



MEETING DOCUMENTATION

Planning • Architecture • Engineering • Interiors • Facility Management

PROJECT: Dixon County LEC – Citizens Committee Meeting #3

LOCATION OF MEETING: Thurston County Jail – Pender, NE

PROJECT NO.: 222701 **DATE:** July 11th, 2022 **TIME:** 6:30 PM

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of the meeting was to tour a modern County Jail. Committee attendance was not taken, but Board member Lisa Lunz was in attendance. The following points were recorded:

1. The tour of the Thurston County Jail facility was led by Jail Captain Julie Nilges, and the group of about twelve individuals from the Dixon County Citizen’s Committee were able to see most of the facility. Ms. Nilges provided her contact information and offered to help further if there are lingering questions.
2. Minutes of the previous (6-16-22) Citizens Committee Meeting had been distributed earlier via email to the membership.
3. We were told that the Inmate capacity in this facility is 34, and the current Average Daily Population (ADP) is 22-23. Thurston County boards inmates from several surrounding counties, including Dixon County.
4. The tour began in the Lobby, which had waiting for approximately 6-8, and a metal detector positioned inside the vestibule door. From there we saw the Video Visitation area (three stations), with video monitors for outside visitors to visit Jail Inmates. Julie stated that there is no in-person visitation allowed at the facility, with the exception of social workers, attorneys, and clergy.
5. The group was allowed inside the secure areas, where we began at the Booking Desk, which adjoined the Master Control room. All cells and holding areas are electronically monitored, and locks are electronically controlled from this room. Julie stated that several windows not only had bullet-resistant glazing, but also bars, and the reason for this is that it is designed to also serve as an area of refuge for staff if the Jail facility experiences a massive security breach.
6. The tour group next saw Inmate Intake, Showering, Change-out, and Records and Inmate Property Storage areas. Julie was appreciative of all the storage areas available in the new Jail, and indicated a preference for the tub-type Property Storage for each inmate. Julie shared an anecdote of how the Inmate uniform pass-thru door (16-inch square +/-) between the clothing storage and shower area had been recently welded shut, ever since one individual broke through, and crawled from one room into the other (see figures #1 and #2 below).
7. There is a negative pressure Holding Cell, for holding inmates with infectious diseases, such as TB, Aides, or Covid, which also contains an outside window, allowing it to serve as a longer-term holding cell (see figure #3 below). Although the Holding Cell capacity was around eight, Julie also stated that she wished for additional negative-pressure Cells.
8. The Safety Holding Cell contained a floor-type toilet, and epoxy flooring, but contained no wall padding. Julie mentioned that Inmates occasionally needed to be held in restraint-chairs, as there have been attempts at self-injury by inmates slamming their heads on the hard walls.

9. The Work Release and Multi-Occupant cell areas were toured. We learned that work-release Inmates were strictly monitored during work release periods, and were returned in the evenings to their cells. Julie reported that there are no Trustees working in the facility at present.
10. The group was shown the Vehicular Sallyport, which is a two-sided garage, containing steel roll-up doors. Julie related that the door height would not allow the local hospital ambulance inside, and the room was too short in length. There was a steel plate bolted to the concrete floor, which we reasoned was a cover for a clean-out for a Kitchen grease interceptor, or Sewage Grinder, but we were told there was no grinder.
11. The group was also shown a Meeting Room/Library, which we learned had also been set up to allow video Court procedures, and occasional religious services. The book collection seems significant compared to other county jail libraries (see figure #4 below).
12. The facility also has a Medical Station, but there is no Doctor or Nurse on staff, and we learned no medical service from the local hospital, which then requires that Inmate medical emergencies be transported out of the facility by ambulance or staff car.
13. The group was shown the Kitchen, which Julie stated was slowly being built-out, stemming from a recent cessation of out-sourced meals preparation, which forced the current jail staff to handle full meal preparation. The Kitchen area had originally not been completion beyond utility stub-outs, due to funding limitations.
14. The group was able to get into the Outside Recreation area, which P&A believes is unusual for a facility of this size, as it is not required by NE Jail Standards. An anecdote was related about how a previous Inmate escape had occurred via a small gap in the fencing, by climbing the basketball hoop pole. Razor wiring had since been installed to further discourage this type of escape attempt. Julie also related how the area had been designed to also allow an additional Jail Housing pod in the future.
15. The group also saw the Indoor Recreation area, which was served by sky-lighting, fresh air intake, and contained an exercise machine (see figure #5 below). Staff has apparently complained about the sound reverberation in this room, so a sound-absorptive material had been partially installed at the ceiling perimeter.
16. The main Inmate Housing area was served by a raised sub-control staff station. Inmate day rooms were arrayed in three directions (behind and beside the control station), to allow classification into medium and maximum-security cells and day rooms, as well as to allow female cells. The windows between the Control Station and Day Rooms had not been mirrored, which allowed two-way visual connection between the Staff and Inmates; the female cells were thus not separated by line-of-site from the male cells (a requirement), so had to be covered over, limiting staff observation of these areas to camera only.
17. Julie reported that the female Inmates appeared to prefer multi-occupant cells, but the male Inmate behavior would be less of a concern if there were more single-occupant cells.
18. The Cell-types appeared to be front-chase, and of concrete block construction, rather than prefabricated steel or concrete, with rear chase access.
19. We were shown the Administration area, where the Sheriff's Office, Jail Captain's Office, Lockers, and Squad Room are located. The Squad Room also has a large Meeting Table for meetings and training events. The County maintains a separate Emergency Dispatch area, with seating for two staff positions and private Toilets, but reported difficulty with staffing this portion of the facility. Smaller Counties often combine Master Control and Emergency Dispatch functions, to save staff and equipment cost.
20. There was a comment offered on several occasions regarding the existing HVAC ductwork being undersized for proper dehumidification of the Admin spaces; consequently, there were supplemental dehumidifiers plugged into receptacles in the Corridors (see figure #6 below)
21. The last space toured was the back side of the Reception Counter and window, which was separated

from the Visitor Lobby by bullet-resistant glass, which contained talk-through openings (not power-amplified) and dip-trays. Julie complained that the pass-through openings did not allow adequate sound transmission, so she often felt forced to physically go out into the Lobby to talk with Visitors.



Figure #1. Records Storage

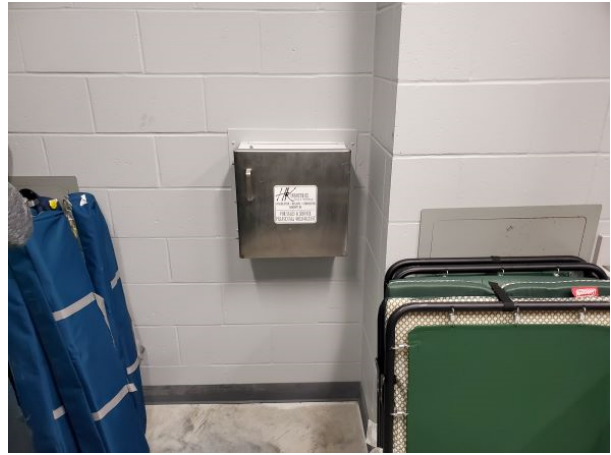


Figure #2. Welded clothing transfer between Storage and Intake Shower Room

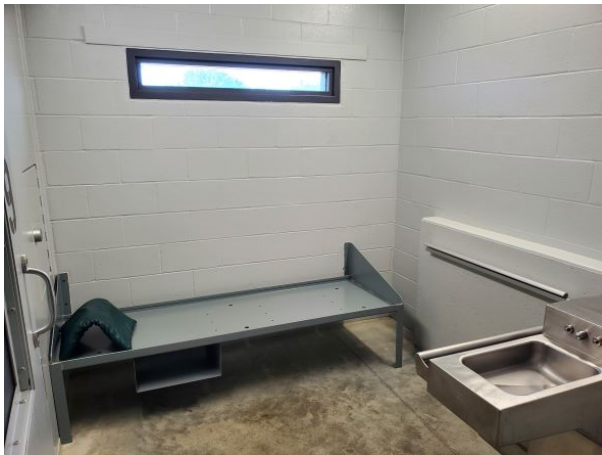


Figure #3. Negative Pressure Holding Cell with window



Figure #4. Meeting/Multi-purpose Room with Video


22. Following the Tour, Lisa Lunn asked if the Citizen's Committee might address other Dixon County issues in a more traditional meeting format for the next month (August), and possibly tour the Antelope County Jail facility in September.
23. Lisa also asked that P&A prepare cost information to share regarding new facility construction, and repair or replacement cost information for deficient or worn-out engineered systems. These deficiencies had been identified in our Phase One Needs Assessment document. Curt has already begun work on this type of cost data collection, and will begin collection of additional items.
24. The Preliminary Draft Structural Report for the Courthouse and County Offices Addition will also be further discussed by the Committee before release to the public.
25. The tour ended around 7:45pm. The date for the next Committee meeting is the third Thursday of next month, or August 18th, at 6:30pm.



Figure #5. Indoor Rec area with Sky Lights and Sound-deadening material at the ceiling



Figure #6. Supplemental dehumidification in the Administration area Corridor

BY: 
Curtis Field, AIA
Architect - Principal

July 14th, 2022
Date

If any of the parties present take exception to these meeting notes, please notify Prochaska & Associates within five (5) days of issuance for correction or they shall be presumed to stand as written.

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