021. Mr. Newton commented that since the Board does not meet again until October and this was a time sensitive issue, that if the Authority Board could approve the motion, then the Jail staff could begin further discussions with the consultant to finalize the plan and be ready for open enrollment.

Ms. Whetzel commented that the Authority Board will probably need to adopt an ordinance or some other legal document at the next board meeting in October to become an official member just as the other localities did when the SAW Consortium changed to a self-funded plan.

Mr. Rosenberg asked about the impact to the other members of the consortium and the impact on the County if the Jail separated membership from their health plan. Ms. Whetzel responded that given the quantity of members on the County plan, this would have very little impact on the County health plan.

Motion made by Ms. Whetzel, Seconded by Mr. Trayer, Approval was unanimous.

6. REPORTS AND BRIEFING

Major Young reviewed the following reports:

- a. Population Report** – (Executive Summary #2021-051) As of July 23, 2021, there are a total of 776 offenders being housed by MRRJ. 18 inmates have been moved to the Department of Corrections. 120 are out of Compliance.
- b. Community Corrections Report** – (Executive Summary #2021-052) Report reviewed and discussed. As of July 23, 2021 there are 70 offenders on HEI/HEM. Home Electronic Incarceration offenders maintain jobs in the community.
- c. Staff Vacancy Report** – (Executive Summary #2021-055) Reviewed. At this time there are 27 Officer vacancies. 10 of the vacant positions are placed on hold. There are also 1 Nursing vacancy.
- d. Superintendent's Report** – (Executive Summary #2021-055)
 - COVID-19 update 64 Inmates and staff have been vaccinated as of June 1, 2021; 6 inmates were released before the 2nd shot-each were contacted and only 1 returned for the second shot)
 - Middle River now has the vaccine on hand for inmates and staff. Periodic clinics are being planned.
 - MRRJ has been asking new intakes vaccine status, since March 3, 2021, as a part of the initial medical assessment. Of the more than 1,300 inmates processed only 165 indicated that they had taken the vaccine; of those 165 only 100 could be verified through the Virginia Department of Health.
 - MRRJ is scheduled to appear before the Board of Local and Regional Jails (BLRJ) August 18, 2021 to present the modified Community Based Corrections Plan that now reflects the renovation project approved by Board motion at the June 1, 2021 MRRJA Board Meeting. No additional action is anticipated until the BLRC acts to ensure the project continues to be eligible for 25% reimbursement.
 - Population trend chart enclosed. MRRJ has begun looking for beds to house inmates as the jail population is trending closer to 750.
 - MRRJ has transferred 14 males and 8 females to VADOC since June 1, 2021. Local and Regional Jails are housing almost 4,000 inmates that belong in VADOC as of July 15, 2021.

- **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 unvaccinated staff are rapid tested for COVID-19 once per week.
 - MRRJ resumed transferring inmates from the Harrisonburg/Rockingham Jail effective April 1, 2021.

- **Superintendent Newton responded to Comments from Public:**
 - **Renovation:**
 - Expansion for Administration and Support Service space (need to verify still eligible for 25% of construction costs).
 - Need for additional food storage and prep space
 - Additional Training Space for staff
 - MRRJ was built for 396 inmates. Currently housing 776 inmates.
 - Renovation for Professional Visitation (different from regular visitation).
 - Displacing the current Watch Commander staff.
 - Specific detailed plans are not available as MRRJA has not retained an architect to begin the design process.

 - **Visitation:**

The Virginia Department of Corrections has not returned to in-person visitation; it has been over 18 months. MRRJ returned to in-person visitation, one 15-minute visit per week, March 1st, 2021.

 - **Digital Mail:**

Process was put into place to address the introduction of contraband (primarily suboxone and K2/spice) into the jail. In 2021 40 inmates have had a reaction to what appear to be K2/Spice; 8 had to be taken to the hospital. For safety and security of the inmates and staff we have switched to a digital mail service (legal mail delivery has not changed).

e. **Programs Report** – (Executive Summary #2021-055) Major Nicholson reviewed the Programs Report:

- **Education Programs:** GED, 1 Female earned her GED and 2 more Females will be testing in August.
- **Addiction Programs:** 24 weeks long (Breaking the Cycle of Addiction) 10-Males and 11-Females enrolled.
- **Thought Process and Behavior Programs:** (Dialectical Behavior Therapy) June-July 8-Males, 4-Females enrolled.
- **Therapy Dog Program**
- **Re-Entry (Mental Health Grant)**
- **Harrisonburg/Rockingham Re-Entry**
- **Upcoming Programs:** Monthly Re-Entry workshops for Staunton, Waynesboro, Augusta resume August 11; The Career Readiness Program; Virginia Department of Behavior and Health Services (DBHDS) is working on a grant in collaboration Valley community Service Board for the 2022 fiscal year; Veterans R-Entry Search Services.

7. **OLD BUSINESS**

Jail Renovation update was addressed in the Superintendent's Report.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss

11. ADJOURNMENT

With no additional business before the Authority Board, Mr. Fitzgerald made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Hamp. The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

The next Authority Board meeting is scheduled for October 5, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

Location: Augusta County Government Center Smith Board Room West.



Stephen King, Chairman