



Sheriff McFadden: Reopening Jail North Requires Real Investment, Not Unrealistic Expectations

(Charlotte, N.C.) – After several meetings and discussions with the State and other interested parties, the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice made a request that the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) recruit, hire, and train the staff that is needed to reopen the Juvenile Detention Center, also known as Jail North. This means we would need to recruit and hire more than 96 detention officers, along with an estimated 20 to 25 support staff, to operate a state-mandated juvenile detention facility. Notably, when Jail North closed in 2022, it housed an average of 51 juveniles daily. Accepting this responsibility places an undue strain on the existing recruiting efforts at MCSO.

This request arrives at a time when the MCSO is already engaged in significant recruitment and training efforts for its own detention officers and future deputies to be enrolled in our Basic Law Enforcement Training Academy. It is important to note that this request from the State is not a statutory requirement for the MCSO.

Not to mention, the State's request comes as it has its own challenges in maintaining staffing levels within its facilities, including the Cabarrus County Juvenile Detention Center, which is currently operating at approximately 40 percent vacancy. The expectation that the MCSO should take on additional state responsibilities without statutory obligation or adequate support is not only unrealistic but could compromise our ongoing efforts to strengthen our staffing levels and safety within our facilities. Reopening Jail North requires more than writing a check or using the word 'resources' as a catch-all solution.

If the State is serious about doing this right, it must invest in people, not promises. That means developing a strong recruitment campaign and a dedicated team to help our staff hire, train, and prepare qualified juvenile detention officers. Only then can we have a real, honest discussion about reopening the facility. Anything less would simply repeat the same mistakes and conversation of the past.

As an agency, we remain committed to collaboration, transparency, and responsible public safety practices that serve the best interests of Mecklenburg County residents, our staff, and most of all, our youth.

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