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### **Jail Oversight Board may vote to terminate contract with GEO as early as next month**

The vote on the future of the county's prison operations is coming. "We will be scheduling a meeting, whether it's our next Jail Oversight Board meeting or I would encourage it to be before then, that we get together and we have a vote on deprivatization," Kevin Madden, chairman of the Delaware County Jail Oversight Board and county councilman, said Tuesday. He spoke about the context of the situation.

"When you're talking about an 1,800-person prison - 1,800 people who are within the custody of the county - it's incumbent upon us to make sure that we're doing this in a responsible manner," Madden said. "Not to mention the fact that it's in the midst of the worst pandemic this century." Madden noted that the Deprivatization Subcommittee meets on a weekly basis to expedite the matter as quickly as possible. On Tuesday, the Jail Oversight Board was instructed to put forth any questions they have regarding the issue of transferring the operation of the prison from GEO Group Inc. to the county so that they can make an informed decision on deprivatization. "My view is we've got one good shot to do it right, if and when the board votes that way," board Vice Chair and County Controller Joanne Phillips said. "I think we're coming really close to that." Board Solicitor Shelley Smith explained that the contract between the county and GEO mandates a 180-day notice prior to a full transition occurring. In addition, she said, "It requires that GEO participate cooperatively in a transfer of the responsibilities to the county throughout the process and for 60 days after the contract is actually terminated." Majid Alsayegh, principal of Alta Management LLC, said it was the county's hope that any transition would be a phased process. His firm is providing owner management representation for Delaware County throughout the deprivatization process. He added that if the county decides to deprivatize, it was his hope that the county and GEO could create a transition plan that is successful for both entities. "This should not be locking the door and walking away and the county coming to open the door," Alsayegh said. "It should be a very planned out transition because, obviously, there are human beings inside. They need to be cared for and we need to do this very carefully."