

Camden Criminal Justice Council

October 6, 2011

Location: Board of Commissioners Meeting Room

Present:

Chairperson – Jackie Johnson, District Attorney
Sheriff Tommy Gregory-Camden County Sheriff's Office
Jim Elders
Jimmy Pitts-Chief Probation Officer
Judge Martin O. Gillette-Probate Court
Robert S. Cummings-Camden County Re-entry Program
Judge Jennifer Lewis-Magistrate Court
David L. Rainer, Chair-Board of County Commissioners
Chief Tim Hatch-St. Marys Police Department
Chief Darryl Griffis-Kingsland Police Department
Christina Turner-Camden Criminal Justice Coordinator

Guests:

Steve L. Howard, Manager-Board of County Commissioners
John Stokes
Harvey Amerson
Doug Neal
Chuck Byerly-Camden County Sheriff's Office
William Terrell-Camden County Sheriff's Office
Dane Studstill-IT

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jackie Johnson who welcomed everyone.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The board members introduced and welcomed Chief Griffis, Kingsland Police Department and Chief Hatch, St. Marys Police Department.

JAIL PRESENTATION –CHUCK BYERLY

Chuck Byerly presented to the board and guests a twenty minute video that explained the difference between a Jail and a Prison. The video showed what the importance of a jail is to a community and how the community can benefit from having a local jail. Chuck Byerly also presented to the board a power point presentation on the Camden County Jail Statistics. The jail was built and occupied in 1987. It was originally built to hold 108 beds with a maximum capacity 120. As of today, the population of inmates at the jail holds steady at 150-170 and that is where we can expect it to be. Jackie Johnson commented on how Chuck Byerly works aggressively to help keep the population number down. Steve Howard brought up, that even when an inmate is sentenced and released on an ankle monitor, the cost still comes out of the Sheriff's budget. Chuck Byerly continued to explain that when a Defendant is sentenced to Probation Detention Center (PDC) and awaiting bed space, the cost to the Sheriff is \$45 a day plus healthcare.

When a Defendant is sentenced and waiting to be sent off to the Department of Corrections (DOC), the DOC pays the Sheriff \$20.00 a day. This is less than half of what it costs daily to house an inmate and that's if they even pay the \$20.00 a day. Sheriff Tommy Gregory would like to speak to the Superior Court Judges about sentencing Defendants to DOC rather the PDC because of cost.

Chuck Byerly supplied the board with pictures and dimensions of the cells and how many inmates per cell due to the overcrowding. Currently each cell holds three inmates with one set of bunk beds and one inmate on the floor. Due to the overcrowding, classification is a problem, and the jail takes in people with all kinds of conditions, mental and physical. Mr. Cumming's mentioned pre-trial diversion and the Camden County re-entry program. Judge Lewis spoke on Satilla Probation and the pre-trial conditions. If a defendant fails to comply with the pre-trial conditions, their bond is revoked. Their bond is usually set low or they receive an OR bond due to the cost from the pre-trial conditions set on the defendant. Magistrate Court Judge is limited to what they can do because of the pre-sentence and pre-trial supervision.

Sheriff Tommy Gregory brought up the issue of overcrowding and housing inmates offsite. We currently have five inmates housed offsite. If the jail has a swap arrangement with another county, there is no extra cost except for transporting the defendant. Otherwise, the cost to house an inmate offsite is about \$45.00 a day plus health care. We currently have a swap arrangement with Glynn and Ware County. Chuck Byerly explained that typically about 80% of the jail population consists of local offenders who are habitual violators with extensive criminal histories. First time offenders with no criminal history are looked at carefully, and their release on bond or by plea is expedited by the District Attorney's Office. Ankle monitors are an option in some cases and range in cost between \$5 and \$20 per day.

In February and March of 2010 the National Institute of Corrections, contracted consultants, Tom Weber and Alan Richardson, conducted a local Jail and Justice System Assessment of the Camden County justice system operation. The short term goal is a Pod expansion, which the Commission approved on January 5, 2010(for more information please visit: <http://www.co.camden.ga.us/DocumentView.aspx?DID=2316> and <http://www.co.camden.ga.us/archives/31/REGULAR%20MEETING.01.05.2010.Ltr%20SIZE.pdf>). The Pod expansion will consist of fifty bunk beds and a kitchen. This Pod expansion will help with the classification of inmate's issue. The architect for the Pod expansion is Doug Neal, the same architect for a similar Pod expansion that is currently in operation in Glynn County. The bids for the Pod expansion will be public, and the announcement will be in the local paper for about four weeks. It is estimated that the construction of the Pod expansion will take about nine months and the cost will be about \$1.4million.

POD EXPANSION

The Council unanimously passed a resolution in support of commission's decision to move forward with the Pod expansion as a temporary solution to the jail overcrowding.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the September 13, 2011 meeting were approved with no corrections.

NEW BUSINESS

Next meeting is November 10, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. to be held in the Board of Commissioners Meeting Room on the 2nd floor of the Board of Commissioners Office Building.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christina Turner