

SAFETY FIRST

VOTE  ES FOR A NEW WARREN COUNTY
LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

WARREN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND JAIL REFERENDUM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. WHY DO WE NEED A NEW SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND JAIL?

- a. The current facility is over 100 years old. The west half of the jail was built in the 1870's as a residence for the sheriff. The east half was built in 1915 and contains the cells for the jail.
- b. The current facility has outlived its usefulness. The facility suffers from structural problems and old and deteriorating electrical, plumbing and HVAC systems.
- c. The current facility is not in compliance with Illinois jail regulations and standards. Because of being in non-compliance, Warren County is prohibited from housing female inmates. Illinois also requires that inmates be separated by classification - for example, sentenced inmates from unsentenced inmates, misdemeanants from felons, mentally ill and combative inmates from the general inmate population. It is impossible to meet these requirements in the current facility. It is only a matter of time before our jail is closed by the State.
- d. Most importantly, the current facility is an unpleasant and unsafe working environment for deputies, correctional officers, staff and other public safety officers who use it.

2. WHY NOT REMODEL THE EXISTING SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND JAIL?

- a. The current facility has been examined by an architectural firm and a design build firm. Both firms advised the County it would cost more to "remodel" than to build a new facility.
- b. To "remodel" the current facility would require an expansion. Illinois law prohibits expansion of the jail because it is too close to the Immaculate Conception School.
- c. It is not possible to design an efficient facility by trying to incorporate the current building.

3. HOW MUCH WOULD A NEW SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND JAIL COST?

- a. The facility would cost between \$16.2 and \$18.6 million, depending on the number of beds. At present, Warren County is considering a facility with a 40 to 60-bed capacity. A final decision on the size

of the facility will be made at a later date.

b. The new Illinois Safe T Act goes into effect January 1, 2023. This Act is designed to reduce jail populations. But no one knows with any degree of certainty how all populations will be affected. The County will have the opportunity under its project timetable to see what will happen to our average jail population.

c. The County's initial intention is to build a 60-bed facility. This capacity would allow the County to house inmates from other counties. Income from housing out-of-county inmates would generate income to help pay for the facility.

4. HOW WILL THE COUNTY PAY FOR A NEW SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND JAIL?

a. The County proposes that the sales tax in Warren County be increased by $\frac{3}{4}\%$. In other words, a \$1 purchase subject to the tax would cost $\frac{3}{4}$ of a penny.

Examples:

i. A \$100 restaurant bill would have an additional tax of 75 cents;

ii. A Big Mac would cost an additional 3 cents;

iii. Other items?

b. Everyone who purchases certain retail goods in Warren County will help pay for the new facility. This includes college students, people living outside of Warren County, and people who live in the County but who do not own real property.

5. WILL THIS SALES TAX APPLY TO ANYTHING I BUY IN WARREN COUNTY?

a. No. Farm equipment, motor vehicles, basic groceries, prescription and non-prescription drugs, as well as drugs and other medical supplies for diabetics are excluded.

6. DO VOTERS HAVE A SAY ABOUT INCREASING THE SALES TAX?

a. Yes. The citizens of Warren County will vote at a referendum on April 23, 2023 to approve the tax and jail project.

7. WILL THIS TAX EVER END?

a. Yes. The County will issue 20-year bonds to finance the project. Once the bonds are paid off, the tax ends.

8. CAN THE COUNTY BOARD CONTINUE THE TAX AFTER THE DEBT IS PAID OFF?

a. No. The sales tax will be for the construction, furnishing and equipping a new facility and for any upgrades required during the 20-year bond term.

b. The question to be voted on at the referendum will have a built-in "sunset clause". A "sunset clause" means that when a certain event happens, the tax ends. In this case, when the bonds are paid off, the tax ends, which is required by Illinois law.

9. CAN THE COUNTY BOARD DIVERT ANY OF THE REVENUE FROM THE NEW SALES TAX TO OTHER THINGS?

a. No. Under Illinois law, any revenue generated by the new sales tax must go to the sheriff's office and jail project.

10. WHERE WILL THE NEW SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND JAIL BE LOCATED?

a. The facility must be located within the boundaries of the county seat (Monmouth) under Illinois law.

b. The Land Acquisition Committee considered several properties for the project. Offers were made on three properties. Two properties were located near the Love's truck stop on the southwest corner of Monmouth. The third was a tract of approximately six acres immediately west of McDonalds, Burger King and Dollar General on the north side of Monmouth. This tract of land was the County's preferred location because of up-to-date infrastructure and law enforcement recommendations.

c. This parcel is ideal, being close to Monmouth's fire department, OSF Holy Family Medical Center, and GHAS Ambulance Service, as well as easy access to the County's highway system.

11. WHY WAS A NEW SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND JAIL NOT BUILT AND CONNECTED TO MONMOUTH POLICE DEPARTMENT?

a. The most important reason was that it would not have been cost effective. There was not enough land. This would have required the purchase and demolition of homes to the west of the existing police department.

b. The location is too close to the BNSF railroad tracks. While it is unlikely to happen, should there be a derailment involving the release of hazardous chemicals, it would be extremely difficult to evacuate inmates, deputies and correctional officers in a timely manner. The result could lead to physical injury or even death.

12. DOESN'T THE MONMOUTH POLICE DEPARTMENT HAVE A JAIL?

a. No. There are no cells in the Monmouth Police Department.

b. Also, Illinois law requires the County's sheriff to provide housing for all inmates arrested in Warren County.

13. WHAT IS THE COUNTY'S TIMELINE FOR THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND JAIL PROJECT?

a. The County is approaching this project like a family would approach building a new home. First, you decide your needs and the price range you can afford based on costs of construction and borrowing money. Second, you decide on the amount of a down payment to be made to reduce the total amount

of money you need to borrow in order to make monthly payments affordable. Third, you decide how long it will take to save enough money to make the necessary down payment.

b. The County has determined a new sheriff's office and jail meeting the County's needs will cost between \$16.2 and \$18.6 million. In order to make affordable payments, the County needs to make a \$5.75 million down payment.

c. The down payment would consist of the following:

i. The County recently received a little over \$3 million from the Government's Covid relief program. The County will contribute \$2 million to this project.

ii. Assume the referendum passes in April, 2023. Collection of revenue would start January 1, 2024. The County would then collect revenue for 4 years, raising \$3.75 million, for a total down payment available of \$5.75 million

iii. The County would then borrow money for the project by issuing bonds. At this time, construction would start.

14. WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE TAX DOES NOT PASS?

a. The Warren County jail will be closed by the State. It is not a question of if this will happen — it is only a question of when.

b. When the jail is closed, the County must house inmates in another county. Warren County is then at another county's mercy as to what to pay that county to house our inmates.

c. At least ten correctional officer jobs will be lost.

d. Your tax dollars will be sent to another county.

e. People arrested in Warren County will be transported to the out-of-county holding facility by the arresting agency. This will increase the costs for these agencies several thousands of dollars per year — particularly the Monmouth Police Department.