

# County splits on jail project

By AMY OBERLIN  
Herald Journal Staff

White County Commissioners split company Monday over the best way to proceed on the White County Jail project.

Longtime incumbent commissioners Chuck Altman and Dean Fleck voted to proceed with the project with several revisions, leaving fellow commissioner Bud Ferguson saying no.

White County Board of Commissioners and Council met in a joint session Monday to discuss how to fund construction of the new jail. Bids opened July 9 put the cost of the project \$1.4 million over what had been estimated.

The project is funded by the sale of \$5.9 million in bonds. White County Council promised \$2 million from the general fund.

Minor changes in the blueprints, rebidding one construction package and exercising alternate funding options should bring the final price tag down to around \$700,000 over the estimates.

White County Council agreed to make up the difference from the county's coffers.

The decision to go ahead with plans as stated passed the board of commissioners by a 2-1 vote. Commissioner Bud Ferguson cast the dissenting vote.

Ferguson wants the project to be done exactly as planned, with no changes or deletions.

Dean Roth, an employee of Everett E. Bucy Building Services, presented possibilities for construction package changes. Bucy Building Services was contracted by the commissioners to oversee construction.

Roth went through all 19 bid packages, noting features that could be deleted. He did not suggest cutting corners, however.

"We could give up some things, if we want to give them up, but they're going to haunt us later," said Roth.

Blueprints call for a maintenance tunnel running beneath the facility. The commissioners could save \$100,000 by eliminating it. They chose to keep it in as planned because of concerns about future costs if workers didn't have access to pipes.

A place where costs could be trimmed without changing the scope of the project was in landscaping. By putting down four inches of top soil instead of six around the building, the county will save \$14,000.

Another \$5,000 will be saved by trading the articulated ceilings and special light fixtures in the lobby to more plain, less expensive features.

Charles Goodman of Schenkel-Schultz Engineering Co., Fort Wayne, is also checking into changes in the outdoor recreation area. Bid specifications require the area to be enclosed by masonry walls. The county would save \$50,000 by putting up a double row of 10-foot high chain link fences instead.

Another \$100,000 can be taken from contingency and radio funds.

County attorney John Goss noted that there is \$275,000 in a contingency fund in case final costs went over the bid amounts. He said \$50,000 could be safely taken out.

Another \$50,000 may be cut from the radio equipment re-

ses. White County Communications Board is studying possibilities for the new communications office to be located in the jail.

The commissioners will advertise for bids on contract B of the project. Only one company bid on the package last Tuesday. The bid was much higher than expected. The county could reduce the cost of that metal work package by \$3,000 if it is rebid.

Randy Ruhl of City Securities Corp., Indianapolis, said bond sales would be \$175,000 more than estimated due to lowered interest rates. Another \$300,000 in property tax money could be generated by starting payments on the lease in 1997 rather than in 1998.

The bonds will be sold in two weeks. When the money is in the bank, contracts can be signed and construction will begin.