

GRANT COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

Bond Issue Information

VOTE NOVEMBER 7

Our Civic Duty and Responsibility

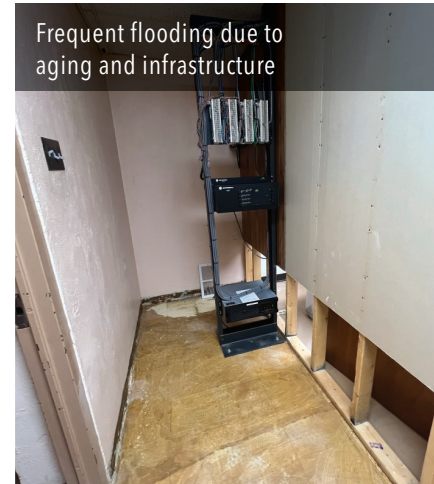
It is our obligation to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Grant County citizens. Our society will always have a court system, and therefore will always need a Law Enforcement Center. It is the first line of defense in detaining people deemed too dangerous to be in public. A Law Enforcement Center needs to be secure to keep detainees inside, the public safe outside, and provide a safe work environment for the employees who work in this facility. Our county must also create a safe environment for our employees and provide a secure and humane setting for those incarcerated.

Why do we need a new Law Enforcement Center?

The current Law Enforcement Center was built in 1972 with an expected lifespan of 50 years. The Law Enforcement Center was built in a linear design (long and narrow) and presents many challenges:

- **Zero ADA accessibility** - This presents one of the county's largest insurance liability exposure.
- **Outdated building codes** - The building is lacking current life-safety standards.
- **Jailers can't view inmate activities from one location** - They are forced to walk past cells down a long hallway or use cameras to monitor inmate activity. This is less safe for jailers and inmates.
- **Insufficient segregation of inmates by different classifications** - This places dangerous inmates in the same space as non-dangerous inmates.
- **Insufficient segregation of female inmates** - These inmates are often housed out of county at a significant cost to Grant County.
- **No kitchen space** - Meals are transported twice a day at a significant cost to Grant County.
- **The current laundry space inhibits staff efficiency** - It is rudimentary and consists of a residential washer and dryer to launder inmate apparel because the plumbing can't handle commercial-sized equipment.
- **The sewer system was constructed using materials that have a life expectancy of 50 years** - These sewer pipes were placed throughout the concrete flooring making them virtually impossible to replace. The pipes have corroded and are currently collapsing. Additionally, the water pipe system has aged and is constantly leaking. This has produced frequent flooding in the basement which creates constant mold problems.
- **Outdated electrical design** - Modern technology is needed to support today's cameras, computers, internet, locks, lights, kiosks, alarms, and automated doors which supports the safety of employees, the community and those incarcerated.

Frequent flooding due to aging and infrastructure



How will a new Law Enforcement Center be financed?

Traditionally, bonds are financed through local property tax. If voters approve a \$15.5M Law Enforcement Center Bond in November, the new Law Enforcement Center can be built without raising current property taxes. That is to say, taxes collected at the current rate will be sufficient to make the bond payments on a new Law Enforcement Center without any additional tax burden. The taxes currently collected each year to pay on the Hospital Bond could now be used each year to pay on a Law Enforcement Center Bond if voters were to approve. No increase in property tax would occur; it would only continue at the same rate until the Law Enforcement Center Bond was paid for over 20 years.

**ZERO
PROPERTY TAX
INCREASE**



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- **October 3**, 6:30 PM - Town Hall Meeting #1, South Room Civic Center
- **October 17**, 6:30 PM - Town Hall Meeting #2, South Room Civic Center

- **October 17** - Voter registration deadline
- **October 18** - Early voting begins
- **November 7** - Polls open for in-person voting

Why are we also voting on a sales tax issue?

A 1% county-wide sales tax question will also appear on the ballot November 7. By law, this sales tax would be collected and used for the sole purpose of financing and repayment of a bond issued to construct or remodel a new Law Enforcement Center. The revenue received from this sales tax cannot be used for any other purpose. Additionally, by law, this sales tax would terminate or “sunset” after the bond debt and interest costs are fully paid.

This sales tax question will appear on the ballot to reduce the financial burden on property owners. The cost of this sales tax will be shared with others who come into our community and spend money and with those who are not property owners. If voters pass this sales tax initiative, the estimated sales tax collection of \$1.2M will be enough to make yearly bond and interest payments for the term of the bond. Additionally, if the sales tax passes, it also means the property taxes currently collected for Hospital debt will decrease. This means if the sales tax issue passes, property taxes will be going down because the Hospital debt is paid.

What are the benefits of a new Law Enforcement Center?

- Modern Law Enforcement Center design includes “podular” design that allows for one jailer to see and monitor all the inmates simultaneously
- Separating different types of offenders prevents issues among inmates that might otherwise result in injuries or other problems.
- Keeping inmates and employees safe is perhaps the biggest priority in the design of a new facility.
- Creating a commercial kitchen and laundry room will benefit day to day operations. Meals that currently must be prepared off site and then transported can be made in house which will save time and cost. A new laundry room will allow for quicker laundry services which frees staff to attend to more pressing duties.

Why build a new Law Enforcement Center now?

The need for a new Law Enforcement Center has been realized and discussed by Commissioners for several years. Both past and current Commissioners have all agreed not to ask tax payers to fund a new Law Enforcement Center until Grant County was free from debt. That time has come. In October, 2023, Grant County will make the final bond payment on the \$24M Hospital Bond it has paid on for the last 20 years. This debt-free circumstance allows voters to consider replacing an aging, unsafe and poorly designed facility which has been failing for many years. If voters choose to wait, the estimated construction costs will continue to increase over time.

How big to build?

Several factors influence incarceration, including increased crime and law changes requiring detention. There is not a direct correlation between population rates and incarceration rates. The population of Grant County has decreased by about 600 people since 2000. However, the crime rate has increased, as well as incarceration rates. The new Law Enforcement Center design allows for a maximum of 38 inmates, which can expand in the future if needed.

How was the project cost calculated?

The technical nature of a detention center drives the cost. The proposed facility is in keeping with similar project costs in our region. We envision this facility to have a straightforward design that is safe, efficient and long lasting.

What will the new Law Enforcement Center encompass?

The new facility is designed to house 38 inmates, Sheriff and deputy offices, dispatch, intake and booking, training room, kitchen, laundry, evidence storage, interview area, and technology room for remote court appearances. The building will have a footprint of approximately 17,000 square feet.

The new Law Enforcement Center would be constructed 1/2 mile north of Ulysses along the west side of Highway 25 on land currently owned by Grant County. This location is also located at the intersection of Highway 25 and the Airport Boulevard Road. This location is situated close to town, yet away from houses and schools.

The Grant County Sheriff's Office and Dispatch Center will be relocated and occupy space provided in the new Law Enforcement Center facility. This configuration allows staff to be cross-trained as jailers or dispatch, and easily allows transfer of inmates to court or other facilities.

The Ulysses Police department will continue to occupy their current space plus the additional space currently occupied by the Sheriff's department. This will effectively double the space the Ulysses Police Department currently occupies.

What happens to the current detention center?

To be good stewards of taxpayer dollars, we plan to reuse the existing detention center. Preliminary discussions for the old Law Enforcement Center include secure courthouse storage, designated public storm shelter, and offices repurposed for other departments or agencies.

QUESTIONS?

Contact your County Commissioner or visit our website that is updated regularly with additional content regarding this project.

