

IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday, Feb. 22, 2017

STRYKER – An ad hoc committee will be created in an effort to review bed utilization at the regional jail following Wednesday's meeting of the Corrections Commission of Northwest Ohio.

Jim Dennis, CCNO Executive Director, said he had discussions with the US Marshalls about holding inmates for them and, new on the horizon within the state corrections department, is preventing low-level felony five offenders from entering the prison system and offering funding for their placement in diversion programs in the community. He said CCNO could extend an offer to utilize its diversion programs to adjacent counties that have limited or no such programs.

CCNO Board Chair Pete Gerken said \$20 million is being offered in diversion programs through the governor's budget with currently eight counties participating and five of them are part of CCNO. Dennis said we mostly have minimum security beds available and that we need to study how we can best use these beds and what security practices or physical plant changes should be considered to hold these potential inmates. He said available rental space at CCNO could be attractive to other jurisdictions.

Members were in consensus to create the special committee to look into how to upgrade bed usage at CCNO, potential costs, public concern in regards to the type of offenders housed, and other factors.

Mr. Dennis said the jail population stood at 500 or 74 percent in December 2016, considerably down in comparison to 600 in July 2016. The population averaged 530 or 79 percent in January and stood at 516 or 77 percent on Wednesday. He noted there were 73 on the new regional diversion program along with 40 on the post release control program, both funded with state grant monies. Due to the low population, said Mr. Dennis, a 60-bed unit has been temporarily closed and being used for additional program space.

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Tonya Justus, Fiscal Manager, reported to the Board that \$271,845 in unused funds from 2016 were available. It was agreed that \$134,553 in bed overage revenue be returned to jurisdictions and \$137,292 be placed in the reserve account.

Jail officials were authorized to purchase some \$50,000 worth of new electronic monitoring equipment. Members were told the purchase will help reduce costs for participants as opposed to leasing the equipment. The new equipment also allows participants the use of cellular phones vs. older equipment that required a land line. As a result, CCNO plans to reduce its daily fee from \$14 to \$12 per day for those on GPS equipment.

Members were informed that its appeal case is scheduled to be heard in the Tenth District Court of Appeals in Columbus on March 23. Board members had appealed a court decision requiring unanimous vote in the event of bylaw changes in the CCNO operating agreement. The City of Toledo withdrew from its 26-year contract with CCNO to house 228 offenders at the regional jail. In June 2016 a visiting judge ruled that Lucas County was responsible to pay for offenders arrested by Toledo police when charged under the Ohio revised code as well as the unanimous vote for bylaw changes.

Members met in executive session for 29 minutes to discuss pending and imminent litigation. No action was taken after the executive session.