

**Child & Youth Services Committee Meeting**  
**Douglas County, Nebraska**  
Tuesday, February 5, 2019

The meeting convened at 1:00 P.M. in Room 903, Omaha-Douglas Civic Center, 1819 Farnam Street, Omaha, NE. A copy of the Open Meetings Act is located on the wall near the entrance of the room. A notice of the meeting was published in the January 30, 2019, issue of *The Daily Record*. County Commissioners present at the meeting were Chris Rodgers, James Cavanaugh, Clare Duda, Mary Ann Borgeson, P.J. Morgan and Marc Kraft. Others present included Dan Esch, Clerk/Comptroller; Diane Carlson, Catherine Hall, Pam Murphy, A'Jamal Byndon and Joe Lorenz, Administration; Jerry Leahy and Jeff McGill, Public Properties; Yosef Seigel, Brad Alexander, Greg Hepburn and Mark LeFlore, Youth Center; Shawne Johnson Coonfare, Juvenile Assessment Center; Christine Henningsen, Nebraska Youth Advocates; Juliet Summers, Voices for Children; David Lemke, HDR; Chris Burbach, Omaha World-Herald; Joe Slattery, David Carrig, Constance Meirendorf, Kevin Rigard, Jim Hubbard, Larry Storer, Nicole LeClerc, Norma LeClerc, Scott Williams, Sharon Martin; and Kim Bollow, Clerk/Comptroller's office. Commissioner Rodgers chairs the committee.

A video recording of the meeting is available on the Douglas County Website:  
<http://commissioners.douglascounty-ne.gov/board-meetings/videos>.

*Time markers for when each topic/item occurs during the video are in parentheses.*

**Introduction** (0:00 to 2:40) Commissioner Rodgers called the meeting to order, began introductions around the table, and asked for the report by Shawne Johnson Coonfare to be handed out. See Attachment A, "Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) January 2019 Sub-Committee Updates."

**1. Presentation: Latest design of Juvenile Justice Center (Bruce Carpenter)** (2:40 to 1:02:02)

[Bruce Carpenter was not present, but David Murphy represented HDR.]

David Murphy, HDR: presented Attachment B, "Douglas County Justice Center 02.05.19 HDR Architecture" which included an overview of the project, goals, space needs, design, different floor uses and mock-images, sleeping quarters, daylight, and rooftop access. He explained differences from a previous potential site. Mr. Murphy addressed the historic aspect of the MUD building and answered questions about total cost of the project, efficiency of space, managing the expense with interior and exterior sides, and vertical movement of youth within. He reviewed his firm's expertise, offered to provide a list of other facilities built, listed other similar urban facilities and relayed this is not a leading edge plan but has already been tried and true; suggested all services should be in one location, relayed the goal is to serve youth and families in a one stop shop, and clarified that the proposal is a detention facility. Mr. Murphy provided a couple different food service models including a preparation kitchen (food brought in - suggested) and a full production kitchen.

Commissioner Cavanaugh: inquired if the presentation by Mr. Murphy was presented to the Building Commission and if any changes since; asked about square footage and relayed concerns of the historic MUD building. He also asked about financing and the proposed floor plans. Commissioner Cavanaugh suggested courtrooms could be at the current facility instead of investing in new construction. He is concerned that there is still no complete floor plan or budget, the Building Commission has turned it

down because of no budget; he feels it's not ready and it doesn't mention the OHA building when the public has already spent money on it. Commissioner Cavanaugh relayed his proposal includes three phases (youth center, lawyer facilities, courthouse) and while it's under revision because of the new footprint, it is still cheaper, will be in phases, and will include a vote of citizens. He expects a substantial mill levy with the current proposal which does not include a vote of the people. Commissioner Cavanaugh relayed the Sherwood Foundation donation paperwork included two pages of conditions.

Commissioner Rodgers: answered questions about the approximate cost breakdown and clarified what Mr. Murphy was asked to present. He also provided information on current and future youth needs, upcoming law changes and potential new programs to help reduce numbers of youth who will need the potential facility. Commissioner Rodgers addressed issues with moving downtown from current facility including programming, processes, and everyone involved in the system. He relayed that remodeling costs at the current facility would be more than new construction costs and relayed lack of room for more judges. He conveyed the new proposal would be best for kids' services including modern trauma needs and he reminded that this has been a ten year long discussion (the reform effort, not this specific project), and that it does not include a parking garage (questions about parking garage need to be addressed with the Building Commission). In addressing the mill levy, he relayed that compared to public school districts and the public building commission, we don't know what the levy adjustment will be yet. While he is expecting a 1% increase as worst case scenario, one donation has been confirmed; the Sherwood Foundation requirements were discussed in joint with the Commissioners, County Attorney, and Probation Departments.

Commissioner Morgan: clarified that financing would be through bonds. He also provided a summary of other facilities: Minneapolis built condos after detention center & courts were established and they have fine restaurants; St. Paul is close to our size, is downtown and has restaurants nearby; Maricopa County has two facilities handling just under 200 youth although they're six times larger than here – they're able to expedite because courts are nearby youth facility. He also reminded that the cost will not exceed \$120 million and there is a potential for help towards those costs from the Sherwood Foundation and possibly others.

David Carrig, citizen: asked about quantity of youth to be housed.

Bob Perrin, citizen: asked if the footprint could be changed and also asked about what is not included in the cost of the new proposal.

Larry Storer, citizen: asked about child safety and utilizing the current facility instead of new land.

Scott Williams, citizen: relayed concerns to move youth detention downtown, potential private donations, and potential tax increase.

Commissioner Kraft: relayed there would still need to be new construction at the current 42<sup>nd</sup> Street facility and it wouldn't necessarily be cheaper than this proposed new construction.

Commissioner Borgeson: relayed that floor plans and budgets have already been shown, \$120 million maximum has been stated multiple times; concerned Commissioner Cavanaugh's plans have been altered as well. She relayed that the following are part of the current proposal for \$120 million: tower, property, renovating MUD building, youth center, and walkway connection.

Commissioner Duda: stated the main driver is a courthouse annex, a courthouse expansion, not a rushed land grab; courthouse annex and juvenile detention center needs to be co-located. We have nowhere to put a 7<sup>th</sup> District Court judge.

Nicole LeClerc, citizen, speaking for Carole Zacek, citizen: questioned how many detention facilities HDR has built; relayed concerns with feeding the youth; inquired if the Sherwood Foundation letter is public.

Clerk/Comptroller Esch: relayed the Sherwood Foundation letter can be viewed on the Justice Center website.

Norma LeClerc, citizen: asked about cost per square foot to remodel MUD building.

**2. *Presentation: Interactive website illustrating the cost and path of a juvenile through the system (Joy Suder and Christine Henningsen)* (1:02:30 to 1:49:30)**

[Joy Suder did not present as shown on the agenda.]

Christine Henningsen, Nebraska Youth Advocates: introduced co-presenter Juliet Summers with Voices for Children (different than shown on agenda as Joy Suder), relayed that while the proposal/project is not directly related to previous Committee discussion, it is in fact related to juvenile justice in general. They showed best, worst and average case scenarios in our current system. See Attachment C, "A Case Scenario Study: The Cost of Juvenile Justice, Douglas County Annual Statistics."

Ms. Henningsen: explained that each of the three case scenarios start out at the same point but a variety of factors lead to the three very different paths; goal is to learn where we can better move youth along the system so they're not waiting for services and/or aging-out. She relayed there are many community based initiatives who provide a spectrum of services.

Ms. Summers: explained how the costs stack up along the way (contractual costs, human capital costs, law enforcement, courts, services for both youth and families, detention costs, administration, residential placement costs, etc.; concern is how effectively the money is being used for the child's needs. She relayed that the hope is to present a more formal release of data in a couple weeks. Ms. Summers also addressed where ethnicity is an issue, issues with dates on the available data. She relayed the end goal is for the State and County to effectively invest in kids, including addressing cases that don't belong and addressing kids who need more investment. Ms. Summers relayed information about the new state law in effect this summer which will shift what's allowed for incarceration of minors. She relayed youth detention numbers are decreasing every year, and anticipates this to continue; they support the bill which rolls out in July. More services and programs are needed but our practices need to be developed.

Commissioner Kraft: asked about children who age-out and the representation of Hispanics in the data.

Commissioner Rodgers: offered to include this presentation on County Board agenda for February 26<sup>th</sup>; other resources include the United Way and Crime Commission; asked what is end goal of the report, and asked if Ms. Summers or Ms. Henningsen will monitor the system from the law change in July. He addressed that there are kids in the current facility who do not need to be there, some kids have a

chance to become worse, and the upcoming July law change will help; the proposed new building is a few years out, and programs are ever evolving. These include programs with Child Savings Institute, CHI, Uta Halee, and other programs are getting developed around current needs.

A'Jamal Byndon, Administration: asked for more details and clarity on data.

Constance Meirendorf, citizen: asked about prevention work before kids enter the system.

Shawne Johnson Coonfare, Juvenile Assessment Center: asked about child welfare system, dual status kids, and if/how that info is included in the presentation data.

Greg Hepburn, Youth Center: wants to know occurrence data for each of the three proposed scenarios and a comparison of demographics.

Mark LeFlore, Youth Center: added thoughts on probation and status offenders.

Commissioner Morgan: expects a reduced number of detained youth in the future; change in law should affect the numbers; the current proposal is not a jail but a hall of justice. He relayed the hall of justice needs to be built according to all seven Commissioners, otherwise the County would be leasing property and thus spending more money.

Sharon Martin, citizen: applauded this spotlight on the need to reform juvenile justice, concerned that Chinn report data is not addressed; questioned the rush to an unsubstantiated building before juvenile justice reform work is done; applauds current facility which needs some work.

Commissioner Borgeson: relayed this has been an ongoing process, changes in law may have spiked data; services, programs and operational pieces continue to be looked at, and the importance to listen to parents earlier. There is a large component of mental health, substance abuse and behavior disorders so she hopes for help to come sooner to avoid violence. She wants to keep kids and families out of the system, but if they do get in, then get them out as soon as possible. Also once they leave, services need to be available so as they don't come back.

Brad Alexander, Youth Center: addressed responsibility of Probation department.

Male citizen: asked about costs and separation with the building and the programs.

### **3. Other Business**

None.

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 P.M.