

This document is an extract of a larger publication.

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Recommendations

The Grand Jury recommends that:

1. The Audit Committee be established and commence operation.
2. The Auditor/Controller Subcommittee Chair and the Treasurer of the Grand Jury be nominated as the two Grand Jury representatives to the committee.

Plumas County Jail

INTRODUCTION

The Plumas County Jail was completed in 1976 for the detention of both male and female adult inmates. In 1985 an addition was completed and the facility is now capable of housing sixty-seven (67) inmates. The facility houses pretrial defendants and persons who are serving a sentence of one (1) year or less. Inmates sentenced to state prison are housed at the jail awaiting transportation to a prison facility. As with so many jails in the state of California, the Plumas County Jail is outdated and in need of many major repairs and should be replaced.

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION

Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 919 the Grand Jury must annually inquire into the condition and management of all public prisons located within the County

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

The Grand Jury members:

1. Inspected the Jail on 12/01/05 and did a follow-up inspection on 02/15/06.
2. Read and reviewed policy and procedure manuals, researched the California Board of Corrections websites <http://www.cdcr.ca.gov> and <http://www.cdcr.ca.gov>
3. Reviewed past Grand Jury reports.
4. Interviewed personnel.

FINDINGS

1. Due to age, size and condition it is in need of replacement.
2. Reports show a change in classification, by severity of offense, of inmate percentages is causing housing issues.
3. Staffing levels are low. Injuries, vacation and training cause undue stress on remaining personnel.
4. The assigning of a full-time Facilities Services maintenance person has been a great improvement to the productivity of the jail staff. The deficiencies noted in the 2004/05 Grand Jury Report have been mostly taken care of with the exceptions of the Control Room. The working area of the staff has been redone. The maintenance person has started bringing the jail to the newer standards set by the Board of Corrections. Work maintenance logs are now available and accessible. Still needed at the last jail tour were the logs for fire safety, sprinkler and fire extinguisher (these were started, not finished).
5. The Control Room still remains a crowded maze of wires and there is no known completion date. See the Board's Response to Finding #4, Plumas County Jail, from the 2004-2005 Grand Jury Final Report: *"Agree. However, the County notes that a RFP (Request For Proposal) with specifications is being done for the repairs in the control room wiring. This RFP is estimated to be completed by December 2005."*

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the time of writing this portion of the report there has only been talk of replacing the jail in the long term County strategic plan. While there may be State and Federal funds available for replacing the jail, this will still take time and major planning. The increase in the percentage of violent crime offenders, in addition to the condition of the jail, has created an unsafe workplace.

The Grand Jury recommends that:

1. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) include a new jail in the strategic plan.
2. The Facilities Services Department continue to support the full-time maintenance person at the jail, and encourage his continued proactive maintenance.
3. The Facilities Services Department and BOS follow up on the control room repairs. According to the BOS response to last year's Grand Jury this should have been completed by the February 16, 2006 inspection.

4. The Sheriff evaluate the staffing levels for the jail and request the creation of additional positions, as necessary.

Planning & Building

Introduction (Statement of Function)

The Department of Planning & Building Service's overall mission is to administer the County General Plan through land use, and building permit review, issuance, and inspection. Additionally, the department maintains the plan and assures that the ongoing Ordinance remains consistent with the plan. Administration of the General Plan requires timely processing of permits for land divisions, special use permits, variances, recreation facilities, building permits and other such applications. The department is the environmental review agency for the County assuring compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act so as to protect the integrity of project approvals both public and private.

The department additionally provides support for other departments and districts by maintaining county-wide maps, census data, and historical data necessary for their operations. Public assistance is the perceived primary goal.

Reason for Investigation

A review of this department was conducted as the result of receipt of two citizen complaints during the previous management. This was not a thorough review in deference to the Department Administrator having been on duty for only a few months.

Procedure Followed

Interviews were held with the Department Administrator and the County Counsel.

Commendation

The Grand Jury supports the positive philosophy and attitudes of the department administrator and staff.

Findings

1. According to interview statements the department is functioning with a public service philosophy. The Administrator is in the process of reorganizing the department and is open to public input.
2. The county currently contracts out for engineering service. It appears this is not cost effective as it is costing the county over \$200,000 per year.

3. Temporary Certificates of Occupancy (TCOs) do not consistently include date of issuance and expiration dates as noted through review of several such TCOs. Consequently tracking of TCOs has not been consistent.

Recommendations

The Grand Jury recommends that:

1. The Board of Supervisors determine the cost effectiveness of hiring an engineer vs. contracting out for such service.
2. The Building and Planning Department institute a computerized tracking system as soon as possible regarding all permits.
3. All TCOs should include issuance date and expiration date.
4. The 2006/2007 Grand Jury consider in depth review of this department.

Veteran's Service Office

Introduction-Statement of Function

The purpose of the Veteran's Service Office is to assist veterans and/or their dependents in filing for and obtaining benefits, as a result of military service. Federal benefits include monetary compensation for service connected disabilities, pension benefits resulting from wartime service, educational benefits, application for discharge review and upgrade, life insurance, medical treatment, transportation to medical appointments at the Veterans Administration Medical Center, Reno, NV, and home loans. California veterans benefit programs include; home loans, employment assistance, inter-departmental referrals, college fee waiver, and veterans' license plates. The Veteran's Service Office also provides referrals to numerous Federal, State, and local agencies concerning a wide variety of social issues as well as full case management services.

Reason for Investigation

According to Grand Jury records the Veteran's Service Office was last reviewed in 1995/1996.

Procedure Followed

The new department administrator was interviewed. The Grand Jury was provided a complete folder outlining Veteran's Services overall mission, history, services, budget and new community outreach program.