

Meherrin River Regional Jail Authority Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 27, 2025

The Meherrin River Regional Jail Authority Board held their meeting in the Meherrin River Regional Jail Board Room.

I. Call To Order

Members Present are as follows:

Kevin Massengill, Dinwiddie County Administrator
Captain Steve Kennedy, Dinwiddie County Sheriff's Office
Captain Joseph Lopresti, Brunswick County Sheriff's Office
Dr. Alfonso Seward, Brunswick County Board of Supervisors
Major Brent Evans, Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office
Alex Gottschalk, Mecklenburg County Administrator
Tom Tanner, Mecklenburg County Board of Supervisors

Others in attendance are as follows:

Crystal Willett, Superintendent
Rodney Jacobs, Lieutenant Colonel
Brendan Hefty, Hefty, Wiley & Gore, P.C.
Casey Dooley, Dinwiddie County Board of Supervisors
Jennifer Derrenbacker, Finance Director
Shelley Slaughter, Executive Secretary

II. Approval of Agenda

Tom Tanner made a motion to approve the February 27, 2025 agenda. Captain Joseph Lopresti seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

III. Approval of Minutes

Major Brent Evans made a motion to approve the November 7, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes. Captain Steve Kennedy seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

IV. New Business

B. Superintendent's Report

1. Presentation – Lieutenant Colonel Rodney Jacobs gave a brief presentation on the demographics of shift personnel and the offender population.

After a brief discussion regarding the difficulty in hiring new officers, Captain Joseph Lopresti inquired about hiring part time officers that have retired from law enforcement. They would be drawing their VRS but may be willing to work minimum hours to cover their insurance. Superintendent Crystal Willett stated that the Board did approve the Jail to hire part time employees, but in the past 2 years after offering this option to MRRJ retirees as well as officers that could no longer work 40 hrs. due to personal issues, we have had no luck finding anyone that was interested. Captain Joseph Lopresti recommended looking at outside agencies as well, such as the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department. He feels he may have a few that would be interested over the next few years. There is a timeline on how long they can be out of service before they will have to go to DCJS for minimum training. After discussion it was agreed that this was a great idea and if anyone knew of a law enforcement officer that is retiring, offer this option to them.

Kevin Massengill asked for an update on the school program that Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Department is working on. Major Brent Evans stated they have a meeting on March 5th to get more information on how they need to teach, what they can or cannot teach, how graphic they can be and what weeks they would be teaching. Each discipline will teach 1 week and will be 4 times each semester. MRRJ is interested in participating. Major Brent Evans stated the Jail could possibly teach 1 day a week and the sessions are 90 minutes. Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Department will keep in touch and update MRRJ as things progress. The first semester is a go.

2. Monthly Status Report – The Monthly Status Report for the months of November 2024 through January 2025 was presented.

For the month of February 2025 we have had no new hires, no resignations and one transfer. A shift officer was transferred to Intake. In recent applications we have received, 1 person has 3 sexual assault charges at a treatment center that he currently works at and a few have significant drug charges. We are continuing to make every effort to advertise our openings such as Indeed and social media. We have 2 new officers approved pending physicals and drug tests that will start in March 2025.

Taxi Service - When an offender is released and they do not have a ride, we offer them taxi service. We have several companies that we can call, however in some instances these taxi services will not respond. We recently added an additional transportation service to our call list to help with this. However, we cannot force an offender to accept the taxi service we provide and in rare instances must release them without transportation. During the past few weeks, it has been extremely cold. Fortunately, no one was released during this period without transportation. We have purchased coats, hats, etc. in the case that an offender does not have warm clothing when released without transportation to ensure they have protection from the extreme cold weather.

Career Day – Major Brent Evans asked if MRRJ attends Career Day at any of the schools. The Jail does when invited. He stated that he would reach out to the person in Mecklenburg County that is in charge of this and ensure that the Jail is added to the invitation list. Captain Joseph Lopresti stated that Brunswick County Chamber of Commerce used to host these events and are planning to start them again next year.

3. Quarterly Financial Report – 2nd Quarter FY2025 – As of December 31, 2024, we have collected 43.39% of our budgeted revenues and spent 37.63% of our budgeted expenses. Expenses are slightly lower than revenues due to lower ADP and staff vacancies. At the end of the second quarter, ADP was 242 with Brunswick accounting for 28%, Dinwiddie 31% and Mecklenburg 41%.

Using the 3 year rolling average to calculate our True-Ups, as of December 31, 2024, the Actual True-Up shows Brunswick would receive a refund of \$68,111, Dinwiddie would owe \$91,716, and Mecklenburg would receive a refund of \$23,606.

The Projected True-Up as of June 30, 2025 shows that Brunswick would receive a refund of \$135,111, Dinwiddie would owe \$181,937 and Mecklenburg would receive a refund of \$46,826.

4. Upcoming ITB – An ITB will be issued in February 2025 for Housekeeping and Janitorial Supplies. The initial period of our contract with Birsch Industries expires on June 20, 2025. We have the option to renew for two additional one-year periods, however, we would like to put this ITB back out to bid to ensure we are receiving the best service and pricing.

We will evaluate all bids prior to the May 2025 Board Meeting in order for the Board to vote and approve the final selection.

5. Proposed FY26 Budget – The FY26 budget has been prepared with the goal of maintaining low operational costs while providing exceptional service to our offenders, staff and community. The budget was prepared using financial data from FY13 through FY24.

Our ADP is decreasing to 270 for FY26. This is determined by using a 3 year weighted average. The total budget is increasing 3.35% due to a decrease in ADP which in turn causes several revenue lines to decrease. We are also having an increase in fixed costs such as the medical contract and several other service contracts. Total locality contributions are decreasing 0.5%. We are able to do this by increasing our interest income revenue line from \$400,000 to \$650,000. We are anticipating our interest for FY25 to be \$788,000.

There are two estimates in the proposed budget. We are waiting on the final rates for VACORP and we are waiting for information regarding our health insurance. We have been self-funded for quite some time, but due to the fact that our staffing has decreased below 90, we may not be able to maintain self-funded status. We have been working with McGriff, our Broker, and may need to go to a level-funded option. This option looks very promising and we would not lose any benefits and the cost is the same. We are comfortable with the estimate proposed in the budget, but we are waiting on the final results.

A few of the large changes in expenses are as follows:

- Food costs are decreasing due to lower ADP.
- Medical services are increasing by 2.9%, which is a CPI increase.
- Academy dues increased by 13%.

- 3% salary increase for all positions effective July 1, 2025.
- 1.5% Bonus for all employees effective July 1, 2025.

We have included \$3.14 million in Reserve Funds to balance the budget and lower locality contributions. \$553,387 is from the Reserve Fund, \$2,310,565 is from the Rate Stabilization Fund and \$276,927 is from Unrestricted Fund Balance.

The operational per diem is increasing which is due to ADP decreasing which causes several revenue lines to decrease. This decrease in revenue along with an increase in fixed costs causes the per diem to increase to cover higher fixed costs at a lower ADP. This budget is prepared on a 3-year rolling average. Brunswick's contribution in decreasing to \$1,999,742, Dinwiddie's is increasing to \$2,097,730 and Mecklenburg's is decreasing to \$3,032,803. Of the 270 ADP, Brunswick is at 28.05%, Dinwiddie is at 29.42% and Mecklenburg is at 42.53%. Overall the total decrease to the localities is \$35,710.82.

Mecklenburg Facility – Tom Tanner inquired about the Mecklenburg Facility and how much it costs to maintain it. Superintendent Crystal Willett stated it costs approximately \$2.8 million, however it is being maintained as if it were open. Tom Tanner requested a recommendation on the best way to move forward with the Mecklenburg facility. Alex Gottschalk asked if the facility were to be closed down, would Mecklenburg owe payment and is the \$3 million a year better spent to defease it than operating it. Superintendent Crystal Willett and Jennifer Derrenbacker will meet with Davenport to determine Mecklenburg's portion of our remaining debt service and discuss our options for paying off the Mecklenburg portion of debt service. After these meetings, the Finance Committee will meet to discuss a recommendation on how to move forward with the Mecklenburg facility.

V. Next Meeting

The next Board meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, May 1, 2025, at 12:30 p.m. at the Meherrin River Regional Jail Board Room. Lunch will be provided.

VI. Adjourn

There being no further business, a motion was made by Tom Tanner to adjourn the meeting. Captain Steve Kennedy seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.