

May 27, 2005

The scheduled meeting of the Board of County Commissioners was called to order this 27th day of May, 2005, in the conference room of the Cleveland County Fairgrounds, 605 E. Robinson, Norman, Oklahoma, by Chairman George Skinner. Roll was called by Dorinda Harvey, County Clerk/Secretary and those present were:

George Skinner, Chairman
Leroy Krohmer, Vice-Chairman
Bill Graves, Member
Dorinda Harvey, Secretary

Others present were: Christine Brannon, Sandra DeSelms, Tammy Howard, Elizabeth Loeffelholz, Jane Cannon, F. DeWayne Beggs, Eddie Thomason, Rhonda Peterson, Donna Roberts, Mike McDanel, John Hancock, Tom Blakey, Tom Gram, Matt Green.

Chairman Skinner began the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Skinner called for discussion, consideration, and/or action on the Jail.

Mike McDanel, Assistant District Attorney, stated he had spoken to representatives from the State Health Department and the Jail Inspector from the State Health Department about putting together a plan for how in the future the jail-overcrowding problem is going to be alleviated in Cleveland County. Also asked was what could be done in the short term to make some minimal reduction in the jail population. Mr. McDanel stated he told Mr. Gary Gardenhire, Attorney, with the State Health Department that David Williams with the Sheriff's Office was in communication with McClain, Grady, and Pottawatomie County about housing contracts for prisoners and Mr. McDanel thought that would very shortly lead to some relief. Mr. Gardenhire would like something back within a month if possible outlining what the plans are for the future.

Chairman Skinner had ideas about getting started: one (1) is finish developing the inter-local agreement with Pottawatomie County, so prisoners can be housed in Pottawatomie County's new jail; two (2) the Courts, the Judges, and the District Attorney's Office need to get together to see if there are people in the system that are in for low priority offenses that could be released on recognizance bond or set their bonds low enough where they can bond out to reduce the inmates; three (3) appoint a committee with the Commissioners, Sheriff and the Judge each appointing a person that would be five people to look for land. Chairman Skinner would like himself, Mike McDanel, and the Judge to work with this committee to develop a place to put the jail. Land needs to be found as close to the courthouse as possible to build a jail.

Bill Graves stated the Commissioners have gone over to Pottawatomie County to the new jail and he was certainly impressed with the way it was built and manned. Mr. Graves thinks that there is a place a jail could be built on Eufaula Street south just across from the jail, by buying the two buildings there and getting rid of the two county buildings to the east of those there is room there to build a 300 inmate jail addition. This would have to be done with a

vote of the public for bonds also there should be a vote for a small sales tax that would go for the maintenance and operations of the facility. The cities of Norman and Moore need to be brought into this on the basis of giving, not for authority but in order to assist the county to build the addition to the jail. Mr. Graves thinks that if everything could be brought together than put this vote on the ballot that the Governor has asked for, for September 13th.

Sheriff Beggs spoke about the over-crowding, and it has come about a lot faster than he had anticipated. He wishes this could be postponed for another couple of years, but he is at a crisis point.

J. Brent Clark, Attorney with Floyd Law Firm, (Bond Attorney for the Pottawatomie County new jail) gave the Board some financing aspects, and said there were two principal concerns one the cost of money and the other the cost of materials. Mr. Clark continued talking about interest, days required for the resolution before an election could be held and getting a financial advisor to run some number so there can be some projections.

Leroy Krohmer stated that he had a different approach; he thinks the Commissioners should get some jail space in some county and get that done first. Buy some land somewhere, get it paid, then do it like we did the courthouse remodeling we saved that money and it took ten years, but if we would save money for two or three years then go out for a vote for some bonds we wouldn't have to ask for near as much money. His choice would be going to the state hospital and try to get some land from them, Mr. Krohmer thinks that would be the cheapest place and my even get it donated. It is going to be a secondary building as far as he knows (to house prisoners) the main one will be where it is now. Mr. Krohmer asked Sheriff Beggs if that wasn't true.

Sheriff Beggs does want the ability to remain with the current one as it has proven itself and it would work to his advantage to keep it and have another building. Sheriff Beggs does agree with what he is hearing is to adequately staff it when it is built.

Chairman Skinner thinks a committee should look at this so the Commissioners can show that they are working toward this goal of coming up with a plan as to how this situation is going to be handled. Chairman Skinner moved that the three Commissioners, the Sheriff and the Judge each appoint a person to this committee and that Mike McDanel, Judge Hetherington, and himself be named to work with this committee.

Leroy Krohmer seconded the motion.

The vote was: George Skinner, yes; Leroy Krohmer, yes; Bill Graves, yes.

Motion carried.

Chairman Skinner asked Sheriff Beggs what it cost per day to house an inmate and Sheriff Beggs stated he could get that figure, but he has not calculated the exact amount. Right now he is charging \$30.00, but it is much higher.

Chairman Skinner wanted to know if the Judges set the rate to house prisoners for the inter-local agreements that the County has with the Cities and Towns?

Sheriff Beggs stated not that he is aware of.

Chairman Skinner stated as of July 1, the Commissioners have to do their new agreements with the Cities and Towns and whatever that agreement is the County needs to charge them the amount to pay for their prisoners upkeep so the County will have money to transport and house prisoners in other counties.

Sheriff Beggs agreed and he will work on a formula to come up with a cost.

Leroy Krohmer asked Mike McDanel how long it would take to get some contracts with other counties and Mr. McDanel stated he had just looked at contracts with McClain and Grady Counties last week. It depends on what the terms are, whether it can be enter into it or not, to make sure the parties are in agreement on the terms of the contract.

Mr. Krohmer doesn't think there is enough time to get something ready to go on a September ballot.

Mike McDanel wanted to re-emphasize that what he heard Mr. Gardenhire saying was not that there has to be a solution that's going to culminate in any particular period of time. Mr. McDanel think what they want to be assured of is that there is some progress toward something even if its some period of time down the line. Mr. McDanel doesn't think they are by any stretch of the imagination expecting the County to have something on the ballot in September.

Rhonda Peterson, Jail Administrator, gave the Board the population of the jail as of today along with statistics. More discussion took place about the jail, average number, number of cells and getting the numbers down.

There being on further business to come before the Board, Bill Graves moved that the meeting be adjourned. Leroy Krohmer seconded the motion.

The vote was: George Skinner, yes; Leroy Krohmer, yes; Bill Graves, yes.

Motion carried.