

DELAWARE COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION BOARD OF MANAGERS  
TUESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2022  
4:30 P.M. EST.

HYBRID: DELAWARE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING ROOM AND VIRTUAL

**Members Present:**

Chair/Councilman Kevin Madden  
Chris Eiserman  
James E. Turner  
Candice Linehan

Vice Chair Marie N. Williams  
Councilwoman Elaine Schaefer  
Chekemma Fulmore Townsend  
Deputy Controller Kelly Diaz

**Call Meeting to Order:**

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

**Public Comment (Agenda Items Only):**

Colleen Kennedy, Upper Darby, Pa requested that the Board considered her previous feedback to allow for public comment to precede any votes from Board members.

**Approval of Minutes for 20 September 2022 Meeting**

**Reports:**

**Juvenile Court and Probation Services:** Juvenile Chief Danielle DiMatteo provided the Monthly Detained Youth Report. Mrs. DiMatteo informed the Board that six (6) juveniles were in custody at the present time. Two(2) youths were detained at Bucks County. Four (4) of the six (6) youths in detention were direct files with three (3) juveniles housed at Abraxas Academy in Morgantown, and one (1) housed in Philadelphia.

**Juvenile Detention:**

David Irizarry stated that of the two options for redesign examined by Spiezle Architectural Group, option #1 would not be viable. Mr. Irizarry presented the Board with a visual model of a facility that adequately incorporated the goal of detention and prevention. Mr. Irizarry highlighted several components that were integral to the facility design:

- a) A less intimidating exterior for youth, family, and visitors. This included removal of the exterior fencing currently in place. Additionally, an official and welcoming Lobby area to greet family and visitors would be added.
- b) Commitment to youth confidentiality. The construction of an enclosed sally port entrance for detained youth would lessen the opportunity for any breach of privacy for detained youths as well as prevent a youth from absconding from entering the facility.
- c) Spaces that prioritized and accommodated family and community engagement and mental wellness for staff and residents. The secured portion of the facility was modeled to include family consultation rooms just beyond the lobby area. For individual youths, 8 separate areas have been marked throughout the

building for self-de-escalation. These areas are intended for youths to utilize them for mental wellness. The non-secure portion of the facility also included spaces for family services and counseling. The facility design also included multiple spaces for mental health workers to use as well as multiple program spaces to lessen idle time and promote reentry.

2. Bob Reid from Spiezle Architecture further elaborated on the new design in terms of size and design necessity. In response to Councilwoman Schaefer's inquiry on the current and proposed square footage of the facility, Mr. Reid clarified that the facility would increase from 49,000 square feet to 85,000 square feet. The final design would include both the secure and nonsecure portions of the facility. Mr. Reid further explained the deficits of option 1 of the facility renovation and why it is not feasible for the new design. Mr. Reid stated that overall, the existing design is not conducive for anything other than residential pods. Mr. Reid also shared with the board that necessary duct work within the facility would lower the ceiling height thus creating a building code violation. Additionally, one wing of the facility was/is already entirely without air or heat due to existing functional flaws with ventilation. He also further stated that existing plumbing in the facility was/is inadequate for the proposed needs. Overall option one is not recommended as it is not feasible with facility needs and building code standards.

Questions:

Councilwoman Schaefer asked how much of this design is modeled within the existing structure and what would need to be built.

Mr. Irizarry highlighted areas of the design that show the existing structure which is planning to be renovated and the existing portion that is planning to be demolished. This includes the areas (mostly in blue and purple) below the purple dotted line at the proposed secure entry.

Vice Chair Williams stated that the design subcommittee had additionally concluded that option #1 for the facility design is not possible after careful examination of the necessary work to be done and costs associated with those fixes. Ms. Williams reiterated the subcommittee's favor toward option 2 as it better encompasses the physical needs of the facility as well as the aspirational goals.

Board member Turner agreed that after hearing the number of code violations that currently existed that would not be fixed with option #1, he was in favor of option 2 for the facility redesign.

Board member Fulmore-Townsend asked whether option #2 still fits within the presented timeline.

Mr. Irizarry responded that both options fit within the presented timeline.

Councilwoman Schaefer asked how the nonsecure space would be utilized -- specifically, who will use that space and what programs will be available?

Mr. Irizarry responded that the vision was to work with the other departments including the courts, CYS, and Juvenile probation to make adequate use of the space. This includes an extension of services provided by those departments including night reporting, alternative schooling, family and community gathering spaces, as well as workspaces for on-site mental health support staff.

Board member Linehan asked whether there is still a plan for staggered opening of the facility.

Mr. Irizarry responded that the secured portion of the project will be prioritized prior to the opening of the entire facility.

Board member Diaz asked if other departments had specifically stated their intentions regarding use of the facility and how exactly that space will be utilized.

Mr. Irizarry responded that while all the logistics are not currently in place, conversations have been had regarding continuing and strengthening partnerships.

Ms. Diaz further inquired as to whether partnering departments agree that this is the best location for them to provide their services.

Mr. Irizarry responded that while certain transportation and related logistics are still being worked out, a centralized location at the current site would best serve the needs of the county.

Chairman Madden commented on the necessity for a collaborative, restorative, and holistic facility that represented the values of the community. Mr. Madden stated that option #2, for the facility, largely encompassed these values and commitment to further community involvement. Regarding community transparency, Mr. Madden stated he valued that input and that as the design becomes finalized, the board will continue to seek feedback from the community.

Mr. Irizarry agreed that there will be continued collaboration between the Juvenile Detention department, the community, and national partners to establish a holistic facility.

Board member Turner commented on the possible financial support that could be obtained from federal and state funds as a nationwide conversation about criminal justice prevails.

Councilwoman Schaefer mentioned that she would like to hear from YAP, CYS, and other departments and partners to hear how they envision their support services within this facility space.

Board member Linehan thanked Mr. Reid for his service in this process and for laying a strong foundation for this facility.

Chairman Madden asked Mr. Irizarry about the timeline for the facility regarding community input and costs for approval to be submitted to the County Council.

Mr. Irizarry responded that he hopes to express estimated costs at the December 2022 meeting after finalizing costs with Mr. Reid. He also stated that he hopes to be prepared to ask the County Council for approval in February 2022. Additionally, Mr. Irizarry stated that he planned to take time to work out establishing more public forums to gather community input.

Board member Turner asked if eventually a 3D or virtual model of the facility design would be available for the public.

Mr. Irizarry responded that more visuals would be made available as planning progresses to help provide a better idea of the vision to the Board and the public.

**Old Business:** No old business

**New Business:** No new business

**Public Comment:**

Colleen Kennedy, Upper Darby, Pa- Ms. Kennedy thanked Chairman Madden for his comments regarding public transparency of the upcoming facility. Additionally, Ms. Kennedy thanked the Board for not holding a vote over the presented design at this time. She reiterated her previous comments about the Board hearing public comment prior to making a formal vote on issues. Ms. Kennedy also asked the Board to consider making community meetings more accessible by increasing the number of public forums at various times and locations throughout the county. Ms. Kennedy also stated that she would like to see the Board more actively engaged with community organizations. Ms. Kennedy also lists her concern for the number of beds planned for the facility and states a desire to see a push away from incarceration.

Mary Austin, Media, Pa- Ms. Austin stated that she questions the size of the facility and doesn't want to see a facility that encourages detention based on its size. She also stated that she would like transparency in the naming of the upcoming facility.

Andre Simms, Sharon Hill, Pa- Mr. Simms shared his concerns that the Juvenile Detention Report portion of the meeting focused on statistics and numbers rather than the humanity of the individuals being detained.

Mr. Irizarry commented that in depth conversations about the youths in detention are happening; however, for confidentiality and privacy purposes, very limited information about the youths is stated in public forums.

Ingrid Bird, Havertown, Pa- As a victim advocate, Ms. Bird wanted to remind the Board that the number of youths currently detained reflects the number of beds available to youths rather than the number of youths who need a bed within a facility.

Board member Linehan acknowledged the need for input from all parties impacted by the juveniles in the system as well as her support for community input naming the new facility.

Pastor Harrison, Chester, Pa– Mr. Harrison asked for the Board to put equal emphasis on the input of parents and victims who are also impacted by the actions of delinquent juveniles.

**Board Member Comments:**

Chairman Madden asked Mr. Irizarry to justify the size of the facility for clarity.

Mr. Irizarry clarified that two thirds reduction in facility size is consistent with other facilities shifting away from an incarceration model. Mr. Irizarry stated that other Delco agencies recommended that we'd consider the year 2018 admissions stats as a good, pre-covid metric for how many beds are needed and that the average daily population in the facility that year was twenty-four (24). Additionally, Mr. Irizarry focused on the highest risk youth within Delaware County. Working with the prison warden, he has collected five years' worth of Data regarding youth offenders with serious convictions, and also landed on a figure around 24 beds for Delaware county per year. Mr. Irizarry further stated that close examination of the data shows that by the end of October, the County typically had an average of 20 youths within their custody. Although numbers are currently below that average and the goal is to keep that trajectory going, the space is still needed in order to have the ability to hold an equal number of boys and girls, as well as accommodate for any separation that must be maintained.

**Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned.