



Clinton County Justice Coordinating Commission
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KROS "FYI" Program from May, 2014 – Discussion of Clinton County Jail project/CCJCC:

Voice of Dave Vickers, KROS News Director: "Welcome to our FYI show this morning. We are going to be visiting about the Clinton County Justice Coordinating Commission...& what's developed as a proposal for a new Jail as it were. We have Clinton County Sheriff Lincoln and Lt. Craig Eberhart, Jail Administrator."

Dave Vickers: "Let's talk about how we got here. Folks have been paying attention and attended meetings and there have been a couple of different presentations. We're not going to talk a lot about a proposal that's included for a city police department...but that was part of the analysis, the space needed and whether they could go together and all those things." " Let's talk about the jail and the Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Lincoln, tell us how did we get here. This process didn't start last month or last week."

Sheriff Rick Lincoln: "I was elected and took office in 2001 and during that time the jail already had a history of overcrowding causing us to have to send inmates to other county jails, at the Clinton County tax payers' expense. And then we had the methamphetamine epidemic, where we had many arrests and at one point we had our jail full with forty-four inmates and we also had thirty-three inmates in other county jails. That cost us almost a quarter of a million dollars just in housing costs for that time period.

I requested the National Institute of Corrections to come out and provide technical assistance to Clinton County in 2007. This is a federal agency that did this at no expense to Clinton County. They provided what was called a Jail Needs and Justice Needs Assessment and they presented that to us in January of 2008. One of the quotes that I took out of the report was about the jail & it said that "The jail is an antiquated facility in dire need of replacement. Serious safety and security issues exist with the design of the 1969 constructed jail. The NIC then recommended that we form a Justice Coordinating Commission and that was to address all of our justice system needs – not just the jail; but the whole flow...uh, the Clinton County Justice Coordinating Commission was then formed in April of 2009. We hired our Coordinator in September of 2009 and that was Brian McKenrick. We also have four subgroups that work under the CCJCC and those are: Mental Health/Substance Abuse, Jail Needs Facility, uh, we have the Courts Issues (How can we smooth out the Courts) and then we have what is called Alternative Sanctions (What can we do to provide punishment to people, so the victims feel they are getting retribution without having to lock them up in an expensive jail cell?). So these four subgroups



now have really run the efficiencies out of the justice system....So we are making certain that those people that are in jail are the ones that really need to be there.

Uh, back in 2010, a group of four of us from Clinton County: Lt. Eberhart (the Jail Administrator), Brian McKenrick (CCJCC Coordinator), Dennis Starling (who was on the Board of Supervisors at that time) and myself attended the 'Planning of a New Institution' class in Colorado. Again, that was paid for by the National Institute of Corrections. We learned a nine step process of how to go about planning and getting a new facility. And it's not just about the building. It's about staffing; it's about how many cells do you need...and it is certainly about efficiencies. Because the cost of a new facility over the lifespan of that facility is actually quite small when compared to the operations of that facility. So, um, anyway we are not just working on building a new jail. We have a new philosophy here: looking at the criminal justice system and what can we be doing better to serve our citizens. So, we recently did a Request for Proposal and we hired Shive Hattery to conduct a Needs Assessment for us. That was done in the summer of 2013 and they just had the report that was given in early April of 2014. They looked at three projects, that being the jail with the Sheriff's Office, the Clinton County Communications Center and the Clinton Police Station.

So, what they came up with a jail for us would have ninety-six (96) beds. They build jails in multiples of eight beds and it has to do with the sizing and the area that's required for inmates and the cost efficiencies that would come with that. And they came up with a projected cost of around nineteen million dollars. And that is not including the land acquisition or preparation costs. We have not, uh, chosen a site that we would be building that facility on just yet. So, I guess this is not something that we want...this is something that Clinton County needs. This is not just a Sheriff's issue – this is a Clinton County issue. And all of the people that live in Clinton County are needing to be involved in this project."

Dave Vickers: "Obviously more beds than you've got, Sheriff...Is this more people being sent to jail from the courts system or just simply a crackdown on crime issue or how come you need more beds than what you've got now?"

Sheriff Lincoln: "What the Shive Hattery architects did was they took a lot of numbers that Lt. Eberhart has been collecting through data collection over the past five-six years. They're looking at crime trend. They are looking at statistical analysis of what percentage of the population tends to be incarcerated. And then, they project twenty to thirty years out. That we are not just building that facility for what we need today – We have to look what are we possibly going to need in the future, anticipating how are we going to utilize this facility in the future? Some of the problems we are encountering right now is the fact that we are required by law



to have our male inmates separated by sight and sound from female inmates. We have to have juveniles separated from adult inmates. That is called classification. We don't have enough extra beds to classify people properly. Lt. Eberhart's staff is supposed to be keeping felons separate from misdemeanors. We are supposed to be keeping sentenced inmates separate from the people that have been accused of a crime and indicted but have not gone to trial yet. We don't have near the facility space in order to be able to separate those people into those different classifications."

Dave Vickers: "Lt. Eberhart, quickly before we take a break for the weather...you mentioned classifications: How much of a problem does that present within the jail for you and the staff not being able to do things the way you are supposed to?"

Lt. Craig Eberhart: "Well, the biggest issue as the Sheriff said is the sentenced being housed with non-sentenced. Um, you gotta understand that right now in our jail, probably ninety-five percent of the inmates we are housing are non-sentenced inmates. And, when you start mixing up the two, it really involves more so the safety of the inmate in that we are putting someone who has not even been convicted of a crime with someone who is now sentenced for committing a crime and it really kind of boils down to the safety of the inmate more so than the staff. So, as the Sheriff said, in our current facility, with what we have our classification boils down to is – Do you get along with this individual? If you do, that's where you're going to be. If you don't, we have to find some other space for you."

Dave Vickers: "We'll talk more with Clinton County Sheriff Rick Lincoln and Lt. Craig Eberhart from the Clinton County Jail, coming up on our program. But we will take a quick break for the weather forecast, as we are at that break time. And our weather forecast brought to you by Kelly Heating & Oil." (Weather forecast read by James Zahara, of WQAD Storm Track 8.)

Dave Vickers: Right now, 58 degrees at the Clinton Municipal Airport...Couple of degrees warmer here at the studio. (Voice recording of Gary Determan, & ad for Kelly Heating & Oil.)

Dave Vickers: "Talking about the Clinton County Justice Coordinating Commission and proposal for a potential new jail – as Sheriff said, something that is needed, not wanted. We'll talk with Lt. Craig Eberhart again quickly. We talked a little bit about classifications...Lt. – When it comes to the jail, I know one of the comments made at some of the presentations about this is not just safety of the inmates; But, safety of the staff. Is that a concern in the layout of the current facility – safety of staff, along with safety of the inmates?"

Lt. Eberhart: "Absolutely. Our current facility's design is what we call (clears throat) a linear design, which means it's basically a square block. The housing units are. And, um, to be able to supervise our inmates – it's very difficult in our current facility. Our staff, I think, does a great job in trying to make sure our



inmates are safe. But on the other hand, we don't have twenty-four hour surveillance on where we can watch and basically what they do and where they move and so forth. So, it is very difficult to supervise our inmates in our current facility. In regards to the safety of our staff, our facility is also very labor intensive for staff. And, by that I mean for our inmates to have visiting to visit with their attorneys, to have rec time (which are all requirements that we have to provide the inmates). Every time we do that, our staff has to physically move the inmate out of the housing unit to another part of the building. And, every time you have that one-on-one contact with staff, there is a high risk that something could possibly happen. We had a staff member who was physically assaulted a year ago. We had two inmates who escaped our building a year ago. And again, all of these things happened during the movement of the inmates. So, the safety of my staff is also a very high concern, because not only are they very busy moving the inmates. But, every time we do that, there is a high risk that something could possibly happen. So, a new facility would reduce the movement of the inmates. The new facilities are now set up that for the inmates to have visiting time, rec time, or a visit with their attorney – all of these things can happen by video. The inmate just stays in the housing unit and does those things by video. Rec time in a new facility would just be a matter of an officer hitting a button and the inmates can go into a rec room and have rec time."

Dave Vickers: "What kind of numbers – Sheriff mentioned numbers...You used to house them out of county. Are we kind of even with that now – are we not housing them out of county now with some of the changes being made in the court system, court process & maybe some Diversions from the jail?"

Lt. Eberhart: "We have drastically reduced the numbers being housed out of county. We still sometimes run into the classification issue, in that we may have beds; but, due to classification – we still have no place to house an inmate. So, we may still have to send them out of county. The other thing that the Sheriff has not touched base on is the mental health in our jails today. Again, when we have inmates who are suffering from mental illness, uh, it requires special care for those particular inmates. For their safety, the safety of staff and the safety of other inmates, we may have to house them separately. So, again it basically comes down to our classification. But, I would say on average in the last couple of months, maybe just one or two inmates have had to be sent out of county."

Dave Vickers: "Sheriff Lincoln, you mentioned the number – I think nineteen million dollars. What's included in that as far as space? I don't believe...I have seen a couple of the presentations on this. So, you have this report...I know this doesn't give you a design. It just gives you basic square footage, the cost that's



developed on square foot construction costs. What did it tell you that you need space-wise, in comparison to what you've got now?"

Sheriff Lincoln: "Well, if you were to contrast us with the Clinton Police Department, we have office space for our staff – they have office space for their staff. But, then we have the jail. Not just jail cells – we have to have a kitchen, we have to have the recreational areas...we have to have all of the laundry areas and the food storage areas. So, we have additional needs because we run the only jail in the county. So, the architects came up with a plan of just over 47,000 square feet, at roughly \$311 per square foot. That doesn't include if we were to remove the existing building that we are in. Those costs are not included there. So, they told us the average cost of a jail bed is \$100,000. Now...it's not just the construction of the cell and the bed and the toilet. That is all the other support area that comes with the building. So people have to understand when I say \$100,000 per bed, it is not a very expensive place for that person to lay down. So, if we were to continue having done business the way we were doing business – we would have needed an additional twenty-four beds that we have now eliminated because of the efficiencies we have encountered by forming the CCJCC. So we've really done a nice job there. I think that was \$2.4 million off the cost of what we would have to build. Another thing, in addition to the space, we're talking staffing costs. Again, the cost of that building over the lifespan is maybe fifteen percent, (I have heard 11 – 18 percent). So, let's say fifteen percent. The rest of it is the staffing, the mechanicals, the utilities, the food, the medical that has to be provided. By redesigning this jail, we can hardly increase the staff and yet, watch more people. And, that is where it really becomes more efficient. The cells would be laid out – if a person could imagine standing in the middle of a pie. There would be a control room there where the jail staff could visually look into each cell constantly and keep those inmates under supervision. We have had two successful suicides since I have been Sheriff. And, that's mainly because we cannot have constant vision of those inmates, due to the layout of our current jail."

Dave Vickers: "What about the current facility? Can that be re-purposed? Can you use that? Can you expand on that?"

Sheriff Lincoln: "The architects were tasked with determining if there was a way to remodel the current facility and they started the project. They quit, because they said it quickly became apparent the costs were going to far exceed what it would be just as far as just building a new facility. That building was built in 1969; it is made out of concrete and steel. It is not like remodeling your house, where you can take a sledgehammer and knock out a 2x4 wall. It was designed as a jail and as such, it is built like a jail."



Dave Vickers: “So, if you are going to expand, it is a new jail or nothing? I hate to put it that way...but, is that kind of the question?”

Sheriff Lincoln: “Well, obviously, we have identified the need. Again, not a want... a need. And, it is up to the taxpayers to understand what the issues are. I understand the taxpayers are weary. I know that; but, we as a society have determined that we can take people’s freedom away and we can lock them up in jail. As Lt. Eberhart indicated, probably 95 percent of the people in the Clinton County Jail have not been convicted. They have been indicted of a crime and the courts have determined, due to their crime being a dangerous crime or the fact that they may not appear for trial that they need to be held, unless they can post a bond. If they can’t post bond, they need to stay with us. So, again... we as a society have taken away these people’s freedom based on an allegation of a crime, not a conviction. We are holding them against their will. We need to provide a safe and secure facility; not just for the inmates, but also for our staff and for any visitors that might come to the Clinton County Jail.”

Dave Vickers: “I guess a response to people that say it’s a luxury hotel ...Do you get a lot of feedback from people who wonder why we’re building such a fancy place for those accused or convicted of a crime?”

Sheriff Lincoln: “Our architects were complimentary when working with them, that we stayed with just the basics. We did not go for the top of the line. In our requests and our work with them, they said ‘You guys were very reasonable. You will still hear the words Taj Mahal thrown around. It seems any time you want to build a government building, no matter how basic you make it, the impression is that we are building a Taj Mahal.’ “We need to build a safe and secure building that has many requirements that we have to meet for safety and security.”

Dave Vickers: “Just a few minutes left. Before we go...if someone wanted to know how much of a need this is; what would you like to tell them about the current jail and how it operates and what you and the staff has to worry about in housing all of these inmates?”

Lt. Eberhart: “Well, in regards to our current facility... from the outside, it’s a beautiful building. It looks sound. It looks like a modern type building. But, you have to come inside the building to see the issues that we are actually having. I guess – our current facility operates 24-7; 365 days a year...We are housing people that don’t necessarily want to be there, so do they treat it the way as if they would treat our homes? No. They don’t really take the best care of it. As staff, we always make sure we keep an eye on them so they do things where they’re not destroying things. But, they don’t want to be there, so they are not going to take the best care of where they are at. So, you know, it boils down to our utilities: our plumbing is basically shot. We have learned through this current facility never put



a jail on top of office buildings. When we have water issues, that water flows downhill onto our office staff below. They have to put blue tarps over their desks when they go home at night, so when they come in the next day, they are assured their phones, computers and office equipment stay dry if we had a leak. So, our plumbing and utilities are shot. Again, our jail is very labor intensive. We are always moving staff. Again, that's something that is just due to how our current facility was laid out. It's something we can't really fix by remodeling and so forth. It's just there. And then, of course, it comes down to the classification and supervision of the inmates that I talked about before. We have no break room for jail staff. They literally have to take their break right there in the 'Book In' office. We could be booking an inmate in while Officers are sitting and taking a break. So, uh, I look at this issue again not more so just about the inmates; but, I am concerned about the Staff also."

Dave Vickers: "Sheriff, where do you go from here? You laid out a nineteen million dollar plan – how many thousand square feet...What is the process from here? You called it a need, not a want. What is your vision of how to proceed from here? You mentioned it's going to be a taxpayer issue. What's the process?"

Sheriff Lincoln: "The Clinton County Justice Coordinating Commission is preparing to hire a new Coordinator. Brian McKenrick took another job opportunity. So, we are going to be announcing that new Coordinator here real quick and then we will have to sit down and strategize what the next step is. The architects that are familiar with this process will help us walk along that process. So, we are just getting ready to start exploring what do we do next."

Dave Vickers: "But, obviously somewhere the tax payers are going to get asked if they want to fund a new jail...at some point or another most likely."

Sheriff Lincoln: "Yes, this will most likely require a bond referendum."

Dave Vickers: "...Unless the Sheriff wants to write out a check from his account."

Sheriff Lincoln: (laughter...) "Well, the Board of Supervisors will be very instrumental, as they are the financial arm of the county. So, we will have to work with them. And, as you are aware there is going to be quite a turnover in the Board of Supervisors come next January."

Dave Vickers: "I think the Board is the one who will have to okay a ballot question for a bond issue. You could ask; but, they would be the ones responsible for putting it on the ballot."

Sheriff Lincoln: "Yes. The Clinton County Justice Coordinating Commission just makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors."

Dave Vickers: "And, you mentioned two new members for sure; plus a new Director...so somewhere we will keep an eye on the process. And you will keep us up to date..."



Sheriff Lincoln: "Yes. Absolutely."

Dave Vickers: "Any other quick things you want to throw in here, Sheriff – about the Jail, your department?...open mic time here."

Sheriff Lincoln: "Just certainly appreciate the opportunity to come in and speak to the public about what we are doing...There is nothing we are trying to hide from anybody. Again, I know the taxpayers are weary. This is an important project and as we go through, I hope they continue to pay attention and ask questions. We will continue to try and educate everybody."

(End of broadcast)