

Committee formed to study jail expansion proposal

(KLZA)-- Richardson County Commissioners have created a Citizens Advisory Committee for the proposed addition to the Jail area of the Richardson County Law Enforcement Center in Falls City.

Most of those agreeing to serve were previously on the Citizens Advisory Committee created in 2013 to determine if a new jail was needed. In 2014 the committee suggested Richardson County move forward with a new law enforcement center with 24 beds in the jail area.

Reappointed to the CRA committee for the proposed addition to the jail area were: Ray Joy, June Bowers, Mark Joy, Jake Ankrom, Jerry Duerfeldt, Charlie Fiegner and Phil Bletscher. Newly appointed members will be Trent Phillips and Austin Duerfeldt.

The CRA Committee will discuss the jail expansion with Richardson County residents and recommend to the Commissioners if the proposal should be put on the ballot in May, 2022 to allow Richardson County voters to decide if the jail expansion will happen.

In a related agenda item, Commissioners voted to enter into an agreement with Prochaska & Associates for the Pre-Design Phase of the proposed addition to the jail area at a cost of \$15-thousand.

Various expansion sizes ranging from 10 to 20 and up to 40 additional beds have been discussed.

Sheriff Rick Hardesty said that since he was appointed in September, 2019, there have been approximately 1,200 bookings into the Richardson County Jail. Some of the people held have helped generate revenue for the facility. In 2019 and 2020 \$80 - \$90-thousand has been generated by housing prisoners for other entities.

This year, the jail has been so full of local inmates there is rarely additional space available to house inmates for other jurisdictions.

Sheriff Hardesty says there is interest from other law enforcement agencies in have additional places to house prisoners, including the U.S. Marshall Service which has indicated they might be interested in up to 20 of the beds for housing their prisoners. Richardson County already has contracts to house prisoners for Pawnee, Nemaha and Otoe counties when bed space is available.

The Sheriff encourages anyone with questions about the jail expansion proposal to contact him.

Many Signals Communications