

February 6, 2023

Council Chambers
Vigo County Government Center
Terre Haute, Indiana

President Mike Morris called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mark Clinkenbeard thanked everyone for coming to be a part of this process. He said that at the end of this process, they will take into consideration all comments and suggestions and make what the Commissioners felt would be the best decision for the County. No matter what decision is made, it will not make everybody happy but he is hopeful that everyone will respect the process and support the decision. Their only agenda is to help make our community a better place.

Mike Morris said that after taking bids, the Commissioner had contracted with DLZ Engineering for a study of the old jail facility. Operations were moved to the new facility in November of 2022. However, the Dispatch Service is still operating in the old Security Center. The survey supplied by DLZ contains five options (which have been submitted to the Council members for consideration). The Council and other county officials have toured the building. The options set out by DLZ are:

- A. Continue with the 911 Dispatch, sally port holding cells. Demolition of existing including site new Dispatch and a new sally port with an estimated cost of \$7.4 million;
- B. Demolition of a portion of the west half of the Security Center, renovation of the east half with an estimated cost of \$6.5 and \$8.5 million;
- C. Repurpose the facility into a rehabilitation and treatment facility, including a new dispatch, communication tower, new vehicle sally port intake holding with an estimated cost of \$21.5 to \$26.5 million;
- D. Repurpose the facility into a juvenile facility, new vehicle sally port intake holding with possible cost of \$16 - \$19 million; and
- E. Minimal work allowance, continue to run it at a cost of \$500,000 for fluffing it up a little bit.

Chris Switzer welcomed everyone and gave a brief synopsis of the history of the building and its uses. Going forward, they are looking at deciding what to do, how much money to spend, and what best benefits the community. They do have the options of the DLZ study or can decide to go another direction. In order to make the best decision, they would like to hear from citizens of the community and what the citizens would like to see happen. The Commissioners are trying to be as transparent as possible. No decision has been made thus far.

Mark Clinkenbeard had the list of people signed up to speak and he asked everyone to try to keep it to 3 minutes so that everyone would have a chance to speak. Following is a brief synopsis of the speakers:

- 1. Colonel Bartley. Spoke briefly. Came with three solutions: 1 – remove the building and make it a greenspace area. No need to spend money on a building we walked away from; 2 – lease the property to the private sector and let them use their private money to rehab the building; and 3 – sell the property for private utilization and development. He noted that any one of those three options could also be used concerning the oldest jail still standing near the River.
- 2. Bill Hubbard. He proposed tearing down the building. Also, tear down the Court House and use the land to build a facility to house the city and the county.

3. Mr. Littleday. He questioned what was being done with the original old jail compared to the current old jail. Mark Clinkenbeard commented that the original old jail was not owned by the County any more and was owned by a private entity.
4. Michael Shaw. Compared the situation with the old jail to the Terre Haute House and its ultimate demolition and the land put to use to build a new building that enhances the area and is a very successful business. Thought there would be great potential in removing the jail and open the area for development, either private or greenspace.
5. Brian Holston. Would like the Commissioners to take into consideration that the cost estimates set forth in the DLZ study have probably increased with inflation. He believes it should be torn down and open up the space for development and put back on the tax rolls.
6. John Collett. It was his opinion, after touring the building and reading the DLZ study, that the building needs to come down. The report basically recommends replacing every major thing in the building. He also thought it should not be developed or leased but the County should keep it since it is part of a government campus and should remain that way. He thought that possibly in the future a new building should be built to house all the government offices in one location.
7. Max Winchell. Believes the building has served its purpose and feels it should be torn down and used for future government use or a greenspace.
8. Neil Marchese. Felt that the old jail should be razed.
9. James Robertson. Said he was in the process of starting a 501(c) for a rehabilitation treatment center as well as a behavioral health center. If the property is leased, the County would receive the money from that which would be used to help the community. He has financial backers. Would be willing to do whatever needed to be done to bring the building up to par. Also trying to set up a crisis response team which would also be housed in that building.
10. Philip Deckert. Felt there was a great need for treatment programs here and gave his reasoning. Gave the Commissioners some paperwork to read. Thought that the building could be used for good.
11. Dan Bradley. He agreed behavioral health needs were great and a place needed to be found but the old jail would not be the appropriate place. He encouraged tearing the building down. Felt that the cost projections were probably outdated and would be substantially more now.
12. Pat Goodwin. He chose not to speak.
13. Mary Cramer. Involved with the Turn to the River Project. Thought that it would be putting good money after bad to try to rehab the building and turn it into something else. Thinks it would be a great opportunity to showcase Terre Haute.
14. Brian Hutchinson. Spoke at length about the old jail and thought it should be repaired or renovated. It could possibly be used to house out-of-county inmates.
15. Tom Bogigian. Asked if the study from the DLZ was available on the county website. Chris Switzer said it was not currently but would see to it that it was put on there.
16. Norm Loudermilk. As Executive Director of the Vigo County Juvenile Center, he expressly stated that they do NOT want any part of the old jail. It will not fit their needs. The place is a wreck and needs to be torn down at the earliest possible date. He spoke further on some possible future uses but as a taxpayer, he feels we do not need to keep that jail for anything. He supports the need for rehab centers but not in that building. He felt it should be torn down as soon as possible

With no one else wanting to speak, Mike Morris thanked everyone for coming and thought this had been very enlightening. Chris Switzer commented he was surprised a homeless shelter had not been mentioned. Social media feedback has been for a homeless shelter. He did note that Myra Wilkey had just been awarded a \$3 million grant for a homeless shelter for this community. He also spoke about the addition of a seventh court that was imminent. That will require space, additional staff, additional clerks, additional prosecutors.

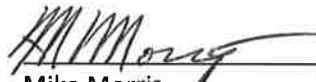
Dispatch was still located in the old jail basement. Commissioners did their due diligence and had the mold remediated to give Dispatch a safer place to work and repaired several other inhumane conditions. They are actively trying to locate a place to house Dispatch. He noted that they have contracted with DLZ to do a study on the Juvenile Center. He commented about the successes Mr. Loudermilk was having with the kids in Juvenile. He also noted that the oldest jail down by the river was owned by a private person and the County had no control over it. Moving forward, they are going to have to spend some money. They have no interest in increasing taxes and will do this within their means. When a plan is brought to the Council, they will have done their due diligence and make sure it will be as beneficial as possible to everybody in the community. This will be a tough decision. They will keep the public in the know. Mark Clinkenbeard thanked everyone and said this was an important process. They want to be as transparent as possible. They have the best interests of the County at heart. Mike Morris said he appreciated everyone's comments.

The meeting concluded at 5:45.

Attest:


James Bramble, Auditor


Chris Switzer


Mike Morris


Mark Clinkenbeard