

Notes from Wyoming Medium Correctional Institution (WMCI)  
Prison Community Partnership Committee (PCPC) meeting  
April 25, 2007 – 6 p.m., County Commissioners' meeting room, Torrington  
Notes taken by Melinda Brazzale

Meeting was called to order by Chair Dee Ludwig. She asked everyone to introduce him/herself. **31 people were in attendance.** Members:: Sue Davis, Sue Ducheneaux, Don Dungan, Tim Ellis, Dee Ludwig, Bob Mayor, Don Murphy, Gary Olson, Karen Smith, Rick Patterson, Sam Wagner, Earl Warren.

Members missing: Steve Fullmer, Martin Gubbels, Roger Humphrey, Father Kevin Koch, Toby Lewis, Chuck Lowry, Paul Puebla (he had to teach a class), Jeff Robertson (was out-of-town).

Media present: Jerry Abbott, Torrington Telegram; Denise Heilbrun, Casper Star Tribune; Ben Neary, Associated Press; Sandra Hansen, Star Herald

Others present: Jason Bauer, Department of Corrections, Torrington Field Services; Melinda Brazzale, Department of Corrections; Doug Brown, Layton Construction; Rev. Richard Cederholm, First Baptist Church; Officer Greg Davis, Department of Corrections, Wyoming State Penitentiary; Rob Hults, Department of Corrections, Wyoming State Penitentiary; Ed McAuley, State of Wyoming Construction Management; Neil Newman, HiPlains Construction, Inc.; Rad Smith; Brad Sutherland, Goshen County Economic Development Corporation; Bob Taylor, BenchMark of Torrington.

Ex-officio: Leroy J. Schafer, Robert Ward, Bob Lampert, Gordy Lewis

Dee also asked for those present to indicate whether or not they would attend a planned trip to Lusk to visit the Wyoming Women's Center on July 18, mid-day. A total of 12 said "yes" and they were: Jerry Abbott, Sue Davis, Don Dungan, Sandra Hansen, Dee Ludwig, Bob Mayor, Gary Olson, Karen Smith, Rick Patterson, Leroy Schafer, Sam Wagner (2). That will help Dee decide on a big bus for transportation or smaller vehicles.

### **Past Minutes**

Minutes of the January 17, 2007 meeting were read by Melinda Brazzale. No changes were made.

### **Newsletter**

A newsletter for the PCPC was distributed by Dee. She asked for comments. It was suggested that Melinda e-mail to members so that they can print it (it is attached to these minutes). The idea would be to produce this quarterly. A possible distribution point would be the Chamber of Commerce. Melinda thanked Kacey Gallagher, an executive assistant in the WDOC, for designing it.

### **Update on Construction**

Bob Lampert, Ed McAuley and Doug Brown updated the group on the progress of construction. Doug talked about the crew that is at the site. He said that this summer they will have about 75-125 people 5-6 days/week working at the site. This time next year there may be a total of 225-250 people (the peak of construction activity). From the outside the activity won't be obvious because most of the work will be indoors at that time. He said that the subcontractors may not be bonded. It depends upon their relationship with Layton Construction. The overall job is bonded by Layton. The deep compaction work is almost done at the site. This weekend about 7 staff people will arrive from Layton and they will be on-site for construction.

### **Staffing**

Bob Lampert was asked about staffing. "Once it's built, they will come." The department will hire staff in advance, keeping in mind that they have to attend a 9-week training academy. Key staff will come on over the next 2 years and will receive cross training at the other facilities. During the 6 months prior to opening, a lot of staff will come on board, training in buildings as they're completed. When the buildings are complete the department will set the date for inmates to arrive, and the date that the assessment a), will be shifted to the WMCI. There will be a public open house at the facility after the staff is in place, and prior to the arrival of the inmates. Bob said that he'll ask for the assistance of the PCPC in this endeavor.

### **Goshen County Housing Survey summary**

Brad Sutherland talked about the "Housing Needs Assessment" that was produced in Goshen County. He commented that the "retirement" effect is not included – the fact that people retire and decide to stay in Goshen County. He said that if people move from Nebraska to Goshen County they'll increase their income automatically by about 10% due to lower property taxes and no state income tax. He has talked to people in Sterling, Colorado, where they have a large state prison, and Brad's economic development counterpart there said that the cost of housing spiked before final completion of the prison and then came down to stay at about 10-15% higher than costs were before.

### **Discussion of July 18 meeting to Wyoming Women's Center**

Final details are not worked out, but Melinda said they should be in the next couple of days. At that time the PCPC members will be informed. Tentatively, Dee suggested that the group leave at 10 a.m. from Torrington, to arrive in Lusk at 11. We will meet with members of two groups: the PCPC from the Wyoming Women's Center, and the Correctional Industries Advisory Board. The day will include a joint meeting, lunch and a tour of the completed Women's Center.

### **Demographics**

Sue Davis admitted that it was very difficult to discern exact demographics of potential staff members at the prison. She said that the local Workforce Services website has about 110 hits per week on the corrections jobs. They have placed 22 people in Lusk from this office and 3 in Rawlins. That does not count those people who go directly to the state

employment page. Sue said that when hired, all 22 people expressed a desire to return to Torrington when the WMCI opens.

Bob Lampert said that in his experience previously with prisons in agricultural communities that applicants are either young, retired, or ag people looking for a 2<sup>nd</sup> job with benefits. Bob said that the department is seeing a mix in recruits: they are young with families or retired, looking for a second career.

**Other**

Question about whether or not the WMCI would have a chapel. Bob Lampert said that it would be a designated room that would be used only for religious services, not really a “chapel.”

How about enhanced security at the hospital? Bob said that we deal with that at each of the hospitals in the current prison communities. Gordy Lewis, CEO of the hospital, explained that they’re already treating inmates effectively and safely and that the public is not really aware of it. They will be prepared.

Meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.

###