

Great Game Huddle Notes

August 29th, 2017

READ ALL ABOUT IT!!

Today we had an opportunity to discuss openly some of the important Greene County issues that have appeared in the News-Leader lately. Huddle attendance was high, which indicates that employees are very interested and involved in what's going on around them!

Yesterday, the Greene County Commission voted and approved (although not unanimously) putting a ½ cent General Fund sales tax initiative on the November, 2017 ballot. The sales tax would provide additions to our overcrowded jail, fund other law enforcement areas, and also fund the many other General Revenue shortfalls that the county faces.

Dan Patterson spoke about the inadequacies of the Public Defender system. There are only 10 Public Defenders that serve Greene County. Their office is too short-staffed to focus on improving efficiencies, and additional funds from the state have been approved and then taken away more than once. A proposed treatment court would provide a pool of defense attorneys to care for indigent cases. Two attorneys assigned and trained for the treatment court could increase Public Defender resources by 20%. The training standards for the attorneys working in the treatment court would be overseen by Greene County judges.

Associate Commissioner Harold Bengsch relayed some facts about the commission's decision to move forward with a temporary jail housing facility to be located on the parking lot north of the Administration Building. The lease will cost \$873,153 per year, not including the hiring of 12 more correction officers and 1 cook. The facility will house 108 inmates and open in November, 2017. We are transporting these out-of-county inmates to and from court and paying for their lodging, which makes this a huge expense for the county. The cost of housing inmates in 5 other county jails for 2017 is an estimated 2.2 million dollars. The question was asked about the severity of the crimes committed by inmates in the Greene County Jail. The answer is that there are no low-level offenders currently jailed in our facility.

Future plans also include relocating the County Commission office, the Purchasing office and the Public Administrator's office to the 10th floor of the Cox North Tower. The Greene County Youth Academy will move into the space that will be vacated in the Administration Building. Greene County Juvenile Administrator, Bill Prince is very excited about occupying this space and initiating some new ideas, including a Juvenile Community Resource Center. The relocation of GCYA will permanently vacate the derelict properties on the west side of Boonville Avenue. If the sales tax passes, these buildings will eventually be demolished and provide space for the Jail expansion.

More discussion to come in future huddles...stay tuned!