

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Rocky Mountain Corrections Jail Proposal**  
**November 18, 2013**  
**9:00 a.m.**

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Todd Tondee, Commissioner Dan Green and Commissioner Jai Nelson met to discuss the following agenda items. Also present were Finance Director David McDowell, Sheriff Ben Wolfinger, Undersheriff Travis Chaney, Chief Deputy Clerk Pat Raffee, Major Neal Robertson, Administrative Assistant Dorinda Thurman, Rocky Mountain Corrections President Walt Femling and Justice Consultant Earl Engleman, Municipal Capital Markets Group Senior Vice President James Anderson, Fundamental Advisors Representatives Dana Fusaris and Cody Noll, Contractors Northwest Chairman/CEO Dean Haagenon, and Deputy Clerk Nancy Jones.

**A. Call to Order:** Chairman Tondee called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

**B. Introductions:** There were no introductions made.

**C. Changes to the Agenda:** There were no changes made to the agenda.

**D. Old Business:** There was no old business discussed.

**E. New Business:**

The attendees gathered to discuss current jail needs and expenditures, as well as the potential demand, costs, revenues, and options with regard to future expansion. Commissioner Green stated that the Rocky Mountain Corrections jail proposal has been reviewed by the Board and the Auditor's Office, and that concerns exist because estimated revenues appear to be lower than originally anticipated. Commissioner Green went on to detail several discussions that he has had with other parties who might be interested in cooperative use of a new jail facility (including the City and County of Spokane and the United States Marshall's Office). Sheriff Ben Wolfinger noted that the inmate population is increasing, and that potential revenues are already being lost due to inmate transfers necessitated by the lack of available space. Sheriff Wolfinger estimated that out-of-county inmate housing is currently costing the County about \$2,000 per day, plus transportation costs. The group considered options that would allow for a smaller project scope, but Sheriff Wolfinger and Commissioner Green stressed that building to only meet capacity would merely serve as a short-term solution (less than five (5) years). Sheriff Wolfinger proposed alternative uses for the current jail, should the County move forward with construction of a new facility. Commissioner Green noted that, per the Department of Corrections, the proposed jail would require Kootenai County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) oversight, and could not be run as a private facility. Budgetary concerns and regional jail needs were discussed. Rocky Mountain Corrections President Walt Femling commented that their design was for a cell facility, without dorms. This design lowers costs by reducing control center needs and allowing for staff consolidation on overnight shifts. Estimates project that jail staff could be reduced by as many as fifteen (15) employees, resulting in considerable savings.

The Board discussed the future progression of this issue, including timelines, required processes, and the level of commitment necessary to move forward with approval. Commissioner Nelson suggested that internal work should be done to analyze maintenance costs and revenues, examine uses for the existing jail, and consider lease alternatives. Overall, the group agreed that inmate housing needs will continue to increase, and that cooperative agreements with other entities will remain a possible source of revenue, since no other new regional facilities are being planned at this time. Sheriff Wolfinger noted that solid alternative programs exist for lesser offenses, but that approximately seventy percent (70%) of County inmates have felony convictions with long-term sentences. Sheriff Wolfinger stated that this number is not expected to decrease and that, eventually, our jail will be filled to capacity even without renting beds to other entities. Justice Consultant Earl Engleman reminded the Board that once the lease facility is operative, purchase options would be available. Mr. Engleman noted that this may benefit the County financially in the long term, and he outlined the benefits of a lease-to-purchase approach for expansion.

The Board determined that a meeting should be scheduled with the Sheriff, Legal, and the Auditor's Office, in order to analyze financial and operational considerations, prior to approving or rejecting this proposal. If approved, the Board will be responsible for determining an allowable budget for this project and informing Rocky Mountain Corrections of their intent to proceed. Mr. Femling thanked the Board for their diligence on this matter, and asked for a final determination as soon as possible, noting that construction and land costs will increase and that time is of the essence.

**F. Staff Reports:** There were no staff reports.

**G. Public Comment:** This section is reserved for citizens wishing to address the Board regarding a County related issue. There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

CLIFFORD T. HAYES, CLERK

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nancy A. Jones, Deputy Clerk