

Project Prison Reset Task Force Meeting

Tuesday, July 8, 2025

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*South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance
1600 W. Russell St., Sioux Falls, South Dakota*

Call to Order

- Lt. Governor Venhuizen called the meeting to order and made introductory remarks

- Task force members present: Lt. Governor Venhuizen (chair), Attorney General Marty Jackley, Minnehaha County Sheriff Mike Milstead, Yankton City Police Chief Jason Foote, Judge Jane Wipf-Pfeifle, Tiffany Wolfgang, Minnehaha County State's Attorney Daniel Haggar, Sen. Jim Mehlhaff, Sen. Jamie Smith, Sen. Joy Hohn, Sen. Ernie Otten, Sen. Mark Lapka, Rep. Scott Odenbach, Rep. Jack Kolbeck, Rep. Erin Healy, Rep. Greg Jamison, Rep. Brian Mulder, Rep. John Hansen, Rep. Karla Lems, and Rep. Tim Reisch
- Task force members excused: Sen. Chris Karr and Sen. Steve Kolbeck

Presentations

- DOC Employee Survey and Results: Secretary Kellie Wasko
- Prison Construction Options: Stacy Watters, State Engineer; Mike Quinn and Mike Conder, Arrington Watkins Architects

- Motion by Senator Otten, seconded by Representative Kolbeck, to remove the Worthing site from further consideration.
 - o The Otten motion passed by a voice vote.
- Motion by Senator Hohn, seconded by Senator Healy, to remove the Mitchell site from further consideration.
 - o The Hohn motion passed by a voice vote.

Public Testimony

- Jerry Pommer, Canton
- George Hahn, Sioux Falls
- Joe Bunkers, Sioux Falls

- Robin Schiro, Elk Point
- Rich Merkouris, Sioux Falls
- Joe Kippley, Sioux Falls
- Jennifer Foss, Sioux Falls
- Angie Maras, Hartford
- Kevin Jensen, Canton
- Zach Swisher, Kadoka
- Steve Haugaard, Sioux Falls
- Vince Jones, Sioux Falls
- Frank Kloucek, Scotland
- Mike Derby, Rapid City
- Nieema Thasing, Elkton

Task Force Discussion and Action

- Motion by Representative Jamison, seconded by Representative Mulder, that the Project Prison Reset task force recommend to the legislature that it introduce, consider and pass legislation authorizing the Office of the State Engineer to expend up to \$600 million in total project cost to purchase land at either the Sweetman or Benson Road locations in the Northeast region of the city of Sioux Falls, and to restart the procurement process to contract for the design and construction of 1,200 beds with security levels as needed, with a 100 year span design.
- Substitute motion by Senator Mehlhaff, seconded by Judge Wipf Pfeifle, to direct the Office of the State Engineer and Department of Corrections to propose a plan to build a 1,500-bed facility, with 1,200 beds being multi-level cells and 300 beds being dorm-style, in the most efficient way possible, in the Sioux Falls area, and at a 100-year construction quality, at a project cost not to exceed \$650 million.
 - o Motion by Attorney General Jackley, seconded by State’s Attorney Haggar, to amend the Mehlhaff motion to add a spending cap of \$650 million.
 - o The Jackley motion to amend passed by a voice vote.
- Consideration returned to the Mehlhaff motion, as amended, by a roll call vote:

Senator Hohn	Yea
Senator Karr	Excused
Senator Kolbeck	Excused
Senator Lapka	Yea
Senator Mehlhaff	Yea

Senator Otten	Yea
Senator Smith	Yea
Representative Hansen	Yea
Representative Healy	Yea
Representative Jamison	Yea
Representative Kolbeck	Yea
Representative Lems	Yea
Representative Mulder	Yea
Representative Odenbach	Yea
Representative Reisch	Yea
Chief Foote	Yea
State's Attorney Haggard	Yea
Attorney General Jackley	Yea
Sheriff Milstead	Yea
Judge Wipf Pfeifle	Yea
Tiffany Wolfgang	Yea
Venhuizen, Tony (chair)	Yea
Total Votes (Y-N)	20-0 2 Excused

So, the Mehlhaff motion having received a majority vote of the members, Lt. Governor Venhuizen declared the motion passed.

As this was the task force's final meeting, Lt. Governor Venhuizen thanked the task force members for their work.

The meeting was adjourned.