

JAIL COSTS ARE RISING UNCONTROLLABLY.

THE PROPOSED JAIL offers a chance to control costs and save in the future.

Jail costs have grown steadily in recent years. The jail is the largest single budget item for Somerset County.

Taxpayers are facing spiraling costs because the jail does not have adequate space to house the increasing population. Inmates are routinely transported to other facilities where room and board charges exceed \$100 per day, per inmate - plus the cost of transportation.

Building a new jail will provide adequate capacity in an efficient facility. Initially, this will cost more; however, when the construction loan has been retired, the County will see projected savings of over **\$4 million per year**. Over a 30-year period, the savings are significant:

TOTAL 30-YEAR COSTS

To do nothing and board excess inmates in other counties..... \$165,300,000

To renovate and expand the Old jail.....\$171,300,000

To build and operate a new jail..... \$149,700,000.

In effect, it's "pay now, or pay much more later."

JAIL POPULATION WILL CONTINUE TO GROW WHILE CAPACITY SHRINKS.

THE PROPOSED NEW JAIL meets current bed space needs with capacity to efficiently accommodate future bed space needs for a changing population.

The jail population has consistently exceeded capacity for the last ten years. Since 1995, the jail population has grown 65%. Current peak populations reach nearly 100. The existing facility has a capacity of 45 inmates.

The increase in population is caused by a number of forces which cannot be controlled by the County. These include:

- Sentencing practices resulting in longer sentences
- New laws
- State programs to divert inmates from state prisons to county jails
- Increased emphasis on drug enforcement

The characteristics of the prisoner population are changing too - with longer term prisoners serving time for more serious crimes.

And remember, every serious offender who eventually ends up in State prison, spends many months as a pretrial detainee in the Somerset County Jail.

THE JAIL IS NOT SAFE AND DOES NOT COMPLY WITH STATE CORRECTIONAL STANDARDS.

THE PROPOSED JAIL provides a safe, secure, standards compliant setting for staff, inmates, and the public.

Due to overcrowding and layout, the existing jail is not safe for:

- Staff who work there;
- Inmates who live there;
- Officials and staff who visit the jail; and
- The public

Because of the lack of adequate prisoner separation, supervision, program space, and security, the jail does not meet mandatory state standards and currently operates under a temporary variance from the Maine Department of Corrections. The lack of standards compliance increases the risk of costly lawsuits.

Jail facts and figures--

- On an average day, 5 inmates will be admitted to the jail and five will be released
- An admission or release occurs about once every two hours-- at all hours of the day and all days of the week
- There are nearly 2,000 admissions to the jail every year
- Over 90% of the inmates are male
- 64% of all inmates are over the age of 25
- 70% of all inmates are county residents

PROPOSED NEW JAIL OFFERS SOLUTIONS TO CURRENT PROBLEMS AND PROVIDES A RESPONSIBLE, FLEXIBLE, COST-EFFECTIVE WAY TO MEET FUTURE NEEDS.

THE PROPOSED JAIL will:

- House up to 173 long-term inmates and;
- 27 short-term inmates (not counted as “bed” capacity but available for peaks)

When fully occupied provide capacity for 4 times as many inmates as the current jail, but require only 89% more staff

The County analyzed several solutions to the jail problems including expansion at the current site. This option was rejected because adequate land is not available for future expansion, and the constrained design would be much less staff-efficient.

Construction of a new facility just over the town line in Madison emerged as the only responsible long-term solution. A committee has been created to explore uses for the old jail.

The new jail has been designed and located for maximum flexibility and efficient expansion. The site selected has ample space for growth.

The proposed facility also offers important new opportunities for developing work and industries programs to reduce inmate idleness. Prisoners who work contribute toward the cost of their confinement, to the community, and to their families.

SOMERSET COUNTY JAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Elaine Aloes – Solon
Joan Bradley – Detroit
John Doucette – Norridgewock
Elvin Hawes – Bingham
Glen Mantor – Madison
Peggy Morgan – Hartland
“Katie” Ouillette – East Madison/Skowhegan
Matthew Petrie – Fairfield
John F. Ring, Sr. – Pittsfield
Steve Steward – Bingham
Phil Tarr – Skowhegan
Richard Thorndike – Canaan
Lloyd Trafton – West Forks
H. Ralph Withee – Anson

For the past 5 years officials have studied jail problems, future needs, and *all* of the options carefully. **The Jail Advisory Committee supports the proposed new jail because:**

- It offers the county a chance to control costs;
- It keeps jobs in Somerset County, rather than paying millions of dollars to other counties to house our prisoners
- It will house future populations in an efficient, effective and flexible way;
- It will provide a secure and safe jail that complies with state standards- now and in the future.

The Committee believes that the proposed jail will be a prudent investment. Although it will be costly in the first years, it will yield increasing savings and benefits over the long run.

For More Information: contact the Jail Committee through Robin Weeks at the County Commissioners Office (207-474-9861), email: somerset@mainester.net or visit our web site at www.somersetcountycommissioners.com to learn all of the facts!

On November 8th, Somerset County Voters Will Be Asked to Approve Funding for a New Jail.

It’s a tough decision -- voters should know all of the facts.

WHY BUILD A NEW JAIL?

- **Costs to operate the old jail and house excess prisoners in other counties are rising uncontrollably.**
- **The old jail is not safe and it does not meet minimum State standards -- posing serious liability.**
- **The new jail will be efficient and flexible to meet future needs.**
- **The new jail will keep jobs in the County rather than paying other counties to house our prisoners.**

We encourage you to vote on Tuesday, November 8th. Absentee ballots are also available at your Town Clerk’s Office.