



Richland County Council  
Detention Center Ad Hoc Committee Meeting  
**MINUTES**  
November 21, 2024 – 3:00 PM  
Council Chambers  
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Derrek Pugh, Overture Walker, and Cheryl English

OTHERS PRESENT: Allison Terracio, Chakisse Newton, Jesica Mackey, Don Weaver, Anette Kyrlo, Patrick Wright, Jennifer Wladishin, Ashiya Myers, Angela Weathersby, Kyle Holsclaw, Jackie Hancock, Crayman Harvey, Michelle Onley, Leonardo Brown, Kenny Bowen, John Thompson, Susan O’Cain, Aric Jensen, and Stacey Hamm

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Councilman Derrek Pugh called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00 PM.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
  - a. **September 24, 2024** – Ms. English moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Mr. Pugh.

In Favor: Pugh, Walker, and English

The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Ms. English moved to adopt the agenda as published, seconded by Mr. Walker.

In Favor: Pugh and English

Not Present: Walker

The vote in favor was unanimous.

4. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION**

- a. **Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center – Status Updates:**

1. *General Overview* – The County Administrator, Leonardo Brown, stated the committee has discussed different ways it can assist the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center. They have focused on personnel, facility improvements, an overall capital plan, and understanding what impacts affect the work at the detention center. There are representatives from the Solicitor’s Office, the Richland County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, and the SC Association of Counties present at today’s meeting.
2. *Role of the Solicitor's Office in the Criminal Justice Process*—Deputy Solicitor Dan Goldberg provided an overview of the relationship between the Solicitor’s Office and the Detention Center. He indicated that the Solicitor’s Office plays an integral part in the criminal justice system.

Law enforcement makes an arrest and takes someone into custody. They then turn the case over to the Solicitor’s Office to prosecute it in court. He pointed out after an arrest, the detainee is provided a bond setting. Some are able to post bond, while others have to await trial in the Detention Center. During the interval between the arrest and trial, the Solicitor’s Office receives information from the arresting agency to assemble their case. There are communications between their office and the defense attorney(s) to determine the disposition of the case (e.g., guilty plea,

dismissal, or jury trial). As the process continues, they are intertwined with the Detention Center on a daily basis.

Court is held almost every week in Richland County. Some weeks, there are two judges, and other weeks, only one. Naturally, when they handle pleas and motions, it involves defendants who are incarcerated. Their direct role is multifaceted. They work with defense lawyers on how to resolve the cases. As they negotiate, the defense lawyer(s) have to communicate with their client by meeting with them at the Detention Center, and there have been some challenges in doing so. During these negotiations, the Solicitor's Office is in a holding pattern. This leaves them without answers to questions from victims' families, law enforcement, etc.

When it comes to court, the Solicitor's Office provides Detention Center personnel with a list of cases on the docket. The detainees must then be transported to the courthouse. Once the detainees arrive at the courthouse, the Richland County Sheriff's Department takes custody of them. The Sheriff's Department escorts the detainee(s) from the holding cell to the courtroom when their case is called. Sheriff's Department personnel stay with the detainee(s) until their matter is resolved and then transport them back to the holding cell, where they remain until they are transported back to the Detention Center.

It was mentioned that staffing challenges have limited the number of detainees who can be transported from the Detention Center on a given day. Another challenge is balancing the number of individuals on the docket who are on bond and will be coming in off the street, as well as those detained at the Detention Center. In addition, the number of females and juveniles also impacts the docket because females cannot be held with males, and juveniles cannot be held with adults. The Family Court prosecution division is entirely separate from General Sessions.

In some cases, detainees need to meet with clinicians or doctors to be evaluated for treatment courts (i.e., Drug Court, Veteran's Court, etc.). He noted that having those individuals brought over during court sessions for evaluation is discouraged due to limited space. At the same time, the clinicians do not want to go to the Detention Center to conduct those evaluations.

The Solicitor's Office is cognizant of the number of detainees and the cost to taxpayers. They receive a report monthly detailing the number of individuals incarcerated, how long they have been at the Detention Center, and the charges against them. Mr. Goldberg stated they are trying to work through these cases as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, they cannot work quickly enough, especially if the detainee requests a jury trial. It is a balancing act between what is fair, just, and right and all the other collateral issues.

Mr. Weaver inquired what Mr. Goldberg would consider the primary reason individuals are detained for an extended length of time.

Mr. Goldberg responded he believes it is a combination of things. Some of the more common reasons are changes in representation, awaiting additional information to evaluate the case properly, and court time. The detainees who have been there for an extended amount of time are going to be the more serious or violent cases.

Mr. Weaver inquired if we are doing better or worse than other detention facilities regarding the days detainees are held.

Mr. Goldberg stated he does not have that information. He noted that the overall docket has 8,000 cases, and approximately 900 individuals are detained at the detention center. He believes we are at about the midpoint regarding caseloads.

3. *Memorandum of Understanding between Richland County and Richland County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council* – Deputy Solicitor Hans Pauling stated in 2013, the Solicitor's Office closed 10,000 warrants in a single year. As of October 2024, they have closed 10,000, and two months remain in the year. In the space of 11 years, with relatively the same amount of staff, they have closed 20% more cases. The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council is tasked with reviewing demographics to assist Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center and the County with information to make good choices going forward. They have a relationship with the Columbia Police Department,

which has a Crisis Intervention Team in the community. The Richland County Sheriff's Department also has a Crisis Intervention Team.

Mr. Pauling is a prosecutor in the Mental Health and Homeless Courts and works with the Veteran's Court and Juvenile Drug Court.

In 2015, Charleston County's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council significantly impacted Bond Court because of the jail population crisis. They hired someone to screen applicants before they went before the judge so they could inform the judge the individual had substance abuse and/or mental health issues. They would then request that the individual's bond be reflective of treatment. While these individuals were awaiting the outcome of their case, they did not need to be incarcerated but in a treatment program.

Mr. Pauling pointed out that the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center provides detainees with their medication, but there are other treatments (e.g., therapy, counseling, and group). He noted sometimes medication is not enough to allow someone to stand before a judge and know why they are in court. In the future, providing as much information on mental health and substance abuse situations as possible and potentially bringing more services in will help make the management of the facility more manageable for a staff that is likely overstressed.

Ms. Angela Turner, Richland County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Director, noted she has worked as a professor at Clemson University and the University of South Carolina as well as a researcher and statistician with the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Additionally, she worked on a similar project in Tallahassee, Florida, entitled the Serious – Habitual – Offender – Comprehensive – Action – Program ("SHOCAP"). In that program, they were looking at juvenile crime and the crack cocaine epidemic to provide alternatives to the youth that fell within the gaps.

She mentioned that she had spoken with the Detention Center Director and Assistant Director, and they have received buy-in from other stakeholders, including the Columbia Police Department and the South Carolina Department of Corrections.

The purpose of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council is to use data to assist the county with navigating and placing the Detention Center in a better position. They will be looking at mental health assessments, how people are falling through the cracks, as it relates to the assessments, and if they are being treated based on their needs.

4. *SCAC Proposed Policy Positions* – Mr. Kent Lesesne, Director of Governmental Affairs – South Carolina Association of Counties, leads the Legislative Team responsible for requesting the General Assembly to implement the policy positions the Association of Counties put forth.

At the Association of Counties, there are four (4) steering committees that encompass various areas of law. Mr. Lesesne staffs the Public Safety, Corrections, and Judicial Steering Committee. The following are proposed policy positions:

- a. Safekeeper Statute – Detention Centers are not adequately equipped to house individuals that pose a particular danger to others, or being housed in the Detention Center would place them in danger. (i.e., gang members). In that scenario, the Department of Corrections was housing those inmates pending their trial and disposition of the case. The Department of Corrections was sued for this practice and stopped housing these individuals. Approximately a year ago, negotiations began on how to implement this in a way that facilitates detention centers housing these individuals but also able to provide protection housing these individuals would necessitate. This lays out a statutory plan that would allow the submission of a petition to request the Circuit Court to order that the individual who would otherwise be housed at the Detention Center be housed with the Department of Corrections. The Sheriff's Department would be responsible for the transportation back and forth for the detainee. The County would remain responsible for any medical care the detainee receives while housed at the Department of Corrections.
- b. Assaults on Public Employees—In 2010, the General Assembly rewrote the Assault and Battery statutes. As part of the rewrite, they repelled advanced penalties for assault and

battery on corrections officers, EMS, etc. One of the proposed policy positions requests that the Legislature reinstate those statutory provisions.

- c. Cell Phones in Jails – The State implemented a system to jam cell phone devices. Unfortunately, a member of the General Assembly held up implementing this provision at the county level.
- d. Medicaid Benefits for Inmates – When a person is detained, Medicaid benefits are terminated. When the individual is released, it is difficult for them to get back into the system. Therefore, instead of terminating the benefits, the request is to suspend them.
- e. Operation of Vending Facilities by Commission for the Blind within Detention Centers—There was a concern about them being in secure areas. A bill offering a compromise was floated around. They can come in but can only operate within non-secure areas. However, if they were already operating in a secure area, those would be grandfathered in.

Mr. Brown pointed out that Council has tackled employee, facility, and capital improvement matters. Now, we are talking about the next steps, which involve looking at other components that impact what goes on with and around the Detention Center. One of the things the committee and Council will be seeing is the Memorandum of Understanding for the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. Depending on what happens at the Legislative Day of Action and what policy positions are adopted, he would like the County to have a voice in lending support.

Mr. Weaver stated he and Mr. Brown discussed the feasibility of a Citizens/Relatives Committee. He inquired if Mr. Brown was able to discuss this proposed committee with the Detention Center Director.

Mr. Brown indicated he had a discussion with Director Harvey, and they believe it is feasible. He noted we have ongoing matters, and sometimes things you intend to go well have a way of biting you. Therefore, he wants to ensure we can address the ongoing matters and then proceed.

Ms. Newton inquired if there were still plans to bring all responsible parties together for an in-depth discussion regarding the Detention Center.

County Attorney Patrick Wright responded the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council serves the purpose Ms. Newton is referring to.

5. **ADJOURNMENT** – Ms. English moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Walker.

In Favor: Pugh, Walker, and English

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:51 PM.