

**JO DAVIESS COUNTY BOARD**

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**APRIL 20, 1998**

Chairperson of the Jo Daviess County Board, Judith Gratton, called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. on Monday, April 20, 1998, at the River Ridge High School gymnasium, Elizabeth Illinois.

**ROLL CALL** was answered as follows: Present-Hylene Anderson, Merri Berlage, Ronald Buening, Clifford Carroll, Don Crawford, John Creighton, Judith Gratton, Vincent Hasken, Larry Lyons, William McFadden, Charlice Offenheiser, Richard Runde, John Rutherford, Domer Schubert, Lynn Sisler, James Slaats and Jack Zillig. Present: 17. Absent: 0.

**CHAIRPERSON JUDITH GRATTON** reminded all present that this was a County Board meeting and not a public hearing but would allow a limited time for public comments. Chairperson Gratton explained the procedures and format for the meeting. Audience members were asked to put their questions on note cards and they would be collected and screened. Agendas were made available.

**STEVE HARING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE LRA** discussed the economic development opportunities that were being pursued at the Savanna Army Depot.

He explained that the Depot consists of approximately 13,064 acres. Of that acreage, 9,600 will be used for Natural Resources and Conservation. 250 acres will be used for the expansion of Blanding Landing Campgrounds and a possible river island site for river dredging materials. Another 280-acre parcel will be used for Conservation and Recreation uses. This would leave approximately 3,000 acres for the LRA re-use plan adopted and completed in 1996.

The LRA development plan calls for a broad base redevelopment including industrial, institutional, educational, housing, recreation and administrative opportunities. Mr. Haring explained that the LRA has been ensueing these and other opportunities along with the correctional facility for some time. He said that the prison will be the first anchor for the Savanna Army Depot and this will be where the redevelopment plan will start.

Mr. Haring thanked the board for their support on behalf of the LRA and is looking forward to working with them in future economic development opportunities.

**CHAIRPERSON GRATTON** gave an overview of where the board is at with the prison issue to date. She explained that when it was learned of the appropriation for the construction of a maximum-security prison, she felt as Chairperson, that the County Board should not be placed in a situation where they were asked to support such a facility without having adequate time to discuss the issues. Chairperson Gratton read the motion that was passed at the February 10<sup>th</sup> County Board meeting that read as follows: "Until such time as we are able to determine the financial, social, and environmental impacts of locating a maximum security prison in Jo Daviess County, the board will neither support nor oppose any efforts (including the annexation of part of Jo Daviess County into Carroll County) which would result in the siting of a maximum-security prison in Jo Daviess County." She stated that research was being conducted and a criminologist was scheduled to speak at the April board meeting.

Gratton explained that on March 16 at a meeting to discuss the location of a maximum-security prison at the depot, she was asked about the stand the County Board would take on the

prison. She said that the board was studying the issue and would be discussing it at the April 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. The question was raised on what process would be followed for siting of the prison. They were told the discussion was in the Governor's office.

Chairman Gratton heard nothing more on this issue until March 31<sup>st</sup> when she got a call that the Governor would be at the Savanna Army Depot on April 2<sup>nd</sup> to make an announcement.

Gratton said that at no time was the Jo Daviess County Board formally asked for a stand on the issue of siting a maximum-security prison in Jo Daviess County.

**ODIE WASHINGTON**, Director of the Department of Corrections was introduced by Chairperson Gratton.

Director Washington noted that his being at the meeting was a little different from the normal process. "The fact that we are here after the decision has been made is a little unusual," Washington said.

Mr. Washington said he was here to address concerns the public might have in regards to a siting of a maximum-security prison at the Savanna Army Depot. He said the Department of Corrections has a strong respect for all communities in Illinois and believes in the Democratic process.

Mr. Washington explained the prison siting process in Illinois. He said when monies are appropriated for the construction of a prison in Illinois, the Department communicates with all communities where there is a desire to build a prison and invites applications throughout the state. They normally get between 30 to 35 applications for each siting. By a process of evaluation, those applications are broken down to about seven or eight in which public hearings are held. Consideration is taken if the community supported or opposed the prison. The Department only looks at the sites that are proposed to them by the proper authority. The selection is then made from three or four finalists that have been recommended to the Governor.

The LRA submitted an application in 1995 for a proposed facility that was eventually sited elsewhere in the state.

In 1996 an application was submitted for another facility. A public forum was held in Stockton, Illinois. Again, the Savanna Army Depot was not selected.

Last January, the decision to site another maximum-security prison in Illinois was made. The Department looked at applications that recently were in the process. The Department recommended to the Governor that the Savanna Army Depot was the best site.

Director Washington said this would be a state of the art facility using the latest technology in design concepts ensuring the highest level of security possible. It will be illuminated with high power lights and the main access road will be the main road to the depot. Date of completion is scheduled around the year 2000.

Director Washington commented on the following concerns and impacts the prison would have on the community.

### **ECONOMIC IMPACT:**

The prison will employ 465 staff and generate a payroll of approximately \$25 million dollars.

The prison population will be included in the county count and will count for such programs as reimbursements for motor fuel tax.

The Department also maintains a program for reimbursement with the local State's Attorney's office for any additional costs related to the process of cases related to the facility.

There will also be a boost to local businesses.

The Department works directly with the State Police. They are the first response. The

facility will not create additional work for local law enforcement. It will also have very little impact on local fire departments.

A field court system will be installed for local court cases that would eliminate the need to transport inmates to the local court.

The facility will maintain a full medical 16-bed infirmary.

Security will be very high. There have been 18 new institutions built in Illinois over the last couple of years and not one escape has taken place from those facilities.

#### **SOCIAL IMPACT:**

Fear of increase of crime from gang activities is highly overrated.

Property values see very little impact and usually increase.

Inmates very rarely relocate in the community after release.

There are no plans at this time to build an additional facility at this site.

The site will be located off the road and will not be visible.

The facility will not have a negative impact on tourism.

The employees are well-trained and very desirable members of the community.

Mr. Washington concluded by saying that this community has been involved in the process of site selection since 1995 and he has been very impressed with the county's concerns for studying all issues of the prison. There has never been a prison built in Illinois that didn't have some opposition. The Department tries to look at the overall view of the community.

**COUNTY BOARD MEMBERS** and Jo Daviess County Department Heads were allowed time to ask questions of Mr. Washington.

**SHERIFF STEVE ALLENDORF** expressed his concerns with the families of inmates that do move into the area. He asked what problems are typically associated with them and what impact they would have on the local Social Services.

Director Washington reiterated that very few families move to the area and of the ones that do he believes there will be very little impact on increase of crime or the use of local Social Services.

In addition, Sheriff Allendorf addressed the issue of an inmate that has served his time and is up for release but is wanted in another state. The sheriff questioned if the inmate would be held in the local county jail for to await transfer.

Director Washington explained that only if there was going to be a delay in the transfer would the local sheriff be asked to house the inmate until arrangements could be made for pick-up.

**CIRCUIT CLERK SHARON WAND** questioned if she would have to staff an on-site courtroom at the prison.

Mr. Washington said there would be video conferencing from the prison to the courthouse. This allows the inmates to stay at the prison and eliminates the travel for the court personnel.

**JUDGE JOHN RAPP**, Chief Judge of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, inquired as to whom would be responsible for costs of installing and maintaining the video conferencing equipment at the courthouse and prison.

Director Washington commented that the Department of Corrections would work with local officials at the time of implementation of the video conferencing plan.

**COUNTY BOARD MEMBER JOHN RUTHERFORD** stated that the main gate would be in Carroll County, 5 miles away from the actual location of the prison in Jo Daviess County. He questioned whether Mr. Washington had any prior situations where one county would reap the benefits over the other such as employees living in Savanna but Jo Daviess County would be responsible for the roads.

Mr. Washington assured Mr. Rutherford that all surrounding communities would benefit from the siting of the prison.

Mr. Rutherford asked if the Department of Corrections would help with the railroad crossing and the roads leading to the prison.

Director Washington said they would be more than happy to work with the County on these issues.

**COUNTY BOARD MEMBER JOHN CREIGHTON** questioned what percentage of the 90 million-dollar project would be awarded to local contractors opposed to contractors outside the area.

Karl Becker, Deputy Director, Administration and Finance of the Department of Corrections, commented that possibly larger firms would get the contract but would hire local subcontractors to complete much of the work.

**COUNTY BOARD MEMBER MERRI BERLAGE** asked Director Washington to explain the term “Circuit Rider” prisoners.

Director Washington told her that “Circuit Rider” prisoners are prisoners that are continually disruptive. There was a practice of moving this type of inmate around from facility to facility and not allowing them to stay at one institution for a long period of time. He said this program has been since abolished with the inception of Super-Max prisons. Now all such prisoners are transferred to the Super-Max prison in Pontiac where regulations are very rigid with a 23 hour a day lockdown.

**COUNTY BOARD MEMBER JACK ZILLIG** questioned if there was a possibility of more facilities being built at that location and would the community have input or would it be left to the discretion of the Department of Corrections.

Director Washington commented that even though this is an excellent site for expansion there were no present plans for an additional facility to be built in the near future.

**COUNTY BOARD MEMBER DOMER SCHUBERT** asked if prisoners who perform duties such as laundry and food service are considered employees and included in the projection of the number of jobs created by the prison.

Director Washington said inmate services would not be included in projected job numbers.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS** were heard from individuals who were both for and against the siting of a prison in the County.

JIM BARANSKI of Galena proposed a solution to the County Board and Department of Corrections to construct the prison in Savanna. He feels this would be a simple solution and also show support to the people in Hanover who would be located only 1½ miles from presently proposed location.

RICK DELVAUX of Hanover, who is a member of Village Board, commented that the village voted three to two not to support the prison. He said he was unable to attend the meeting the

vote was taken but if he had been there he would have voted to support it.

LINDA HOWARD of Hanover explained that Jo Daviess County is presently made up of small businesses, agriculture and tourism with a low unemployment rate. She noted the two new businesses locating in East Dubuque, the expansion of Stockton and the thousands of dollars recently raised for a new fort and information center in Elizabeth. She feels with so much interest and expansion in the County the Savanna Army Depot could be better utilized for this type of economic development instead of a prison.

KATHY BRUNNER from Mt. Carroll has friends and family members who live within a few miles of the access road to the Depot. She said they are not afraid of the siting of the prison at the Depot and she believes that there is room for other economic opportunities at the Savanna Army Depot along with the prison without adverse affects.

TIFFANY WILLARD a Galena High School student stated she is supportive of the prison. She feels it will create good jobs for the future. She said that tourism will not be around forever and Jo Daviess County needs this prison.

BRIAN SCHOENROCK of Galena read a statement of prison reality he received from his brother who is a maximum-security correctional officer at Leavenworth, Kansas, a maximum-security federal prison. He read that rules and civilized society no longer apply and are replaced by violence, corrosion and intimidation. Strong, hardened inmates prey on the weaker ones. Sexual assaults and rape are commonplace. In order to survive, inmates must join gangs for protection. With the influence of these gangs, which extend well beyond the prison compound, it is reasonable to expect an increase in gang presence in Jo Daviess and Carroll County.

JACK FOSDICK, a Savanna city councilman, disputed the point that the benefits from the prison will all go to Carroll County while the problems will go to Jo Daviess County. He said the government allocated money to benefit certain areas, not just one area. He believes that both counties will benefit and people should consider the DOC's past record, which he finds to be very fair.

JANET FISHER of Hanover, chairperson of the Galena Railroad Development Committee has been trying to get a passenger train to come to Galena for the past four years. She said she was making progress with a private company until they learned of the prison. She said all progress came to a halt. She expressed her concern that the prison is already affecting tourism in the County.

CARRIE FOLEY a Galena High School Student said she is in favor of the prison because of all the jobs it will provide.

JOHN STRUM of Hanover reminded Director Washington that at the public forum in Stockton he made a comment that the Department of Corrections listens to the people of the communities considered for a prison siting and they never place a prison where it is not wanted. When the Depot was not chosen at that time, Mr. Sturm was told if an application were looked at again, the same public process would take place. He feels this process was ignored. He said he hopes the County Board will take a non-support position on the prison siting. He commented that his group is prepared to fight and will take the issue to court if necessary.

SAM HAAS of East Dubuque stated that a major employer of East Dubuque was lost due to a fire a few years ago. He said that with the closing of the Depot the County is losing another major employer. He feels that the prison will provide good paying jobs to replace the lost ones. He feels that the prison will be just a start of many businesses coming to the Savanna Army Depot area.

LAWRENCE PETTERA of Hanover, who lives just a few blocks from the prison siting, asked Director Washington if he would like a prison in his back yard Director Washington answered Mr. Pettera by saying he has spent the last 25 years around prisons. He commented that he has lived and raised his children on prison grounds with no regrets.

HOLLY MARKS of Elizabeth stated that she is a mother of 5 and would not want her children working at a prison or around any drug traffic that she knows will be here with a prison. She feels the LRA has some good plans for the Savanna Army Depot that do not have to include a prison.

TROY MILLER, formerly of Hanover stated that he would like an opportunity to come home to Hanover. He feels that the jobs the prison will provide would help with that opportunity. He asked the board when they planned their vacations did they call the area to see if they had a prison located nearby. He feels a prison will have no effect on tourism.

ED DUPLESIS of Galena read excerpts from the Chicago Tribune. It reads; We have gangs in Illinois prisons. We face one of the most crowded and explosive prison systems in the country. Administrators and officers literally put their lives on the line each day. We have more gang oriented inmates in our institutions than any other prison system in the country. Aggressive, sophisticated inmate population. Crowded, highly volatile facilities. Mr. DuPlessis stated that these were not the types of individuals he would like to be associated with. He asked why can't the prison be left out of Jo Daviess County and find another place for it. He cited many other possible uses for the Savanna Army Depot but stated that a prison at that location would kill off those potential economic developments.

**THE COUNTY BOARD** and the Department of Corrections addressed responses to audience questions submitted by written statements.

Question-Does the County Board feel they have been locked out of this decision?

Answer-Board member Ron Buening stated that he felt locked out at first because of lack of notification, but after examination of a great amount of information on correctional institutions throughout the country which seem to be working, he said he did not find the fears that are generated here in any of his reading.

Question-What input do citizens have in the siting of a prison?

Answer-Director Washington stated that public hearings are held and the Department looks at all sides. He said they also look at the overall needs of the community.

Question-Is there a requirement for an environmental impact study?

Answer-Director Washington reported that there have been several impact studies completed and the site was chosen with the consideration of those results.

Question-Will jobs be allocated to age groups?

Answer- Director Washington said there is no job discrimination by age but there is a minimum 18-year requirement.

Question-How secure will the prison be?

Answer-Director Washington stated that there has not been a maximum-security prison built in this state since 1940. This will be a state of the art facility and will be built on the concept of very controlled, restricted movement under maximum seclusion. He said that there is no other facility in the state that is built like this.

Question-Can this issue be put to referendum?

Answer-County Clerk Jean Dimke explained that an advisory question does not fit the qualifications for a special election and could only be put on a regularly scheduled election. The next election is November 3, 1998.

Question-What has been the experience in other areas with regard to crime and what about crime in the prison, especially with staff as victims?

Answer-Director Washington stated that this is a maximum-security prison and bad things happen in a maximum-security prison. He did say the Department of Corrections is very good at their business. As far as additional crime in the area, the prison will bring no more crime than what is already here.

Question-Please respond to Lee County Sheriff's quote in the April 19 Telegraph Herald that "There will be a gang influence because it is in the prison. That brings people related to gangs to the community".

Answer-Many people who are incarcerated are gang related. That's part of the reason they are there. But evidence does not present itself that there will be a spillover effect into the community.

Question-What is involved in funding in regards to medical care for prisoners, court cost and roads and what is the Department's share of funding?

Answer-All inmates' medical care is covered by the State. The Department will reimburse the State's Attorney's office for any additional cost they incur for the prosecution of the Department's cases. The Department will maintain the roads on the prison property and generally the county will be responsible for roads accessing the property.

Question-In a Telegraph Herald article a prison official said about 20% of the correctional jobs actually go to local people. You say most of the jobs go to locals. Who is right? What is the truth?

Answer-The Department's experience has been that about 80% of the jobs go to people from the local area.

Question-What effect would the prison have on recreational activities such as fishing and hunting? Would this be allowed or would it be stopped?

Answer-Inmates for the minimum-security prison actually work to develop those areas.

Question-At Monterey, California where Fort Ord Army base was closed, a branch of the University of California has now opened. Has the Board considered an educational facility?

Answer-Steve Haring of the LRA said the board has considered educational options and has

talked to the Regional Superintendent's office, Area Vocational Schools and Highland Community College about the possibilities.

Question-How much does it cost to house a prisoner for 1 year including food, shelter, social and educational costs and who pays for this?

Answer-It costs approximately \$17,000 a year to house an inmate and all the costs fall on the State of Illinois.

Question-Jo Daviess County is second only to Chicago as the most popular tourist destination in Illinois. Many people visit Palisades State Park. Will there be road signs warning visitors not to pick up hitchhikers as well as the signs designating the recreation area?

Answer-These signs are not placed around parks and recreation areas.

Question-How are the LRA members selected and who are they accountable to? How do they get the authority to initiate this?

Answer-Steve Haring explained that the LRA board gets their authority to act from a bi-county agreement between the Carroll and Jo Daviess County boards.

**A MOTION** to adopt a resolution recommending the prison be sited in Carroll County was made by John Rutherford.

The motion failed for lack of a second.

**A MOTION** for the Jo Daviess County Board to support the siting of a maximum-security prison in Jo Daviess County was made by William McFadden, seconded by John Creighton.

Jack Zillig commented that he knows more about prisons now than he ever thought he would. He asked if anything would be gained by the effort that was put forth here tonight or is it water over the dam.

John Rutherford said he believes that State of Illinois pays absolutely no attention to Jo Daviess County by the way they sited this prison and he intends to vote against the siting.

Ronald Buening stated that he has lived here for 62 years and life in Jo Daviess County has changed. He said he wants young people to come back to Galena and Jo Daviess County and they will come back if there are jobs.

John Creighton said he has been a lifelong resident of the county and stated that without decent employment the county will cater to tourists and retirees.

Ronald Buening called for the question.

The calling of the question carried by voice vote ending all debate.

The original motion for the Jo Daviess County Board to support the siting of a maximum security prison in Jo Daviess County carried by roll call vote: Ayes-Hylene Anderson, Merri Berlage, Ronald Buening, Clifford Carroll, Don Crawford, John Creighton, Vincent Hasken, Larry Lyons, William McFadden, Charlice Offenheiser, Richard Runde, Domer Schubert and Jack Zillig. Ayes: 13. Nays-Judith Gratton, John Rutherford, Lynn Sisler and James Slaats. Nays: 4.

**THE MEETING ADJOURNED** following a motion made by Don Crawford, seconded by Ronald Buening.

Motion carried by voice vote.

Chairperson Judith Gratton, adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m. until 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 12, 1998 at the County Board Room, Jo Daviess County Courthouse, Galena, Illinois.

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Jean Dimke, County Clerk