



MAY 24, 2016
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: JENNIFER MCCLURE
417.868.4140

GREENE COUNTY COMMISSION PROPOSES TEMPORARY FACILITY AS A MEANS TO HOUSE ADDITIONAL INMATES

Springfield, MO - Today the Greene County Commission made a proposal to Springfield City Council to lease a temporary inmate housing facility in an effort to once again accept Springfield Municipal Court offenders into the Greene County Jail. In making the proposal, Presiding Commissioner Bob Cirtin expressed that the Commission is unified in its support of the proposal and that Greene County Sheriff Jim Arnott is also in agreement with the proposal.

"We want our communities to be safe and we need the City of Springfield's help in funding a short-term solution to the extreme demand on the County's jail facility, one of the most difficult challenges presented by our over-burdened criminal justice system," said Presiding Commissioner Bob Cirtin. "The jail is full every day. The Greene County Sheriff currently has reciprocity agreements with four counties to house inmates. It is now estimated these agreements will cost the County \$1 million by year's end. That's more than double our original budget for reciprocity. Just last week we were notified by the fourth County that their jail was at capacity."

The proposal included asking the City to contribute funds to help lease a temporary correctional structure to house additional inmates. The facility would be erected on the parking lot just east of the jail and north of the Commission office at 933 N. Robberson. The Commission would guarantee a minimum of 20 beds per day for offenders arrested on Springfield municipal charges and warrants by the Springfield Police Department during a three-year period.

"We are hopeful this temporary facility option offers a more viable and fiscally responsible approach for all of us in addressing this challenge immediately," said Commissioner Harold Bengsch. "The County is already spending nearly \$3 million this year in improvements to the justice system including the addition of courtrooms. This requires relocating the Prosecuting Attorney's office off campus. These measures are intended to reduce jail population by improving the efficiency of the system."

The proposal comes directly from the Commission as a political subdivision due to the fact it involves use of property owned by the County and a potential contractual agreement executed by the Commission. While not a requirement of the formal proposal, the Commission did ask the City to drop its lawsuit against County related to this issue.

#####

FAST FACTS ABOUT PROPOSAL:

Timeline - would include the bid period plus approximately 90 to 125 days to construct the facility.

Location - Greene County campus parking lot east of the jail and north of the Commission building at 933 N. Robberson, currently used by Commission, officeholders and department directors. The bidding process should help clarify capacity options for the space available.

Beds - Commission would guarantee a minimum of 20 beds per day for offenders arrested on Springfield municipal charges and warrants by the Springfield Police Department during the three-year period.

Funding Request - City of Springfield being asked to contribute \$1 million at the execution of the legal agreement and \$1 million per year in the second and third years of the agreement. Those funds will be applied to the leasing fees for the structure, staffing for additional facility, meals, medical services and other operational costs.

