

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The providers were equally concerned regarding the negative conditions within the downtown jail, including:
 - a. The deplorable conditions within the facility.
 - b. The disparate gender treatment; i.e. primary use of the downtown to hold females and special need inmates (with limited programs), while male inmates are held in the newer satellite jail (with programs and better conditions of confinement),
 - c. The need for additional programs for females within the downtown jail, knowing that a number of small group programs could be held within the jail's Dayroom spaces.
 - d. The limited artificial and natural light and dingy colors found within the jail, making the ambience depressing for staff and inmates alike.
 - e. The amount of problems with debilitated plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and security systems.

The providers note that inmates who are kept in these conditions regress mentally and after fashion assume a state of physical and mental malady that have significant negative impact on their lives for years to come.

While the female inmates and those with special needs should be moved to the satellite jail {as soon as possible} the providers (at minimum) recommend that

the Sheriff take steps to bring programs (GED, AA, NA, and Counseling Discussion Programs) within the downtown jail utilizing community resources.

2. The providers were concerned that the County provides only emergency maintenance to address the needs of the downtown jail facility; resulting in its continual degradation.

The providers recommend that the County Board join the Sheriff in making a decision to close the downtown jail (as soon as possible) and move the females and others to the satellite jail.

This can be done this year, through the use of minimum or medium jail beds, through the use of dormitory-style housing units for traffic and minor offenders.

This will result in freeing up more jail beds for females and special needs inmates, currently held within the downtown jail.

3. **IF THE DOWNTOWN JAIL IS NOT CLOSED, the Board needs to spend a significant amount of funds to remodel the jail and upgrade all the supportive systems.**

4. **The providers recommend that the Champaign County Stakeholders fully embrace the philosophy of reentry and reintegration - making the offender whole, while addressing the requirements of the court and getting the offenders back into the community as productive citizens.**

5. **Planning For The Future: The providers recommend that the Champaign County Board establish a Champaign County Jail Planning Committee to actively work on the development of a needs assessment and master plan for the expansion of their Champaign County Criminal Justice Complex, at the site of the satellite jail. As part of this recommendation, the providers suggest that the County contract with a criminal justice planner (not a bidding architect) to provide assessment and planning expertise.**

The providers are encouraged by Sheriff Walsh's and the Jail Administrator's upcoming participation with others in the "Planning (for) Opening a New Institution" (P.O.N.I.) Program with the National Institute of Corrections during August 2011, where they will be accompanied by a County Commissioner and a member of the Jail Planning Committee. Sparked by the Sheriff's leadership and desire to operate a very good jail that meets standards and is safe and secure, their participation --- in jail planning education programs is visionary and will result in immediate and long-term improvements in jail operations and it will positively impact the jail planning and design process.

6. **As part of the County's master plan for expansion, a new or greatly expanded and renovated Champaign County Jail should be one of the first portions of their new complex to be completed. In addition to actively working to comply with the American Correction Association Standards for Local Detention**

Facilities (ALDF), the standards of the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC), the jail planning should also provide appropriate spaces for active recreation and programs for jail inmates; while providing space for growth over the next 20 to 30 years.

It is felt that only the following categories of pre-trial persons and offenders should remain in jail (noting that 90% of those that are booked into the jail will return to the community):

- a. The person who will continue to be a predator upon the community;
- b. The person that is a ‘flight risk’, and unlikely to appear at court time;
- c. The person that a Judge requires to remain in jail until trial;
- d. The person that is being held on a warrant from another jurisdiction;
- e. The convicted person that requires a jail sentence; [or]
- f. The person that is being held for contempt of court or non-compliance by a judge.

All others should be considered as candidates for release from jail (being released on Own Recognizance Release [often referred to as “OR”] or assigned to alternatives, such as a Day Reporting Center) where they can be monitored. This way alleged and convicted offenders are less likely to lose their jobs and their families’ income; frequently resulting in their families being thrown onto the County’s welfare system to further drain county resources.

Offenders assigned to alternatives programs and associated sanctions:

1. Are still controlled, supervised, and managed by the criminal justice system (as exhibited by the county’s current Electronic Home Detention Program);

2. May be assigned or sentenced to report to the Day Reporting Center, each and every day, to check in per court orders, participate in programs for their betterment, and provide restitution as they participate in community service;
3. Are appropriately punished for their convicted criminal behavior;
4. Spend renewed time with their families within their own homes;
5. Have a high probability of becoming a tax-paying/law abiding citizen;
6. Pay a portion of the cost of their monitoring and programs.

The following are typical statements made by offenders assigned to alternatives to incarceration, house arrest, and electronic monitoring programs:

“...well anyone that is on the monitoring program is stupid if they try to escape, because they are the one that is going to suffer the consequences...”

“...I’m just glad I’m able to work. My job is far more important. If I lost my job it would hurt me and my family. I can’t comprehend why you would want to violate your release conditions. It is not reasonable...”

“ It made me realize about life and freedom. I can’t go anywhere...I am a very active person, and this is almost like being in jail. It takes time to go downtown and get checked...I can’t take my granddaughter anywhere, like the park or to a friends with other children. I can’t go to the grocery store.”

“...It controls but punishes too. You pay for it. It’s punishment. I work and go home. That’s it. I am still confined. I can’t go out. It is a form of control. No question. No doubt...”

“...Freedom is something you don’t miss until you don’t have it. I feel

fortunate to be back with my family. It gives me the opportunity to be with my family each and every day. Mom is happy I am home. I am able to help my mother tremendously with household duties and yard work. My relationship with my family has improved...”

Actions The Short Term. To deal with the current problems within their criminal justice system and the crowding within their jail,, the providers hereby recommend:

- 1. That the County and the Sheriff explore acquiring one or more small manufactured buildings (possibly utilizing donated construction trailers that are not being utilized due to reductions in construction activities within the County), to provide flexibility for:**
 - a. Programs space directly adjacent to the current jail,**
 - b. Dormitory space:**
 - (1) If a review of the jail population reveals that there are persons who do not qualify for electronic monitoring, but are such that can reside in a low security dorm;**
 - (2) This dormitory housing would be ideal for those persons who have to remain in jail for traffic charges.**
 - (3) Used for detention during construction / renovation.**

Utilizing this scenario, the County Board could issue a letter of donation, allowing the donating company to take appropriate tax credits for their donation. These structures could be truncated to the satellite jail through recreation yard [utilizing the existing outer door], allowing easy supervision *utilizing existing staff* making frequent security and welfare checks. In addition, the closing of the downtown jail would provide staff to provide ‘direct supervision’ (24-7) for the dorms.

To ensure that there is appropriate security for these units, a security fencing system should be installed to create a secure perimeter around the modular units.

- 2. That the Jail Superintendent, with the full support of the Sheriff, seek to expand the current programs (AA, NA, GED, Bible Study, Friday Prayer, Religious Services and Library) to include Anger Management, Domestic Violence, Thinking Errors, Job Search, etc., provided by community program volunteers working with inmates while they are in jail; and, supporting a seamless continuation of these programs within the Champaign County Community, so that the inmate can continue to work on the programs and their betterment upon release from jail.**

The providers recommend that the programs be available to the entire jail population.

In addition, the Sheriff should work with his staff to develop and implement an inmate re-entry program. Along with these, a work release program will reinforce the elements of reentry.

3. That the Jail Superintendent continually work on updating the basic requirements for the operation of the jail, in compliance with professional standards, including the;

- a. Mission Statement, describing their current operational philosophy;**
- b. The existing Policies, Procedures, Post Orders, and the Inmate Manual;**
- c. Training for jail staff.**

In addition, it is further recommended that ALL STAFF participate in 40 hours of In-Service Training each year.

4. That the Jail Superintendent continue to subscribe to corrections professional periodicals (“American Jails” and “Corrections Today”), along with receiving the ACA “ALDF”, “ACRS” Standards, the “NCCHC” ; to ensure that the Champaign County Jail is not only in compliance with all these standards, but also on the cutting edge for the operation of a local county jail and associated alternatives to incarceration programs.

- 5. That the Jail Superintendent make provisions for the use of the ‘officer’s area’ (adjacent to the housing pods) for inmate program space. This will facilitate more programs and relieve the busy schedule in the classroom.**

- 6. That the County should install reflective material on all windows (upper and lower) facing the housing officer’s station, to keep the inmates from watching where the officer is located and where the officer is looking while visually supervising the housing units. This can be accomplished economically by utilizing inexpensive auto glass materials applied to the officer’s side of the windows, so that it cannot be damaged by the inmates.**

It should be noted that the reflective material can be neutralized, at will by the officer, by equalizing the light –levels on both sides of the windows. This will allow the officers to visually supervise the inmates that are participating in programs within the multi-purpose area, during the times when the officers are making security/welfare checks within the housing units.

Summary

The providers would like to thank Sheriff Walsh and his staff for their professional courtesy and hospitality during the scope of this project. In addition, the vision shown by the Champaign County stakeholders is encouraging, as they move forward to change conditions within their jails and the operating philosophy of their criminal justice system. Through this approach, they will ensure that their resources are properly utilized and that offenders, while being held accountable for their criminal behavior, are given opportunities to improve – becoming law abiding/tax

paying citizens; without just wasting time and the County's valuable resources, while sitting in highly expensive jail cells.

The providers recommend that Sheriff Walsh distribute this report to all of the stakeholders, for their review, consideration, and associated work to implement the components that will significantly improve their jail and criminal justice system.

Note:

Utilizing data supplied by the agency, the attached analyses of data (*see Appendix*) were developed by Mark Martin to reflect various elements that affect the operations of the Champaign County Jail, as well as an expanded and remodeled jail. Please note that the data that was analyzed was limited and that a more comprehensive needs assessment study should precede and serve as a basis for the development of a jail master plan.