

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

ORLEANS COUNTY LEGISLATURE PROVIDES ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE JAIL

AUGUST 27, 2007

Why are we building a new jail?

Orleans County must build a new jail for two reasons. First, the jail has significant structural damage. The jail was built in 1969 and has suffered problems with its' construction since then. Despite numerous attempts to fix it, there is considerable deterioration of the facility. Water damage alone has caused concrete walls to crumble, light fixtures to fill with water and rust, bars and gates to rust and fail. The damage has made the jail unsafe and unsecured.

In addition to the structural issues, the jail is not large enough to accommodate the county's long-term needs. The current facility was built for a maximum capacity of 82 inmates. Orleans County has consistently exceeded this amount and has been allowed on a temporary basis to house up to 105 by the New York State Commission of Correction with the expectation that Orleans County make progress toward addressing the county's long-term corrections needs. The New York State Commission of Correction is the single regulatory authority for jails in New York State. The commission determines standards, size, and classification of inmates to be housed in the facility.

Does Orleans County need a jail?

The constitution of the State of New York states that the County Sheriff shall maintain a county jail. This is a fundamental service of county government and is in no way optional according to the state.

How much will the jail cost to build and where will the money come from?

The Orleans County Legislature is currently assessing the needs and costs to rebuild. Based on what is happening elsewhere in the state, the assumption is that a new jail facility will cost between \$20 and \$30 million.

Unfortunately, outside resources – like state and / or federal grants are not available for building a county jail. Therefore the taxpayers of the county in which it is located must fund it.

Why now?

Consider this: with the cost of inflation for building materials, labor and interest rates on the rise, the sooner the task is completed, the less it will cost the

taxpayers for a project that cannot be avoided. Secondly, the county has an obligation to the state to house its' own inmates and to our employees who work in the jail to ensure their safety. The jail project is a culmination of years of damage and the problem must be addressed because the jail itself is becoming unsafe and will only incur more damage as time goes on.

Where and when will it be built?

We are still assessing the best location for the new facility and we will keep the taxpayers informed as we move forward with the assessment process.

Over the next few months the County will advertise for sites. Those sites will then be evaluated. The top 4 or 5 sites will then be evaluated and a selection will be made. Some of the things that will be considered are location, character of the neighborhood, infrastructure, environmental impact and cost of acquisition.

The facility development process proceeds in five phases:

- Phase 1 – Pre-architectural Planning
- Phase 2 – Site Selection and Planning
- Phase 3 – Architectural Design
- Phase 4 – Construction
- Phase 5 – Occupancy

Orleans County is currently finishing Phase 1. The next phase is site selection and planning.

The activities of Phase 1 include:

- Selection of a consultant – Orleans County has selected LaBella Associates, P.C.
- Development of functional and space programming
- Development of an operational budget
- Evaluation of operational costs

Activities of Phase 2 include:

- Advertisement for available sites
- Development of site selection criteria
- Preliminary site analysis
- Selection and acquisition of the site
- Completion of Environmental requirements
- Preparation of a site Master Plan

How can I stay informed about this issue?

We encourage residents of Orleans County to get the facts about the jail project – and all County issues – from the people leading the initiatives: the Orleans County Legislature and our sheriff.

Attend

Legislature meetings are held every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 4:30 pm at the County Legislature Office, 2nd floor of the County Clerk's building on Courthouse Square.

Website

Visit www.orleansny.com for updates, as they are available.

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