

**Proposed New Greene County Jail
Greene County Legislature
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
Posted August 2, 2018**

(Responses Provided by the Chairman of the Public Safety Committee and does not Necessarily Represent the entire Legislature)

1. What is the current size of the proposed Jail and how has it changed from previous proposals?

The project is currently defined as the construction of a 96 bed Jail, consisting of 70 full beds for both male and female general population inmates, 58 for males and 12 for females. There are 2 PODS for males housing a total of 72 beds, with 58 general and 14 transitional. There is 1 POD for females housing a total of 24 beds, with 12 general and 12 transitional. Transitional beds are designed to house multiple classifications of inmates, including: new intakes, pre-medical clearance, protective custody, discipline and special management. The pre-bid construction costs for the Jail are currently estimated at \$47,065,435. The bonding authorization is proposed at \$39,000,000. The county is proposing to fund the balance of the costs with county funds over the next three years budgeted at \$8,065,435. Over the last several months the GC Legislature has been working with the Architect to find savings within the plan by reducing or eliminating features that would not jeopardize the integrity of the plan and would be cost effective. A total cost savings of \$4,352,565 was achieved. Changes to the plan include elimination of 1 POD, a 911 back-up system and exercise room. The originally proposed Jail plan included a 130 bed facility with a pre-bid construction cost of \$55,000,000 with a bond amount equal to the construction estimate.

2. Why don't we just board out all our inmates as we are doing now? It will be a lot cheaper and we won't have to build a jail.

New York State Law requires that every County have a Jail and that the County provide for its operation and maintenance.

3. Why don't we just build a new jail where the old one is, it already has infrastructure and is close to the Greene County Courthouse?

The property where the current Jail is located is not large enough to build a new Jail that will meet the State recommendations. Additionally, the property is too small to adequately provide for parking. Modern Jails are now typically designed as one story buildings for safety and efficiency purposes to accommodate line of sight for corrections staff. The ~~existing~~ ^{proposed} Gannett site is only .55 acres. The ~~planned~~ ^{proposed} location of the Jail in Coxsackie will be built on a 32 acre portion of the 50 acre site, which was donated by NYS

for the express purpose of building a new Jail.

4. Why do we need a jail built for 80 or more inmates when we only have about 30 or 40 inmates right now?

The Jail is currently proposed at 96 beds, consisting of 70 full beds for general population inmates, with 2 PODS for males housing 58 beds, and 1 POD for females housing 12 beds, and an additional 26 transitional beds designed to house multiple classifications of inmates, including: new intakes, pre-medical clearance, protective custody, discipline and special management. The NYS Commission of Corrections requires that Jails be constructed for these categories and be sized at a maximum capacity of 90 percent. The NYS Commission of Correction does not recommend that the transitional beds be used to house general population inmates. The Jail is sized to accommodate a fluctuation of daily inmates based upon the history of inmate usage calculated by the Average Daily Population figures and the peak usage on any given day. The Jail has been reduced in size as a result of the AVP decreasing. The most recent activity of daily Jail inmate populations has the male population as high as 51 and females as high as 11.

5. Since everyone is talking about shared services, why don't we just share the Columbia County jail?

The concept of a "shared" jail with Columbia County would have to start with the funding of a feasibility study to see if such a project could be done on property on or near the jail facility in Columbia County. A resolution to fund half the cost of this study, estimated at \$60,000, minus the possibility that the NY Department of State might fund up to \$50,000 as part of a shared services grant was defeated by the Greene County Public Safety Committee this year. The same concept was introduced as a resolution from the floor of the Legislature at our regular monthly meeting in June and was also defeated in a vote that included all the members of the Greene County Legislature.

6. The bond resolution calls for borrowing 39 million dollars. How much will it actually cost over a 30 year term? How much will be needed each year to pay for it?

Borrowing \$39 million dollars at an interest rate of 3.5% for a 30 year term will result in an annual average debt service payment of 2.4 million dollars. When the Jail opens and boarding out inmates ends, the net debt service will be reduced to 1.65 million dollars.

7. Won't a bond issue of this size bankrupt the County or excessively raise our taxes? How will it affect my tax rate? By what percentage will it increase the County tax rate? What is the impact to a typical homeowner?

The County is at 4% of its total bonding authority and has a Moody's Rating of Ala. Greene County ranks 12th lowest in tax rate per thousand out of the 57 Upstate NY counties. The new debt service will result in an additional tax impact of .29 cents per thousand per year of assessed value. With the average household in Greene County assessed at \$179,000, the increase in debt service at 29 cents per thousand would result in an additional \$51.91 per year.

8. Won't a jail which is nearly double the size of our current jail cost twice as much to man in terms of personnel costs?

Greene County does not anticipate any meaningful increase in the number of Corrections Officers (CO's) for the new Jail. The old Jail operated at a 1-12 ratio of CO's to inmates. The new Jail has greater efficiencies and will operate at a 1-60 ratio. However, the County does anticipate an increase in Social Workers and Transition Officers for services to assist the inmates with relocation and integration back into the county population.

9. I have heard that Alternatives to Incarceration will dramatically reduce the number of inmates placed in our jail, why do we need so many cells?

Greene County already has a successfully operating Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) Program with over 300 county residents in the program and without such would be in the Jail. Previous ATI evaluations conducted by the County have determined that no additional inmates were eligible for release. This is an ongoing evaluation as the inmate population changes over time.

10. What is the rush in building this new jail, there has been no opportunity to ask questions or discuss it?

The proposed Jail officially started in 2016 with solicitation and procurement of the Jail consultants, including Architect, Engineer and Construction Management. All meetings of the Legislature and Committees have been open to the public. The Legislature also formed citizen appointed committees which performed months of work and evaluation of the Jail, including Alternatives to Incarceration, which was significantly relied upon for the sizing of the Jail. A Full Environmental Impact Statement was prepared and adopted by the Legislature which also provided multiple opportunities for the public to review and comment on the Jail site plan and environmental impacts. The Legislature also participated in several workshops where the Jail consultants made

presentations and were available for questions and comments.

11. Construction projects of this size are notorious for cost overruns, has the Legislature thought about that?

There are multiple steps built into the Jail Capital Project which will provide safeguards to costs and cost overruns. The Jail will be offered for competitive bidding. The Architect and Construction Manager have provided detailed cost estimates to assist the county with budgeting. The construction cost of the Jail will be fully known when bids are received and evaluated. The decision to award contracts is made by the Legislature. With the recent increase in costs of steel and commodities, and an increased demand in construction, the costs may be higher than expected. If this happens, the Legislature will review and adjust the project accordingly. It is possible that the project may have to be competitively bid more than once. Once the project is awarded, the costs are fixed, however, there is a contingency built into the budget for unforeseen costs, such as site and soil conditions. Each delay in awarding bids risks higher costs due to escalation of materials, competition and higher interest rates. Fortunately, the GC Legislature has locked in a 30 year term at 3.5% interest through the USDA Community Facilities Program.

12. How long will it take to build the Jail?

The Legislature anticipates that the competitive bid package will be offered by December of 2018. The award of contracts by February of 2019. The start of construction in the spring of 2019 with an 18-24 month construction window. The County expects to occupy the new Jail by July of 2021.

13. How much does it cost to board out inmates?

Greene County has been boarding out inmates for several years. The Jail was old and inadequate with portions closed. The County's inmate population exceeded the number of usable beds. With the closing of the old Jail, the County now boards out all of its inmates, with the majority housed in Columbia and Ulster County Jails. Albany County Jail is used periodically for special classifications of inmates. The average daily cost is \$75 per day per inmate plus Greene County remains responsible for medical and transportation costs. With an average of 50 inmates boarded out that totals approximately \$1.4 million per year for the housing only.

14. What will happen to the old Jail?

The County is currently working with an Engineering Firm to evaluate the options and costs for the Remediation of Hazardous Materials, Demolition of the Buildings, and Site Restoration, including sale or redevelopment options. The future use of the site is undetermined.

15. Where will Sheriff and Jail Inmate processing occur during the construction period?

Evaluation is underway to lease temporary space during construction for both the Sheriff's Office and Jail Inmate processing.

16. Doesn't the Sheriff's Office have to stay in Catskill?

The County is making provisions for the Civil Division of the Sheriff's Office to remain in the Village of Catskill. The Civil Division consists of 1.5 employees and will be located in the Greene County Office Building where the Sheriff already has staff for building security.

17. What is the Cost of the proposed Herkimer County Jail?

In 2011, Herkimer County began design for the construction of a new Jail, and at that time the construction estimate was approximately \$34,500,000. The project was delayed due to a lack of consensus. Herkimer County recently reactivated the project and with construction management services provided by Gilbane, Inc. Herkimer County is now estimating the Jail project at approximately \$40 million, exclusive of site preparation and infrastructure. Herkimer's costs are lower, due in part to minimal site and infrastructure improvements and lower prevailing wage rates. Greene County's labor market is approximately 10% greater, adding an additional \$1.6 million to the cost of the Greene County Jail.