

## **Fairness In Taxes**

### **Meeting Minutes 1-9-15**

**Board Attendance:** Bill & Sheila Hartranft, Michael Hinchman, Don Kerns, Joe Somerville, Vic Staniec & Jim Tweed

Meeting opened by Michael Hinchman with Pledge Allegiance at 3:00 P.M.

#### **Guest – Gary Schaeffer, Cape County Sheriff**

##### **Background**

- Served with Ocean City Police Department for 25+ years. Was a detective, served on SWAT team and in the narcotics division. Was President of the Police Academy and was New Jersey Training Commander.
- Two children on the Ocean City Police Force; 1 an officer, 1 a Captain, and 1 daughter married to an Ocean City Police officer. His brother is a retired officer of the Ventnor Police Department.
- Served as Cape May County Sheriff for the past 16+ years.
- Gary stated he has a proven record; always under budget. When he began they were about \$300,000 in the red and are now \$250,000 in the black.
- In his position he oversees the County Jail, Security, Animal Shelter just to name a few.
- Security is a high priority. Approximately 32,000 people passed through security last year.

##### **Current Facts**

- The current Cape May County facility was built in 1976 with a capacity for 168 prisoners; it was then expanded to accommodate 188. Currently there are 267 prisoners housed in the facility.
- The prison is falling apart; air quality is poor, a chiller required replacement at a cost of \$150,000.
- They investigated looking at an addition to the existing facility and a rehab. After comparing costs it seemed a better idea to build a new facility. The rehab of the existing facility alone came in at about \$15m. A new facility may only come in at \$28m, and will receive some funding. They took this to the freeholders and they proposed a new facility.
- In the past the same inspection team familiar with the facility would return. Now there is a new inspection team, who may see things a bit differently and possibly would support the need for a new facility.

##### **Overview of Proposed New Facility**

- The prison would be built with individual pods with their own exercise yard, cafeteria (dining only; there would be a single kitchen for the entire facility), attorney/client rooms with guards for each pod. This will help in lowering the risk from gangs within the prison. There are, at this time members of 13 different gangs in the prison.
- They would add a second floor for administration offices, court room and staff break area.
- It would have a state of the art infirmary with 24-hour nursing. Now there is no nurse from 11:00 P.M. to 7:00 A.M. resulting in high transportation costs, wage costs (2 officers must accompany and remain with the inmate taken to a hospital) and medical and prescription costs. Having our own infirmary would represent a huge cost savings.
- The infirmary would be 3<sup>rd</sup>-party run.
- The new jail would be built behind the old one. When completed, the old jail would be torn down and parking provided, both for staff and visitors.
- While still allowing for face to face visitations, we would also be able to provide internet visitation. As there would be a fee for this service, it would also generate income for the facility.
- They will enlarge the laundry facility and they could bring in laundry done by the prisoners, from neighboring facilities such as Crest Haven Nursing, which would also generate additional monies.
- The court room on site again would save on transportation costs and man hours.

- There will be two-cell area for juveniles. We would also have state of the art electronic monitoring for eligible offenders and will continue our work program.
- It will have a capacity of 288 (possibly 346 with an additional pod) with the expectation that they would never be full.
- The budget for the facility right now is \$37m. We have received a proposal for \$50m which we believe is too high. Reducing size by one pod may resolve this problem.

## Q & A

- **Question** – Are Cells/Pods pre cast. ?
- **Answer** – Yes. The entire facility will be pre-fab. To keep costs down we will have alternate bidding for interior finishing of the court room and the juvenile area. Note: the energy cost savings alone should be about \$340,000.
- **Question** – Besides heating, etc. what else is wrong with the existing facility.
- **Answer** – Showers, plumbing, boiler, infirmary (too small), etc.
- **Question** – Why not share facilities with other counties.
- **Answer** – This has been tried in the past, and has not been very successful for various reasons.
- **Question** – Will this work be bonded?
- **Answer** – Yes, but will not affect the current tax rate.
- **Question** – Is there a full kitchen in each pod? This would seem to be expensive.
- **Answer** – No. There is a single kitchen with a dining area in each pod. A meal for inmates has a cost \$1.27/meal; for officers \$1.87/meal. Operation of this fall under City facilities, not the prison.

At this point in the meeting Gary explained some of the advantages of alternate incarceration; electronic monitoring (\$10.00/day) and SLAP (\$2.00/Day), and provided a video presentation on the proposed facility.

## Comments/Questions During the Video

- They will have a paperless operation.
- There will be a fitness room in the administration area.
- There is a single elevator for all visitors to the building. They do have a stairway for authorized personnel only.
- Administration is comprised of Internal Affairs, Warrants, Processing and alternate incarceration (electronic monitoring & SLAP).
- Medical records will all be electronic.
- There will be a break area for personnel; right now they have none.
- **Question** – Is there room for expansion?
- **Answer** – If needed, yes.
- **Question** – Is there a female population?
- **Answer** – At the present time there are 33 female inmates.
- **Question** – How many officers.
- **Answer** – 88; of that number there are 13 per shift plus 2 officers for each pod.
- **Question** – When will it be completed?
- **Answer** – Working on acquiring the bids. Hopefully, construction will begin in May and will take approximately 18 months to complete.

## Education Report – Vic Staniec

- There was a reorganization meeting – Joe Clark is the School Board President, Tom Oves is the Vice President
- The Science curriculum is changing as follows:
  - 9<sup>th</sup> Grade          Physics
  - 10<sup>th</sup> Grade        Chemistry
  - 11<sup>th</sup> Grade        Biology
  - 12<sup>th</sup> Grade        AP & Honors Science
- Math curriculum will also be changing but has not been finalized.

- New HVAC units being serviced due to too much noise. They are adding shock absorbers to see if the problem can be resolved.
- Over and above operating and capital there is a surplus of \$2.5m representing 1.2 cents in taxes. They seem to be hiding it in capital and calling it by a different name. This also represents 6% excess and the allowance is only 2%.
- The cafeteria food service (Aramark) has losses of \$50,000.
- A question was posed by a member as to why they allow students to charge their meals without permission from their parents. This individual received a bill from the school for the charges, but had no knowledge that they could even do this. Was told by the school they were aware of this, but could not deny the meal to the student. Can this be looked into. Vic said he would take it to the School Board.

#### **President – Michael Hinchman**

- He took issue with Council regarding Peck’s Beach. After all the housing repairs done here, the City now wants to tear them down and rebuild. Just replacing the roofs after sandy was \$.5m. Council said they were receiving grant money for the work; but, the questions remains, why didn’t they follow the guidelines from the get go?

#### **Jim Tweed**

- There will be a city clean-up day for MLK Day, January 19<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon. Anyone interested should go to the Community Center.
- A tentative date is set, after Easter, on April 11, 2015 for Rehoboth’s Mayor Cooper to speak with FIT members on how non-resident voting works for their city.

#### **Miscellaneous**

- Eric Sauder commented that FIT seems to be a bit rudderless regarding city projects and property owner concerns are not being addressed. He proposes we contact property owners and encourage them to put pressure on City Council. Perhaps FIT should take the lead.
- Michael suggested Eric attend the Capital Planning meeting Thursday, January 15<sup>th</sup> and ask if they have a list of the 10 worst areas for drainage. Bill Hartranft suggested that perhaps Council should be made aware in advance so as to provide the answer at that time.
- It was commented that OCCA may be a good contact as they have had success in the past. Also, to take pictures and present them at the Council meeting.
- Jim Tweed recommended FIT create a special committee from among interested members to gather information from property owners and report back to FIT.
- Jim then made a motion to create this special committee headed up by Eric Sauder, move forward and providing updates to FIT. Seconded by Joe Somerville& all present voted yes; motion carried.

Meeting adjourned 5:00 P.M.

Next meeting will be February 6, 2015.

Respectively submitted by:

Sheila Hartranft, Secretary