



# MIDDLE RIVER REGIONAL JAIL

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

December 1, 2020 2:00 p.m.

Augusta County Government Center  
18 Government Center Lane  
Verona Virginia 24482  
(Via Webex)

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

Upon determination of a quorum, Mr. King, Chairman, called the December 1, 2020 Middle River Regional Jail Authority Board meeting to order at 2:00 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  
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  
Gabriel Camacho (Harrisonburg Interim Chief of Police)  
Bryan Hutcheson, Rockingham County Sheriff  
Donald Smith, Augusta County Sheriff

### Members Absent:

Joe Harris, Waynesboro City Sheriff  
Matt Robertson, Staunton 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

**Others Present:**

Jeff Gore, Legal Counsel, Middle River Regional Jail Authority  
Captain Jimmy L. Wimer, Rockingham County  
Tyler Moses, IT, Middle River Regional Jail  
Misty Cook, Finance Director, Augusta County Finance Director  
Tony Bell, Moseley Architects  
Adam Bricker, Moseley Architects  
Betsy Hendrick, PB Mares  
Tyler Farnsworth, PB Mares  
Approximately 15 citizens attended via Webex

**2. RECOGNITIONS, RESOLUTIONS, AWARDS, AND RETIREMENTS**

None at this time.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 6, 2020 meeting. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. Approval was **unanimous**.

**4. CITIZEN COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

There were numerous questions and concerns from citizens:

- Is personal protective equipment being provided to the inmates?  
**Mr. King responded that this would be discussed later in the meeting**
- Concerns regarding family members and Covid. What is the process for early release?  
**Mr. King asked that concerned citizens wait until the end of the meeting for questions. Many answers may be given during the meeting as Covid 19 will be one of the issues discussed.**
- How are the inmates that are released being tracked if positive?  
**Mr. Newton stated a letter is provided to each inmate when released if they have tested positive. The letter states the offender should quarantine and follow-up with the Health Department. It is the Health Department's responsibility once the inmate is released from MRRJ custody.**  
**Mr. King stated that no one wants the inmates or staff to contract Covid. The jail staff are doing everything that the CDC and VDH require or recommend.**

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

None at this time.

**6. FINANCE REPORT**

- a. **FY 2020 Audit Report** - Betsy Hedrick and Tyler Farnsworth reviewed the Financial Audit Report for FY'20. Ms. Hedrick presented the report, noting that internal controls were reviewed and related issues have been addressed. The final report has an unmodified opinion. There were no audit adjustments needed. At this time Augusta County continues to serve as MRRJ fiscal agent. Ms. Whetzel made a motion to accept the audit report. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Approval was **unanimous**.

- a. **FY 2021 Budget** – Ms. Colvin alerted the Board that Work Release revenue is down due to Covid.
- b. **FY 2021 Budget Amendment #2** - Ms. Colvin stated the total #2 budget amendment is \$357,100, this includes \$27,680.00 recovered costs from insurance for lightning strike damage and \$329,420.00 from the Compensation Board for 18 new emergency officer positions. No local money is needed for the additional emergency positions at this time as we anticipate enough vacancy savings. Mr. Trayer made a motion to accept the second budget amendment. Ms. Davidson seconded the motion. Approval was **unanimous**.
- c. Ms. Colvin stated that the FY 2022 budget process has begun.
- d. There is a Resolution to amend the MRRJA Cafeteria Plan and an Amendment eliminating the prescription requirement for OTC medications. Ms. Whetzel made a motion to accept the resolution and the Amendment to the Cafeteria Plan. Mr. Trayer seconded the motion. **Approval was unanimous.**

## 7. **REPORTS AND BRIEFING**

Major Young reviewed the following reports:

- a. **Population Report** – As of December 1, 2020, there are a total of 892 offenders being housed by MRRJ. 838 of these offenders are in-house. 345 are out of compliance with the Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC). Since September 2020 the VADOC has only accepted 26 males and 5 females. Mr. Trayer inquired if there is a legal avenue that could be used to get the VADOC take inmates. Letters have been sent to the local legislative delegation from Mr. King regarding out of compliance inmates. Mr. Trayer is concerned for the safety of the inmates due to the over-crowding. Mr. Gore states that the state has a legal right to leave the offenders in the jails. Mr. Newton stated that the Virginia Association of Regional Jails and the Virginia Sheriff's Association are working on the issue as well. The VADOC did begin intaking females due to the letters that were sent to the local legislative delegation but the VADOC has the final say on all intakes.
- b. **Community Corrections Report** – Report reviewed and discussed. The program is going well. Sheriff Smith inquired as to the number of offenders that can be in the program. There is no limit to the number of offenders that can be in the program however they must meet qualifications.
- c. **Staff Vacancy Report** – Reviewed. At this time there are 26 Officer vacancies. 18 of the vacant positions are from the November 1, 2020 Emergency Jail Officer positions from the Compensation Board. A job fair is planned. It can take several months to get someone ready to work alone. Mr. King noted that staff are working with the courts to get as many that can qualify to be released. Mr. Newton reviewed the evolution of jail population growth. The numbers are climbing every day. The jail does not control the number of individuals arrested or the amount of time an offender must serve.
- d. **Superintendent's Report** –
  - COVID-19 update - At this time we have had 47 staff and 213 inmates test positive. We began mass testing weekly November 25, 2020. Once results are received staff meet with each inmate, positive or negative to discuss the results.
  - Mr. Newton advised that the jail has instructed all staff and inmates to wear the masks which are provided. Inmates and staff receive a new mask daily. There have been no supply issues. Cleaning products are also provided to the inmates' numerous times a day.

**8. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. **Community Based Corrections Plan Guidance** - Mr. Newton reminded the Board that the Community Based Corrections Plan was approved by the Board of Local and Regional Jails. The Board will need to decide which option and select an architect and bond counsel at the February Board meeting. Mr. Trayer likes the options however his locality can't afford any option at this time. Mr. Trayer would also like to look at more programs instead of expansion at this time. Mr. King asked that over the next 30 days get all questions concerning expansion to jail staff so the issue can be discussed at the February 2, 2021 meeting. Sheriff Smith feels there is a need to aggressively lower the offender rate. There are too many offenders in the jail at this time. Ms. Whetzel states that programs should be looked into however, expansion must happen with the numbers we are facing.
- b. **Community Based Corrections Plan Review** – Mr. King had requested that Mr. Bell with Moseley Architects provide MRRJA with a review of previously discussed Expansion Options. Mr. Bell reviewed Expansion Option A, Option B and Option C.
- c. **Community Based Corrections Plan Population Projection Update** – Mr. Newton had requested Mr. Bell and Moseley staff consider recently approved earned good time changes for VADOC inmates and how these changes might impact previously developed Population projections. The earned good time changes have the potential to reduce the MRRJ population projection by about 60 inmates in 2023 from 1,060 to 1, 001.

UPDATED PROJ BASED ON OFFENDER COUNT 20% REDUCTION OF STATE RESP

	Fiscal Year							
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Jul	883	921	964	1,005	1,048	1,090	1,132	1174
Aug	889	929	971	1,013	1,055	1,097	1,139	1181
Sep	897	936	978	1,020	1,062	1,105	1,146	1188
Oct	900	939	981	1,023	1,066	1,107	1,150	1191
Nov	900	938	981	1,023	1,065	1,107	1,150	1191
Dec	892	930	973	1,015	1,057	1,099	1,141	1184
Jan	898	936	979	1,021	1,063	1,105	1,147	1189
Feb	908	947	989	1,031	1,073	1,116	1,157	1200
Mar	916	955	998	1,040	1,082	1,124	1,167	1208
Apr	919	959	1,001	1,043	1,085	1,127	1,170	1211
May	917	958	1,000	1,042	1,085	1,126	1,169	1210
Jun	912	954	997	1,038	1,081	1,122	1,165	1206
Average	903	942	985	1,027	1,069	1,111	1,153	1,195
Minimum	883	921	964	1,005	1,048	1,090	1,132	1,174
Maximum	919	959	1,001	1,043	1,085	1,127	1,170	1,211
Change								
Percent	--	4.32%	4.38%	4.20%	4.03%	3.87%	3.82%	3.50%
Number	--	39	42	42	42	42	43	41

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **Compensation Board \$500 Bonus to Sworn Staff only** – Mr. Newton reviewed the Compensation Board \$500 bonus proposed for December 1, 2020. The bonus is proposed for sworn staff only. There would be no additional cost to MRRJA. After a discussion concerning the bonus and the fact that the funds can be used to help defray the \$2,500 bonus previously awarded staff by MRRJA, Mr. Hamp made a motion to withhold the bonus and use the funds to help defray the previous bonus. Mr. Rosenberg seconded the motion. **There were twelve affirmative votes and one dissenting vote.**
- b. **2021 Meeting Dates** – Mr. Newton presented the Board with the proposed meeting dates for 2021. Mr. Rosenberg made a motion to accept all meeting dates. Mr. Trayer seconded the motion. Approval was **unanimous**.

Mr. King asked if there were any public comments or questions before the meeting closed. A citizen inquired as to the issuance of masks to inmates as well as why staff were not wearing masks. ***Mr. Newton has responded to this issue in the Superintendent's report.***

Mr. King stated that if there are any further questions or concerns from the public, please send an email to Mrs. Reed. The jail staff will respond as requests are received.

**10. CLOSED SESSION**

There was not a closed session held.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

With no additional business before the Authority Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:27 p.m.

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

**This meeting will be held in person**

**Location: Augusta County Government Center Smith Board Room West.**

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Stephen King, Chairman

