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Sherriff Walsh:

Your letter was correct; our report, while satisfying for our sense of thoroughness and documentation, was both overwhelming and yet short on the necessary action steps for your agency and the Board, and the core problem: crowding and construction. You suggested it left you without the guidance or explicit technical case to your Board that was needed.

Below is our best effort to fill that gap with an updated summary of the plan focused on crowding and facility construction, and ILPP's recommendation of the core choices and actions to be made now. We hope it will help.

During the early phase of your project, after a careful review of the historic and current jail population, ILPP determined that significant numbers of inmates could be eliminated from the daily jail population through a greater use of citation for release, careful screening at booking, diversion of arrestees to alternative programs, and, specifically, implementation of pretrial services. These options should reduce the jail population sufficiently enough to close the downtown jail.

The central theme in controlling this jail population at minimum cost is the assumption that in closing the downtown jail, existing staff would be moved to the satellite jail to provide improved and adequate coverage.

Regardless, the downtown jail is substandard and requires immediate closing. You and your staff, the National Institute of Corrections Report and our review of the facility identified "deplorable conditions" and the need to accelerate the closing of the facility. The continued use of the downtown jail should be considered only as a last resort under very special circumstances. However, this action should not jeopardize inmate and staff safety. In addition to reducing the population numbers is the critical need to provide difficult segregation of various inmates types with the most demanding need for mental health, and those designated as dangerous requiring high security separations. Existing facilities lack the necessary segregation opportunities. Merely reducing population to below capacity does not satisfy the segregation issues. So important are these segregation requirements that new

construction is probably necessary in the immediate future.

While you have made great strides to affect the jail's population, these efforts have not reduced the total inmate population enough to make the jail closing easy. This seems primarily the result of the Judges' refusal to institute a strong pre-trial release program as is so common nationally, a recommendation ILPP and others always thought would do away with the need for new construction. We have, nonetheless, been impressed by the cooperation of the other justice agencies as well as your department and jail staff with modifying current policy and practice while considering changes to their system.

One option we considered to decrease the number of inmates was the possibility of using the downtown jail for very low security inmates, only while programs and diversion options were implemented. Although we discussed this option, it became clear that this alternative would continue the current burden on short staff coverage and unnecessarily maintain work force to two facilities instead of one.

The current population of the downtown jail is approximately 60 inmates. We recommend moving these prisoners to the satellite jail. This option increases the satellite jail staffing levels by that number now assigned to the downtown jail. This increased staffing is advantageous in managing the jail population. It is imperative to note that the jail staffing levels are insufficient for the continued use of the two jails. The only option to satisfy the shortage of staff, other than increased budget, is the elimination of the downtown jail and reassignment of those staff to the satellite jail.

ILPP strongly encourages your discontinued use of the downtown jail. We propose immediate transferring of all inmates from the downtown jail to the satellite jail. This can be accomplished by distribution of the inmates throughout each of the living units at the satellite jail. Ideally, the addition of hard bunks is the desirable solution. Assuming that diversion and recommended options later decrease the jail population, which should be a strong assumption resulting from the system study, those bunks will be eliminated. The use of plastic beds could accommodate the temporary crowding of the satellite jail. If crowding of the cells is considered extreme, an alternative method is the introduction of beds in the dayroom spaces. There is the alternative of crowding the cells or crowding the dayroom. Either still is a preferable choice than continued use of the downtown jail. Our suggestion is the use of additional beds in each cell since inmates use the dayroom for greater hours each day.

There are a number of cells used only for handicap prisoners. Modify these cells to accept additional prisoners and use as a single cell only when required by the rare special needs of handicap prisoners.

ILPP continued to argue for identifying special housing for medical and mental needs inmates. We have discussed several options for these changes, and we congratulate your efforts to consider possibilities for improving the use of existing resources.

We previously urged the use of an assessment center for all incoming inmates. This allows an intensified assessment of all new inmates to identify their security levels and needs while at the jail. An assessment center requires a more intensive staff involvement during those hours at the assessment center, but requires another segregation housing designation which you find difficult at this point. Additional housing modules are necessary to realize a satisfactory distribution of housing components (fulfilling the number of segregation separations needed for safe operation).

Without a significant decrease in the jail's population, it is imperative that the County expedite planning efforts to increase the jail holding capacity by the addition of more living units at the satellite jail including segregation units to satisfy classification needs.

ILPP has developed a substantial list of recommendations to improve the system, allowing a delay or elimination of the building option. These are difficult changes to a static system and unfortunately, these changes will result in additional expenditures. These expenditures, however, are more desirable than a full building option required because system changes are not possible to the extent that prisoner population numbers are reduced. Without implementation of significant improvements and reduction of the jail(s) population, the building option must move forward immediately. Planning for new facilities can take a dual role of planning long range needs and short range requirements, allowing later selection of the number of beds to fully fund in the near future. The plans should allow for multiple building options. This is advantageous because system changes can be evaluated prior determining the number of beds to immediately build and the number to building later. If the system changes fail, the larger number of beds would be required. Start planning now new building options but continue to develop system changes to reduce prisoner numbers.

During our September 26th visit, staff willingly worked on options to move the female population from the downtown jail to the satellite. We considered a number of options, including some requiring additional building modifications. We identified options that were minimum changes and cost. The use of these low cost options, however, may prove inadequate. Your successful move of the female population did not come easily and we again congratulate your intentions and actions.

While visiting each of the living units at the satellite jail, we noted that

a single officer assigned to each pod now manages too great a population for effective control. Additionally, several blind spots existed in living units that would be eliminated by adding inexpensive cameras monitored at the officer workstation. Finding methods or resources to increase living unit staff coverage must be pursued.

ILPP congratulates you and your staff on the willingness and effectiveness in accepting and implementing an improved classification system. The use of the nationally recognized objective jail classification is essential to manage the jail population. The jail staff not only embraces the concept but also aggressively works towards full implementation.

We want to emphasize the willingness and cooperation of your staff in considering difficult options for modifying existing conditions. Your staff embraced our recommendations and made significant strides in improvement of the system. Limited resources and prisoner living accommodations limits your options.

It will be difficult to achieve full recognition of ILPP's recommendations, but with existing and increased cooperation, significant changes are more than possible.

In closing, ILPP urges the immediate selection and retention of architectural planning resources to further develop the building options we presented in our report and plan. We urge you assign existing staff to the task of full-time planning of these difficult processes. An architectural team needs skillful interaction to be successful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan Kalmanoff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end.

Alan Kalmanoff
Executive Director

