

Richardson Co Jail Committee Holds First Meeting

(KTNC) - The Richardson County Citizens Advisory Jail Committee met for the first time Thursday evening.

The 10-member committee will make a recommendation to the County Board regarding a proposal to turn the Armory Building on the west edge of Falls City into a new County Jail.

Eight of 10 committee members were at Thursday's kick-off meeting. They heard from Jay Weingarten and Scott Lundberg with the architecture firm Prochaska and Associates of Omaha. They outlined the role of committee members and went over options they'd have to consider for the county jail.

Those options are either renovate and expand the Armory, or close the jail and transport prisoners to other facilities.

Some committee members expressed reservation initially about the need for improvements to the current jail, but Sheriff Randy Houser said he hoped to demonstrate why a new jail is needed, saying it comes down to safety for both staff and inmates.

Denny McCumber with Nebraska Jail Standards was at the meeting. He said safety is the number one issue they focus on. McCumber said there have been several suicides in the Richardson County Jail over the years, something he attributes to the fact that the facility is hard to supervise. That's something that he says poses liability issues.

Weingarten estimated that a new jail would cost from \$1.5 million for a bare-bones facility to between 3 million and 4 million dollars.

He said the committee members will hold four more meetings before coming to a decision on a recommendation by the end of November.