

The new Monroe County Indiana Jail Commander, Kyle Gibbons, invited the group (via Sydney) to visit the Jail to see the changes being made to make the place more humane.

The previous Sheriff, with the assistance from the County Commissioners and by some obfuscation of the County Council (limited tours, access) and the public had let the facility go to ruin. And most importantly generally treated the people inside as less than human.

Besides the dirt, there were strict policies in place which confined people to a cell for 23 hours a day. The plumbing was in disrepair, with clogged and non-functional toilets and drains, leaky pipes and water corrosion to the fittings of the showers. The roof failed and was not repaired.

The meals are delivered to the people in the cell and much grim had accumulated on the access through the door which is called a "bean hole."

Programs were halted a few years ago, during the pandemic, and not restarted. Family visits, visits in general were only available via the expensive video and telephone systems.

When i visited the jail, I saw that processing and people awaiting processing were on the first floor close to the "sally port".

(Note from Google: The purpose of a sally port is to deter, defend, and delay against unwanted entry (or exit).)

Perhaps this design is suppose to reduce the amount of force required to transport people from the police vehicle to "detox" and two holding areas. Also on the first floor is a unused "reentry dorm" housing 12 or so bunks and a small living area. This design allows correctional

officers time make the necessary preparations for inclusion and then, separation from the community of people living in the jail.

Commander Gibbons said a few times that the incoming process is an important part of acclimatizing people to not rebel against the correctional officers during their stay as inmates. Later from community members on the NewsFeed of CareNotCages I heard that the Centerstone organization once had a grant to utilize the "reentry dorm" but a funding issue prevented it from continuing.

The third and fourth floors housed all other people, I think. The elevator is the means of access and exit to/from the upper levels. Though we also used keyed stairwells. Whether awaiting trial or serving time, people were placed into (I think) three categories and areas - minimum, maximum or segregated quarters and then three other categories male, female or trans people. I am not sure of all of the policies regarding the rights or placement of trans people in this facility by their birth gender. The layout is odd, with ("C", "D") blocks which have two floors and 32 beds. The layout is not easily described with just one tour. Additionally there is a "work" block, for meal preparation and laundry. This area had music playing in the laundry room, and people cleaning the kitchen - generally moving freely around the entire area.

Video surveillance is complete. Meaning there was not a time that I felt that I was not being watch, which was later confirmed by the monitoring in Commander Gibbons office.

There is one "classroom" centrally located. Either configured as one large room or two smaller rooms. GED prep classes were being held with two people attending. Commander Gibbons said that new office furniture was being unloaded and that there are plans to update the classroom technology with whiteboards and updates to the tables and chairs.

I heard Commander Gibbons comment that the layout of this facility has challenges but is feasible. He knows of other facilities which have a preferred "pod" design. We agreed that a new layout is years away, (and for me, may not happen.)

*The RFQ presentations by the jail construction companies for a new jail facility have been recently completed even as the location for the facility is still unknown.

Key takeaways for me were :

- * Nothing was known or discussed about the Stride Center or the efforts toward directing police officers or people to that Crisis Response Center.
- People with felony charges are lumped together and, IMHO, stigmatized in that setting.
- It was Commanders Gibbons opinion that adequate health care services are being provided by Advanced Correctional Health (ACH) , including:
 - on staff nurses,
 - transport to/from medical appointments and
 - timely continuation of prescriptions during incarceration.