



Milwaukee County House of Correction: who's in charge?

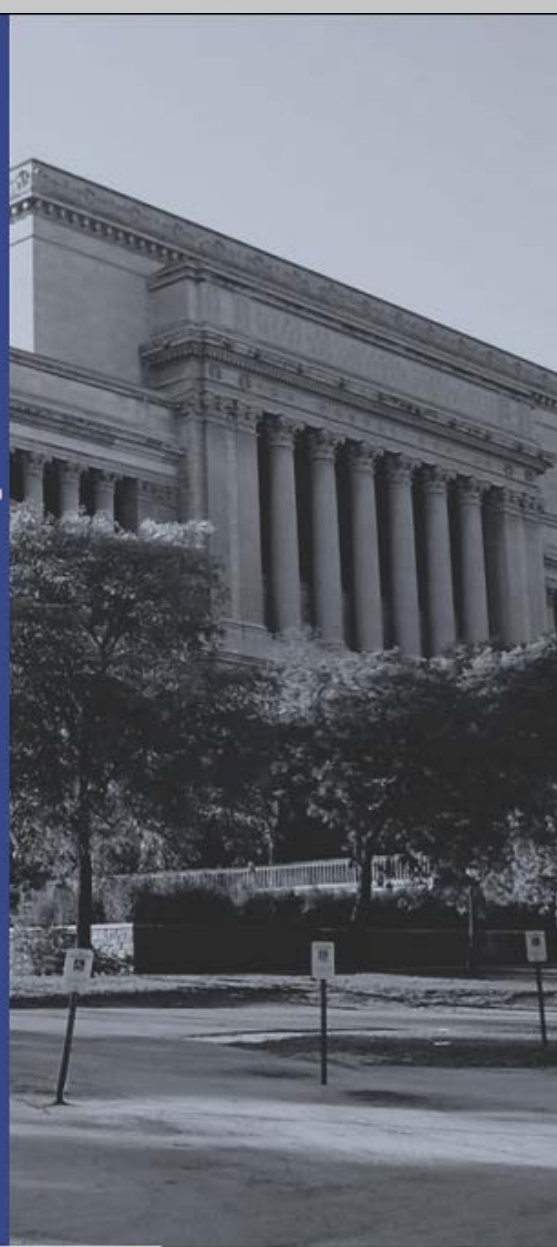
Rob Henken, President

WHO'S IN CHARGE?

Assessing the options
for corrections
administration in
Milwaukee County

June 2020

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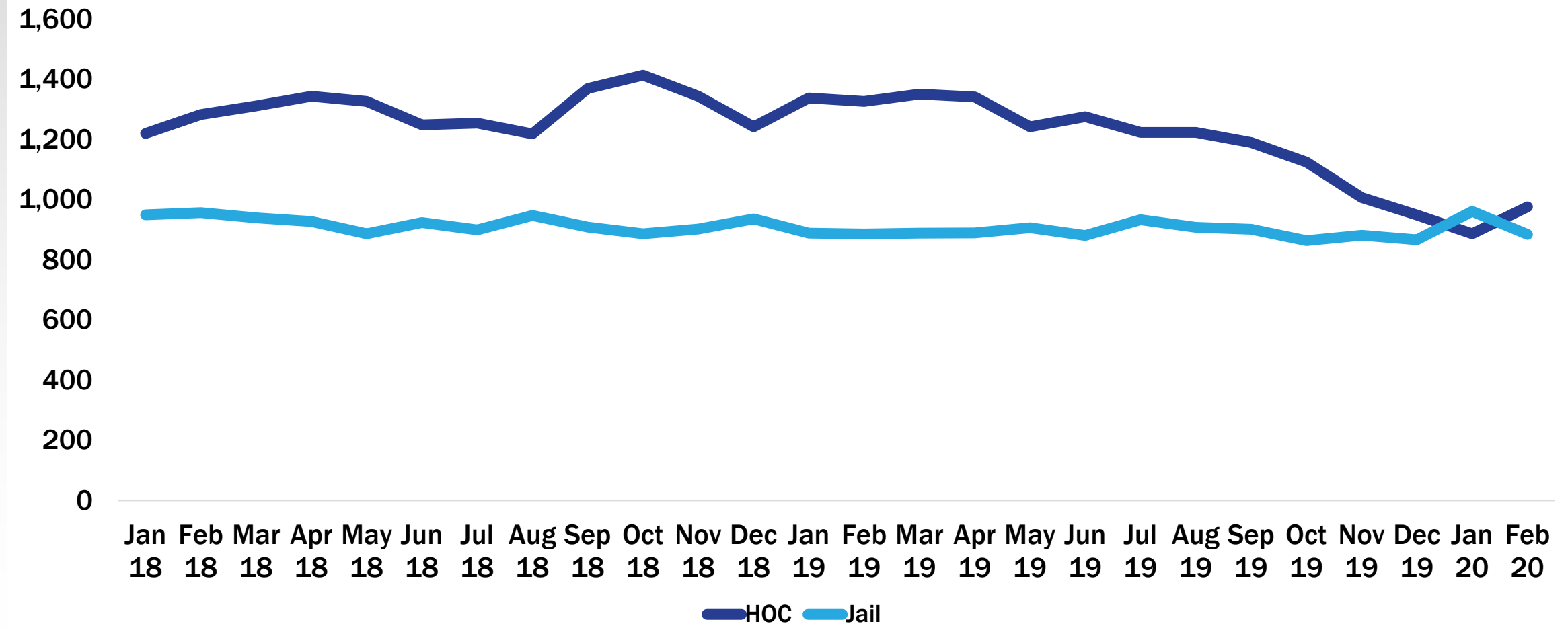


BACKGROUND

- 2020 budget calls for plan to move HOC under authority of the Sheriff on January 1, 2021; DAS, Comptroller, Sheriff, HOC, DHR to prepare report by June 2020.
- WPF commissioned to perform 3rd party research and facilitation to shed light on peer county models and help reach consensus.
- June report describes research findings; informed by group and individual meetings with stakeholders and other key informants.

HOC & Jail Populations

Average daily populations in the HOC and jail, Jan 2018-Feb 2020





Milwaukee County Peer Counties

Peer Counties

| County | Facilities | Administration |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Allegheny (PA-Pittsburgh) | Jail | County Executive |
| Cuyahoga (OH-Cleveland) | Jail | Sheriff |
| Hennepin (MN-Minneapolis) | Jail Adult Corrections Facility | Sheriff County Administrator |
| St Louis County (MO) | Jail | County Executive |
| Suffolk (MA-Boston) | Separate Jail and HOC | Sheriff |

Allegheny County

| County/ Facility | County Population | Administration | Offenders | Programs |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---|--|--|
| Allegheny County Jail | 1.2 million | Warden under county manager who reports to elected county executive | The Jail holds those committed to it by a legal authority. It also provides "lock-up" for between 80-100 arrestees per day. | Full suite of reentry/ rehabilitative programs. |

Cuyahoga County

| County/ Facility | County Population | Administration | Offenders | Programs |
|--|----------------------|----------------|---|----------------------------|
| Cuyahoga Co. Corrections Center (CCCC); also took over City of Cleveland jails in 2018. | 1.2 million | Sheriff | Holds inmates awaiting trial or sentencing and sentenced inmates (typically less than two years). Also holds inmates for municipalities and the federal government. | Common reentry services |

Hennepin County

| County/ Facility | County Population | Administration | Offenders | Programs |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---|--|--|
| Hennepin Jail | 1.26 million | Hennepin County Sheriff's Office | Pre-trial facility in downtown Minneapolis | Substance abuse and mental health treatment |
| Adult Corrections Facility | | Dept of Community Corrections & Rehabilitation, under county administrator and asst. county administrator for public safety | Provides short-term (up to one year) custody and programming for adult offenders | Huber, volunteer opportunities for tutors, mentoring, domestic abuse counseling, education |

St. Louis County

| County/ Facility | County Population | Administration | Offenders | Programs |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--|---|---|
| St. Louis County Jail | 996,945 | Department of Justice Services; director serves at pleasure of the county executive | Adults and certified juveniles who are pre-trial or serving county sentences. Also houses federal and state inmates and municipal offenders. | Several reentry programs related to mental health, anger/stress management, parenting, AODA, GED |

Suffolk County

| County/ Facility | County Population | Administration | Offenders | Programs |
|---|----------------------|--|--|--|
| Suffolk County House of Correction | 807,252 (2018) | Sheriff (who appoints a superintendent who reports to him) | Adult male and female inmates convicted of crimes with a sentence of 2.5 years or less. | Substance abuse, anger management, vocational training, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), basic literacy, college prep classes, job skills, parenting skills, reintegration programming. |
| Suffolk County Jail | | Sheriff | Pretrial detainees in 13 different housing units. | Small group programs offer educational assistance, including resume writing; private tutoring offered. |

Peer county summary

- Different counties take different approaches; those differences do not appear to preclude a strong focus on reentry services.
- A broadly constituted oversight committee could ensure that justice system priorities established for the HOC are being met.
- An emphasis on reentry programming could be supported by a stronger and more formal linkage between corrections and health and human services.



Framing the discussion in Milwaukee county

Training

| Issue | Advantages | Concerns |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Efficiency/Quality | Merging under sheriff could streamline management/administration, potentially produce fiscal savings. | Two independent training operations allow for better student outcomes through smaller class sizes; HOC's partnership with MATC helps attract students and might be lost under consolidation. |
| Consistency | Training CO's for both HOC and jail in same classes and to same standards would enhance the ability to easily move them between the two facilities. | Different types of inmates and different physical characteristics at the two facilities demand different types of training. |
| Recruitment | Recruitment would be enhanced if classes were tailored for individuals seeking to work in Milwaukee County corrections and placement decisions made post-training. | Those attending either HOC or sheriff's training academies specifically wish to work at the HOC or jail and may not sign up if the place of employment is determined after training occurs. |

Staffing

| Issue | Advantages | Concerns |
|----------------|---|---|
| Recruitment | Joint recruitment of CO's could eliminate redundancy and competition; many recruits attracted to the CO position as a stepping stone to becoming a deputy. | Many of HOC's recruits specifically wish to work at the HOC; joint recruitment ineffective given the different nature of the CO position at each facility. |
| Retention | Ability to transfer CO's between facilities could be valuable at times of high vacancy; could reduce the need for OT and relieve worker stress. | Many HOC CO's want to specifically work at the HOC; Sheriff Clarke perceived to favor jail, harming HOC morale; HOC has drastically reduced CO OT, thus eliminating a primary rationale for change. |
| Administration | One entity managing staff at both facilities could encourage more strategic deployment, thus reducing OT; ability to occasionally deploy supervisors interchangeably could be even more valuable. | Inter-facility movement of CO's could cause disgruntlement; the two facilities require different skills and training and have different physical environments. |

Contracts

| Issue | Advantages | Concerns |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Contract procurement | The entity that administers the contract also develops the RFP and may not fully consider the needs and desires of the other entity. | Status quo working relatively well; merged administration not required to work out any issues. |
| Contract Administration | Difficult for the medical vendor (Wellpath) to work under two different agencies with different sets of expectations. | Status quo working relatively well; merged administration not required to work out any issues. |

Programming

| Issue | Advantages | Concerns |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Commitment to Programming</p> | <p>Current sheriff fully committed to robust programming & community partnerships, would not change current HOC offerings or focus.</p> | <p>Despite the current sheriff's good intentions, he or future sheriffs may have higher priorities, particularly if faced with severe budget pressures.</p> |
| <p>Relationship to Mission</p> | <p>Current sheriff recognizes critical role of reentry programming at any correctional facility, as demonstrated by jail programming.</p> | <p>Reentry programming should be top priority (in addition to safety) of a facility serving low-level offenders and would be treated as such by county executive.</p> |
| <p>Administration</p> | <p>Programming quality could be improved by merging similar types of reentry programming currently offered by each facility individually.</p> | <p>Current HOC leadership already has vast programming experience and proven success; a new administrative structure could negatively impact that success.</p> |

Inmate Transfers

| Issue | Advantages | Concerns |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Efficiency</p> | <p>Inmate transfer process has been cumbersome in the past because of the sheriff's need to seek approval from HOC officials for each transfer.</p> | <p>This concern has been addressed by a new process in which the HOC initiates the list of transfers when the jail population approaches the cap.</p> |
| <p>Proactively Addressing Jail Capacity</p> | <p>Jail administrators have better sense of when to initiate transfers than HOC; disputes would not occur if the sheriff in charge of both facilities.</p> | <p>An effective dispute resolution process could be developed to address this issue without merging administrative control.</p> |
| <p>Transparency</p> | <p>Having one official manage both populations could enhance accountability for meeting consent and overall effective population management.</p> | <p>Inmate transfers might be guided not only by population pressures, but also by sheriff's desire to keep populations and costs lower at the jail.</p> |

Financial Management

| Issue | Advantages | Concerns |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Efficiency | Efficiency enhanced by merging redundant services in areas like accounting, budgeting, human resources, procurement, legal services. | Sheriff's ability to determine where to place cost centers for merged administrative services could make it more difficult for policymakers to evaluate sheriff's budget. |
| Accountability | As an elected Constitutional officer, the sheriff stands before voters and is properly incentivized to manage his finances efficiently. | Previous sheriffs have run large deficits, undermining other county functions and the fiscal authority of the exec and board; placing HOC under sheriff would allow him similar discretion with an even larger portion of the county budget. |

Key informant summary

- For some operational areas, it is easy to see how efficiencies might be achieved from a shift in control; for others it is equally possible to be wary of potential negative impacts.
- We do not provide a clear answer to the administrative control question, but our analysis suggests the need to focus on the key issues any change in authority would seek to resolve.
- Some of these issues may be effectively addressed without a change in administrative control; for others a change might be best, but might it detract from HOC programming and fiscal accountability?

conclusion

- There is no “right” or “wrong” way for the HOC to be administered.
- Initial focus might be on the full range of options to address inmate transfers, CO recruitment/retention, medical contract administration.
- A compromise could involve shift in control coupled w/new oversight board to establish and monitor policy direction; closer relationship between corrections and DHHS could be explored regardless.
- Changes to corrections population, COVID-19 uncertainty, and county’s growing fiscal challenges may justify a “pause.”