

**THE CONDITION AND MANAGEMENT
OF
CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES
WITHIN
JACKSON COUNTY, OREGON**

By

Special Corrections Grand Jury

2008

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GRAND JURY REVIEW

The 2008 Special Corrections Grand Jury inspected the Jackson County Jail, Jackson County Juvenile Detention and Shelter Facility, and the Community Justice Transition Center. Most of our observations and recommendations listed in this report concern the jail. Our recommendations for the jail cover the following topics:

1. Sally Port and Holding Area
2. Attorney Visiting Area
3. Upgrade of Video System
4. Closed Circuit Television Channel
5. Information Systems
6. Reading Materials
7. Kites
8. Recreation Facilities
9. Staffing Levels

The jury also made a recommendation regarding the kitchen facilities at the Transition Center.

BACKGROUND

Oregon Revised Statute 132.440 requires that at least once yearly, a grand jury shall inquire into the condition and management of every correctional facility and youth correction facility in the county. On January 5, 2009, a grand jury was sworn in to fulfill that requirement, and was assigned to meet on Fridays. In this report, the jury will be referred to as the Special Corrections Grand Jury, or simply, the grand jury.

Two correctional facilities are operated within Jackson County. The Jackson County Jail is under the supervision of the Jackson County Sheriff's Office. The Juvenile Detention and Shelter Facility is operated by Jackson County Community Justice.

The grand jury began its inquiry on Friday, January 9, 2009, with an overview provided by District Attorney Mark Huddleston. This was followed by testimony from three witnesses, Community Justice Assistant Deputy Director John Watson, Corrections Sergeant Christine Dismukes and Corrections Sergeant Dan Penland.

On Friday, January 16, 2009, the grand jury heard testimony from Dan Converse, Program Manager of Community Justice Juvenile Detention Facility. The jury then conducted an inspection of the Jackson County Jail, the Community Justice Juvenile Detention and Shelter Facility and the Community Justice Transition Center. Inspection of the Transition Center is outside the statutory authority of the jury, but the request to inspect the facility was granted by Community Justice.

On Friday, January 23, 2009, the grand jury heard testimony from one female inmate, one male inmate, Medical Supervisor Lori Braughton, RN, Corrections Deputy Tom Lee, Mental Health Specialist Dennis McNamara and Public Defender Benjamin Anderson.

The observations, conclusions and recommendations of this report are based upon the testimony of the witnesses, from the facts and figures they provided and from the observations of the grand jury as it toured Jackson County correctional facilities.

OPERATION OF THE JACKSON COUNTY JAIL

The Jackson County Jail provides services for Jackson County, which currently has a population of 198,615. In addition, it provides beds, when required, for other agencies, including DEA, US Marshalls and Immigration. The jail has a bed space of 291, but has a self-imposed cap of 230. 37 beds are assigned to females, 193 to males. Jail staff includes one under sheriff, one lieutenant, who is the Jail Commander, and six sergeants. There are currently 44 full-time deputies, 9 female and 35 male.

The jail was built in 1981 and is a medium security, linear design, indirect supervision facility. The jail has housing units capable of holding adult male and female prisoners, as well as juveniles in exceptional circumstances. The jail has a medical unit that treats trauma and chronic health issues, but is incapable of providing constant care. The operation of the medical facility is currently contracted out to ConMed. ConMed also provides the services of a mental health specialist.

The kitchen facility is currently operated under a contract with Aramark and provides food for the Jackson County Jail, the Juvenile Detention and Shelter Facility and the Community Justice Transition center, the in-house laundry provides services for both the Jail and Juvenile facility.

Initial processing of prisoners entering the Jackson County Jail includes a screening process to determine mental health and substance abuse issues, prescription medication usage and level of security required. Persons who are under the influence of substances and/or are mentally challenged are housed in individual cells or in holding or detoxification cells in the intake area of the jail. They are monitored every 15 minutes, instead of the usual hourly checks of the general jail population, because of the risk of suicide attempts.

GRAND JURY OBSERVATIONS OF THE JACKSON COUNTY JAIL

The grand jury was given a tour of the Jackson County Jail by Sgt Penland and Under Sheriff Countryman. The jury also was served lunch at the jail and interviewed Jody Cheever of Aramark. We were very impressed with the professionalism and commitment to service of all the staff that we observed and interviewed. Their ability to perform their duties, given the restrictions of space and design, under-staffing, and severe technological

limitations, was commendable. As the facility was toured, the grand jury found the overall condition of the jail to be clean and adequate.

GRAND JURY OBSERVATIONS OF THE JUVENILE DETENTION AND SHELTER FACILITY

Dan Converse showed the grand jury through the Juvenile Facility. The jury finds that the Juvenile Detention Center is modern, clean, and easily monitored. The atmosphere was very positive and the professional and caring attitude of the staff was apparent.

GRAND JURY OBSERVATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY JUSTICE TRANSITION CENTER

Tour of the center was given by Eric Geyer. The jury was impressed with his enthusiasm and rapport with staff members and inmates.

Programs at the work center include required daily counseling classes and optional Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Life skill classes, continuing education classes, and job skill training are also provided.

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Jail

1. Sally Port and Holding Area: The grand jury recognizes the need for a larger Sally Port and receiving vestibule area. This also includes the holding cell area. The grand jury recommends expanding the vestibule and holding cells into part of the existing Sally Port parking area. This expansion would include adding on a Sally Port drive-through system that would incorporate part of the parking area and enlarging the driveway. This would allow a faster and safer transfer of prisoners from the patrol vehicles to the jail. The additional holding cells are needed for processing prisoners when they are brought in.
2. Attorney Visiting Area: Recommend remodel of attorney visiting area to provide a safer environment for attorneys. We understand from Sgt. Dismukes that plans have been drawn up and submitted for approval.
3. Upgrade of Video System: Recommend existing VHS surveillance system be upgraded to digital.
4. Closed Circuit Television Channel: We would like to see a closed circuit TV system that could deliver educational programming to inmate cells. With a large percentage of

inmates having drug or alcohol problems, we feel it is essential to provide Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous programs to them. Closed circuit TV could be provided at minimal cost since televisions are already in place and manpower costs would be limited. A TV system would eliminate the risk of contraband from outside sources that caused the demise of previous programs. The channel could also provide religious programming – an important element for many inmates according to Dennis McNamara, the mental health specialist. In addition, programs which teach life skills could be provided, such as dealing with stress, locating a job/interviewing, personal finance and exercise programs.

Possible sources of programming would be the state employment department, Job Council, RCC, SOU, and Friends of the Library. Programs at the Transitional Center could also be taped for use at the jail.

5. Information Systems: Since 2003, the grand jury has made recommendations related to large file volume, overcrowded records area and need to move to a digital file system. The recommendations have generally been met with agreement and in 2005, the National Institute of Corrections also made a similar recommendation. In the opinion of the grand jury, moving to a digital record keeping system will increase staff efficiency and provide better disaster recovery protection, as well as remote access to records. In addition, document management systems are the best way to ensure compliance with strict security and record-keeping rules.

It is understandable why capital investments are held to a minimum with the potential new jail still under consideration. However, an investment in a digital information system would be transferable to a new jail when the need arises. Further, there are many other correctional facilities already using digital information systems with great success that could be resources in the selection and implementation process. A digital record keeping system would operate much like the current scanning device used for finger printing currently in use at the jail. A possible side benefit is a records management system could also be used by attorneys and other county departments, allowing for easier access between county and possibly state government agencies.

The jury recommends that the Jackson County Sheriff's Office work with the county information technology department to select and implement a digital record keeping system.

6. Reading materials: Recommend contacting Friends of the Library to reestablish donations and update current available reading materials. Rotate carts twice a week instead of once a week. This may help inmates utilize their time in a more constructive manner.

Suggest outreach for volunteers and book donations/or book drive.

People read for different reasons, to improve their knowledge, expand on their culture, for enjoyment, use their imaginations, find new ways to express their ideas, expand their vocabulary and finally to keep from being bored.

7. Kites: Recommend that kites be color-coded to differentiate between medical, mental health, and routine issues. Recommend that kites coded for medical and mental health be picked up more than once per day and sent directly to the medical center for evaluation.

8. Recreation Facilities: Recommend improving outdoor recreation area so it can be utilized during all weather conditions in order to maintain health of inmates and improve well being. Suggest privilege could be withheld from inmates causing problems in the recreation area.

9. Staffing Levels: Recommend increasing number of deputies for efficiency and safety. Decreasing overtime and comp time would lead to improved staff retention.

Recommendation for Transition Center

10. Explore the possibility of utilizing the kitchen facility for meals at the center. It would be a good opportunity to teach another skill to inmates that would help them obtain employment once released. Also recommend that possibility of providing food to the jail be considered.

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

Request responding agency **restate the topic of the recommendation of the grand jury** and follow format listed below. The written response will become part of the grand jury report.

1. Agreed and Completed: The agency agrees and has implemented the recommendation.
2. Partial Agreement and Completed: There is partial agreement, which has been completed, and partial rejection. Provide details and reasons for this action.
3. Disagreed and Rejected: Provide reasons for rejection.
4. Agreed, but Unable to Implement: Provide reasons recommendation cannot be implemented at this time.
5. Pending: Partial or full acceptance has occurred, but implementation is either incomplete or has yet to be initiated. Provide details.
6. Unanswered: The agency will not respond to the recommendation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The grand jury has a new appreciation of the judicial system and all who work within the system. Special thanks to District Attorney Mark Huddleston and his staff for their patience and assistance for allowing us to serve our community.



JACKSON COUNTY

Community Justice

Community Justice Transition Center

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February 17, 2009

The Special Corrections Grand Jury

RE: Response to Grand Jury Recommendations

I want to thank the Special Corrections Grand Jury for their interest and feedback to the Transition Center program.

Specifically the Grand Jury recommended:

10. Explore the possibility of utilizing the kitchen facility for meals at the center. It would be a good opportunity to teach another skill to inmates that would help them obtain employment once released. Also recommend that possibility of providing food to the jail be considered.

Response: (5) Pending The program will be issuing a Request For Proposals (RFP) which will include the potential for on-site kitchen utilization. This RFP will be issued within the next three months. The program is also implementing a food-handler certification class for any residents who will handle food or are interested in gaining employment in food service industries.

Thank you again for your feedback, please let me know if I can provide any additional feedback regarding program operations.

Sincerely,

Eric Guyer
Program Manager



MEMO

INTER - OFFICE

Sheriff's Office
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To: Mark Huddleston
From: Sgt. Dismukes
Subject: Grand Jury Response
Date: March 2, 2009

As everyone is aware, the economy of our nation is experiencing a recession. Funding from the national level down is being re-evaluated and cuts being made to balance the short falls in lost revenues. Oregon is no different. While our County Administrator has done an exemplary job managing our county budget despite the reduction of O&C funds, we are facing even more cuts from the state. Our jail alone is facing a cut of \$2.8 million. We are looking to retain all of our dedicated and well trained staff despite the loss of funding. All facility upgrades and remodeling projects will need to be postponed until we are in a better economic standing.

1. Sally Port and Holding Area: Agreed, but unable to implement, based on the above stated budgetary reasons.
2. Attorney Visiting Area: Agreed, but unable to implement, based on the above stated budgetary reasons.
3. Upgrade of Video System: Agreed, but unable to implement, based on the above stated budgetary reasons.
4. Closed Circuit Television Channel: Agreed, but unable to implement, based on the above stated budgetary reasons.
5. Information System: Agreed, but unable to implement, based on the above stated budgetary reasons.

Our local State court is looking at a pilot project to go paperless. When they adopt their new system, it will be easier for us to change at the same time. We currently receive most court documents on paper which bear original signatures and seals.

During a recent visit to Multnomah County Jail, I looked at their internal data management system. It was a system called “KoVis”. Once funding is again stabilized and our economic future brighter, this system may offer a viable option to paper management within our facility.

6. Reading materials: Partial Agreement. I have contacted the Medford Library to inquire about book donations to our facility. The Friends of the Library volunteers were told they could not volunteer under the Library name due to liability reasons. We offered to bring them in as Jackson County Volunteers. We have yet to hear back from them. We will continue to dispense books once a week due to the manpower it takes to search, restock and rotate books through the facility. Inmates are allowed to have five items of reading material each. They may exchange books with others within their unit if they finish all of their reading material before the next library day.
7. Kites: Agreed and Completed. There are currently, in use, separate medical kites for inmates. These kites are picked up two to three times a day by medical personal while they make their rounds through the facility dispensing medications. The medical form also addresses mental health requests. The standard yellow kites are used for all other requests.
8. Recreation Facilities: Disagreed and Rejected. We have looked at enclosing the outdoor recreation yards in the past and have found it cost prohibitive. The outdoor area is used whenever possible because it allows for more inmates to attend recreation at one time thus reducing deputy time to watch recreation. Loss of recreation is imposed for up to fourteen days when an inmate receives a major disciplinary action.
9. Staffing Levels: Agreed, but unable to implement, based on the above stated budgetary reasons.