

Okaloosa County Public Safety Coordinating Council
Regular Meeting
Thursday February 13, 2025

Present:

Commissioner Paul Mixon
Brad E. Embry, Clerk of Court
April McDaniel, Major of Corrections
Craig Coffey, Deputy County Administrator – Operations
Larry McFarland, Bridgeway Center, Inc.
Andrea Oliver, Accreditation Lieutenant, Corrections
Bonnie Barlow, Bridgeway Center, Inc.
Itza Andrade, Programs and Reentry Coordinator
Judge Jonathan Schlechter
Kelli Huckabee, Pre-Trial Services
Tricia Fagan, YesCare Okaloosa County
Susan Priddy, Health Services Administrator
Maria Everton, Clerk to Board of County Commissioners
Samantha Cutsinger, Legislative Aide

Location:

Okaloosa County Courthouse, Board Chambers, Crestview, Florida

Minutes prepared by Maria Everton

Commissioner Mixon called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

The November 7, 2024 minutes were approved as presented by the majority.

2. Old Business

None.

3. Clerk of Court Update

Brad E. Embry provided an overview of his interactions with judiciary, specifically with the jail. He said (the Clerk's Office) performs the following:

- Process the paperwork when individuals are processed into the jail, after first appearances, bond posting.
- Sign checks for inmate commissary fund accounts.
- Serve as official record keeper.

- Maintain minute sheets from all sentencing. The Clerk’s Office is in the process of automating this process.

Mr. Embry continued by stating a new record management system that is forthcoming with an implementation date of April 26, 2025. Pre-trial and the jail will also have new systems, and all three systems will be able to share electronic data with each other more efficiently. He is optimistic and said the goal is to eliminate as much human error, duplication of effort, and paperwork as possible. The judiciary, Sheriff’s Office, and local municipalities will also be able to share data using the new record management system.

4. Jail Population/Statistical Report: Q & A

The Jail Population/Statistical report was provided to the council via email. No questions were asked.

Major McDaniel said the current average jail daily population is about 777 but can fluctuate, depending on court volume. She said there is a misconception that inmates can only stay in the jail for up to one (1) year – one inmate is currently in pre-trial incarceration for 2,442 days. She reminded the Council that the jail’s maximum capacity is 592, which does not include down housing units. The jail is down one (1) housing unit for renovations.

Major McDaniel said there are cooperative agreements in place for juveniles with the neighboring counties.

Ms. Barlow provided comments on the hold for civil commitments. She said she attended a conference earlier this week and noted that the Florida Department of Children and Families was lamenting the wait list from across the State for this issue.

5. Inmate Programs Update

Ms. Andrade said there are ten (10) varied programs currently available inside the jail, with a total of 365 participating inmates. For programs outside of the jail, there are 33 pending applications.

Programs inside the jail include:

- Celebrate Recovery
- Gulf Coast Sexual Assault
- Yoga
- Live Your Best Life
- Emerald Coast Life Center
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Narcotics Anonymous

- Re-entry
- Anger Management

6. Pre-Trial Information

Ms. Huckabee said Pre-Trial is also implementing new software pending Board of County Commissioners' approval. It is anticipated to make pre-trial processes more efficient. A go live date has not been established.

7. New Business (informational only)

- a. Medical Updates – Susan Priddy said three (3) additional staff members were added:

- Anne Crow, Evening Nurse Practitioner (full time)
- Sara Greathouse, Licensed Clinical Social Worker (full time)
- Dr. Carl Graves, DDS (provides additional support to Dr. Parikh for dental services)

Ms. Priddy stated that for the quarter ending December 31, 2024, Morse Correctional has paid \$109,458.99 to the County for unfilled positions.

Daily whiteboard meetings were implemented last November 2024. These meetings are centered around clinical updates, offsite care referrals of the most critical/high interest patients. The medical director is now performing daily rounds.

Ms. Priddy continued by stating that a registered nurse will be visiting the new commit housing units, cell by cell, to inquire about any medical concerns new admissions may have, and to observe new commits for any acute needs not disclosed through the intake process. She then informed the Council that Morse Correctional has provided 24/7 registered nurse coverage in the ACR to screen new commits. Intake nursing staff have begun to perform drug testing on new jail admissions if drug or alcohol use is disclosed, or as appropriate per nursing clinical judgement. Pregnancy tests are also administered for females when substance abuse is identified.

Morse Correctional has planned for a nurse practitioner to come to the jail after hours to provide basic evaluations and suturing as clinically appropriate to eliminate an otherwise needed emergency room trip.

- b. Juvenile Therapeutic Groups – Tricia Fagan

Ms. Fagan said weekly mental health groups have been initiated with the juveniles. These groups are a combination of cognitive behavioral therapy and dialectical behavioral therapy along with recreational therapy as appropriate. The intention is for juveniles to learn appropriate strategies to prevent/reduce issues while incarcerated and to carry them into the community to reduce recidivism.

- c. Hold for Civil Commitments – Tricia Fagan

Ms. Fagan said that during a regional call on February 5, 2025, she was informed that there was a state hold on civil commitments. This could potentially result in a bottleneck/domino effect that would affect the jail. She said that receiving facilities are instructed to hold civil commitments for thirty (30) days or more until they are advised that the commits can be sent to the Florida State Hospital. She expressed concern that this may cause a problem for Baker Act cases and anticipates increased charges of battery and trespassing due to tensions that could arise in emergency rooms.

d. Current Staffing and Retention Update – Lt. Andrea Oliver

Lt. Oliver said there are currently five (5) openings for correctional officers and technicians. Two (2) of the five (5) are pending background screenings. Secondly, she said nine cadets (9) were recently sent to the academy.

Lt. Oliver informed the Council that the FMJS is scheduled for the end of February 2025.

e. Jail Management System (JMS) Update – Maj. April McDaniel

Maj. McDaniel said the new JMS is progressing on schedule – weekly progress meetings are being conducted with the vendor. There is regular communication with FDLE regarding Criminal Justice Data Transparency (CJDT) and the JMS migration's implications for CJDT. A projected go-live timeframe for the new system is at the end of June 2025. Mr. Embry confirmed that the new JMS will be able to link with the Clerk's Office new software.

f. Public Booking Information – Maj. April McDaniel

Maj. McDaniel said that the Leon County Sheriff's Office provided a press release regarding a change to the way their County handles the public availability of booking information, including mugshots. Beginning on January 17, 2025 booking reports will no longer be available on the Leon County Sheriff's Office website or social media as a response to a recent federal court ruling in *Houston v. Maricopa County, Arizona, 116 F.4th 935 (2024)*. A meeting with the Okaloosa County Attorney and Interim Director of Corrections is forthcoming to discuss any implications.

g. Martha-Wright Reed Act – Maj. April McDaniel

Maj. McDaniel informed the Council that the United States Congress passed the Martha-Wright Reed Just and Reasonable Communications Act in 2022. This piece of legislation empowered the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to implement a broad and sweeping regulatory framework on providers of prison telecommunications services. On July 18, 2024, the FCC adopted new rules severely impacting the prison telecommunications industry. The most pressing issue regarding facilities is that HomeWAV and other inmate telecommunication service providers will no longer be permitted to provide revenue sharing payments for voice calling or

video calling services. This prohibition will extend to any currently active monthly minimum guarantees and technology grants. This revenue sharing prohibition will go into effect based on the date the contract was due to expire as of June 27, 2024, which was the date the FCC published their draft rules. The County's transition date will be April 1, 2025.

The commissions and shared revenue from these services have been a major component of the Inmate Welfare Fund, which is used to fund services and programs to benefit the inmate population. Historically, the County has used this revenue to pay salaries for additional mental health and program staff, and to purchase equipment such as body scanners. For context, video visits and call revenue generate roughly \$30,000.00 a month in revenue for the fund. This Act will drastically impact the health of the welfare fund over time and will require us to make changes to long standing provisions.

h. New Jail Update – Deputy County Administrator Craig Coffey

Mr. Coffey said a consultant has been gathering data and is making positive progress. Support from the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) remains strong. Funding and location are still pending BCC consideration. The project is anticipated to be a \$75M project. A master plan meeting is scheduled for February 25, 2025 with the design team.

Maj. McDaniel said she is prepared to address staffing issues for when the new jail is complete.

8. Public Comments

Kelli Huckabee – Illegal immigration/Homeland security

9. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 12:48 p.m.