

Testimony HB2828

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Marshall County Commissioner District 1

The current Marshall County jail was constructed in 1979. It is a two story brick building that was designed by an architect with no knowledge of jail construction. The Marshall County Jail is built in the linear style with lots of safety concerns. As it stands our county cannot meet modern jail standards as related to classifying inmates for housing, health, and personal needs. Currently, due to the layout of the building, inmates are able to hear what is said in our investigator's office and dispatch. There are no separate locations for intake processing and medical needs of inmates that guarantee privacy because of their close proximity. Currently we have no meeting space for inmates and their attorneys or families. Attorneys and the inmates meet in what is referred to as the drunk tank and families meet in the garage. The Kansas State Fire Marshall has notified us the kitchen system has inadequate venting to provide adequate food service for inmates. Mold and other health hazards prohibit use of all locations in this facility.

County commissioners recognized the need for a new jail and started working on a plan to add on to the existing building in 2017. Plans advanced when six acres were purchased on the East outskirts of Marysville to construct a new jail. A jail was designed to meet current needs with be ability to take the county into the future. The estimated cost of the new building was \$13.5 million. The county approached Marshall County Municipalities to sign interlocal agreements allowing the county to retain the proceeds of a proposed 0.5 cent county sales tax. The proposed sales tax was defeated in the November election with the cost being the greatest concern of voters. The increases in property taxes over the last few years have citizens rightly concerned with any additional tax increases.

The county is exploring options to construct just the containment portion of a new jail facility which would cut the cost by roughly 40%. We are working to address the concerns of our county citizens while meeting the needs of the county for an adequate jail facility. We hope you can support these efforts by allowing us the option of pursuing funding methods which could include a possible sales tax for reduced costs going on the ballot without the need to once again go to each county municipality to approve interlocal agreements.

Thank You for your time and consideration and we'd be glad to answer any questions you have.