

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA**



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June 14, 2013

The Honorable Sheriff David Morgan
1700 West Leonard Street
Pensacola, Florida 32501

RE: Response to your letter

Dear Sheriff Morgan,

It is not my normal mode of operations to communicate by letter; however, I am responding to your most recent communications to the entire BCC. I am simply one of five; however, I am always open and available at any time you wish to talk about my specific opinions related to either your operations or those of the jail.

It is very unfortunate that we find ourselves in the current position we are. Still as public servants it is our job to work together for the betterment of the entire county and its citizens. We serve the exact same constituents and the front of our uniforms say the exact same thing "Escambia County." Toward that end, I am happy to work in any way we can to help negotiate a settlement of our issues.

Unfortunately, as I have communicated at prior meetings, where you were present, we find ourselves in an approximate one to two year fiscal pinch before we begin to see property values appreciate and thereby pressure on our general fund alleviated. As I have communicated, I am willing to work with you and your office in any way that we can to do some temporary additions and improvements to support the jail and its administration. Whether that option is to look at reserve funds for additional corrections officers or suspension of raises for county employees I am very open and willing to cooperate with you.

However, I am adamant in my position that I will not raise ad valorem taxes, which impacts the citizens and more importantly the businesses that are helping us recover from the most recent economic recession. Such a move to raise ad valorem taxes would be devastating to our economic recovery and detrimental to the long term viability of Escambia County. I was somewhat dismayed by your comments that the BCC has acted in "bad faith" as I have indicated both from the dais to you as well as in numerous articles in the PNJ and the Independent Weekly my position to not raise ad valorem taxes. Due to the fragility of our economic recovery that is simply not an option for me at this time.

At the same time, jail privatization is not an option for me either. I am all too familiar with the experiences of Bay County and all other jail systems across the State of Florida, which have been

unsuccessful in the implementation of privatization. I am all too aware that the profit motive will very likely eliminate the programs Commissioner May has indicated are important to real rehabilitation and improvement of our criminal system. Just like tax increases, privatization is a non-starter for me.

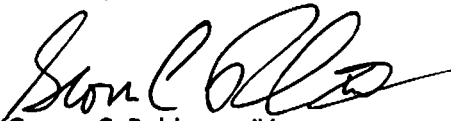
As for the DOJ and their conditions, I am more than happy to spend the time and energy needed to discuss this matter with both our Florida Delegation and the Administrative Offices in Washington DC. We in Escambia County, and I in particular, have good relationships with all of those individuals and will be more than happy to work to some satisfactory agreement in how we move forward. While you certainly have been our agent, you are not in this alone as you know the jail is the responsibility of the Escambia BCC and I am more than willing to dedicate the time and energy to support proper management and development of the jail system. However, that system cannot be inconsistent with the burdens placed on the individual Escambia County citizens and taxpayers.

Finally, please do not allow the differences of opinion to become personal. As our agent, I greatly appreciate the work that you have done and I am very happy to be a part of the same team with you. Please also understand that there are five individual and equal commissioners. If you have personal issues with one, I cannot control that as I have had personal issues with colleagues of mine historically from time to time. Please note that I am available to work with you if you desire a true cooperative spirit to resolve our problems. However like you, there are certain issues that I simply cannot support.

Finally, I respect your opinion, and if you believe the management of the Escambia County jail is beyond your capacity, I am willing to relieve you of your responsibility as agent. I regret that we have come to this point; however, we are not the only county facing this exact issue. Recently I have had the opportunity to meet with commissioners from Marion County and they are dealing with the exact scenario. The Marion BCC, too, will be taking authority of their jail in effort to protect their vision for their county in its entirety.

Thank you for your time, understanding and effort. I truly appreciate the work that you and your deputies do. Please know that the door is always open for real solutions that move Escambia County in its entirety forward toward the vision of the community we all want it to be.

Sincerely,



Grover C. Robinson, IV
Escambia County Commissioner
District 4