

January 12, 2021

To: County Board Chair Analiese Eicher
County of Dane County

From: Sheriff David J. Mahoney

The Dane County Sheriff is responsible for taking charge and custody of those committed to the Dane County Jail by our justice system partners (law enforcement agencies, courts, U.S. Marshal, and the department of corrections). The Sheriff of Dane County, per State Statute 302.31, Use of Jails, operates a jail in order to confine persons committed pursuant to a sentence, or held in custody for any cause authorized by law. While the Sheriff cannot control who, how many, or how long justice involved citizens are committed to the custody of the jail; does have a responsibility for their care.

The Sheriff is charged with operating a safe, secure, constitutional, and humane facility. This mission is accomplished through direction and adherence to a number of sources such as guidelines established by State and Federal court decisions, statutory requirements, national standards; administrative code requirements, accreditation criteria, collaboration, and evidence based decision making. The Jail Consolidation Project as planned, adheres to the above guidelines thereby fulfilling the responsibilities placed upon the Sheriff.

While the bed capacity (922) of the Jail Consolidation Project reduces the bed capacity by 91 beds and is based on evidence based forecast studies; the Sheriff is prepared to reduce the bed capacity further should the opportunity arise. This opportunity is contingent upon those partners who commit people to the jail making changes in their practices (less people brought to jail and reduced time spent in jail) that result in a smaller jail population. Their efforts will be evidenced by a sustained, stable, flattened, and reduced jail population.

Should this reduction be met; the Sheriff is prepared to reduce the jail bed capacity upon completion of the tower by another 50 beds (a 141 total bed reduction from current bed capacity) through the closing of Public Safety Building Housing Unit 3A.

Reducing the bed capacity in this fashion is consistent with the mission (safe, secure, constitutional, and humane facility); does so without driving up operational costs; and actually allows for potential operational savings.