

Criminal Justice Committee Meeting Douglas County, Nebraska

Tuesday, August 25, 2015

The meeting convened at 11:10 a.m. in Room 903 of the Omaha-Douglas Civic Center, 1819 Farnam Street, Omaha, NE 68183. A copy of the Open Meetings Act is located near the entrance of the room. A notice of the meeting was published in the August 19, 2015 issue of The Daily Record. County Commissioners present at the beginning of the meeting were Mike Boyle, Mary Ann Borgeson, Clare Duda, PJ Morgan, and Chris Rodgers. Others present at the beginning of the meeting were Patrick Bloomingdale, Marcos San Martin, and Karen Cole of Administration; Mark Conrey and Floyd Pretz of 911/Communications (911); Paul Johnson and Whitney Shipley of Emergency Management; Mark Foxall and John Hubbard of Corrections; Dan Esch of the Clerk/Comptroller's office; Ken Fox of the Omaha Police Department; and Bev Traub of the League of Women Voters. Commissioner Boyle conducted the meeting.

1. 911 presentation.

County Commissioners Jim Cavanaugh and Marc Kraft entered the meeting during this item, as well as Joe Lorenz and Catherine Hall of Administration, and Shakil Malik of the County Attorney's office. Ms. Cole left the meeting during this item. Speaking to the item were Commissioner Boyle, Mr. Conrey, Mr. Pretz, Commissioner Rodgers, Mr. Lorenz, Ms. Shipley, Mr. Johnson, Commissioner Borgeson, Mr. Bloomingdale, and Commissioner Morgan. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Mr. Conrey and Mr. Pretz provided a presentation that featured data and statistics on 911 phone calls.
 - The data collected on the phone calls included:
 - How many 911 phone calls occurred each month.
 - What type of calls came in (i.e. home invasion, domestic violence, disturbances).
 - Calls broken down by agency (i.e. Omaha Police, County Sheriff, Bennington Police).
 - Looking up a certain address and seeing what type of activity has occurred over a period of time within a nine block radius of that address.
 - Commissioner Boyle said he thinks the City Council should see this presentation.
- Mr. Pretz said 911 has statistics going back to 1998.
- Mr. Pretz said 911 can search for a specific incident, and then find the details of that incident.
- Mr. Conrey spoke about how the 911 data and statistics are based on what was reported to 911 by the caller, which may be different than what the responding officer determined or reported.
- Mr. Conrey said the priority of the call is set is by how it is classified (i.e. a call classified as a "home invasion" automatically gets a Priority 1 ranking).
- Mr. Conrey said there is an interface between 911's system and the Sheriff's records management system.
 - Mr. Conrey said the Omaha Police have access to 911 data, but 911's system does not interface with an Omaha Police system.

- Mr. Conrey said when it comes to strategic planning, 911 data could be a tool to help the County determine where its emphasis is going to be in the future for services the County has to provide.
- Commissioner Cavanaugh and Commissioner Kraft left the meeting during this item.

2. Discussion on 911 Director search process.

Speaking during this item were Commissioner Boyle, Mr. Conrey, Mr. Bloomingdale, Commissioner Rodgers, Commissioner Duda, Commissioner Borgeson, and Commissioner Morgan. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Mr. Conrey will be retiring in the near future.
- Mr. Bloomingdale said when a new 911 Director is needed, the interlocal agreement says a new director should be hired by the County Board with the advice of the 911 Users Group.
- Mr. Bloomingdale said a search committee could be formed to make a recommendation to the County Board.
 - Mr. Bloomingdale said the search committee could be made up of Commissioners, staff, and a member of the 911 Users Group.
 - Mr. Bloomingdale said the 911 Users Group representative would be selected by the 911 Users Group, and that representative would be responsible for keeping the 911 Users Group informed.
 - Mr. Conrey said the County could ask for the Chair of the Users Group to be on the search committee, and then the 911 Users Group could decide if that's who they want on the search committee.
 - Commissioner Boyle said he feels Mr. Conrey should be on the search committee since he has a lot of experience with the 911 operation.
 - Mr. Conrey said he thinks the search committee should make sure the applicants have a good working knowledge of 911, because 911 is going to change a lot over the next four to five years.
 - Commissioner Rodgers said he thinks the Douglas County 911 Director has to guide the whole region.
- Kent Holm of Environmental Services entered the meeting during this item.
- Mr. Pretz left the meeting during this item; Mr. Conrey left the meeting after this item.

3. Discussion of city siren maintenance costs.

Speaking to this item were Mr. Johnson, Commissioner Boyle, Commissioner Borgeson, Ms. Shipley, Commissioner Duda, Mr. Bloomingdale, Commissioner Morgan, and Mr. Lorenz. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Mr. Johnson said he would like to talk to all of the cities in Douglas County about them taking over their siren maintenance costs within their city limits.
 - Mr. Johnson said this is consistent with the other cities in Nebraska, all of whom incur their siren maintenance costs.
 - Mr. Johnson said over the last three years, the County has spent \$15,300 for maintenance on 119 sirens, an average of \$5,100 per year.

- Mr. Johnson said most of the repairs are within the city limits of Omaha.
 - Mr. Johnson said \$5,100 per year is reasonable, but if a siren needed to be replaced, it would cost \$25,000 - \$27,000.
- Mr. Johnson said this would give cities the opportunity to determine where they want sirens, through their planning boards, when new developments come along.
- Commissioner Boyle talked about having the cities pay a maintenance cost to the County to help maintain the sirens.
- Systems of warning were discussed.
 - Mr. Johnson said there are several systems in place and functioning in Douglas County.
 - Commissioner Boyle said he wants a report on what those systems are.
 - Commissioner Borgeson said she'd like for Emergency Management to do a presentation to the County Board on all of the systems in place.
 - Mr. Johnson said one of the systems is Ping4, a telephonic system, and Douglas County is the only county in Nebraska that has it.
- Mr. Johnson and Ms. Shipley left the meeting after this item.

4. Discussion of proposed mental health facility in Kearney.

Speaking during this item were Commissioner Boyle and Commissioner Borgeson. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Commissioner Boyle said he read that there is talk of building a hospital for the mentally ill in Kearney and he thinks the County needs to look into it and find out what its status is.
- Commissioner Borgeson said Region VI plans on asking questions.
 - Commissioner Borgeson said Region VI heard it is going to be in Hastings.

5. Treatment of mentally ill patients in an emergency room setting.

Speaking during this item were Commissioner Boyle and Commissioner Borgeson. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Commissioner Borgeson said Region VI is looking at the whole behavioral health emergency system.
 - Commissioner Borgeson said there are quite a few issues that are causing backups in the rest of the continuum of care process.
- Commissioner Borgeson said she was part of a group that visited some facilities in Oakland, CA.
 - Commissioner Borgeson said there was a facility there where no one could be turned away; the person is assessed immediately and seen by a psychiatrist within 15 minutes.
 - Commissioner Borgeson spoke about how when individuals go to the emergency room in Nebraska, they could wait for hours upon days before a bed opens up for them.
 - Commissioner Borgeson spoke about how she feels a facility such as the one in Oakland, CA could help resolve some of those issues.
 - Commissioner Borgeson said there have been conversations with a lot of the providers to try to get some buy-in, but there are a lot of questions that are being worked on.

- Commissioner Borgeson said these discussions will continue and she'll report back again when some of those questions are answered.

6. Sarpy County interlocal agreement for housing of inmates.

Speaking during this item were Dr. Foxall, Commissioner Morgan, Commissioner Boyle, Mr. Lorenz, Commissioner Borgeson, Commissioner Duda, and Commissioner Rodgers. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Dr. Foxall said there will be two interlocal agreements with Sarpy County coming up soon.
 - One agreement is for Douglas County to house inmates of Sarpy County.
 - Dr. Foxall said Sarpy County is getting near capacity and they've indicated an interest in housing some of their inmates with Douglas County.
 - Dr. Foxall said Corrections has housed Sarpy County inmates before.
 - Dr. Foxall said Corrections has the space to do so right now.
 - Dr. Foxall said Sarpy County may do some remodeling at their facility, so they may need to house some inmates with Corrections during that time, as well.
 - Another agreement is for Sarpy County to house inmates of Douglas County.
 - Dr. Foxall spoke about there being a need from time to time for Corrections to house inmates outside of their facility, and this would send those inmates to Sarpy County instead of to Lincoln.

7. Corrections Updates/Protocols

- **Mental Health First Aid**
- **Pepper Spray**
- **STD Protocols**
- **Crisis Intervention Team**

Speaking during this item were Dr. Foxall, Commissioner Boyle, Commissioner Borgeson, Commissioner Rodgers, and Commissioner Duda. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Dr. Foxall said several Corrections employees were sent to Mental Health First Aid training.
 - Dr. Foxall said Mental Health First Aid is an eight hour synopsis of crisis intervention training, which teaches how to interact with a mentally ill person who's having an episode.
 - Commissioner Borgeson talked about the possibility of utilizing a peer specialist at Corrections.
 - Commissioner Borgeson said a peer specialist is someone who has a mental illness and is trained to help others with mental illness.
 - Dr. Foxall said he wants to find grant money to add one or two peer specialists at Corrections.
- Dr. Foxall said he would like to provide pepper spray to custody staff working in housing units where there would be interaction with violent inmates.
 - Dr. Foxall said currently only supervisors are given pepper spray.
 - Dr. Foxall said pepper spray will not yet be expanded to all custody staff.

- Dr. Foxall said part of pepper spray training includes how to use it, how to decontaminate, and weapon retention.
- Dr. Foxall said the Health Department has asked Corrections to provide condoms to inmates upon discharge from the facility.
 - Dr. Foxall said this wouldn't cost Corrections anything as the Health Department would already have the items put together for Corrections to provide.
 - Commissioner Borgeson said she isn't against this idea, but spoke about how there could be members of the public who would not like this idea.
 - Commissioner Boyle said it's a public health issue, so it ought to be given to people at discharge, and the people can decide whether or not to use them.
- Dr. Foxall said the Health Department is interested in mandatory STD testing for everybody who is brought in to Corrections.
 - Dr. Foxall said Corrections already does provide STD testing on an opt-in basis (where the inmate would be tested if the inmate said he/she wanted to be).
 - Commissioners Rodgers, Boyle, and Borgeson spoke in favor of having STD testing on an opt-out basis (where the inmate would have to say that he/she did not want to be tested), as opposed to on a mandatory basis or opt-in basis.
- Diane Carlson of Administration entered the meeting during this item.

8. Community Corrections Updates

- **Veterans Housing Unit**
- **Literacy Center**
- **Corrections T.V.**
- **Stability Works**
- **Vocational and Educational Training (Metro Comm. College)**
- **Reentry Employment Specialist**

Speaking during this item were Dr. Foxall, Commissioner Boyle, Commissioner Rodgers, Commissioner Borgeson, and Mr. Hubbard. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Dr. Foxall said Corrections would like to have the Veterans Housing Unit opened by October.
 - Dr. Foxall said the VA is very supportive of this.
 - Commissioner Borgeson said for the most recent network of care initiative that's been brought to Nebraska, there's information specific to veterans and their families.
 - Commissioner Borgeson said for all of the information out there regarding housing, family services, health care, mental health, and financial assistance, the network of care for veterans consolidates all of that information into one website.
 - Commissioner Borgeson said the information can be sorted by County.
- Dr. Foxall said Corrections is working with the Literacy Center to get more resources into the jail to help inmates increase their reading scores, which will help them with their GED examinations.
- Dr. Foxall said with Corrections TV, educational TV can be pushed throughout the facility.

- Dr. Foxall said Corrections has done a good job with providing education at the Criminal Justice Center, but a better job could be done with providing educational opportunities on the secure side, and Corrections TV is going to help meet that need.
- Dr. Foxall said he thinks Corrections TV is going to be a model for jails around the country.
- Dr. Foxall said he hopes to have something in place before the end of the year.
- Dr. Foxall said Stability Works is a partnership with the Family Housing Advisory Service that tries to provide permanent and supportive housing to individuals coming out of jail who need stable housing.
 - Dr. Foxall said the Stability Works people want to come in to Corrections and assess the inmates to determine what their needs are, and then Stability Works will make the connection on the outside.
 - Dr. Foxall said the initial approach isn't going to cost the County anything.
- Dr. Foxall said Corrections continues to work with Metropolitan Community College on vocational and educational training.
 - Dr. Foxall spoke about assessing what inmates' needs are when at Corrections, and then helping the inmates get access to what they need when they leave Corrections.
- Dr. Foxall said he's working to certify some of the Corrections staff as offender employment specialists.
 - Dr. Foxall said these specialists would work with inmates to get them a job post-release.

9. Other business

There was no other business.

The meeting adjourned at 1:26 p.m.