



Public Safety Facility Needs and Assessment Committee

60 Central Avenue, Room 304
Cortland, NY 13045

<http://www.cortland-co.org>

Committee

~ Minutes ~

Joseph Steinhoff

Tuesday, April 25, 2017

11:00 AM

Room 304

I. Call to Order

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
John R Troy	Legislative District 1	Present	
Donnell Boyden	Legislative District 8	Present	
Sandra Price	District 14	Present	
Brian Parker	Assistant	Present	
George Wagner	District 15	Present	
Mary Ann Discenza	District 6	Present	
Joseph Steinhoff	District 12	Present	
Charles Sudbrink	District 17	Present	
Christopher Newell	District 11	Late	11:06 AM
Mark Helms	Sheriff	Present	
Budd Rigg	Undersheriff	Late	11:15 AM
Peggy Mousaw	Budget and Finance Director	Present	
Richard Bushnell	District 4	Present	
James Denkenberger	District 16	Present	
Nick Graziano	Cortland Standard	Present	
Karen Howe	County Attorney	Present	
Karen Fuller	Deputy Clerk of the Legislature	Present	
Ralph Canfield	Treasurer	Present	

II. Minutes Approval

Thursday, March 16, 2017

III. Discussion

Discussion Item (ID # 4478)

Size, Scope, and Costs

COMMENTS - Current Meeting:

Mr. Steinhoff reviewed a letter from Chairman Boyden that more clearly specified the direction the Committee should take during Phase 2. He then stated he did not believe he had received the property review documents and was still awaiting three designs from the consultants and a full break-out of costs associated with the three designs.

Mr. Sudbrink spoke of his concern regarding an e-mail stating the County was close to jeopardizing the SMRT budget line for schematics, which he does not understand. He also stated he thought there was to be three designs. Ms. Price said the Committee has seen them, however, does not have a physical copy for each member. Ms. Mousaw noted that when the latest invoice is paid the

\$347,421 allocated for schematics will be exhausted.

Mr. Steinhoff noted that perhaps he views what a schematic is differently and believes them to be drawings and is not certain what the overall design provided with separate colors was meant to be. Ms. Price said it would be useful for all committee members to have copies provided.

Mr. Bushnell expressed his concerns that although the Committee is seeking information and having discussions, they are not asking individuals who would be a valuable source such as Mr. Rigg. He said as a result, it appears that choices and information is all over the place. Mr. Steinhoff said the Committee is attempting to get the costs down to a reasonable level; a resolution for the entire project, including an extra pod could be brought forward at the cost of \$56 million but is almost guaranteed to fail.

Mr. Newell arrived at this time.

Mr. Steinhoff said the Chair of the Legislature asked to find a way to reduce cost and it seems square footage is the one way.

Ms. Howe explained that for the questions asked and answered she has an e-mail group that receives the correspondence. She then notified members that SMRT staff is available via conference call if there are any questions.

Mr. Sudbrink spoke of his continual belief that the mission statement doesn't fit Phase 2 as this is an assessment committee; the statement indicates looking at new and existing building site for potential sites. Now the Chair is indicating not to consider the existing site. Mr. Boyden said the mission statement was developed during the time the Judiciary and Public Safety Committee (JPS) was involved and there was a desire to form a committee prior to Phase 2. The resolutions to appoint this committee were vetted by JPS.

Ms. Price believes it might be worthwhile to work on two parallel paths to present the initial complex at \$48 million and also develop other measures to cut costs to get to what is necessary to then have the full Legislature decide. Mr. Steinhoff said it could be done but he would like to see three designs. Mr. Sudbrink agreed with Mr. Steinhoff.

At this time Ms. Howe provided members with copies of Resolution Nos. 365-16 and 366-16 relating to the project. In addition, Mr. Rigg and Mr. Canfield arrived at the meeting.

Sheriff Helms asked how the Committee would proceed and whether there is a group of individuals being chosen to decide how to cut the cost and determine if the State would approve them. Mr. Steinhoff said he assumes SMRT would know what the State would allow.

Mr. Steinhoff spoke of the various questions that had been asked of SMRT to try to determine areas of savings. Mr. Sudbrink said he understands the Sheriff's concerns regarding how the Committee is moving forward. Ms. Howe explained the process she has utilized when

forwarding questions and receiving answers. Sheriff Helms said many of the questions being asked cannot be done and that although the cost is a large concern it is important to recognize the need to provide safety.

Mr. Bushnell asked if members of the Committee had visited other jails or been to Albany to discuss the matter. He believes doing so would save a lot of time looking at potential problems since the State would have to approve any decision. Ms. Price said she believes there is an effort to put together a trip together to meet in Albany with Senator Seward and others. Chair Boyden confirmed a trip is being planned. Mr. Sudbrink said he would not like to go to other jails since what they did may no longer be a viable option; the consultants hired work with the State and know what is allowed. Sheriff Helms offered to show members the reasons some options being discussed are not allowable.

Mr. Troy said he agrees with the Sheriff that the Committee has not made progress since learning the expense. He noted the costs would only go up with time and since time has passed since first discussing a jail this has been shown to be true. He said a decision needs to be made and move it to the full Legislature who would make a determination of moving into Phase 3 or not. He also addressed the three estimated costs for the project and how decisions made by the Committee would determine costs. Mr. Troy does not believe it would make any sense to make the jail smaller than the initial design.

Ms. Discenza said she had heard the \$1.9 million contract with SMRT was exhausted and now heard it is only the schematic design portion of the contract that has been expended.

Mr. Wagner said it would be important to know how the new jail would be paid for and if it is not known how to do so then the jail should not be built. Mr. Mulvihill said the home rule request for the additional ½ percent sales tax to be used for the jail will have the public hearing is on the Legislature agenda for Thursday evening. If it were to then pass at the State level the Governor would have 60 days to approve or deny the request. Ms. Mousaw said if it were passed it would require discussions on the Sales Tax Distribution Agreement. Mr. Wagner clarified the ½ percent is designated for the Jail and bonding for it as indicated in the resolution and would not be subject. Ms. Howe confirmed the additional tax would not be shared. Mr. Wagner asked what if the additional sales tax resolution failed. Ms. Howe said a new sales tax agreement could be discussed, similar to the interoperable radio system agreements previously completed.

Mr. Steinhoff said he understands the Sheriff's frustration with the process, however, this is the most expensive project the County would be bonding. The current debt is \$44 million and when bonding the jail it would double the County's debt. Although he is aware there could be offsets such as discontinuing board-outs it is hard to deal with until the figures are known for certain. His concern is the burden on taxpayers. Sheriff Helms said he is making every effort to help with the project but he has not been asked about what could be done to make it better. There are people who understand the needs of the jail more and it is important for everyone to work together. It is not possible to know what to build until it is known what you want. Mr. Steinhoff said the Committee needs to build a jail to house between 150-200 inmates with the best cost possible and that SMRT had not provided designs. Mr. Sudbrink said it is necessary to have options. Sheriff Helms asked if the Committee was just making arbitrary choices or if there is a definitive thought process to the decisions. Mr. Sudbrink said if the jail were built at the new location he does not want to maintain

the buildings being vacated. Sheriff Helms noted he has not had the opportunity to discuss what the options would mean to him. Mr. Steinhoff reiterated he would have liked to have the three sets of plans. Sheriff Helms noted three options were provided. Ms. Howe said if three separate design drawings were requested it would be an additional cost.

Discussion followed regarding removal of different portions of the complex and Ms. Mousaw noted removing the 911 center would remove potential grant funds. Further discussion included potential uses of vacated buildings if the complex was built, cost estimates including contingency, and the need to have SMRT clarify the costs for the three designs.

Mr. Boyden said the County could decide to not do anything regarding the jail project but could have repercussions from the State as a result. The only way to fund is through bonding and to determine how to pay off the bond debt. If it is possible to obtain grants that would help to pay for the project they should be sought. Mr. Wagner noted the inmates have primarily broken State laws and he believes if all counties made an effort to request the State to assist in offsetting the costs it should be done.

Mr. Sudbrink spoke of hearing that if the jail is voted down the use of the current gym may be eliminated. Undersheriff Rigg said the variances are for other sections of the jail, which would be what could potentially be taken away. If the variances were removed it would require an increase of staff to cover the number of inmates in the other allowable areas. Mr. Sudbrink said rushing the process will make it fail. Ms. Price said by bringing this to the full Legislature it would provide an opportunity for other Legislators to weigh in.

Sheriff Helms was excused at this time.

Mr. Sudbrink expressed concern that if the vote on moving forward was successful the County still cannot afford to do so. Ms. Price said approving the concept would require a 2/3 vote for bonding.

Ms. Howe asked how to move forward. Mr. Steinhoff said it was his belief there will be three cost break-downs as originally requested. Ms. Howe noted that information had been previously provided. Mr. Steinhoff said the matter would be brought up in May. Ms. Howe said there is not anything at this time to take to the full Legislature. Mr. Boyden said the Committee would only bring a design for approval and that there is no commitment to move to Phase 3. Mr. Sudbrink said there would be a problem to move forward for a design with the budget for schematics is exhausted. Mr. Boyden said the Committee should get clarity of the recommendations. If it costs more than anticipated there could be discussions but a design should be chosen and then it would be decided whether to move to the next phase. Ms. Howe said the project has not moved further in design since no direction has been given.

Mr. Boyden was excused at this time.

Discussion regarding potential funding options such as grants and assistance from the State

followed. It was noted there is not a great deal of grant funding available for counties and the potential for shared services, perhaps in the form of centralized booking and first arraignment. Ms. Howe noted the initial design for the jail provided centralized booking and arraignment facilities. Mr. Denkenberger provided his personal viewpoint regarding the proposed project, noting disagreement regarding the potential of building on the current jail site and stated he would like facts versus things heard and will not support any recommendation until he has the information in hand.

Ms. Discenza spoke of voting in June to make a recommendation to provide the full Legislature with a voice. Ms. Price believes it should be done immediately. Mr. Wagner said when employed by the bank it was policy not to bring and present a problem without having a potential solution. Ms. Price believes the \$48+ million option should move to the floor as it would provide insight to how the full legislature views the option. It would show the County is trying to come to a determination of what to do. Mr. Sudbrink asked what would occur if an option were put to a vote and failed; what would happen to the balance of the SMRT contract.

It was decided to hold the next Committee meeting on May 11th at noon, which would be a day after the trip to Albany to discuss the project and difficulties with State representatives.

RESULT:	COMPLETED
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IV. Adjournment

On motion the meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.