

First Interim Report Of The Boone County Judicial & Law Enforcement Task Force May 21, 2001

This is the First Interim Report from the Boone County Judicial and Law Enforcement Task Force. The purpose of this report is to update the Citizens of Boone County regarding the Task Force's initial organizational status and to give some sense of where the Task Force anticipates going with its work.

The Task Force has now met as a whole on two occasions:

The first meeting was held on April 4. The primary purpose of the first meeting was to give the members an opportunity to get acquainted with one another. At the same time, a packet of resource materials was presented to each member. The materials included Boone County Budget information; prison and prisoner statistics; a recent article authored by the Department of Justice entitled **A Second Look At Jail Overcrowding, Systems Perspective**; a copy of the 1997 Jail Task Force Report; and several needs assessments completed by Boone County in recent years. At the same meeting, the Court Services Office of the 13th Judicial Circuit (Boone and Callaway County) provided current statistics from the court system.

At the second meeting, on April 18, the Task Force participated in a national videoconference conducted by the Department of Justice and the National Institute of Corrections entitled **Alleviating Jail Overcrowding: A Systematic Approach**. Interestingly, the conference was based upon the Department of Justice article mentioned above. The conference was an excellent introduction to some (if not all) of the issues that the Task Force will be facing. The conference also told us that the Task Force was on the right track with regard to its membership base, but that we needed some additional input in two areas: local law enforcement and bail bonds.

A third meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, June 6. The Task Force will tour the Courthouse, the Government Center, the Jail and Sheriff's Office, and, possibly, the Juvenile Justice Center. At the same time, it is anticipated that a budget overview will be presented by the Budget, Finance & Information System Committee.

The Task Force has been broken down into four Committees:

- Law Enforcement Committee
- Jail/Sheriff's Office Facilities Committee
- Courthouse Facilities Committee
- Budget, Finance & Information System Committee

It was the intention that the titles of the Committees give a sense of the work assignment of each of the Committees.

Specifically, though, the Law Enforcement Committee will take a look at law enforcement needs in the county and will seek public opinion on those needs.

The two "Facilities" committees, Courthouse and Jail/Sheriff's Office, will assess the current and future requirements of the their respective facilities. It will not be their purpose to reinvent the "needs assessments" studies that have been recently conducted. However, they will review the philosophical approach utilized in the making of those studies.

The Budget, Finance and Information System Committee will deal with the money issues, but particularly, and based upon a primary recommendation of the 1997 Jail Task Force, they will seek to develop and implement a "Point of Sentencing" unified, computer data base system so that the Court, the Prosecutor, the Public Defender, the Jail, the Sheriff, the Commission and the Public can simultaneously and instantaneously communicate with one another and share available data regarding the criminal justice system in Boone County.¹

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Direct quote from the 1997 Jail Task Force Report: "**Observation:** The (1997 Jail) Task Force was surprised at the lack of statistical communication and informational exchange between the Sheriff's Office, the Prosecutor's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Circuit Clerk's Office and the Judiciary and the absence of periodic review of each other's data and insight. Although it was clear that each of the offices was willing to share their information with the others, historically, no such sharing was occurring. It was obvious from the very outset of the Task Force work that regardless of how much the Sheriff, the Prosecutor, the Public Defender, the Circuit Clerk's Office and the Judiciary wanted to cooperate with one another and the Task Force so as to create a statistical base for study, the collection of the data as well as the assimilation of the data for interpretation was difficult and time consuming: generally, each contributor had their own computer system and accompanying software. Although the Task Force recognizes that each office is a "stand alone" entity and they must each retain their autonomy, meeting regularly and candidly discussing common issues can only serve the common good.

1. Recommendation: Creation of a network system and software program for use by the Sheriff's Office, the Prosecutor's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Circuit Clerk's Office and the Judiciary which permits the continuous monitoring of cases (particularly misdemeanors which regularly end in "time served"), bookings, commitments; the monitoring of persons serving long sentences; and any and all other statistical information referenced in this Report.

Of the 3 Recommendations contained in the **Administration-Not Immediate** category, this Recommendation was given a No. 1 Priority by the Task Force based upon the cost of implementation of the **Recommendation**; the time required to implement the **Recommendation**; and the anticipated impact on the reduction of the jail population.

The Spread of the Task Force Members' expression of how they felt about this Recommendation on a 1 to 5, 5 point scale from **Strongly Agree** to **Strongly Disagree** was as follows:

11	members graded this a 1
0	members graded this a 2
1	member graded this a 3
0	members graded this a 4
0	members graded this a 5

The **Average** score expression was **1.16**

Note 1: The Sheriff should be able to provide particular assistance in the area of pretrial misdemeanors. Presently, there is an informal procedure being used to monitor these cases, but tighter case management could favorably impact upon the Jail population. This is especially true of cases where the sentence is going to be "timed served."

The Chairs of the four Committees comprise the Executive Committee of the Task Force.

- Gary Stangler, former Director of the Department of Social Services for the State of Missouri, and long-time Boone County citizen, will serve as Chair of the Law Enforcement Committee.
- Jerome “Rusty” Antel, former Assistant Prosecutor for Boone County, member of the Criminal Defense Bar and former member of the 1997 Jail Task Force, will serve as Chair of the Jail/Sheriff Office Facilities Committee.
- David Griggs, Boone County native and former Boone County Commissioner, will serve as Chair of the Courthouse Facilities Committee.
- Colleen Coble, former City of Columbia Councilperson and current Executive Director of the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence, will Chair Budget, Finance & Information System Committee.

Each of these professionals is an independent thinker, with vast experience in leading and directing problem-solving, goal-oriented groups. All are in the process of calling their first Committee meetings.

For each Committee, a Resource Advisor has been appointed. Each Advisor is a person known to have extensive knowledge in a particular area; a professional that will be able to provide immediate, objective information to each of our Committees. Two of the Advisors serve on the Committee they advise, two do not.

- Sheriff Ted Boehm will serve as Resource Advisor for the Law Enforcement Committee.
- Warden Warren Brewer will serve as Resource Advisor for the Jail/Sheriff Office Facilities Committee.
- Director of Court Services Robert Perry will serve as Resource Advisor for the Courthouse Facilities Committee.
- Boone County Auditor June Pitchford will serve as Resource Advisor for the Budget, Finance & Information System Committee.

There are currently 30 members on the Task Force. Committee assignments are as follows. In all but one or two instances, the members of the Task Force have been assigned to their first or second choice of committees. The assignments have been reviewed and approved by the Chairs of the Committees:

- **Law Enforcement Committee:**
 1. Gary Stangler, Chair
 2. Michael Lyman
 3. June Pitchford
 4. Kevin Crane

Note 2: The Sheriff and the Prosecutor presently communicate with one another. With ease, the Public Defender could be added to the system.”

5. Raymond Hayes
6. Ted Boehm
7. Rene Bennett
8. Dan Viets
9. Mary Ann McCollum
10. Al Tacker
11. Randy Boehm
12. Fred Otto

- **Jail/Sheriff Office Facilities Committee**

1. Rusty Antel, Chair
2. Wynna Faye Elbert
3. Warren Brewer
4. Dennis Winfrey
5. Mark Pfeiffer
6. Elaine Larson
7. Rob Fleming²

- **Courthouse Facilities Committee**

1. David Griggs, Chair
2. Frank Conley
3. Robert Perry
4. Leigh Voltmer
5. Sue Turner

- **Budget, Finance & Information System Committee**

1. Colleen Coble, Chair
2. Tom Quinn
3. Doug Moore
4. Don Stamper
5. Kay Murray

Additionally, it is anticipated that the Commission will shortly appoint a bail bondsperson to the Task Force.

Finally, the Commission is in the process of recruiting local county law enforcement leaders to serve on an advisory panel to the Task Force.

As a further checks and balances and to insure that the Task Force considers all points of view, philosophies and alternatives, popular or unpopular, each Committee Chair has designated (or will designate) one of their members to serve as a devil's

² Former Boone County Public Defender Rob Fleming is shown as a member on the Jail/Sheriff's Office Facilities Committee. In that he has moved from that position, it is anticipated that the Commission will shortly appoint a new member from the Public Defender's Office.

advocate. The member so-designated will be encouraged by the Committee Chair to openly, but respectfully, challenge the views of the Committee so as to draw out all of the issues.

Although there are many issues to consider, the Chair and the Committee Chairs shall have the right and obligation to limit the issues that are addressed by the Task Force and the Committees, so that the Task Force can accomplish its Mission³ within a reasonable period of time.

As Chair, I have drafted a set of standing rules which will govern the deliberations of the Task Force and, in turn, the deliberations of the Committees. The rules have been developed with an eye toward alternative and innovative problem solving . . . trying to find answers to our problems without looking to solve them, in a knee jerk fashion, with taxpayer money. This is not to say that the Task Force will not make recommendation(s) that could have a financial impact upon the Citizens of Boone County, but it is to say that we will approach our Mission in a manner which forces us to fully research non-money alternatives.

The Task Force's Standing Rules are as follows:

- **Prime Directive:** Assume that there is **no** money available to remedy any needs that you might identify.
 - Through your Resource Advisor and through whatever other sources you deem appropriate:
 - Identify the needs.
 - Prioritize the needs.
 - Identify when the needs must be met, i.e. immediately, in a year, in 5 years, never, etc.
 - Determine what it will take to remedy each need and if it will take money (**see the Prime Directive**), estimate the cost.
 - Suggest means or alternative means of meeting each need.
 - Report to the Budget, Finance Information System Committee.
 - Report to the Task Force.

With the help of Mike Robertson, Boone County Office of Information Technology, the Task Force has a website:

www.showmeboone.com/judicialtaskforce.

We are hopeful that the site will serve as the hub of information for the Task Force and the Community. Though it is a work in progress, it will serve as a means for Task Force to Task Force communications as well as a means for the Public to communicate with the Task Force, the Chairs of the Committees and the individual Task Force members. In that public input plays such an important role in the Task

³ To study available resources and to create a plan to maximize the effective long-term use of the Boone County Jail, the Courthouse and the Sheriff's Office, while meeting the needs of Boone County for continued, quality law enforcement and a balanced budget.

Force work, we anticipate using the website for public surveys. If anyone has any suggestions with regard to the use of the Website, please send us an email.

On our website, you can access a copy of our organizational chart. Tongue in cheek, we've been told that the Chart has a lot of boxes in it. It does. However, at the same time, it sets out with specificity, the Task Force's organization, membership, jobs and plan of action (as partially described in this Interim Report). One of the first criticisms of the Task Force has been that it was "too large" . . . "too many people to really accomplish anything." At first blush that may appear to be a valid comment. However, there are many issues to address. By breaking up the Task Force into subcommittees, appointing strong chairs of each Committee and insuring that each Committee is staffed with a balance of knowledgeable citizens, it turns what might be considered a detriment into a clear advantage. In a phrase: we need everyone we've got.

No deadline has been set for the completion of the Task Force work. We are hopeful that our final report date will be set after the first or second round of Committee meetings.

All Task Force meetings will be posted as open to the public. We must have everyone's input so that we don't miss considering something that needs to be considered.

In closing this Interim Report, I extend my thanks to the Task Force members, and particularly, those members who have agreed to assume extra responsibilities as Chairs, Resource Advisors and Advocates. It is clear that our work involves many complicated issues, but we have assembled a sharp group of innovative thinkers and problem solvers who will do their very best to help make good decisions for the future of Boone County. Let's get to it.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Oxenhandler
Chair
Boone County Judicial & Law
Enforcement Task Force