

AGENDA

Newport News City Council Work Session

April 14, 2009

*10th Floor Conference Room
City Hall*

- 2:00 p.m. I. Newport News Public Schools Budget Presentation
- 3:00 p.m. II. MGT Study of Future Incarceration Needs
- 4:00 p.m. III. Fire Department Budget Presentation
- 4:30 p.m. IV. Police Department Budget Presentation
- 5:00 p.m. V. Community Services Board - Funding for Regional
Crisis Stabilization Unit and Therapeutic Day
Treatment Program
- 5:15 p.m. VI. Pension Trust Fund Benefit Alternatives
- 6:30 p.m. Dinner

CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS

Office of the City Manager

April 9, 2009

TO: The Honorable City Council
FROM: City Manager
SUBJECT: Future Incarceration Needs Study

Last fall, Sheriff Morgan and I co-chaired a staff committee which selected MGT, a national consulting firm, to undertake a detailed study of our future local incarceration needs. This study has been recently completed, and you will find attached its final report. I have arranged for MGT to present its findings at the April 14 Work Session.

The original impetus for this study was the suggestion that a consolidation of City Farm and City Jail operations would save money. Since the City is considering the relocation of the current City Farm facility, it was important to examine the future need for prison beds, their location and the mix of security levels, as well as the physical adequacy of our facilities. In essence, we requested that MGT study the City's requirements for adult detention beds and how best to plan for meeting this need.

The report includes several significant recommendations, including: 1) the phasing out of the City Farm as an independent operation under the supervision of the City Manager and consolidating it under the Sheriff's Department; 2) the construction of a new, more efficient, low-to-medium-security facility to replace the City Farm at a location other than the existing site; and 3) a comprehensive effort to make process and policy changes that reduce the time pre-disposition prisoners are housed in the jail.

While issues related to the closing of the existing City Farm facility and its management will require thorough deliberation, perhaps the more significant recommendation from a long-term financial perspective is the effort to shorten the length of jail stays for pre-disposition prisoners. If we do not find a way to do this, the cost of constructing additional beds to

The Honorable City Council
Page 2
Future Incarceration Needs Study
April 9, 2009

house the growing number of prisoners will compete with other important City governmental priorities for the use of capital monies. As the management study documents, even small reductions in the average length-of-stay result in dramatic reductions in the need for more prison beds. Achieving even modest length of stay reductions will require a concerted effort by the many different players in the Newport News justice system, including the Sheriff, judges, police officials, Commonwealth's Attorney, magistrates and the various other entities that are involved in the process of holding and trying criminal defendants.

As you will note, the potential budgetary savings according to MGT from the consolidation of jail and City Farm operations are substantial. However, confirming potential savings and examining all of the details involved in this course of action will entail a significant staff effort over about six to nine months. For this reason, potential savings could not be realized until the FY 2011 Operating Budget. I look forward to engaging City Council in this extremely important discussion about the future direction of our City's incarceration system. I anticipate providing to City Council a proposed course of action to move forward on those recommendations which City Council believes have merit.



Randy W. Hildebrandt

RWH:rsw

Attachment

cc: Sheriff Gabe Morgan
Neil A. Morgan, Assistant City Manager
John Roberts, Director of Adult Corrections