SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

(All meetings at 7pm)

BYRON/STILLMAN VALLEY
February 22, 7pm
Byron Community Room, 232 W 2nd St, Byron

PEOTLO
February 23, 7pm
Buffalo Township Hall, 117 N Franklin, Polo

DAVIS JUNCTION/MOORE CENTER
February 28, 7pm
Davis Junction Fire Station, 100 W, Davis Junction

ROCHELLE
March 1, 7pm
Rochelle City Hall, 6th St & 5th Ave., Rochelle

FORRESTON
March 2, 7pm
Forreston Public Library, Rtes. 72 & 26, Forreston

MT. MORRIS
March 7, 7pm
Mt.Morris Village Hall, 105 W Lincoln, Mt. Morris

OREGON
March 9, 7pm
Oregon Coliseum, 124 N 4th St, Oregon

WHAT IS THE OGLE COUNTY JAIL PROJECT?
AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME?

Front view of the proposed new jail facility (right) and the existing Judicial Center (left).
June 1998: Ogle County Board created the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC), to research the long range needs of our Ogle County government.

September 1998: Ogle County Executive Committee gave the specific changes to the LRPC:
1. determining immediate needs of the county (the next 25 years);
2. making recommendations for long-term needs (the next 50 years); and,
3. utilizing the property to the west of the old courthouse (where four County Annex buildings were located at the time).

In July, 2000, the Ogle County Board adopted the following recommendations:
1. Relocate the Departments in the four Annex Buildings
   Result: August 2003. Bought an existing building, CourtHouse for County offices; demolished the Annex buildings.
2. Build a new Judicial Center at the former Annex location
   Result: August 2005. New Judicial Center built; courts and supporting departments moved to new facility.
3. After Judicial Center completion, remodel the old Courthouse for county administrative departments
   Result: August 2010. Temporarily moved all Courthouse departments to a building in Mt. Morris for one year, and remodeled Courthouse building.
4. Within ten to fifteen years (by 2015), build a new Sheriff’s Administration Building
   Result: April 2015. Built a new Public Safety Complex, housing the Sheriff’s Office and Coroner Department; demolished old building.
5. Build a new jail by 2025
   Result: New jail proposed to be built in 2018-2020

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS, CONTACT:
Kim Gouker, Ogle County Board Chairman, 815-732-1111 - or -
Don Griffin, Long Range Planning Committee Chair, 815-732-3201, EXT. 543
or email: newjail@oglecounty.org

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BACKGROUND

JAIL PROJECT PLANNING PROCESS

After the substantial completion of the Public Safety Complex project, the LRPC, in October 2015, focused on the next project on its list above, a new jail. For the next year, the LRPC researched many building options and, several site locations were recommended. However, in 2016, the Ogle County Board approved a proposed concept design and site location, on property already owned by the County on Sixth Street in Oregon, behind the current Judicial Center.

JAIL SIZE DETERMINATION

A new jail was determined by a projection of need over the next several decades. While the population of Ogle County has dropped over the last few years, like all of Illinois, there has been a steady increase in population and crime over the last two decades. Criminal activity tends to increase faster than population. When the current jail was built in the late 1960s, it also housed the Sheriff’s Offices and could accommodate only five detainees. Within in two decades of its opening, the Sheriff’s Offices moved out of the old jail on the same block as the current Sheriff’s Office. The jail was then expanded gradually to its current status of 109 jail beds. The changing needs of the Ogle County population over the last five decades illustrates the need to look forward and build to accommodate the future jail population growth.

SITE LOCATION CONSIDERATION

The decision on the location of the jail included several possible options, with the pros and cons of each site weighed, including the block housing the Sheriff and Coroner’s Offices, and a possible location outside of Oregon. First off, the Illinois statutes dictate the County jail and courthouse must be located in the County seat, which narrowed the choices to a location within Oregon. In the end, the approved site location on Sixth Street had so many advantages over the other locations it was nearly an obvious decision of the LRPC. The greatest advantage of the Sixth Street location is the operation efficiency from connecting the jail to the Judicial Center.

CONCEPT DESIGN CRITERIA

The concept design of the new jail was then developed with a need not to look like a typical jail, but to be attractive enough so as not to detract from the residential area that is nearby. Given that criteria, it was also determined that the jail design and concept design of the Judicial Center, so that the final design would be more than sympathetic to its residential area, as well as being complimentary and reflective of the Judicial Center to which it will be connected.

Why do we need a new Jail?

A jail is a necessary part of our Judicial system and the current jail is approaching 50 years in age. From time to time, Ogle County has upgraded the jail facilities, as the Court facilities have been expanded and as current facilities age and become expensive to maintain. All of these circumstances are true for our current facility. First, the State of Illinois, which reviews all jails annually for code compliance, has noted the need for more space, to handle the ever increasing inmate load. For most of the last decade, ruled our facility out of compliance, but has grandfathered the existing facility because a new jail has been a part of Ogle County’s Long Range Plan since July 2003. Second, with the age of the old jail, the County’s maintenance staff spends more time repairing parts of the jail than any other County building.

Why do we need a larger Jail?

The third reason for new jails, mentioned above, is also the necessary key to meeting our changing needs for detention. The size of a jail tends to expand as the population grows, and more importantly must expand, as the crime rate grows, which tends to grow much faster than population. The current jail was built in the late 1960s, when Ogle County’s population was three-quarters of our current population. That jail was built for about twenty inmates, and over the years, has been remodeled to its current capacity of 109 inmates. The walls allow for no more expansion of cell space through remodeling, and the Long Range Planning Committee has planned the new jail, with 180-200 cells, with future expansion of growth in mind as well.

Why build in the City of Oregon?

For efficiency purposes, the jail needs to be located near the courts, which are in the Ogle County Judicial Center on Fifth Street in Oregon. The current Ogle County Jail is the fourth such jail, and all four were located on the Courthouse Square. The courts have added the potential to move to 2005 to the Judicial Center. With the courts now located in the Judicial Center, it gives the County maximum cost efficiency to build the new jail on County-owned property just west of the Judicial Center, and connect the two facilities by closing Sixth Street.

Why build a jail in the middle of Oregon?

If the new facility looked like a “jail,” that would be a legitimate concern. This facility will be designed as a mixed-use, modern, functional, and efficient structure like the Judicial Center. From the outside, it will look like any other government or business facility. There will be no “razor wire” fencing, no public exercise yard with floodlights, and no drab looking block construction. The exercise yard will be located inside the facility, with a large, upper story window to allow the state required sunlight for outdoor exercise.

Has the County considered other locations?

Yes, of course. Three other sites were considered - the existing site, the First Street location on the city block owned by the County and housing the new Sheriff and Coroner Administration Building, and finally a possible location outside of Oregon. Each of these locations had additional drawbacks, besides being less efficient due to the transportation costs.

WHAT’S NEXT?

Why must Sixth Street be closed?

Since the Judicial Center was built in 2005, and the courts moved out of the old Courthouse that is connected to the current jail, all inmates have been transported to their court proceedings via a van, which drives through the Sully Port in the jail (think of it as a garage), one block west to the Sally Port in the Judicial Center that is located on Sixth Street. Connecting the Jail to the Judicial Center would eliminate that need to drive the inmates one block twice. A jail location more than a block from the courts would add the cost of a van, gas, upkeep, plus salaries for a driver and guards, which would be a significantly higher annual cost. Because the Judicial Center was designed for the flow of inmates into and out of the Courthouse on Sixth Street, connecting the Sully Port at Sixth Street that location provides optimal efficiency for the operation of both buildings.

What will the new Jail cost to build?

The project design carries an estimated price tag of $25-28 million, including parking lots and landscaping.

What will the Jail building cost me as a taxpayer?

Instead of placing this cost on your annual property tax bill, like the Judicial Center construction in 2004-2005, the cost of the jail construction will be entirely funded by a secure and reliable outside income source - the host fees received from the two landlords located in Ogle County. When the landlords were opened, nearly eighteen years ago, all of the revenue from the landlords was set aside for the County’s long term capital building needs.

How much will it cost to operate the new jail?

It is estimated that the operational costs could increase slightly, if at all. Due to better technology, it is anticipated that the new jail, even if the full population of 200 inmates were housed, would require only one additional full-time correctional officer. While the facility would be much larger than the current jail, the utility and other operation costs could be offset by more energy efficient construction.

When will the referendum be held?

There is no referendum scheduled at this time. Referendums are also required to complete successfully. This project provides for our necessary and anticipated jail needs for the next 25 to 50 years and beyond. Given the non-compliant and aging nature of the current jail, it is the opinion of the Committee that it is in the best interest of the County that the efficiency of the Sheriff’s Office will be adversely affected. Since the project will be completely funded by an existing income source (see “What will the Jail building cost me as a taxpayer?”), and not on an annual tax levy, the Committee has decided to save the time and expense of a referendum and move directly to the construction phase. Given the absence of another referendum, the Committee will also extend the public comment period - from the normal 30 days to 45 days.

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