

JAIL & CORRECTIONS REFORM TASK FORCE

Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the 2023 Interim

October 23, 2023

Call to Order and Roll Call

The fifth meeting of the Jail & Corrections Reform Task Force was held on October 23, 2023, at 11:00 AM in Room 129 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Josh Bray, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Josh Bray Co-Chair; Representatives David Hale, Keturah Herron, Jason Petrie, and Wade Williams.

Guests: Chris Girdler, President & CEO, Somerset-Pulaski County Economic Development Authority (SPEDA); Anthony McCollum, Jailer, Pulaski County Detention Center; Michelle Bramble, Program Coordinator, Pulaski County Detention Center; Brad Sassatelli, Senior Vice President, CGL Companies

LRC Staff: Roberta Kiser, Randall Roof, Joshua Shelepak, and Jennifer Smith.

Discussion on the Pulaski County Detention Center Re-Entry Program

Chris Gridler, President and CEO, Somerset-Pulaski County Economic Development Authority (SPEDA), stated that SPEDA was formed over four years ago and focuses on tourism promotion, downtown development, arts and entertainment, education and workforce, airport and aviation enhancement, commercial and retail recruitment, attractions, and conventions.

SPEDA worked with the Pulaski County Detention Center to have a soft skills re-entry program implemented inside the detention center. It was making an impact on the inmates, but unfortunately an internal change from the Department of Corrections caused the program to no longer qualify. Currently, SPEDA is in the process of starting a relationship with the Life Learning Center based in Covington.

Mr. Girdler explained that SPEDA and the Pulaski County Detention Center recently entered into an agreement to purchase a building adjacent to the detention center. The detention center's staff, and inmates have been completing the renovations. In a few

months, the building will be fully functional to offer programs to assist in an inmate's re-entry to the community.

Anthony McCollum, Pulaski County Jailer, discussed the overcrowding at the Pulaski County Detention Center. To help manage with the overcrowding, the detention center has been providing resources such as counseling for inmates to try to reduce recidivism. Unfortunately, inmates do not have driver license, birth certificates, or social security cards. These reasons, among other barriers to successful re-entry, forced the detention to work with community partners to develop a re-entry program. Inmates chosen for the program have 90 days remaining on their sentences, and are from the Lake Cumberland region. Inmates can receive job training and work in the community while serving their sentence. The jail transports inmates to and from the company. Each participant sets up a personal bank account and earns the same wage as every other employee in the company. The detention center receives \$50 from each paycheck to cover its expenses. Since the program's current inception, the detention center has had 40 inmates participate, with two inmates returning to incarceration. Currently, the detention center has nine inmates participating in the program.

In response to a question from Representative Herron, Mr. McCollum said, the inmates must be classified by the Department of Corrections and deemed safe to work in the community.

In response to a question from Representative Hale, Mr. McCollum stated that, the jail trains the company's supervisors about what appropriate inmate conduct is. The inmates only get one chance at the program. If they violate the rules then they are no longer able to participate. The inmates are allowed to wear regular clothing, but when they return to the detention center, they are checked for contraband then put back in jail issued suits. Jail staff also do spot checks on the work sites to make sure they are abiding by the program policy.

In response to a question from Representative Williams, Mr. Girdler responds that they had an industrial leader's breakfast which included 54 of the largest employers in their region. Hendrickson was the first to participate in the program, and continues to be most active. Locally owned companies find it easier to adapt to the program verses corporate owned.

In response to a question from Chairman Bray, Mr. McCollum stated that the inmates do not get time off their sentence for participation in the re-entry program. The detention center does not receive state funding for the re-entry program, but the inmates receive scholarships from Somerset Community College.

Discussion on Justice Facility Planning, Design, Program Management, and Maintenance Solutions

Brad Sassatelli, Senior Vice President, CGL Companies, presented that CGL's primary focus is on criminal justice consulting of state prison systems and local jails. The company looks at the system, such as arrests, court systems, pre-trial services, and detention to determine how inmate population could be reduced. CGL offers master planning and provides solutions in areas such as staffing needs assessments, operating budget analysis, deferred maintenance, and after-incident reviews. CGL has been operational for almost 50 years. Throughout that time, Mr. Sassatelli has worked on over 50 major state and county projects, completed 4 state master plans, 75 county jail needs assessments, and over 20 state corrections operational needs assessments.

In response to a question from Representative Hale, Mr. Sassatelli stated that other states do not rely on the county jail beds to supplement their state prison capacity.

In response to a question from Representative Williams, Mr. Sassatelli said, there is no doubt the smaller jails have higher cost verses the larger jails.

In response to a question from Representative Herron, Mr. Sassatelli responded that the pricing is difficult because it varies by location. The cost of an assessment is determined by the location as well. Mr. Sassatelli stated that in order to determine the cost to do an assessment in Kentucky, CGL would need to know all components requested to be studied. The Utah master plan cost was \$1 million; whereas in Florida to review the correctional system, the cost was \$400,000.

In response to a question from Representative Bray, Mr. Sassatelli stated that several states classify inmates very well. They rely on data and factors, and not base it on judgement. About 75 percent of states have a good classification system, but that does not mean there is not room for improvements. Reclassification is more important that the initial classification because inmates have been housed and observed.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the task force, the meeting adjourned at 11:54 A.M. The next meeting of the task force will be November 8, at 10:00 A.M.