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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #237

Barracks Units (Corrections -- Adult Correctional Institutions)

[LFB 2019-21 Budget Summary: Page 99, #5]

CURRENT LAW

The Department currently operates barracks units at Columbia Correctional Institution, Dodge Correctional Institution, Fox Lake Correctional Institution (two units), Jackson Correctional Institution, Taycheedah Correctional Institution, Racine Correctional Institution, and Oshkosh Correctional Institution. Each of the existing barracks units have 144 beds. All units were constructed in 1996 by Venture Architects under one construction contract. The construction cost for the eight barracks units was \$6,455,000 (in 1996). The Department intended these barracks to be for temporary housing, but all eight are still in operation.

GOVERNOR

Construction of New Barracks Units. Provide \$15,000,000 in general fund supported borrowing to construct three 144-bed barracks units, including two at Jackson Correctional Institution (JCI) for male inmates and one at Taycheedah Correctional Institution (TCI) for female inmates.

Operation of New Barracks Units. Provide \$6,056,400 GPR and 72.0 GPR positions in 2020-21 for the operation of the three 144-bed barracks units. On an annualized basis, the barracks, as recommended by the Governor, will cost \$9,387,800 (\$6,031,500 at JCI and \$3,356,300 at TCI).

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The Governor's capital and biennial budgets include items to construct and operate barracks units for male inmates at Jackson Correctional Institution (in Jackson County) and for female

inmates at Taycheedah Correctional Institution (in Fond du Lac County). According to the Department of Corrections, the barracks are intended to provide temporary housing until legislation is passed that can help reduce the inmate population.

A. Construction of New Barracks Units

2. Under the capital budget, the Governor recommended enumeration of \$5,000,000 in general fund supported borrowing to build one 144-bed barracks unit at TCI and \$10,000,000 in general fund supported borrowing to build two 144-bed barracks units at JCI. Time schedules in the Building Commission's materials indicate that units at JCI could be constructed by January, 2022, and at TCI by February, 2023. The Building Commission did not approve this, or any capital budget projects for enumeration.

3. The locations of the new barracks units were largely determined based on which medium-security institutions had sufficient space for construction and existing services for the associated increased inmate populations. Additionally, JCI typically has an employee vacancy rate below the institutional average (in the first half of 2018-19, JCI has a vacancy rate of 10.2%; the institutional average is 13.4%). As a result, the use of overtime to staff the barracks could potentially be limited at this location. When looking at locations for a female barracks unit, TCI was the only existing facility available for females classified as medium-security, which is the classification experiencing the most overcrowding.

4. The barracks unit at TCI would provide living quarters, a food serving area, bathrooms, showers, laundry areas, telephones, indoor dayrooms, a security station, staff restroom and two substance use disorder (SUD) group treatment rooms. Food would be served to inmates in one central food services area. The barracks units at JCI would provide access to existing utility infrastructure, including food and health services. Food would be prepared in the food services area of the institution, then transported to the inmates in their barracks units. At both locations, inmates would have all of the same programming and health services opportunities as the other inmates at the institution.

5. A barracks housing unit can be built within a shorter timeframe, compared to a typical housing unit construction project. A prototypical barracks housing unit design may include an officer station and food server station in the middle of a rectangular unit, with four pods of 36 beds, each with its own sleeping area and dayroom. Despite the capital budget construction time schedules, the bill assumes all three barracks would open January 1, 2021. The construction design and timeline was determined based on the Department's experience with building barracks units in 1996. According to Corrections, the new units would incorporate design changes based on the Department's prior operations of such units and have improved mechanical equipment and windows, among other improvements. Despite operating funding being provided in the bill, on May 1, 2019, the Department of Administration submitted an erratum on the barracks indicating that "if the barracks are approved, they would not be completed within the 2019-21 biennium."

6. The barracks units are intended to alleviate population capacity issues. In April, 2019, the correctional facility population (including institutions, centers, and contract beds) was at 23,722 inmates (1,545 females and 22,177 males). The Department's population growth rate anticipates that this number will climb to average daily populations of 24,187 in 2019-20 and 24,659 in 2020-21. As

of April, 2019, all correctional institutions, excluding the Wisconsin Secure Program Facility and the Sturtevant Transitional Facility, were already housing a prison population greater than the intended design capacity. During that same time, the Department was utilizing 538 contract beds in Wisconsin counties at a per diem rate of \$51.46.

7. The barracks units would serve medium-security general population inmates and SUD inmates. The Department places inmates in barracks units at their discretion. The Department may use the units to: (a) alleviate overcrowding at TCI and JCI; (b) alleviate overcrowding at a number of institutions by transferring inmates from their current institution to one of the barracks units; and/or (c) decrease the Department's need for contract beds. Due to the various options available, it is unknown if the barracks units will impact contract bed costs. However, a reduction in contract beds seems unlikely, as the inmate population is anticipated to increase, funding for the barracks did not account for any anticipated reduction in contract bed costs, and the barracks units may not open in the 2019-21 biennium. Further, according to the Department of Corrections:

"It is anticipated that the construction of barracks will help the Department reduce some of the overcrowding in the prisons by better aligning inmates with their intake security assessment. This will allow the Department to shift inmates within the system. There could be a reduction of contract beds seen, but it is difficult to estimate at the moment because of the crowding of current institutions."

8. Given the demonstrated overcrowding issues at existing adult correctional facilities, the Committee may wish to enumerate \$15,000,000 in general fund supported borrowing for two new barracks units at JCI and one new barracks unit at TCI, as recommended in the capital budget. Barracks units can be constructed at a faster rate than traditional construction projects, allowing the Department to alleviate some of the overcrowding more quickly. The Department anticipates that there are savings associated with building two barracks in one location (JCI) at the same time. However, the Department indicates that it cannot predict what the savings would be until a construction bid is accepted. There are no other building projects under the bill intended to alleviate general population overcrowding in the 2019-21 biennium. [Alternative A1]

9. As an alternative to constructing two barracks units at JCI, the Committee could instead recommend construction of one unit. This alternative would decrease construction costs by approximately \$5,000,000 in general fund supported borrowing. Under 2017 Act 185, the Department is required to close the Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Schools for juveniles and convert the space into a fenced-minimum security adult male correctional facility called Lincoln County Correctional Institution. The facility would have an estimated capacity of 575 male inmates. While the Governor recommended removing the date of closure of the current Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake Schools (the current closure date is January 1, 2021), the process of removing juveniles from the facility in preparation for the conversion is underway, and will open up additional space for adult males, once the juvenile facility has been fully converted. As a result, increased capacity for male inmates will occur at some time in the future. Therefore, in order to mitigate creation of more capacity than may be needed in the future, one unit at JCI could be authorized. [The corresponding operation and staffing alternative is Alternative B2, identified below.] [Alternative A2]

10. On the other hand, the Committee may wish to forgo barracks construction and pursue

a more permanent housing option to address overcrowding in institutions. A comprehensive long range "Master Facilities Plan Study" is currently being compiled by the Mead & Hunt consulting firm and the BWBR architectural firm. These entities were hired in April, 2018, by the Division of Facilities and Management to provide master planning services in support of the Correctional Facilities Planning Committee. A final draft is expected to be completed sometime in 2019. While the Master Facilities Plan Study will focus on long-term solutions only, the Committee may wish to wait until the report recommendations can be fully evaluated or until the Lincoln County Correctional Institution opens. [Alternative A3]

B. Operation of New Barracks Units

11. Under the bill, Jackson Correctional Institution would receive \$3,936,900 GPR and 46.0 GPR positions for the new barracks units, including: 30.0 correctional officers (17.50 officers, 10.50 sergeants, and 2.0 supervising officers), 9.0 nurses, 2.0 social workers, 2.0 teachers, 1.0 psychologist, 1.0 food service leader, and 1.0 sentencing associate. Taycheedah Correctional Institution would receive \$2,119,500 GPR and 26.0 GPR positions, including: 15.0 correctional officers (8.75 officers, 5.25 sergeants, and 1.0 supervising officer), 6.0 nurses, 1.0 psychologist, 1.0 social worker, 1.0 teacher, 1.0 food service leader, and 1.0 sentencing associate. The funding for the positions covers a six-month period (January, 2021, through June, 2021).

12. The 45.0 total correctional officers and sergeants are recommended to staff the barracks units 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Specifically, there would be 4.0 officer posts and 2.0 sergeant posts for first and second shift, seven days per week at the JCI barracks and 2.0 officer posts and 2.0 sergeant posts for third shift, seven days per week at the JCI barracks. At the TCI barracks, there would be 2.0 officer posts and 1.0 sergeant post for first and second shift, seven days per week and 1.0 officer post and 1.0 sergeant post for third shift, seven days per week. Finally, the bill provides 2.0 supervising officer posts on first shift at JCI and 1.0 supervising officer post on first shift at TCI. The additional psychologists, nurses, teachers, social workers, correctional sentencing associates, and food service leaders are needed to provide programming, food services, and health services to the additional populations associated with the barracks (144 inmates at TCI and 288 inmates at JCI).

13. In total, the bill provides \$6,056,400 and 72.0 positions in 2020-21 for operation and staffing of the three new barracks units. On an annualized basis, operating two barracks units at JCI would cost approximately \$6,031,500 annually and operating a barracks unit at TCI would cost approximately \$3,356,300 annually. If the Committee recommends construction of three barracks units, the staffing patterns appear to be consistent with the current design and operation of other such units. Therefore, recommended funding and position authority could be provided. [Alternative B1]

14. If the Committee approves the construction of one barracks unit at TCI and one barracks unit at JCI (Alternative A2), staffing and operation costs at JCI would be reduced by -\$1,878,900 GPR and -21.50 positions. The modified staffing would include 24.50 positions, including: 15 correctional officers (including 8.75 officers, 5.25 sergeants, and 1.0 supervising officer), 1.0 psychologist, 4.50 nurses, 1.0 teacher, 1.0 correctional food service leader, 1.0 correctional sentencing associate, and 1.0 social worker. It is important to note that there is an operating budget benefit to building two barracks at the same time and location, as certain positions (including 1.0 psychologist, 1.0 food service leader, and 1.0 corrections sentencing associate) would remain at the same staffing

level, regardless of if there are one or two barracks at JCI. [Alternative B2]

15. It should be noted, Alternatives B1 and B2 assume the barracks can be constructed and opened by January 1, 2021. However, as stated previously, on May 1, 2019, the Department of Administration submitted an erratum on this item, indicating that the \$6,056,400 GPR and 72.0 GPR positions associated with staffing and operating the barracks in 2020-21 should be removed. Based on the erratum (indicating that the barracks "would not be completed within the 2019-21 biennium") and the proposed construction schedule in the capital budget (indicating "final completion" would occur in January, 2022, for JCI and in February, 2023, for TCD), a January 1, 2021 opening may not be possible. If the Committee incorporates the technical erratum or takes no action on the construction of the barracks (Alternative A3), all funding and staffing for operation of the barracks could be deleted. [Alternative B3]

ALTERNATIVES

A. *Construction of New Barracks Units*

1. Enumerate \$5,000,000 in general fund supported borrowing to construct a 144-bed barracks unit at Taycheedah Correctional Institution and \$10,000,000 in general fund supported borrowing to construct two 144-bed barracks units at Jackson Correctional Institution.

ALT A1	Change to	
	Base	Bill
BR	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000

2. Enumerate \$10,000,000 in general fund supported borrowing associated with one barracks unit at Taycheedah Correctional Institution and one at Jackson Correctional Institution.

ALT A2	Change to	
	Base	Bill
BR	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000

3. Take no action. This alternative may not be selected in conjunction with Alternatives B1 or B2, below, which provide funding for operation of the barracks units.

B. *Operation of New Barracks Units*

1. Provide \$6,056,400 GPR and 72.0 GPR positions in 2020-21 for the operation and staffing of three 144-bed barracks units. This alternative assumes an opening date of January 1, 2021.

ALT B1	Change to Base		Change to Bill	
	Funding	Positions	Funding	Positions
GPR	\$6,056,400	72.00	\$0	0.00

2. Modify the Governor's recommendation by -\$1,878,900 GPR and -21.50 GPR positions associated with removing one of two barracks unit from Jackson Correctional Institution. Provided funding would include \$4,177,500 GPR and 50.50 GPR positions in 2020-21. This alternative would support one barracks unit at JCI and one barracks unit at TCI and assumes an opening date of January, 1, 2021.

ALT B2	Change to Base		Change to Bill	
	Funding	Positions	Funding	Positions
GPR	\$4,177,500	50.50	- \$1,878,900	- 21.50

3. Take no action.

ALT B3	Change to Base		Change to Bill	
	Funding	Positions	Funding	Positions
GPR	\$0	0.00	- \$6,056,400	- 72.00

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