Council Says 'No' to Extended Jail Contract with State

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

The Kodiak City Council maintained its hard line last week against the State of Alaska in the battle over housing prisoners. Last month the council voted to accept one last contract with the state to operate a jail here. After that, the care and feeding of prisoners will no longer be the city's problem - unless the state pony's up millions of dollars to complete the build-out of the jail portion of the new Kodiak Police Station.

City Manager Aimee Kniaziowski (Kenya-zhoff-ski) and Police Chief T.C. Kamai presented two options to the council at the Thursday night regular meeting. One was to accept an additional 375-thousand dollars for a contract to begin in July next year, or to stay the course, as described by the chief:

-- (Jail 1 30 sec "We close the jail ... you're responsible for them.")

The presentation did not impress Councilman Tom Walters, who is leading the push for closing the current jail:

-- (Jail 2 51 sec "It's nice to see a ... is criminal.")

He said if the city were to accept the additional funds for one more year, there would be nothing to stop the state from trying to delay it, year after year.
Councilwoman Josie Rosales said that if the state were to start paying for transporting prisoners in and out of town, it would add up quickly, and that money could be put to better use:

-- (Jail 3 17 sec "State Troopers have estimated ... rather than spending it?")

Councilman Paul Smith inquired of Kniaziowski (Kenya-zhoff-ski) what the state might do if the city lets the contract lapse:

-- (Jail 4 33 sec "If we shut the jail ... we're currently the contractor, so. Yeah.")

Kniaziowski (Kenya-zhoff-ski) told the councilmembers that if they were at all interested in extending the jail contract with the state, she needs to know soon.
Councilman Terry Haines reflected the mood of his colleagues when he basically said no.

-- (Jail 5 47 sec "I don't think we should ... another minute if we can help it.")

In the end, the council agreed to send a letter to incoming Governor Sean Parnell asking that he include funds for completing the jail portion of the new police station in his capital budget.

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