

Information On The Possible Clay County Jail Expansion

There is so much false information and untrue statements being made about the possible jail expansion that we want to clarify the facts and what is true and untrue.

The possible jail expansion will cost approximately 26 million dollars, but there will be no increase in taxes. Presently we have a .25% tax on local income to pay for the present jail which will continue to pay for the possible jail expansion.

There will be new beds for 296 inmates. This will generate approximately \$6,450,000 million per year. Expenses will need to come out of this amount. The ICE money is used for the budgeted items for the jail to include but not limited for salaries of the jail employees, heating and cooling, utilities, and for the other operational costs of the jail. By using this money to pay for all of the jail expenses, this frees up other county tax money to be used to pay for non-jail employee salary increases and other operational expenses for the County. This amount is on the low side. We really anticipate that we will receive over 7 million dollars per year from the ICE Program. The County Council is in charge of all monetary matters for the County.

If we do not expand, other counties are looking at the opportunity to receive the ICE Program. At the present time, many counties are expanding or building new jails to meet their local county demands. If we expand, the new jail addition will be completed in October/November 2023.

The State of Indiana has determined that more local inmates will be kept at the local jails compared to sending them off to Putnamville and other places. To house the inmates mandated by the State, we receive only \$37.00 per day per inmate

Also, a study was recently done which indicated by the year 2024, our jail would be full with local inmates. So, in only a few years, we would be required to add additional units to the jail to accommodate the increase in local inmates. The longer we wait, the greater the cost will be. We are all very aware of the increase in most items we now purchase. So, with a drastic increase in the cost

of a future jail expansion, now would be a much better time to consider an expansion for the local jail.

We realize that no one really wants to spend money on a jail to house criminals whether they are local inmates or the ICE Inmates. Unfortunately, there have been wrong doings and inmates since the beginning of time and nothing has changed. So, we must build jails and prisons to house those who do not follow the laws whether locally or nationally.

The new jail will be attached to the present jail but will use the present kitchen and laundry areas although part of these areas will be expanded.

Some individuals have said they do not want dangerous inmates brought into the county. We have been receiving ICE inmates since 2013. There have been no problems with the ICE inmates in our jail. Many people, until now, did not know we were housing the ICE Inmates. This program began under Sheriff Heaton.

The new jail will meet the requirements of the ICE Program. For example, the medical area will be expanded to care for the inmates as suggested by ICE. There will also be video conferencing for inmates from the Courts, and there will be ADA cells for 10 inmates.

It has been stated the county is losing money on the ICE Inmates. That is totally untrue. Why would we want the ICE inmates if we were losing money. Last year, our gross income was approximately \$1.4 million with a net of \$783,000. That money was used, as stated previously, to pay for jail salaries and for the other costs associated with the operation of the jail

The county council was able to give the county employees a 3% raise for next year plus a bonus of 2%. This would not have been possible without the ICE money paying for the costs of the jail which freed up the other county money to pay for the increases in salaries and the other operational costs of the County.

The question is---do you want to generate ICE funds or do you want the Council to raise our taxes? We are not paying any thing on the ICE Inmates---there is no cost to anyone and the taxpayers of the County. But, if we do not have the ICE

Income paying for the jail costs, we may need to increase taxes to pay for the raises for the other county employees and for the other general operational costs of the County. Many counties have had to raise taxes to operate their facilities and programs.

If we have the jail expansion, we will be creating new jobs for Clay County. When we have job expansion in the County, that is always a big plus with more people working at home.

There has been concerned expressed that we may not have any ICE Inmates in the future. We have met with the ICE Personnel, and talked with them by phone, and we have no doubt that we will have ICE Inmates in the future. There will be, unfortunately, criminals, and there must be a place for them to go. So, a facility will be needed for them. If we thought this would not be the case, we would not even be thinking about a jail expansion to include the ICE Inmates. Keep in mind that all of us do live in this county, we pay taxes just like anyone else, so anything that affects the taxpayers and citizens of this county, will also affect all of us. So, our decisions will be based on facts—not on fear and false information which is being generated by some people both inside and outside of this county.

As part of the jail expansion and included in the cost of the jail expansion is a new roof for the present jail. It is leaking badly, has been repaired numerous times, and now it must be replaced. It is a flat roof. The cost to replace the roof is approximately \$640,000. We also plan to install a new water management system in the present jail. At the present time, water is being wasted which is costing all of us additional money. The new system will save the county much money over time.

We also will be installing an overhead door to the present jail. When the present jail was built, there is no outside entrance to parts of the jail. For example, there is no way at the present time, to remove the water softener tanks which will soon need to be replaced. The new overhead door will permit access to the jail for future repairs to be made in a less costly way.

If we do not include these in the possible jail expansion, the County Council will need to come up with additional money which may include a tax increase to pay

for the required repairs to the present jail. We are looking at this as a way to save the citizens of the county additional cost, in the future, from a new tax or a tax increase.

Because of the ICE Money which has been generated over the past several years to help pay for the costs incurred at the jail, the County has been able to use the other tax money and county money to purchase a Health Building, build a new Community Corrections Building, build a storage building for the Sheriff's Department, and for other purposes as well. Without the money from the ICE Program being used to pay the expenses at the jail, these additions could not have been made, no doubt, without an additional tax being imposed by the County Council.

Much thought has gone into the planning and possible expansion of the jail. We are looking at what is best for everyone in Clay County to make sure that a tax increase is not needed or required for the taxpayers of this County.