

MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SEPTEMBER 11, 2007

3:00 P.M.

**NORTH CAROLINA
MECKLENBURG COUNTY**

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Budget/Public Policy Session in Conference Center Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 11, 2007.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chairman Jennifer Roberts and Commissioners Karen Bentley, Dumont Clarke, H. Parks Helms Norman A. Mitchell, Sr., and Valerie C. Woodard
County Manager Harry L. Jones, Sr.
Clerk to the Board Janice S. Paige

Absent: Commissioners J. Daniel Bishop, Bill James, and Dan Ramirez

Commissioner Clarke was absent when the meeting was called to order and until noted in the minutes.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Roberts.

(1) JAIL STUDY UPDATE

County Manager Jones introduced consultants Dennis Kimme and Dr. Terri Martin with KIMME & Associates, Inc. /Law & Policy Associates for the purpose of addressing jail population issues and detention facility needs.

The Board received a program update on the Detention Operations Master Plan.

The update covered the following:

- Adult Jail Population
- Jail Population History
- Jail Population Growth
- Overcrowding
- POD Overcrowding
- Projections
- Population Reduction Opportunities
- Opportunities to Mitigate Growth
- Reducing Admissions
- Reducing Average Length of Stay (ALOS)
- American University

Commissioner Clarke entered the meeting.

- Types of Resources Needed
- Estimated Impacts – Preliminary
- Facility Planning
- Adult & Juvenile Facilities
- Major Issues

- Facility Planning
- Facility Development Schedule

A copy of the report is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Comments:

Manager Jones noted that overcrowding presents a management problem for the Sheriff's Office because of the number of detention officers per POD vs. the number of inmates, especially in the minimum security area.

Commissioner Helms asked were the projections being noted, for minimum and medium security PODs. *The response was yes and that the County does not have enough minimum and medium security beds.*

Commissioner Helms asked were the state inmates referenced convicted or waiting for trial. *The response was that the majority were awaiting trial.*

Commissioner Helms asked for clarification on the statement made that currently 87% get secured bail and 13% no bond. He asked with respect to the 13%, was it because no bond was set or was it that they couldn't make bond. *The response was that most of the 13% are released on their own recognizance but that a lot of the people released on their own recognizance still sit in jail for quite some time. It was stated that one of the reasons for this is because there's a snag in the system, which delays the time it takes for someone to review an inmate's risk factors.*

It was noted that Magistrates see the person before Pre-trial staff and that this was something that needs to be improved.

Commissioner Woodard asked why misdemeanors aren't being processed quicker by Pre-trial. *The response was it could be that they're chronic offenders with mental health issues. Also, one solution could be Supervised Release Options that could be used on the front end.*

The consultants said it's important to look at the misdemeanor population and they plan to do so.

Commissioner Mitchell asked about lab test and were they conducted by the SBI, FBI, or CMPD. *The response was that the majority are done by CMPD. Also, delays occur because there's not a good electronic link for transferring the information to the courts because the courts lack the necessary technology that's needed.*

Commissioner Helms asked the consultants were they coordinating their work with Area Mental Health. *The response was that they are aware of the work Area Mental Health is doing and will take that information into account, however, it is on a separate track, although very interrelated.*

Commissioner Helms said chronic offenders need to be dealt with, especially those that have mental health and/or substance abuse problems. He said a lot of them shouldn't be in jail but somewhere else. Commissioner Helms said whatever is done it needs to make a difference when it comes to the chronic offender.

Manager Jones noted there's an accountability issue for the County's partners in this, the state agencies. He said there needs to be some system changes on the part of the justice system.

Manager Jones said staff will continue to consider alternatives as the consultants continue their work.

The consultants said the study should be completed by the end of the year. Also, the first set of numbers will be based on no change in the system and the second set of numbers will be based on changes in the system. It was noted that they've had a lot of contact with the local justice system.

Commissioner Clarke asked with respect to facility and staff costs that the consultants present recommendations based on 1) no changes in the system, 2) changes in the system that are in the County's control, and 3) changes if the County gets cooperation from state agencies. *The response was that they would look at trying to provide this, but that it may be difficult.*

Note: The above is not inclusive of every comment but is a summary.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Helms, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, and unanimously carried with Commissioners Bentley, Clarke, Helms, Mitchell, Roberts, and Woodard voting yes, that there being no further business to come before the Board that the meeting be adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Janice S. Paige, Clerk

Jennifer Roberts, Chairman