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TEHAMA COUNTY JAIL CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

SUMMARY

Penal Code 919(b) stipulates that the Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county, which includes both state and local correctional facilities. The Tehama County Jail is located at 502 Oak Street in Red Bluff. The jail is a Type II facility that is used for the detention of persons pending arraignment, during trial, and upon a sentence of commitment.

METHODOLOGY

Members of the 2020 - 2021 Tehama County Grand Jury toured the county jail on May 4th and July 1st to conduct interviews. Our committee met with the jail captain, who oversees jail operations and administrative divisions for Tehama County, and the lieutenant who is responsible for the supervision and transportation of inmates.

DISCUSSION

The capacity of the jail, rated by the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) is 191. As of the interview date on May 4th, 2021, there were 127 inmates housed at the facility. At the second visit there was a decrease of nine inmates. The county would prefer inmate count to remain below 178.

The jail is divided into two wings: the east wing, built in 1994, and the west wing, built in 1974. The cells for high security inmates are located in the west wing. In general, the facility was clean and free of any obvious disrepair. The inmates are housed in four pods: three male pods and one female pod. The most serious offenders are housed in their own cell and not allowed in the general population. Each inmate is allowed time in the recreation area, which consists of a secured concrete pad with a mesh roof.

Jail Expansion Project

A jail expansion project is planned for the former Tehama County Library site on Madison Street. The Board of Supervisors accepted conditional award money from the State in the amount of \$20 million. The county must first build the facility and then be reimbursed by the State. It is estimated that \$2.7 million will be needed for the operational cost of the expansion.

The State was expected to approve the preliminary plan for the jail in December 2020. The working drawings and bid process were expected to take place in April, 2021. From there the project was expected to have a construction contract awarded by June 15, 2021 and that contract

was expected to be approved by the State Department of Finance by August 2021. The project is expected to be completed by the summer of 2023. As of August 2021, the jail project has been delayed by the State of California due to the circumstances of COVID-19. The funds set aside by the Board of Supervisors remain in place for the project to proceed. This delay has caused the construction costs to increase significantly.

The jail expansion would add 64 new beds and replace some of the aging facilities located at the current jail. The plans for the new jail (architectural basics only) were presented which showed the layout of the expansion project. This new build is treated as a separate building, which avoids the requirement to bring the existing jail up to current codes. The new facility would be staffed by 12 deputies and one supervisor. The new facility would also replace the kitchen and laundry in the existing facility, as both are small and outdated.

Staffing

Current staffing includes one supervisor and five deputies per shift. They work a 12-hour shift, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Absences are covered by deputies from the preceding shift, employees on call, or administrators. Bilingual staff includes one deputy and one nurse medic who receive additional compensation for their bilingual skill. The jail is maintained by two maintenance employees. Custodial services are performed by inmates.

Deputies conduct visual safety checks for all inmates every 45 minutes. An inmate management system, utilizing a barcode system, documents safety checks and ensures that the rounds are made in a timely manner. There are colored monitors in the tower that monitor security in the various areas. The tower booth had a large plate glass window that overlooks a dorm where high security inmates are housed. During the committee's tour, it was noticed that this window was cracked. The crack appears to impact the security integrity of the glass. There is a process to replace the glass. This requires acquiring bids and submitting said bids to the Board of Supervisors for approval. The last bid of \$10,000 has yet to be approved.

Safety Cell and Sobering Cell

There is currently one sobering cell and one safety cell. The safety cell is designated for one occupant with known or suspected mental health issues. The capacity of the sobering cell has been exceeded during large public events. These cells are video monitored with physical checks each hour.

Intake

Standard operating procedures for the intake process provides for the safety of the detainee, the arresting officer, and jail staff. A health history of the inmate is taken during this process. Each inmate is given clothing, a mattress, a blanket, a hygiene packet, and two stamped

envelopes. The jail is following the guidelines of Public Safety and detainees are tested for Covid-19 before entering. Covid-19 vaccines have been offered to all inmates and staff. An inmate classification system is used to assign new inmates based on their background and tendencies. This practice provides for inmate and officer safety by preventing inmate versus inmate victimizations or assaults.

Health

Medical staff consists of a registered nurse that is on duty during the day. There is a doctor on call who will come to the facility as needed. For periods when medical staff is unavailable, Emergency Medical Services, such as the fire department or ambulance, are utilized. Mental health services are provided to inmates by phone through the Tehama County Mental Health Department.

Currently, there are four mentally impaired who await assignment to mental health facilities. Tehama County Mental Health Services will often not accept mental health candidates who have been noted as problematic patients and are repeat offenders. Instead they are arrested, charged with a crime, and incarcerated.

Meals/Nutrition

Nutritional guidelines and menus are created by a staff nutritionist, with input from health services, for prisoners with food allergies or special dietary needs. Hot meals are provided for breakfast and a bagged meal is provided for lunch and dinner. Meals are prepared by inmate staff who are supervised by an employee cook. Low security inmates are used in the kitchen and laundry facilities.

Inmates have access to an online ordering service which allows them to order additional foods and snacks of their choice. Inmates must pay for these items. Jail staff check each item upon arrival, as the order comes in bulk packages. Food is also grown at the work farm. The produce is used in the jail, at social services, and at a halfway house.

Programs

The Tehama County Jail offers programs to assist inmates with re-entry to public life. External programs are utilized by those who pose the least amount of threat to the public. Some of these programs include Electric Home Monitoring (EHM), day reporting, and working at the farm, cabinet shop, welding shop, or auto shop. The program goal is to assist inmates with re-entry into the workforce and public life; thereby, reducing the risk of recidivism.

Educational programs are also offered to the inmates. They are given the opportunity to acquire a General Education GED certificate. Sixty tablets have been ordered for this purpose.

Due to COVID-19, they have not yet been received.

Chronic Offender Program

A new program has recently been initiated at the jail. The program is designed for those who are arrested and rearrested, and who continue to fail to appear in court. By keeping offenders in jail for the duration of their court proceedings, this effort works to prevent criminals from reoffending.

Each law enforcement agency in the county will be allotted three jail beds for habitual offenders. These offenders would normally have been released on a promise to appear after being booked into the jail for non-violent crimes. This program will not prevent an arrested person from posting bail.

Grievances and Discipline

There is a chain of command for handling grievances. A grievance is first reviewed by the shift supervisor, and if it is not resolved at that level, it is reviewed by the jail administration. If there is no resolution, it will be submitted to the Sheriff.

Frequency of disciplinary actions are posted and are accessible to staff. Reports are generated documenting the actions that were taken. Most disciplinary actions are in response to fighting, contraband, and weapons. All disciplinary actions must be approved by the jail administrator.

Visitation

Due to COVID-19, all in-person visitation at the jail has been cancelled. Video visitation is available.

FINDINGS

F1. There is a large plate glass security window in the tower that is damaged. The replacement procedure has created a delay in completing a repair.

F2. The new jail facility does not have a start date for the expansion. The delay in construction of the new jail facility is adding to the cost of the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1A. The Grand Jury recommends adding a category to the next annual budget that would allow for emergency repairs.

R1B. The Grand Jury recommends that jail administrators immediately compile a list of contractors for needed repairs.

R2. The Grand Jury recommends exploring a bond initiative to address the funding shortfall for the new jail facility.

Required Response

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses to R1- R2 within 90 days.