

Questions and Concerns

December 2021

1. The renovation plans are in progress but this process is scheduled to take at least 5 years, and many of the concerns require immediate attention. What efforts are being made to mitigate these problems in the short term? It seems that issues with the HVAC system, mold, and plumbing shouldn't be put off any further than necessary.

We have resumed our annual light renovation of all of the housing areas. We start with an empty unit and then power wash it from top to bottom, remove any loose paint, replace lights, fix any issues, then repaint the entire area. The HVAC units were rebuilt over the last 24 months and are operating as intended. However, they were not designed to remove humidity. We have purchased and began using dehumidifiers starting last summer. We are also looking into coating the showers in all housing areas with an industrial grade epoxy to reduce mold growth and make the showers easier to clean.

2. Will the public have a chance to give input on the renovation plans once they're presented?

The Board will determine the review process.

3. Has the inmate population been surveyed about what they would like to see in the renovation? Will the public have access to this information?

Neither inmates nor Jail staff has been surveyed. Both groups will be surveyed the first of the year. All input from any source: staff and inmates included, will be shared using the same method as previous input.

4. Several questions about trustees.
 - a. 1. How many trustees are there currently at the jail and what is the current work schedule?

All trustees work is voluntary. They may stop or refuse to work at any time without consequences. No one can be forced to work. There are approximately 45 men and women trustees.

2. Are trustees given days off?

Kitchen trustees typically work two days on one day off, sometimes more often. Trustees who work on the floors typically work from 2-3 hours per day, 7 days a week. We haven't experienced inmates requesting days off. They would prefer to work as opposed to sitting in a cell.

3. If a trustee desires a day off from their work duties how is that addressed?

We would work with them. The goal is to offer as many individuals as possible the opportunity to work to stay busy, socialize and move around the facility. They earn good time when allowed by law. They receive extra canteen items, make their own meals when working in the kitchen, and receive enhanced hygiene supplies and other benefits to volunteering. We also have 5 women who work in the laundry 6 days per week and are physically in the laundry room for up to 8 hours per day. However, there is a lot of down time between cycles and they are allowed to play games or read during that time.

b. 1. What would the cost be for the jail if trustees didn't exist?

An experienced human resource consultant would have to be consulted and a work study performed to determine an accurate cost.

2. How would the work that trustees do be completed if this position was eliminated?

Existing staff would assume the responsibilities.

Questions and Answers from December 2021 Board Authority Meeting Continued

Physical Plant Issues –

1. What can be done now to improve air and water quality? For example, can the HVAC infrastructure be replaced ASAP? I don't think we can wait for the renovation in 5 years for critical facility repairs. Do you have any more information on the water quality (hot water, taste, pressure)?
 - a. We rebuilt all of our old in unit HVAC systems. They improved things somewhat. To achieve anymore quality they will have to be replaced entirely with a new system which will be part of the renovation. In the interim, we have purchased dehumidifiers and water coolers to improve the air quality it will still not be the quality you experience in your home. The heating system is "ok" for now but will also be replaced.

Emphasize Reinstating Educational Programs –

1. When can this happen? I think the absence of programs is detrimental to individuals and to the overall environment.
 - a. We do have some programs currently operating in one of our housing units. We stopped it during our recent outbreak but it has resumed. We have also had the UVA program that just finished. That was possible since those individuals participating were housed in the same area and did not move to classrooms. We are not near the quantity of classes pre-pandemic and I do not imagine that happening until the pandemic is better under control. The reason for this is by taking people from different areas to a classroom and then back again increases the likelihood of an outbreak. If a person tests positive, everyone who was in that class has exposed dozens of people who now have to be quarantined and those housing areas can't be used to house anyone else.
 - b. It is also difficult to have a class with 12 students that are not enemies or co-defendants who want or need to take the same class. This is even more difficult due to the incredibly low population. Additionally, our average length of stay is 35 days which makes programming even more difficult. Most people are released before the class even gets started. The classes need a specific number of cohorts to make the class successful since they require dialogue and learning from the experiences of others.
 - c. Programs are what put our facility on the map. We are looking at using IT to make programming more available to likeminded individuals without compromising safety but maintaining an appropriate sized group to make the program a success.

HEI Information –

1. I would like more information on how inmates on HEI are doing? Are they getting any support while they are out in the community? How are we judging success of this program?
 - a. They are getting as much support as the community can offer (Region Ten is experiencing a crisis in vacancies). They can use more support. We help with employment. Anyone who can and wants work, we find them a job. We also help with housing (what little there is).

Success is defined by a person not committing a new offense, abstaining from substance abuse (we work with them on this, it is rare someone is revoked for a substance abuse violation) and maintains employment and attending all court ordered programming.

Inmate Complaint Process –

1. I would like to better understand the inmate complaint process. I am in favor of making it transparent, i.e., I think the Board should know what the complaints are and when/how the complaints are addressed.
 - a. The Board would need to determine if and or how and to what degree they would want to be involved in the process.