

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL JAIL AUTHORITY
January 15, 2021
Held at the New River Valley Regional Jail

A. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting of the New River Valley Regional Jail Authority was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Chairman Mark Armentrout with six (6) members and three (3) alternates present.

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Bland County:	Mr. Workman (video)
	Carroll County:	Mr. Lyons (video)
	Floyd County:	Mr. Turman
	Grayson County:	Sheriff Vaughan (video)
	Radford City:	Sheriff Armentrout
	Wythe County:	Mr. Vaught (video)

ALTERNATES PRESENT:	Giles County:	Mr. Martin
	Grayson County:	Mr. Smith
	Pulaski County:	Mr. Sweet (video)

STAFF & GUESTS PRESENT:	Superintendent Gregory Winston
	Mr. Steve Durbin-Sands Anderson (video)
	Mr. Bob Sumner-Citizen
	Mrs. Tammy Dobbins-NRVRJ
	Mr. Tim Clark- NRVRJ

B. ROLL CALL:

In Mrs. Akers' absence, Mrs. Tammy Dobbins called roll and reported a quorum present.

C. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 2020 MINUTES:

Copies of the Minutes from the November 13, 2020 meeting were mailed to each member. Chairman Armentrout asked if there were any additions or additional corrections to the Minutes as presented.

Motion: Mr. Workman moved that the November 13, 2020 Minutes be approved as presented. Mr. Lyons seconded the motion.

Action: The motion passed unanimously.

D. OLD BUSINESS:

E. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance Committee:

Copies of the monthly financials were distributed. Mr. Workman reviewed the report in detail with the group.

Motion: On behalf of the Finance Committee, Mr. Workman made the motion to approve the Finance Report as presented.

Action: Following a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

On behalf of the of employees of the NRVJRJ, we extend our deepest condolences to the family of Sgt. Perry Hodge and his work family at the Pulaski County Sheriff's Office. Sgt. Hodge began his career here at the regional jail and maintained some close relationships with several employees. It is a terrible loss for us as well and he will be missed.

Academy:

We will begin an upcoming corrections academy in February. We plan to have three academy groups this year.

Operations:

- Headcount today: 957
- Total days served 30,532
- Average Daily Population: 985
- Average Daily Population for male prisoners: 788
- Average Daily Population for female prisoners: 197
- Number of commitments: 340
- Avg Daily commitments: 11
- Number of releases: 334
- Avg Daily releases: 10.8

HR:

We have initiated an employee recognition program and have been accepting recommendations for Employee of the Quarter and Employee of the Year. We will be recognizing one employee for both sworn staff and civilian staff on a plaque in roll call. We'll be announcing those employees in the next few weeks and some parking places out front has been designated for the winners as an added benefit of this recognition.

Applicant Testing:

We continue to solicit for testing and we have been a reduced number of applicants that have come for testing. We've attributed that to the holidays, the stimulus payments and also the extension of unemployment insurance. Our HR folks are going back through last year's applicant pool and making contact with all of the folks that confirmed but didn't actually show up to test. We hope to receive some additional applicants by doing so.

COVID Update:

We've been hit fairly hard by COVID with our jail staff. As of this morning, we have about 7-8 employees out with COVID. We're performing testing for staff onsite if someone has symptoms because we really need to know their results. Most of the regional jails in the Virginia are seeing an increase in staff being impacted by COVID.

IT:

We have updated the telephone system throughout the jail. Our old phone system was obsolete and had been unsupported for some time.

Inmate Tablets:

The tablets are now installed in the housing units and inmates are able to visit through them. We've had a few challenges with the video visitation through the tablets and not everyone has been following all of the rules. We have a video officer who monitors the visits and if someone is caught misusing the tablets the video is shut down and they are no longer allowed to use the tablets.

Maintenance:

We have a lot of obsolete equipment in our security system and have been saving up in our Repair and Replacement reserve account. We had hoped to do a \$280,000 project on our security system this year but COVID has put a hold on that.

We did have a company come in a few weeks ago to discuss security system upgrades and 2-way radio upgrades which were already been budgeted for. They had planned to come for a walk thru last week but had to cancel due to weather and will reschedule their visit.

Insurance:

On Wednesday, we met with our health insurance providers and based upon our utilization they're projecting as much as a 14% increase in our costs. That relates in real dollars to \$370,000. Last year we budgeted 15% increase in our health insurance and we were able to negotiate a lower rate than that. So, there may be a level funding option where we won't have to increase anything. We're going to be analyzing that over the next few weeks and report back to the group.

Inmate Population:

Our inmate population has been fairly high and we've been pretty successful in keeping our contract beds up. With the need to move inmates for the energy savings project and when you're dealing with 970-1000 inmates it becomes quite difficult. With short staffing and COVID losses, we're trying to keep our inmate population manageable while still being able to meet our revenue expectations and our forecast projections.

Performance Contracting:

In regards to the energy savings project, we have had to pause that on and off but they have had some success. They've done some work up on the roof and have replaced diffusers as well as some electronic equipment. They've been working out back installing two chillers and have been doing some civil site work on that. We are moving forward and expect to have it completed on time. We're not expecting delays in the total project time but we're having intermittent delays during the construction phase of the project due to challenges with COVID.

Video Arraignments:

We have done 5,644 video court hearing this year which averages as many as 40-50 a day. Video truly is so much safer as well as a cost saving by not having to transport inmates back and forth to court. Special thanks to Officer Josh Arnold for the great job he does in that department.

COVID:

We test every prisoner that enters the jail whether it be by arrest, anyone leaving for court, a doctor's visit, etc. Once they enter the jail, they are quarantined for five days then they receive a COVID test. If it comes back negative, the inmate goes to general population and that process has been working for us.

Superintendent updated the group on some inmate cases of COVID that have were discovered in recent weeks. He detailed the steps that were taken to isolate those that tested positive and moving those that tested negative to a separate housing unit. That resulted in 20 cases all of which have since recovered. Last weekend, a female inmate came down with symptoms and tested positive for COVID. After testing all 50 female inmates in that pod, 24 tested positive with no symptoms at all. Some of those testing positive reported having symptoms the previous week but they didn't tell anyone. They knew if they told an officer that they will be locked down and COVID tested.

Currently there are 26 active cases with just a handful having actual symptoms. Yesterday, a couple of inmates in two separate units sent request forms to medical saying they weren't feeling well. We tested those inmates and they were positive so we will now be testing both of those two housing units. Last night, we had a third pod with a positive case so we will be testing that unit as well.

We work very closely with the health department and their epidemiologist. We have a meeting with them today to get their advice on the best approach to take once we have the test results from these three housing units. He doesn't think that they will recommend mass testing because we are able to isolate the pods as needed. Superintendent Winston will update the group has he has more information.

G. NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Armentrout reminded everyone that hasn't sent in their Financial Disclosure forms to please do so as soon as possible. The jail's auditors require this documentation from each board member and alternate.

COVID Vaccines:

After polling the staff, we have about 1/3 of the employees that are willing to take the vaccine. Dr. Bissell is ordering the vaccine for our staff and inmates and according to the health department, they plan to report here to immunize our staff and inmates. Supt Winston emailed Dr. Bissell last week to check on the portal that is supposed to be sent so we can key in our staffs' contact information.

I. OTHER BUSINESS OR INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business to discuss, Chairman Armentrout asked for motion to adjourn.

Motion: Mr. Lyons made the motion to adjourn the meeting.
Mr. Workman seconded the motion.

Action: The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the Authority, Chairman Armentrout adjourned the meeting at 10:28 a.m.

Chairman Mark A. Armentrout