

MAY 31, 2005  
RACELAND, LOUISIANA

STATE OF LOUISIANA  
PARISH OF LAFOURCHE

THE LAFOURCHE PARISH DETENTION CENTER IMPROVEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING WAS SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, MAY 31, AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL MEETING ROOM AT THE LAFOURCHE PARISH COUNCIL BARRIOS CENTER, 1612 HWY. 182, SUITE 100, RACELAND, LOUISIANA.

Chairman Lasseigne stated that the Detention Center Improvement Subcommittee was ready for the transaction of business at 6:00 p.m. Proceedings of the meeting were called to order with the following:

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Mr. Ronnie Winston	Judge Bruce Simpson
	Dr. Tommy Lasseigne	Sheriff Craig Webre
	Mr. Michael Delatte	Mr. Lindel Toups
	Mr. Stephen Baudoin	Ms. Jennifer Plaisance
	Mr. Ulysse Morvant	

<b>ABSENT:</b>	Mr. Daniel Lorraine	Mr. Mark Atzenhoffer
	Mr. Brent Callais	

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The first item (1) on the agenda was the approval of the minutes of the April 19, 2005 Detention Center Improvement Subcommittee meeting. A **motion** was offered by Mr. Lindel Toups, seconded by Mr. Stephen Baudoin, to approve the April 19, 2005 minutes, and **carried** by a vote of nine (9) yeas, zero (0) nays, and three (3) absent, that being of Mr. Daniel Lorraine, Mr. Mark Atzenhoffer, and Mr. Brent Callais.

**DISCUSSIONS**

The next item (2) on the agenda was open discussions regarding the Lafourche Parish Detention Center. Mr. Lasseigne recognized Sheriff Craig Webre. Sheriff Webre spoke on two issues for the Committee's consideration. He first spoke on the progression of the Committee and of a meeting which took place with the Parish President and himself on a variety of issues. Sheriff Webre advised that the Committee had done a diligent job and it seemed to him that a consensus had been reached regarding the improvements of the current situation. He then advised that everyone (including himself) had similar questions, concerns, and perspectives regarding different matters pertaining to both the new and old jail.

Sheriff Webre advised that the Chairman stated at the last meeting that he would approach the Parish President or the Council regarding possible appropriations of money for the purpose of retaining a consultant or expert. He offered to match the expenditures of the Parish for the retention of a consultant. Sheriff Webre spoke of reasons why he felt an expert should be hired. He advised that at the request of the Parish President, that he had contacted Mr. Richard Stalder, Secretary of the Department of Corrections of the State of Louisiana, and asked who he would suggest as a consultant. Sheriff Webre gave a detailed description of Mr. Stalder's qualifications and position. He advised that Mr. Stalder offered the name of Dr. James Austin. Sheriff Webre then gave a handout regarding LPSO (Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office) payments versus LPC (Lafourche Parish Council) payments. Sheriff

Webre continued to speak with regards to the qualifications of Mr. Stalder which included working in Corrections to having a consulting firm. He also advised that he spoke to Dr. Austin at length regarding his possible employment as a consultant for the Committee. Sheriff Webre advised that Dr. Austin stated that he would be willing to come to a Committee meeting to meet with the Committee and explain the services that he would be capable of providing. He said that his only basis for the recommendation of Dr. Austin was due to Mr. Stalder's statement of total confidence in Dr. Austin. Sheriff Webre advised that Mr. Stalder had also recommended resources within his agency as well, but due to time and expertise for the purpose needed that Dr. Austin was his first and only choice. He again stated that he would match the Council's appropriations (up to a reasonable amount of money) with regards to engaging a consultant of some sort, that being Dr. James Austin or not. Sheriff Webre further advised that Dr. Austin would be in Louisiana in June and suggested that he may be able to confirm dates with him for a possible meeting. He then stated that he would like to put that topic up for discussion.

Mr. Lindel Toups questioned the amount of money such a meeting would cost and Sheriff Webre replied that Dr. Austin would meet with the Committee at no charge.

A **motion** was offered by Mr. Lindel Toups, seconded by Sheriff Webre, to contact Dr. Austin to set a special meeting to address the Committee that would coincide with his schedule. The motion **carried** by a vote of nine (9) yeas, zero (0) nays, and three (3) absent, that being of Mr. Daniel Lorraine, Mr. Mark Atzenhoffer, and Mr. Brent Callais.

Dr. Tommy Lasseigne questioned the qualifications and specifics of Dr. Austin. Sheriff Webre reiterated that he had relied strictly on Mr. Stalder's recommendation. Discussions continued regarding the qualifications and services that Dr. Austin would be able to provide.

Dr. Lasseigne then questioned the costs of such services. Sheriff Webre advised that an amount had not been given, but that Dr. Austin was indeed told that the Committee would be operating on a small budget. Sheriff Webre suggested that if both parties (the Council and Sheriff's Office) put up a maximum of \$10,000 each, that he believed that half of that amount would be sufficient. Dr. Lasseigne spoke of a resolution he proposed at the last council meeting regarding a similar matter and stated that he believed that 100 hours would be a reasonable amount of time of service for a consultant. Sheriff Webre agreed with Dr. Lasseigne. Dr. Lasseigne stated that he was in agreement with regards to another facility being needed and that the two harder issues would be the location and the economics of the project. A detailed discussion ensued regarding the size of the current facility and the conflicts of the acreage needed for the new configuration.

Sheriff Webre stated that he would contact Dr. Austin to try and schedule a meeting. Dr. Lasseigne advised that the next meeting would be held on June 21, 2005. Sheriff Webre said that he believed that to be one of the dates that Dr. Austin would be available and that he would confirm the same. Dr. Lasseigne then advised that a special meeting would be possible, if so needed.

A detailed discussion ensued regarding the viability of having the matter on the November ballot and the individuality of each millage.

Sheriff Webre then discussed in detail the funds needed to run a facility. He advised that the Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office spends over \$3 million a year to operate the jail, whereas the Lafourche Parish Council has been paying a little more than \$1 million. Sheriff Webre wanted the Committee members to realize that the amounts paid by both would increase with a larger facility. He also advised that when a millage or proposal was brought to the voters, that it should be kept in mind that not only costs of building the facility should be taken into concept, but that more money would also be needed to run a larger facility.

Sheriff Webre then discussed the facilities located in St. Charles and Terrebonne Parish. He stated that each facility had over a 600 bed capacity. Sheriff Webre advised that Terrebonne Parish had 636 beds and that their total annual operational budget combined was \$6.2 million. He further advised

that St. Charles Parish had 638 beds and that their annual operational budget was \$7 million. Sheriff Webre stated that at a minimum that the LPSO would have to come up with would be an additional \$1.5 million and that the LPC's portion would probably double or go up substantially.

Dr. Lasseigne questioned previously stated savings regarding reduced prisoner per day costs. Sheriff Webre advised that the costs would be based on having a larger prisoner population with which to divide the expenditures by. A brief discussion ensued regarding the prisoner per day costs of Terrebonne, St. Charles, and Lafourche parishes.

Dr. Lasseigne then questioned the previous discussions of reduction of prisoner per guard ratio. Sheriff Webre explained that with a larger facility that a reduction would be seen. He stated that Terrebonne Parish guards 638 inmates with 125 employees. He further advised that St. Charles Parish guards 636 inmates with 130 employees. He advised that Lafourche Parish could only guard 225 inmates with 76 employees.

Dr. Lasseigne questioned what the approximate prisoner population would be if the facility was up and running. Sheriff Webre advised that he anticipated approximately 500 to 600 prisoners. A discussion ensued regarding the current policies being used due to overcrowding of the present facility.

Mr. Ronnie Winston inquired as to what amount of additional money would be needed to pay off the debt for the facility. Dr. Lasseigne advised that \$1.5 million a year would be a more realistic amount and gave his reasons for same. After a brief discussion, Sheriff Webre advised that Lafourche Parish was currently operating at \$4.2 million and that Terrebonne Parish was operating at \$6.2 million. He stated that the best case scenario would be a \$2 million increase in operational expenses with three times the capacity.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the out-of- parish housing and feeding of prisoners.

Dr. Lasseigne questioned as to what parish funds were used as revenues. Sheriff Webre advised he believed it to be the general fund. He advised that he believed that \$275,000 of the sales tax was dedicated to jail operation and also an additional 25% over \$2 million. A brief discussion ensued regarding the Sheriff's current budget and the future needs of the facility.

Mr. Lindel Toups questioned how much of a millage would be needed. Mr. Michael Delatte questioned as to how much an actual Lafourche Parish millage was. Dr. Lasseigne advised that one mill equaled \$430,000 parish wide. Mr. Toups questioned whether Sheriff Webre would be able to put up more money for the new jail to operate or whether there would have to be more revenues. Sheriff Webre advised that at present their budget was maxed out and that their budget would need to be amended because they would be over budget ,due to several reasons (gasoline prices being one of them).

A brief discussion ensued regarding fueling practices of the Sheriff's Office. A detailed discussion ensued regarding inmates and that 500 was being a "break-even" point for the facility. Sheriff Webre advised that Dr. Austin or someone of his capacity would be better able to answer questions.

Mr. Stephen Baudoin then inquired as to how big of a facility was actually needed. A detailed discussion ensued regarding the current facility and the reasons of having Dr. Austin or someone else project the needed information for the new facility. Sheriff Webre advised that he used the comparisons of Terrebonne and St. Charles because they were neighbors and the demographics were very similar.

Sheriff Webre advised that currently there were approximately 300 people incarcerated in the prison population, all of whom have been given "2 for 1". Sheriff Webre advised that if the "2 for 1" policy was taken away, then in a theoretical sense, the prison population would double.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the age, size, and changes made to the current facility.

Another brief discussion ensued regarding estimates of the future prison population. Sheriff Webre advised that in the last five years that there had been an increase.

Dr. Lasseigne questioned the rate of re-offenders and if inmates would have to then serve their full term. Sheriff Webre advised that it would then be based more on individuals.

Sheriff Webre then spoke of the effect of short term incarceration as having “no meaningful” rehabilitation.

Mr. Baudoin stated that he agreed that the existing property was insufficient and that additional property would need to be found. He stated that the process should begin with the intentions of future growth in mind.

A brief discussion then ensued regarding the state law which requires that a facility be located in the parish seat.

Mr. Michael Delatte questioned if any land in front of, on the side of, or around the current facility would be for sale. A brief discussion was held regarding the current facility, the surrounding properties and businesses.

Sheriff Webre then gave a explanation regarding the advantages and disadvantages of DOC inmates.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the use of the current facility for other purposes and the reasons for deferring same to an expert.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

The next item on the agenda was any other business. Hearing none, Chairman Lasseigne moved to the next item on the agenda.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

On **motion** by Mr. Ronnie Winston, seconded by Mr. Michael Delatte, and with no further business, the Lafourche Parish Detention Center Improvement Subcommittee meeting of May 31, 2005 **adjourned** at 6:45 p.m.

**TOMMY LASSEIGNE, CHAIRMAN  
OF THE DETENTION CENTER  
IMPROVEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE**

**REGINA NAQUIN, MINUTE CLERK  
LAFOURCHE PARISH COUNCIL**