



Clinton County Justice Coordinating Commission
Clinton County Courthouse
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Blue Ribbon Panel - Meeting Minutes

September 28, 2015 (6:30 p.m.)
Clinton County Satellite Office
226 11th Street DeWitt, Iowa

Panel Members present: Jerome Burken, Robert Betsinger, David Sivright, Amber Metzger, Kathy Rohling, Alex Rhodes, Peggy Selnau, James Schroeder and Jan Hansen.

Voted via e-mail: K C Hootman

County Officials and Staff in attendance: County Attorney Mike Wolf, County Board of Supervisor Dan Srp, Clinton County Communications Director Eric Dau, CCJCC Coordinator Margaret Kuhl

Media present: John Rolfe (*Clinton Herald*) and Tom Pantera (*The Observer*)

I. Welcome and Introductions at 6:32 p.m.

II. CCJCC Coordinator Kuhl circulated a signup sheet for October tours of the current Law Center.

III. Discussion of Public Safety Authority (PSA) comments from panel & citizens:

Supervisor Srp led the discussion with follow up comments since last month's BRP meeting. Srp said the questions have been good to form how to proceed. "As elected officials, we need to provide best long-term solution that makes sense."

Comments were brought up in regard to the Satellite Office having one of the offices closed most of the time. It will be important to have questions answered and facts/history on the DeWitt building.

The issue of suspended sentences & deferred judgments was also brought up. County Attorney Wolf said that people who are eligible for probation and not a danger to society are not held in the Jail.

David Sivright talked about two separate questions:

Procedural - the PSA statute doesn't require the city of Clinton to spend any money.

Jail - Everyone says we need to do this.

Amber Metzger stated, "The conditions in the jail are horrid. If we had to close the facility today, we do not have options."

If the jail were to be closed, Mike Wolf said he was struck that the transportation and staffing plus housing out-of-county costs will be significant. Related costs will be born no matter what.



Jerome Burken said we need to keep getting the public to tour the jail.
David Sivright suggested we get the Citizens Police Academy involved.

Robert Betsinger said there is no doubt we need a new jail. The PSA is the issue. He said he talked to 294 people at WalMart & asked them if they would favor the PSA. Only seven would approve. The main issue is raising their taxes.

David Sivright commented that they just want the 60% threshold so they can defeat it. If we don't do something now - the cost will be greater if we are forced to shut down...the costs go up.

Robert Betsinger stated, "You have to spend money to save money."

IV. Vote/consensus regarding PSA:

County Attorney Mike Wolf stated that Clinton is a "Can Do" county & let's get an idea as a group. He appreciates the group seeking input from citizens.

Margaret Kuhl commented, "Citizen engagement has been vital in each step of these processes with the replacement facility project. County citizens were involved with Site Selection, the architectural representation and now Blue Ribbon Panel."

Lost Nation Mayor Jim Schroeder made the motion for the BRP "to formally recommend to CCJCC and the City of Clinton to pursue the PSA."

Robert Betsinger seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously, with Jan Hansen and Robert Betsinger abstaining.

Discussion included:

Jan Hansen said, "Need to hit hard the safety of people....The Jail is atrocious!"

Jan Hansen's and Robert Betsinger's reason for abstaining is they want the Clinton City Council, as elected officials, to vote on the PSA.

Dan Srp said they will have the opportunity.

V. Communications Groups:

Margaret Kuhl asked the group to help identify groups for Project Outreach and Community Education opportunities. BRP Members added names and information to display charts.

VI. Open Discussion:

Robert Betsinger asked why we chose DeWitt for the meetings.

Dan Srp answered because the BRP Members were from across the county.

Jan Hansen said, "The Board of Supervisors are the best kept secret...truly something to behold."

Mike Wolf stated, "The project costs cannot be gambled with. We need to educate the



people on numbers." He also said, "Careful planning has been at the heart of actions. Careful planning are part of our next steps."

Dan Srp mentioned if someone is interested in serving on the PSA to let us know.

VII. The BRP was thanked for their time and service. The BRP was dissolved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Kuhl
CCJCC Coordinator