

Jail Facts-Do you Remember?

Cont. from Page 1

not guarantee any numbers. "Any county proposals shouldn't be looking at dollars from the state - they need to build to meet local needs. --T-R 4-25-06)

• "This facility was designed on a business model, not a government model," Jon Wagar explained in a recent interview. "It is a for-profit business. The rental revenue generated will have to make the payments - it will not rely on tax dollars." -T-R 4-25-06

Now: According to Wednesday Jan 24th 2007 T-R The USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) wants a guarantee that the Sheyenne Valley Correctional Facility can sustain a cash flow, which according to the article it could cost Barnes County and Valley City approximately \$90,000.00 a year to subsidize the new jail.

• "In the event of a financial failure, the jail would go back to the USDA and so it would become the obligation of the tax payers of the United States as opposed to just the tax payers of Barnes County or Valley City or the member county," JonWagar 6-19-06 T-R

Now: The U.S. Department of Agriculture wants guarantees the Sheyenne Valley Correctional Facility can sustain a positive cash flow if state and federal bed rentals for prisoners do not meet the projected estimates. 1-24-07 T-R

• Wagar sees one big advantage to this stand-alone facility. "Once the down payment is made, the counties involved and the city of Valley City are done," he explained. "Except for paying a daily rate to house their prisoners, they have no additional liability or obligation to the facility. It has to make its own way financially. This takes taxpayers off the hook, and makes the facility and its management responsible for making the operation financially successful." Wagar said of his ad hoc committee. "We did the homework..." -T-R 12-15-05

• But the obligation to the city and the county, and each of the other entities who have bought into the partnership, has already been met with the down payment of \$62,500 per entity over the next two years. This guarantees bed space at the minimum cost per day - currently projected at \$65 a day. Non-members will be paying considerably more. The facility cannot come back and demand more money from the entities - including Barnes County and Valley City. It is meant to "stand on its own" and service its own debt through occupancy, rate structure and good management. Any profits, which could be seen in year one, will go back towards debt reduction and to build capital reserves. Other possibilities, such as reduced rates or dividends, would be decided by the board of directors. "The counties all kicked in for the down payment and they're done - their obligation is complete," Wagar said. "We own a percentage of the facility, but that's where the responsibility ends." --T-R-2-6-06

Now: "But if the jail doesn't fill its 84 total beds, the enti-

ties could pay up to \$93 a day per prisoner." Jon Wagar-1-29-07 Fargo Forum

Scenario One: Leave facility as is, cutting staff. Fill beds locally, leaving approximately 44 beds empty, raising cost per day to \$93.

Scenario Two: Cost per bed per day at \$65, subsidizing correctional facility from each of the seven-member counties general fund for five years. As beds are filled cost per day would be lowered. Valley City/Barnes County cost per year would be approximately \$45,000 each.

Scenario Three: Cost per bed per day at \$75, subsidizing correctional facility from each of the seven member counties general fund for five years. As beds are filled, cost per day would be lowered. Valley City/Barnes County cost per year would be approximately \$28,500 each.-TR 1-24-07

Full speed ahead, Wagar said he does not believe recent discussions about prisoner rates will hold up groundbreaking, which is scheduled this spring. 1-29-07 Fargo Forum

Taxpayers take a look at what is happening up in Grand Forks, \$1,000,000.00 in the red and who does the Commissioners say are going to pay for shortfall.....the local taxpayers!

GRAND FORKS COUNTY: New jail runs \$1 million in the red (GF Herald 1-3-07) "The new Grand Forks County jail will run nearly \$1 million in the red this year and taxes will have to be raised next year to pay for it, said County Commissioner Connie Triplett on Tuesday."

Finally, let's remember Jon Wagar's statement "Financially it works. The business study shows it could generate a profit the first year. It could be a cash cow ... and wouldn't that be a nice break for our taxpayers?" -

-Jon Wagar T-R August 9, 2005

CCI POLL

- 1) **Has the City Coordinator improved relations between City Hall and Citizens?**
 Yes No Not Sure
- 2) **Do you think Valley City department head positions should be elected or appointed?**
 Elected Appointed
- 3) **Should thorough background checks be done on all local government employees?**
 Yes No Not Sure
- 4) **Do you favor consolidating city and county positions?**
 Yes No Not Sure
- 5) **What punishment do you think David B. Johnson (City Coordinator) should have been given for his involvement with the slanderous website before last June's city election?**
 A) Fired B) Two weeks without pay
 C) no punishment
 D) Other _____

STAND UP AND BE HEARD!

City Watch



Volume 3
Number 1

Committee for Community Involvement • Box 403 • Valley City, ND 58072
valleycitycci@yahoo.com

2007
February

"It is not the function of our Government to keep the citizen from falling into error; it is the function of the citizen to keep the Government from falling into error."

U.S. Supreme Court in American Communications Association v. Douds, 339 U.S. 382-442

Sheriff Held Accountable

The November 2006 election has shown that an elected official in Barnes County was held accountable for his failure to perform his duties according to the expectations of the voters. The voters made it clear that they were not satisfied with our sheriff's job performance by not reelecting him despite the fact that he was the clear winner over his opponent in the June primary.

It appears that the events surrounding the Morgenstern murder, namely the failure to do a proper investigation of his employee and to pay attention to this employee's job performance while on duty at the Barnes County Jail, cost the Sheriff his job. The charges brought against his employee while being on duty as a jailer were appalling to say the least. This obviously is not what the voters expected.

The mechanism that was used to hold this official accountable will be history from now on in this county because of the voters' approval of City Measure Number 2 that will erase the opportunity to hold anyone accountable
Cont. on Page 2

Thank You!

A big "Thank You" to all that have called, and have stopped us on the streets encouraging us through these difficult times here in Valley City. Your support is very much appreciated!

A %95 Budget

Recently former Governor Ed Schafer was a guest on a Fargo talk show and a caller asked him about his administration suggesting %95 budgets for Higher Education when he was governor. Following is the partial transcript from the show.

Caller: "When you were Governor, you encouraged %95 budgets for Higher Education. I read the minutes from some of the Higher Education meetings and some looked at a %95 budget as an opportunity to prioritize and cut waste, others thought it was the end of the world. Looking back, how did that all turn out?"

Former Governor Ed Schafer: "Well I think we pro-
Cont. on Page 3

Jail Facts-Do you Remember?

• It will cost about \$5-6 million to build--
Times-Record (T-R) 4-25-06

Now: A nearly \$7 million multicounty jail scheduled to be built in Barnes County, N.D --Fargo Forum "Barnes jail price tag rises" 1-29-07

• It is not anticipated there will be problems filling the proposed correctional center, and the group already has an agreement with the federal marshal's service to house 10 inmates. --T-R 4-25-06

Now: Jon Wagar said the jail hopes to obtain contracts with the state and federal government to house inmates at the multicounty facility, but while officials have had verbal assurances,"nobody's willing to put anything in writing" yet. --Fargo Forum 1-29-07

(Remember State Corrections Director Leann Bertsch will
Cont. on back page

CCI recommends

"Mr. Smith Goes to Washington"

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (1939) is one of the most popular films about American government. Nominated for 11 Academy Awards

This film has been around for almost 60 years and remains the top Washington-related movie. **Jimmy Stewart plays Jefferson Smith, the "average Joe" who thinks he can make a difference but runs into men with power, crooked politicians and a controlled press.**

The film was banned in Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Falangist Spain. The film was also dubbed in certain European countries to alter the message of the film so it conformed with official ideology.

When a ban on American films was imposed in German-occupied France in 1942, some theaters chose to show Mr. Smith Goes to Washington as the last movie before the ban went into effect. One theater owner in Paris reportedly screened the film nonstop for thirty days prior to the ban.

This is a classic film that should be recognized and cherished forever. Mr. Smith Goes to Washington is a great film for the whole family, the film is not only captivating and genuine but there is also a moral in the story.

DID YOU KNOW?

THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

The federal government has quietly begun using an incredibly intrusive new census form called "The American Community Survey." Up to 1 million households a year will receive this form. It's 24 pages long and demands you lay bare every detail of your life, including how much you earn, what your home is worth, details of your health, when you leave for work, previous addresses, pregnancies, monies received from government and on and on. The American Community survey also demands that you report on the activities of relatives, employers and roommates. Joseph Stalin could hardly ask for more surveillance powers. You can download the survey at <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>

Oh, what happens if you don't answer or answer "incorrectly"? You can be fined up to \$1000 for each of the 72 questions.

Article I of the Constitution allows the government to conduct a count of the American people once every ten years to determine voting districts. Nothing in the Constitution gives government the power to continuously spy on the people or probe every intimate detail of their lives.

As Congressman Ron Paul (R-TX) observes, questions on the American Community Survey are "both ludicrous and insulting," and this information is simply none of the governments business.

Do you have a question? Do you want to find something about Valley City? ASK US and we will look into it for you. Do you have a question about our Town but do not want to deal with CITY HALL for the information. Well we at CCI enjoy working with CITY HALL and boy do they LOVE us down there. So if you want help with CITY HALL, let us know and we will take it from there.

Sheriff Held Accountable

Cont. from Page 1

for any questionable or blatant acts such as recently took place. Now that the multi-county jail is moving forward the voters will not be able to hold anyone accountable that is connected with this facility. The board that oversees the operation of this facility will not be directly subject to the vote of the people of Valley City or Barnes County or for that matter any of the other counties involved.

The voters have decided by their approval of moving forward with the multi-county jail to throw wide open the doors of consolidation once again. What's next? Do we want a multi-county sheriff, a multi-county courthouse, or perhaps a multi-county government? What have the voters started here? Where will it end? Do you want your vote to mean less or have no effect at all? Is this what the voters want to pass on to their children?

In a Times-Record opinion article T-R Editor Sandy Hanson on May 25, 2006 stated that the jail (multi-county) is designed on a for profit business model. The recent news concerning the (alleged for profit) Grand Forks jail pretty much nullifies what she said because the Grand Forks Jail is now expected to be approximately one million dollars in arrears, and officials say they will raise taxes to make up the difference. (Some for profit business, huh Sandy?)

If the Grand Forks jail was to be the role model for the Sheyenne Valley Multi-County Correctional Center, are we to expect the same thing happening here, or are we expected to believe that we have much more capable leadership? How many stages are there to this multi county jail project? We have jumped from the dream stage to the shovel stage. It seems we have missed one important stage: the information stage.

Mission Statement

The Committee for Community Involvement is an inclusive nonpartisan coalition of Valley City area citizens working together for the following purposes:

- To encourage local government to listen to and implement the wishes of the citizens
- To encourage local government to provide accurate and complete information to the citizens
- To encourage citizen involvement in local decision making
- To encourage all members of local government to maintain high ethical standards and to remember always their accountability to the citizens they represent
- To strengthen our community by protecting the individual liberties of citizens and their posterity.
- To provide citizens with a means to **Stand Up And Be Heard**

Official publication of Committee for Community Involvement (CCI), City Watch is published approximately every two months. Articles are submitted by members and friends of CCI. Opinions expressed are those of the writers and may not reflect official policies of CCI. Past issues of "City Watch" are available or if you would like to receive future newsletters electronically, just send us an e-mail. Contact information: CCI, Box 403, Valley City, ND 58072 or email valleycitycci@yahoo.com

HOW IS CITY GOVERNMENT SPENDING YOUR MONEY?

This month's focus – The City Coordinator

City of Valley City City Coordinator

ACCT #	EXPENDITURE	2007 BUDGET
101	Employees Salaries	66,950.00
122	FICA-City Share	5,120.00
125	Employee Pension	6,695.00
130	BCBS Premiums	750.00
131	BCBS Claims Expense	5,000.00
133	Life Insurance	617.40
151	Worker's Comp	150.00
165	Cobra Plus	30.00
201	Office Supplies	100.00
202	Computer Supplies	200.00
210	Operation & Maint. Supp.	50.00
317	Registration Fee	
322	Postage	
331	Travel Expense	1,000.00
332	Vehicle Allowance	1,200.00
340	Advertising	
352	Publish-Printing	
390	Other Services	
400	Repair & Maint. Ser	
414	License & Support Fees	100.00
433	Dues-Memberships	
490	Miscellaneous	100.00
570	Office Furniture & Equipment	
	Total Expenditures	88,062.40
	Salary & Benefits	85,282.40
	Operations	2,780.00
	Total Expenditures	88,062.40
621	Expenses Trferred to PW	(44,031.20)
	City Share	\$44,031.20

Item 125 Employee pension - \$6,695 (Does your employer pay you an additional 10 percent over and above your salary for your IRA?)

Items 130 and 131 – Blue Cross-Blue Shield \$5,750 (Does your employer pay your health benefits? If not, why do you have to pay for the City Coordinator?)

Item 133 – Life Insurance – Why should the taxpayer have to pay for the City Coordinator's Life Insurance? Who's the beneficiary – the city, or his family?

Item 165 – Do you pay your own COBRA? (Not sure what COBRA PLUS is? Please call 845-1700 – City Hall – and inquire)

Items 331 and 332 - \$2,200 Vehicle allowance and expense. (That's a car payment!) He should be on mileage only.

And, last but not least – In a poll taken a year ago or so, nearly 70% of the citizens of Valley City voted AGAINST hiring a City Coordinator. The City hired one anyway!

A %95 Budget

Cont. from Page 1

posed %95 budgets for all agencies not just Higher Ed and how it turned out was this, when I left office we had a lower cost of Government, we had fewer state employees and people had more money in their pockets and better jobs and a better economy in the State of North Dakota, so I think it is appropriate.

The people that looked at this and said you know from a campus standpoint and said we have a limited amount of resources and we are going to create the best university, the best college, the best campus that we can with the money we have, they do well. The people that say it's never enough money we need more or we are going to sock tuition, we're going to borrow money, we're going to raise it from alumnus, we're going to get wealthy people to donate buildings. Those people never focused on creating an excellent university within the revenue that they had and I think that's a problem and that's why we're seeing the costs spiral out of control today."

One of the ideas that we have asked the City Commissioners to save the taxpayers of Valley City money is a %95 budget. To explain this a little. Each department is asked to operate on %95 of the last years budget. To do that may require using less paper clips but we feel as Governor Schafer that Valley City and the citizens would come out of it stronger and better off.

There are very few of us that couldn't stand to lose a few pounds, sure most don't want to eat less and exercise but if we do, we are healthier and feel better. We at CCI feel that a %95 City budget would make Valley City healthier and feel better.

Call your Commissioners, let them know what you feel.

Please call City Hall at 845-1700 for answers to any questions on this budget expenditure.

"Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you."

--Pericles (430 B.C.)