

March 04, 2010

**LONG-RANGE PLANNING/REAL ESTATE & BUILDINGS
COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Long Range Planning/Real Estate & Buildings Committee met Thursday, March 04, 2010 at 6:00 p.m., in the Quorum Court Meeting Room, Third Floor, County Administration Building, 215 East Central, Bentonville, Arkansas

Committee Members Present: Sandlin, Brown, Lewis, Hubbard, Winscott

Others Present: JP Kurt Moore, County Judge David Bisbee, Circuit Judge Jay Finch, Circuit Judge Doug Schrantz, Circuit Judge John Scott, Circuit Judge David Clinger, Circuit Judge Robin Green, Circuit Judge Xollie Duncan, Prosecuting Attorney Van Stone, Circuit Clerk Brenda DeShields, Treasurer Deanna Ratcliffe, Juvenile Detention Director Dennis Cottrell, Juvenile Probation Director Petie Cobb

Media: Tabatha Hunter –Morning News

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by JP Winscott at 6:00 p.m.

2. Public Comments

None

3. Update/Discussion: County Property Leases – JP Winscott

JP Winscott reported on the County Property Lease update that was provided showing the lease expiration dates and yearly amounts being paid on the leased properties.

4. Presentation: Tom Johnson with Johnson–Troillett Architects

Tom Johnson of Johnson–Troillett Architects gave a brief history of the Juvenile Justice project and how the \$5 million estimate was determined. He stated that County Judge Dave Bisbee had contacted them in July of 2009 to look at the Benton County Health Department building as a possibility for the Juvenile Justice facility. He stated that three individual studies had been made on the existing building and one for a free standing facility. He then gave a power point presentation on the individual studies and what each entailed in converging the current health building to the Juvenile Justice system. Lengthy discussion was held following the presentation on the different plans presented.

5. Ed Clifford: Bentonville/Bella Vista Chamber of Commerce, Bentonville Leadership Committee

Ed Clifford of the Bentonville/Bella Vista Chamber of Commerce and Bentonville Leadership Committee stated the Chamber appreciates the activity generated by having the County offices located in the downtown area, and that the City of Bentonville is putting in 200 to 300 new parking spaces downtown. He stated that there is an opportunity to do some public/private partnerships for some facilities downtown, and that they would like to keep as much downtown as possible. He added they believe the Juvenile Detention Center needs to be moved; that two new court rooms are

needed, and that they need to get the prisoners off the square. He stated that the Chamber of Commerce stands ready to help keep as many of the county operations downtown as possible.

6. Circuit Judge David Clinger

Circuit Judge David Clinger noted that all of the Circuit Judges were present. He stated that he is here to talk about the new Juvenile Detention Center, adding that Prosecuting Attorney Van Stone has investigated, and has determined that Benton County is spending over \$2,700 a month to house the overflow of inmates to other counties. Judge Clinger commented on the parking problems with the downtown area, and added that when you look at the future needs, that a true and valid study will show that we do not have room for growth. He stated that if the JP's would do a realistic study of the needs, that they should look at the approach that Sebastian County has taken, since their problems were a lot like those of Benton County.

Circuit Judges David Clinger, Xollie Duncan, Doug Schrantz, John Scott and Robin Green each expressed their concerns regarding the Long Range Planning/ Real Estate & Buildings Committee building plans for the Juvenile Detention Center. The judges asked that the committee spend more time developing a building plan to meet all of the county's needs, and that the plan ensures each court works as efficiently as possible. They each said that separating the circuit judges could be problematic.

Circuit Judges Clinger, Duncan, Schrantz, Scott, and Green joined the members of the Long Range Planning/Real Estate & Buildings in a lengthy discussion of the court system needs for the county and the various options that are being presented.

7. Other Business

Prosecuting Attorney Van Stone stated that he would like to speak as someone who is involved with all of these offices. He stated that he was asked to see if the dynamics have changed, and stated that you have time to step back and see what would be the most efficient use of the Long Range Plan. He stated that in 2006, Washington County was paid \$4,800 to house our overflow juveniles, and in 2009 that number dropped to \$2,392 or \$92 per day. He stated that efficiency has to be the number one goal and that they have time to step back and consider the long-range effects in terms of the county's efficiency.

Further discussion was held on the long term plans for the JDC and court rooms for Circuit Judges.

Circuit Clerk Brenda DeShields stated that she had contacted Washington, Pulaski, and Sebastian counties, and reported how each of the Circuit Clerks' offices worked with the other judicial systems in those counties.

County Judge Dave Bisbee commented on the Juvenile Detention Center and the need for new court rooms and stated that when the committee is ready to forward an appropriation, he will proceed with any study of space needs that the court requests.

Juvenile Detention Director Dennis Cottrell stated that he wanted to point out that Benton County has the same number of juveniles as Washington County, but only half the space to house them. He stated that for five years, people who work with the JDC have come before this committee asking for help, that the numbers being housed are problematic, and when they cannot find a place to house the juveniles, those numbers put us at risk. He stated that because the numbers have been so high, the county spent \$3,400 last month to house the overflow of juveniles in other county facilities.

JP Moore stated he was on the court when the old jail was renovated and at the time they estimated that they would be lucky to get ten years' use, and that they have gone beyond those projected years.

County Judge Dave Bisbee stated that when the current court was organized he had been asked to hire someone to oversee construction, but he had stated at the time that he did not want the county to oversee construction – that is why we hire architects. He stated that we do need to hire an architect to do the master plan, but that it is not of urgency.

JP Brown stated that he wanted to remind the court that one Quorum Court cannot bind the next Quorum Court to anything. He added that there will be several new Quorum Court members after the next election and if the current court does not get something locked in, nothing will ever get done.

JP Moore stated that he liked the idea of a new court complex, but that they need to get an idea of what figures they are looking at, and suggested contacting Sebastian County to get an idea of their square footage and what their new facility contains. He added that they could then see what the cost would be with using land that the county already owns. He said he believes everyone will agree that a complete justice center would be the best thing, but once they determine what a bond issue will raise and how much the complex will cost, that could be the thing that stops any further discussion. JP Winscott stated that is the subject he would like to discuss at the next meeting.

JP Winscott announced that the next Long Range Planning/Real Estate & Buildings meeting will be held Tuesday, March 16, 2010 at 5:30 p.m.

Circuit Clerk Brenda DeShields stated that she and the County Judge have spoken with their counterparts in Sebastian County, who would be willing to conduct a tour of the new Sebastian County Justice Center. She added that they had toured Washington County's justice system, which is separated into several different locations, and seeing a courts system all in one location might give them a different perspective. JP Moore requested a floor plan of Sebastian County that could be projected for everyone to see.

JP Winscott asked the County Judge to schedule the tour on March 9, 2010.

8. Adjournment

After motion and second the meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.