

Sullivan County NH

Type of meeting: Board of Commissioners & Criminal Justice
Coordinating Committee

~~DOC Needs Assessment Interviews~~

Date/Time: Friday, April 14, 2006, 12 & 1 PM

Place: Newport County Complex – 1st Floor, Commissioners
Conference Room.

Attendees: Commissioners Donald S. Clarke – *Chair* (left midway through 2nd interview), Ben Nelson – *Vice Chair* and Ethel Jarvis – *Clerk* (arrived at 12:20 p.m.); Ed Gil de Rubio – *County Manager*; Marc Hathaway – *County Attorney*; Sheriff Michael Prozzo; Jim Peale – *Superior Court Clerk*; Scott Hagar – *DOC Superintendent*; Sherrie Curtis – *Human Services Coordinator*; Cindy Vezina – *Victim Witness Coordinator*; and Sharon Johnson-Callum (minute taker).

The first applicant interview began @ 12 Noon.

Ricci Greene & Associates - Ken Greene, Laura Maiello and Kevin Warwick

Mr. Ken Greene indicated the company was founded many years ago and Laura Maiello has worked with him about 20 years. Lead firm – architects and planners. Working with Kevin Warwick on several projects and has expertise in alternatives regarding incarceration and special needs. Wendy Naro will provide population-forecasting expertise. He spoke of projects they worked on together with courthouses, correctional and juvenile facilities. Laura began in social work in county facility, hired by jail sheriff to design a classification system to manage population. She has a degree in criminal justice, likes to apply research – to see impact of the answers to questions County's have. She commended Scott and staff working hard under some really challenging issues at the facility. She noted the facility has a small social area for families; it's not designed for secure population - with sheet rock, etc. She noted the building is working against staff in deficiencies - single cell linear set up is hard to manage and controlled by officer patrol. She pointed out there is little programming and support space and what was there has been "carved up" and used for other housing. She noted, "Sullivan County has overcrowding and building problem". She finalized by indicating the way to approach the problem: look at needs assessment for jail and who should be in secure confinement or handled elsewhere without compromising community safety. Kevin Warwick discussed places he worked, of late in private consulting - last 5 years - focusing on treatment and alternative programming. He indicated the County "needs to be thoughtful as to where they are going with the facility". During their assessment they will look at confinement vs. alternatives to incarceration, asking, "*Whom are you targeting for the programs? How do they fit in safely to the community?*" Review the special needs population – substance abuse and mental health populations. Mental health issues create large problems, they are a complex population and the facilities struggle – they need specialized housing, how do you treat them, where do you put them, can they be moved

to a community based situation, before moving back home? Substance Abuse – he noted he understood the County DOC facility has 90% of population with these issues – offenders who repeat, they can be safely worked with in community, or in the correctional facility to help transition back to community. He discussed model in Dane County of the criminal justice treatment-planning chart. Laura pointed out renovation vs. new constructions will be a key issue to elected officials who answer to the public, and the decision becomes critical. She pointed out at times new construction is less expensive, dollars must be set appropriately for right population and facility. She noted the group needed to achieve a consensus on the services appropriate, number of beds, and amount of dollars to spend; and that the purpose of their study is to help them achieve the consensus. Mr. Greene showed pictures of buildings: a minimum security facility in Maine – designed for 50 people but currently housing 75 – this facility houses an automotive trades program; the Merrimack County facility – they did not design it but did the needs assessment, a Union County and Poukeepsie NY facility – latter, maximum security cells for everyone – Laura noted they developed classification system as 100 were direct supervision – the facility was overstaffed and in older pod format – the result was a nice layout and less correctional officers. She indicated with direct supervision the Superintendent runs the place, not the inmates; Westchester County NY – they developed a multi year master plan and have revisited them on invite to update studies. Mr. Greene is their principal in charge and Laura is point person. Approach will be: how many beds for inmate offender population - perform population projections based on historical trends, forecast modeling if done differently – opening a program to other types of offenders or adding a new program, who is in the facility – how does population relate to current criteria – they work with the staff - take list of inmates and reclassify if there is no classification system – this is tied directly to dollars in term of constructions, what are the facility requirements - how do you want to operate? They will perform a walk through with staff and discuss square footage by LCAA – they develop a facility space program – it determines size of facility/renovations vs. new construction and start and stop of cost control, what are the facility options – number of beds based on projection, location – existing site or another that makes more sense – each option is compared. They get all in order to allow the County to make a good decision and minimize the number of surprises. Mr. Greene indicated options developed will be displayed, cost of construction, cost of escalation to bid date, contingency to unknowns – legal costs, etc. They will work along side the County to create a package to bring to the media, public and delegation. They recognize that getting to “yes” has to be handled in a public forum.

The following questions were asked ...

Comm. Clarke asked if flexibility is built in to their programs for certain variations of maximum/minimum facility? Mr. Greene confirmed yes. Mr. Hagar pointed out classification at Sullivan currently is based on gender first, then behavior; they use other County's jails frequently. He noted 28/30 % of the population has mental health issues with the remaining substance abuse. Mr. Jim Peale discussed increase of special populations.

Mr. Hathaway asked how successful they were in their track record for programming vs. cost; to do analysis on programming DOC provides and a link to reduction to HHS cost? Kevin indicated he has not done studies on this link to budget.

Comm. Clarke asked if they did follow-ups on their projections? Laura confirmed they did, and the places that held up were where the companion alternatives were put in to place.

Mr. Gil de Rubio noted they would hear by Wednesday on decision of the Board of Commissioners between the two bids received. Ken, Laura and Kevin left.

Jim Peal left and was not present for the second interview.

The second applicant interview began @ 1:31 PM

SMRT Inc – Arthur Thompson, Rod Miller, CRS Inc. a non profit – reviews programs, bed needs, projections. Both Thompson and Miller would be at every meeting; **Roger Monsell –L.L.S. Partner Clough Harbour & Associates; Dennis Jud –** Land planner and architect, site selection project. Mr. Miller of CRS noted that CRS would work for the County, not SMRT. Our job is to give you all the options, they are not short on opinions and are long on experience, nationally and locally. We don't arrive with a packaged image. Mr. Thompson indicated they based their presentation today around the questions and answers they provided (Typed answers to questions on file. Questions with their additional verbal comments during meeting are as follows):

1. *Based on the information that you have about Sullivan County such as demographics, taxes, etc. what would be your initial recommendations?*
 - They feel it's wrong to give an opinion. They do a life cycle cost analysis, 70% of cost is staffing, the building is 10% of the period of time, will do a projection over time of what it will look like 30 years down the road on the different alternatives the County decides on. Choices: a) do nothing, b) renovate/expand, or c) new construction. They need to know the County's priorities first then they will define county goals, life cycle cost of jail, current demographics discussed.

2. *What place would the county jail have regarding the residential treatment needs for substance abusers?*
 - They again noted the answer depends on the County's goals/vision. They discussed research and county data, and need to break the cycle, as 80-90% of the crimes are substance abuse related. They noted programs require not only space but also the proper climate for volunteers. It was noted state statistics show 50% parolees return within 10 months and 60% of those violations are substance abuse related cost: \$3.8M over four years. Mr. Thompson gave an example of another County DOC in NH who has found with the new building, they not only have more room for more programming to treat and lessen recidivism, they are attracting the

agencies that provide the treatment to the facility as the facility has a safer environment.

3. *What is the most difficult jail project you had regarding the promotion of the project to the elected leadership and the general public?*

- Somerset County ME – A \$30 million jail facility was proposed – a large cost for small county with small tax base and they had downtown site issue – it was integrated with the Sheriff's Department. They detailed the project on the County website, printed place mats for local restaurants, taking the message to the communities. They had a good committee that pushed it.
- Knox County Maine – The facility was only 15-year-old jail renovated jail, with many of the same officials in office. Solution: got broad based community involvements, mercilessly looked into the alternatives through educating the community at clubs, churches, towns, and any type of organization there was.
- Our site selection – Identify criteria to evaluate the sites for pros and cons, gather the sites – can do public participation and cast the net out as far as reasonable, review the sites against accepted criteria to compare and weigh, work to identify final site, all within the public process.
- Mr. Roger Monsell – CHA, will provide support services to Mr. Thompson and his group on local issues. He'd address power, sewer and traffic. He indicated it appears the services: water and sewer, are adequate for future needs.

4. *How should mental health issues be incorporated into the jail?*

- Due to variance in estimates, and no hard data, they will address the mission of the jail and research current statistics.

5. *If the tables were reversed, what questions would you be asking us?*

- They discussed the series of workshops they'd like to hold in a period of time, allowing them to discuss and review many issues in one day. They then create a draft that evening and return to the group to see if things may have changed after second thought/review.

Mr. Gil de Rubio noted they would hear by Wednesday of the Board's decision.

The group from SMRT left the room.

Input was requested for the committee members first, and included:

- Sheriff Prozzo felt the 1st group was very professional and they had good ideas. His first impression regarding SMRT was not good due to the bantering, but as they got going and discussed location they began winning him over with the discussion of the programs. He noted Superintendent Hagar should have the major say in the decision. He liked the poster visuals over the PowerPoint - as they are permanent items attendees at meeting can view after a meeting is done.

- Mr. Gil de Rubio indicated the second group is used to going before the public.
- Commissioner Jarvis liked the way that when SMRT walks away the County would have a whole view of what they are going to see and she liked the idea they would be available. Commissioner Jarvis noted she just wants to be sure whoever they decide on that Mr. Hagar and Mr. Gil de Rubio have a good rapport with the firm they work with.
- Ms. Cindy Vezina indicated she liked and preferred the second group [SMRT]. She had the same first impression as they seemed to joke around but liked their visual board presentation.
- Ms. Sherrie Curtis indicated she liked the first group [Ricci Greene & Associates] as they covered issues she is interested in. She felt the second group acted very silly at first, but liked their visuals and approach to the questions. Overall, she would prefer the second group.
- Commissioner Nelson indicated he felt they could not go wrong with either.
- Mr. Hagar discussed previous projects of both firms in NH and outcomes. He noted both would do a good job. He felt, on paper, SMRT proposal was good on the description. Based on history of both, confident with both abilities to do a good needs assessment; however, he felt Mr. Miller's personality type with his use of sarcasm and humor might make a bad first impression and it would be safer to go with Ricci Greene. He noted both would perform quality work. Overall, looking at the product as being equal, based on presentation - I would go with Ricci Greene.
- Sheriff Prozzo added he would go with the first group [Ricci Greene] as they were professional.
- Mr. Gil de Rubio discussed his views and indicated he leaned towards Ricci Greene also.

The committee consensus was to retain Ricci Greene and Associates to perform the DOC needs assessment.

3:38 The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



*Ethel Jarvis, Clerk
Board of Commissioners*

EJ/s.j-c.