

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL JAIL AUTHORITY
September 10, 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 10:04 a.m. by Chairman Mark Armentrout.

Prior to roll call, he read a note from Wythe County. With the retirement of Sheriff Keith Dunagan, Ch. Deputy Charles Foster has been promoted to Sheriff and will now be serving as a member on the Authority board. His Chief Deputy Major Anthony Cline will be serving as his alternate.

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Carroll County:	Sheriff Kemp
	Floyd County:	Mr. Turman; Sheriff Craig
	Giles County:	Mr. Chidester; Sheriff Millirons
	Radford City:	Sheriff Armentrout; Mr. Fleisher
	Wythe County:	Mr. Vaught

ALTERNATES PRESENT:	Pulaski County:	Mr. Sweet
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STAFF & GUESTS PRESENT:	Superintendent Gregory Winston
	Mrs. Tonya Akers-NRVRJ
	Sgt. Travis Hamilton-NRVRJ
	Mr. Steve Durbin-Sands Anderson
	Mr. Bob Sumner-citizen
	Capt. Lucas Nester-PCSO

B. ROLL CALL:

Mrs. Tonya Akers called roll and reported a quorum with eight (8) members and one (1) alternate present.

C. APPROVAL OF JULY 2021 MINUTES:

Copies of the Minutes from the July 10, 2021 meeting were mailed to each member. Chairman Armentrout asked if there were any additions or additional corrections to the Minutes as presented.

Motion: Sheriff Millirons moved that the July 10, 2021 Minutes be approved as presented. Mr. Vaught seconded the motion.

Action: The motion passed unanimously.

D. OLD BUSINESS:

E. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance Committee:

Copies of the monthly financials were distributed. In Mr. Workman's absence, Superintendent Winston reviewed the report in detail with the group.

Motion: Chairman Armentrout said the reports were discussed/reviewed at length in the Finance Meeting. He added that a motion came from the Finance Committee to approve the Financial Reports as presented.

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

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Superintendent Winston notified the authority members earlier in the month of an unfortunate circumstance when a female inmate committed suicide in the middle of the day. Several of our staff members assisted with the incident: Officer Brittney Cox, Officer Jamie Light, Officer Jeremy Cohen, Sgt. Travis Hamilton, Nurse Lisa Ferguson and Nurse Hannah Flatton.

Superintendent Winston wanted to recognize those staff members for their quick response in being able to resuscitate her until the ambulance arrived. Tragically, she did pass away several days later after being transported to a Richmond hospital.

Academy:

There are eight officers still in the academy and are currently battling a few cases of Covid. At this time, we have around six staff members out of work that have tested positive. We do not have any inmates with COVID that we are aware of and there has been no change to our Covid protocols. Everyone brought into the jail still gets tested prior to going to general population.

Operations:

- Headcount today: 779
- Total days served 24,771
- Average Daily Population: 799
- Average Daily Population for male prisoners: 647
- Average Daily Population for female prisoners: 152
- Number of commitments: 392
- Avg Daily commitments: 12.6
- Number of releases: 455
- Avg Daily releases: 14.7

Superintendent Winston updated the group on the drop in inmate population over the last 2-3 months. Some of this was due to DOC pulling over 100 state responsible inmates. He asked the sheriffs in the room what they are seeing in terms of arrests. We're seeing a lot of admittance to bail which results in an increase in releases. Why this is important to us is our budget is based on an inmate forecast of 884. From an annual perspective, for every 10 inmates that we fall below that projection it costs about \$105,000 so over the course of a year it equates to a \$1 million. We've found some stability in the workforce so we're not seeing as many terminations. He hired two this week and we're seeing a slight uptick in applications. For every 10 applicants, we may get one that is qualified to be hired. But because of the vacancies we have a significant amount of overtime we're incurring well above what was budgeted. Some of the vacancy savings will offset the cost of the overtime and some will offset the reduction in the number of prisoners.

We are holding some contract prisoners from Martinsville Sheriff's Office and Henry County Sheriff's Office. Superintendent has also reached out to see if there are any sheriff ran jails that need prisoners housed. Also, he met with the US Marshals earlier in the week to work out a limited use contract and see about housing some federal prisoners. He will work closely to approve the types of prisoners that we will house. Mr. Sweet said it was a catch 22 for administrators with respect to cost savings. But if we have to shift per diems to offset that then it's not unless we can mitigate that internally. We're in a healthy position with respect to our reserves. His recommendation would be to absorb that from operating without asking our localities to make up pennies on the dollar by raising per diems. He thinks we are in a position to do that without jeopardizing our cash position with respect to reserves. He is going to keep his eye on it and also get some contract prisoners in her to make up some of that revenue.

Sheriff Craig asked what the comp board did for us in the financial aspect. Superintendent Winston said they pay for our positions and pay a per diem per prisoner per day. For a local responsible inmate, they give us \$4 a day and for state responsible inmate they pay \$12 per day. Sheriff Craig asked what we could utilize those vacancy savings for? Superintendent said we could use it for prisoner food service, computer service/supplies, vehicles, radios and things like that. According to the comp board rule book, you can't use that to offset overtime and personnel costs. Mr. Sweet asked if we were only able to evaluate per diems at the six-month mark. Superintendent Winston said to the best of his knowledge but he would verify that with the By-laws. ***After the meeting it was verified that the per diems can be changed periodically by a vote of the board.*

Sheriff Millirons asked if we had any certain counties to target to house their inmates. Superintendent Winston said not necessarily just whoever has prisoners. Sheriff Millirons said that he would be at a meeting next week and would mention it to some of the sheriffs in attendance.

Prisoner Issues:

Superintendent Winston updated the Authority on several inmates we are currently housing that have serious medical conditions. Sheriff Ramsey was unable to attend today but Superintendent Winston appreciated his assistance in working with the judge and Commonwealth Attorney on a bond for a female inmate that needed to be airlifted to Richmond hospital.

IT:

We signed the GTL contract and expect a check from them in approximately 30 days. This will give us a revenue surplus of about \$360,000 in that particular line item of the budget.

We have a Coronavirus grant that is getting ready to expire so we have ordered quite a bit of training equipment with those funds. There have been some supply chain issues which have delayed the products in shipment.

Security System:

We have made a decision on our security system vendor. They came in last week to do a final walk through and they're working on a final price. We have budgeted for this project and expect to have more information at the next meeting.

Performance Contracting Project:

The energy saving performance contracting project is winding down. Superintendent Winston reviewed all of the items that have been completed. The biggest project left to do is cooling tower which should be completed next week. This project is expected to be completed by the end of September and we've already been seeing energy saving over the last six months.

Academy:

The Superintendent sent out copies of a resolution drafted by the training academy's attorney. Our attorney is reviewing it at this time to see if the jail needs to complete one. Our understanding is that it is method to formalize the relationship so there are no loose ends. If nobody has any objections, we'll see if the jail in fact needs to complete one. If so, we'll vote on it at the next meeting and send it to them if approved.

Employment Contract:

If no one objects, we're going to move forward with our employment contract. We feel it will enhance our ability to retain employees and get them through the academy. We'll work with our attorney to make sure it's in compliance with applicable law. Mr. Vaught asked the contract amount and time period. Superintendent Winston said it would be a two-year contract for \$10,600. During that time, they will need to complete the academy and if they leave prior to those two years they would be responsible for reimbursing the jail a pro-rated amount. There was some discussion on how contracts have worked in other jurisdictions and the decision was made to move forward with the process. Mr. Sweet asked how many positions were vacant at this time. Superintendent Winston said we had a total of 54 fillable positions. Superintendent said currently we're not doing mandatory overtime as many other facilities are. We have voluntary overtime and we're actually paying them a bounty to work overtime.

Staffing:

Mr. Turman said at the last meeting, Sheriff Ramsey asked the Superintendent at what amount would the jail not be able to operate. Superintendent gave him some numbers and situations with inmates in the hospitals that have resulted in lockdown on a few occasions. Mr. Turman said that he was all for bringing inmates in from other facilities as long as they are vetted well but it also concerns him bring more in when we're running with a skeleton crew. Superintendent Winston said they would be reviewed well and he had no intention of getting them in here until we have staff up and trained.

Trusties:

Superintendent Winston has been working with Sgt. Hamilton on solutions to the inmate trusty shortage that we've been experiencing. In addition to Jerel Dobbins' crew that works throughout the week we also have a group of inmates that work on the jail grounds mowing, trimming etc. With mowing season winding down those inmates would also be available to help out in the jurisdictions. If you have special projects through the week, you can schedule those through Sgt. Hamilton or Captain Bobbitt and we could bring them. They would be available to help out on the weekends if the jurisdictions would be able to send a couple of deputies to pick them up.

There was a lengthy discussion on the matter. The possibility of counties paying inmate workers and also the possibility of putting some pretrial detainees as workforce. Supt. Winston said there may be some inmates that have been sentenced for minor offenses and are awaiting trial on other charges. If we modified our rules to allow for pretrial detainees to serve then we may be able to identify a larger pool of qualified workers. Sheriff Craig said his county would be interested in getting more details on cost, who would pick up the inmates, or drop them off, etc. Mr. Turman asked if it would be minimum wage. Superintendent Winston said he wasn't even sure if you could pay pretrial detainees so we would have to look into it.

Comp Board Bonus:

The Governor's budget amendment allowed for the state to pay a one-time \$3,000 bonus to all sworn deputy sheriff officers and regional jail officers. For us that works out to around \$500,000 provided to us by the comp board. He thinks it would be appropriate to pay that to all fulltime staff—civilian/nurses included and that would amount to \$103,000. He thinks it's only fair and reasonable to do so and would like to extend that to the entire staff. We have money recovered from the telephone contract and would be able to absorb that cost. He asked if anyone had objections or concerns on doing so. Sheriff Craig asked the Superintendent Winston if the money was there to cover it. Superintendent Winston said that once that telephone contract funds arrive the money will be available. Sheriff Craig said morale it tough enough in any of these jobs here or at the sheriff's office. If we can pay one then should pay them all. Mr. Vaught added that last year Wythe County paid out a \$2,500 bonus to all of their staff. Superintendent Winston said he appreciated the support from the Authority to do that.

Discussion:

There was discussion on the President's proposal of a Federal Covid vaccine mandate or weekly testing for employers with over 100 employees. Superintendent Winston asked that the jurisdictions communicate to him how they will be handling this so we can all be on the same page.

G. NEW BUSINESS:

H. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

I. OTHER BUSINESS OR INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

J. ADJOURNMENT:

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

Motion: Sheriff Millirons made the motion to adjourn the meeting.
Sheriff Craig seconded the motion.

Action: The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the Authority, Chairman Armentrout adjourned the meeting at 11:21 a.m.

Chairman Mark A. Armentrout