

**MINUTES
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**February 10, 2015
5:00 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM D - COUNTY SQUARE**

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting date, time, place and agenda was posted on the bulletin board at the entrance of the Council Office and mailed to the newspapers, radio stations and television stations.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Liz Seman
Vice Chairman Joe Baldwin
Councilor Lottie Gibson
Councilor Lynn Ballard
Councilor Willis Meadows

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Joe Kernell, County Administrator
Jeffrey D. Wile, Assistant County Attorney
Mark Tollison, County Attorney
John Vandermosten, Interim Assistant County Administrator
Tracy Krein, Medical Administrator
Marie Livingston, Mental Health Manager
Dr. Ernest Martin, Forensic Psychiatrist
Helen E. Wood, Clerk to Public Safety Committee
Debbie Templeton, Administrative Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Judge Leila Foster, Chief Magistrate Judge
John Eldridge, Chief Deputy, Greenville County Sheriff's Office

CALL TO ORDER:

Liz Seman
Chairman

INVOCATION:

Joe Baldwin
Vice Chairman

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ACTION: Councilor Lynn Ballard moved to approve the minutes of the Committee on Public Safety and Human Services' meeting of September 22, 2014. Motion carried unanimously by all Council members present.

INTRODUCTION OF CHIEF MAGISTRATE JUDGE

Mr. Kernell introduced Judge Leila Foster, the newly appointed Chief Magistrate Judge. Judge Foster has been a life-long Greenville County resident. She has been with Greenville County for 28 years. In 1992, she was appointed to the Summary Court judge's bench making her the youngest African American appointed to the bench in Greenville County. Judge Foster is the longest serving African American magistrate in the history of Greenville County. She was appointed as the Associate Chief Magistrate by Chief Justice Toal of the South Carolina State Supreme Court. She has been instrumental in transitioning Greenville County to a state-wide system for centralized bond court. In 2014, Chief Justice Jean Toal requested that Judge Foster assume the role as Chief Magistrate of Greenville County. She is a dedicated and humble public servant. Judge Foster strives to uphold the law and educate the citizens of Greenville County about the judicial system. Mr. Kernell expressed his appreciation for all Judge Foster has done for Greenville County and the Detention Center in regards to Bond Court and for going over and beyond to assist the Detention Center and the Magistrate System.

Judge Leila Foster affirms it has been a pleasure to work for Greenville County and offered her assistance to anyone who may need it. She professes that the Magistrate System's success is due to a wonderful working relationship with the jail. Judge Foster expresses her appreciation to Mr. Vandermosten and his staff, along with County Council for all that is done for Greenville County.

Vice Chairman Baldwin asked Judge Foster if all the magistrates were on board with the new court facilities. Judge Foster advised that all magistrates were extremely excited. Vice Chairman Baldwin requested a future presentation on the Magistrate Court system. He also inquired on the possibility of a Centralized Civil Court system. Judge Foster articulated that this is something of interest and has been talked about. She believes the other judges would be very responsive to a Centralized Civil Court system. However, the next project is the E-Filing system. Chief Justice Toal would like Greenville County to lead the state in this new system.

Vice Chairman Ballard asked where Judge Foster is located. She has two offices: one in Bond Court at the Detention Center and the other in the Law Enforcement Center.

Councilor Gibson knows Judge Foster on a personal level and expressed her appreciation for all Judge Foster has done and congratulated her on her new appointment. Councilor Gibson would like a date set to honor Judge Foster and acknowledge her new position within Greenville County.

Chairman Seman conveyed her appreciation for Judge Foster's attendance at the committee meeting and congratulated her on her appointment.

BRIEFING – MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AT DETENTION CENTER

Tracy Krein, Medical Administrator, explained that the Greenville County Detention Center's mental health section includes Marie Livingston, Mental Health Manager, Forensic Psychiatrist, Dr. Ernest Martin and five (5) mental health counselors.

Ms. Krein stated that many of the arrestees may exhibit coping mechanisms which manifests as self-injurious behaviors. There are processes in place to protect both the inmates and officers from these behaviors. Continuity of care for those with mental health conditions is of the utmost importance. Staff works closely with the psychiatrist to continue any needed medications so a lapse in treatment is minimal.

Another challenge is placement of individuals within community based treatment centers, mental health hospitals, and substance abuse programs. However, due to increased need and decreased funding, these facilities are extremely stressed. The mental health section routinely competes with the private sector for bed space and vacancies.

Ms. Livingston thanked the committee for their interest in the mental health services offered at the detention center. Because of changes in society and population, a detention center is often seen as a treatment center. Last year alone, the mental health staff saw over 9,000 inmates and of this total approximately 4,000 was on suicide observation.

Monthly meetings are held with staff from the Office of Probation and Parole and other rehabilitation centers to determine alternative sentences. Last year, 171 inmates were placed in rehab or treatment centers in lieu of incarceration. This option can only be utilized if judges are willing to listen to recommendations and "sentence" accordingly.

Currently offered is a DHEC licensed alcohol and drug treatment 6 week program along with mental health education groups. Work is underway to expand on those programs to provide a co-occurring/disorders group. Many inmates have a combination of disorders feeding off one another. Information is available to inmates released from the facility on a means to continue with treatment within the community. Ms. Krein reiterated that the Greenville County Detention Center has the only DHEC licensed drug/alcohol treatment program within a detention facility in South Carolina.

Councilor Ballard questioned if there was a method of follow-up or monitoring those individuals treated when release from the facility. There is not a specific tracking system but information is passed on to outside facilities treating patient who were previously incarcerated/treated here at the facility

Councilor Gibson asked how long it takes for an inmate to receive medication after being booked into the detention center. As stated prior, continuity of care for those with mental health conditions is of the utmost importance. Staff works closely with the psychiatrist to continue any needed medications so a lapse in treatment is minimal and immediate medications to those who present as unstable or in crisis.

Dr. Martin, Forensic Psychiatrist, with his 15 years of tenure with the facility has witnessed an evolution in population, diagnoses, and drug types. The population has now aged and is presenting with neuro cognitive issues like dementia. The severity of the mental illnesses has become more complex and much of the inmate mental health population has dual diagnoses making for a more complex treatment. A significant portion of the inmate mental health population is being treated for

depression, mood disorders, personality disorders, and schizophrenia among other areas of dysfunction.

Vice Chairman Baldwin asked for an estimate of how many inmates had to be hospitalized due to their mental conditions. Ms. Krein disseminated a monthly statistical overview to the Public Safety Committee which showed the involuntary commitments of 27 inmates in 2014 due to their extreme mental condition. It was also noted that about 60% of the jail population is on some type of prescription medication and half of this is for mental health issues. Dr. Martin estimates that about a third of the inmate population has some type of mental illness.

Councilor Gibson asked how many of the 60% treated was veterans. Dr. Martin estimated that approximately 8% of the 60% were veterans. Many of those presented PTSD symptoms from time spent in conflicts from Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. Councilor Gibson inquired if veterans take priority. Dr. Martin responded that there were resources specifically for veterans that are utilized for placement into programs and treatment centers. Mr. Vandermosten also explained that the detention has a process in place to identify any veterans immediately. After identification, the veteran information is passed on to Lee Vining, who involves State Veteran's Affairs. The Solicitor's Office also operates a Veteran's Court.

Councilor Gibson inquired about how many inmates could participate in the drug/alcohol program at one time. Mrs. Livingston acknowledged that only one 6 week program is going at a time. The current session is operating with 11 inmates.

Ms. Gibson asked about the average population of the jail and the suspension of government benefits such as Social Security. Mr. Vandermosten replied approximately 1,300 inmates and that Social Security Benefits is suspended after 30 days of incarceration.

OVERVIEW – BOOKING PROCEDURES AT DETENTION CENTER

Mr. Vandermosten, Interim Assistant County Administrator for the Department of Public Safety, explained to the committee the procedures utilized during custody transfer from arresting officer to the detention facility. The arresting officer arrives at the facility via the vehicle sally port. Escort's the arrestee into the judicial corridor to be searched and relinquished of all jewelry and property and placed in a holding cell until he is seen by a judge while the office completes all the necessary paperwork. Additional warrants will be signed at this time, if needed. Subsequent to being seen by a judge, the arrestee will be escorted to the custody transfer sally port of the detention center. A detention officer at this time must be certain that the inmate is healthy and uninjured, search for weapons and contraband, and account for all his property and money. Then inmate is fingerprinted at Safe ID system, which reveals if the inmate has been to the facility previously, his real name, a photo, and his pack identification number. If Safe ID affirms a name different from what the arresting officer had originally, the arresting officer will have to step back out and re-do all paperwork. Subsequent to positive identification, the inmate removes his socks and shoes and undergoes a more extensive search. At this point, the inmate is allowed into the intake and release area of the facility and the arresting officer returns to the road. The detention booking process now begins and includes taking property inventory and meticulous documentation. The booking process takes approximately 60 minutes. On a weekend, the detention center could book in 80 – 90 inmates. There is three staff members dedicated to the booking process. However, during busy times, more help is solicited.

Councilor Ballard asked for confirmation that three staff members are dedicated to the booking process and are also responsible for releases. Mr. Vandermosten confirmed. Councilor Ballard

expressed concern for the amount of time the arresting officer was off the road during transfer of custody while he was performing a "ride along" and regarding the allowances of only two at a time in the initial processing area. Mr. Vandermosten explained the reason for limiting the number allowed in the processing area to two is for security reasons. Mr. Vandermosten requested more details regarding the long wait times during specific date/time. He will review video and charges in an attempt to get an answer.

Councilor Gibson voiced safety concerns over the times inmates are released from the facility, as well as the distribution of the debit release card. Councilor Gibson also expressed concern over the transaction fee incurred for each deposit as well as to the county's responsibility to provide free health care to inmates. Mr. Vandermosten explained that there is a law that mandates the release of an individual within a specified time period from the time a discharge is received. Mr. Vandermosten related that the detention center went to a debit card release system due to fraudulent activity in regards to release checks. He assured that this card could be used anywhere a MasterCard was accepted. He also explained that there is an ATM in the lobby of the detention center that may be utilized at release to obtain cash and affirmed that the transaction fee is used to maintain the machine and processing. Councilor Gibson inquired as to the current balance in the inmate fund. Mr. Vandermosten responded he did not know that exact amount. Mr. Kernell, County Administrator, reminded Councilor Gibson that the inmate fund is used solely to benefit the inmates. He also explained that if there was not a medical copay, medical would be over used for insignificant reasons. The medical charge deters this over use. Mr. Kernell noted that the detention center would never deny anyone who needed medical care due to insufficient funds and he stated that the county is required to deliver adequate food, shelter and safety. Recouping funds due to outstanding debt incurred for anything extra is compulsory and legal.

Vice Chairman Baldwin inquired as to the policy of an ICE hold. Mr. Vandermosten explained that an alert is sent to ICE when a foreign born national is booked into the facility. ICE will then respond to the alert with a "clear" or "hold". ICE has 48 hours from the time the last charge is released to pick up the inmate and the detention center is in minimal compliance with the law regarding this issue. For more details or more in depth information, Mr. Vandermosten will have to do some research and get back to the committee. Vice Chairman Baldwin asked if the facility was able to identify the exact date and time an inmate is to be released. The detention center staff time stamps all judicial paperwork coming through booking and notes the date and time in the computer. Vice Chairman Baldwin also questioned the idea of housing and billing of federal prisoners. Mr. Vandermosten resolved that the detention center is not set up with enough room for this venture.

ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Councilor Lynn Ballard moved to adjourn the meeting of the Committee on Public Safety and Human Services. Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Templeton, Administrative Assistant