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JAIL HOLDING FACILITY FOR MONO COUNTY

COMPLAINT #07-01

STATEMENT

Complaint #07-01 was an investigation initiated by the Mono County Grand Jury as a group after the Jail Tour was completed. There was a concern expressed by the Mono County Sheriff's Office that the current holding facility in the Bridgeport Jail is too small with the expanding population of Mono County and specifically the Town of Mammoth Lakes. There was uncertainty whether there are future plans being considered for an additional or new holding facility in the proposed Mammoth Lakes Civic Center plan. A majority of jail internees are from Mammoth Lakes, where currently there is no facility to house inmates for either short or long term stays. Often, transporting a prisoner to Bridgeport takes a Mono County Sheriff off of County patrol to transfer the prisoner to Bridgeport. Cost effectiveness, appropriate use of County personnel and safety County-wide are issues of concern.

FINDINGS

Multiple members of the Grand Jury met with and interviewed personnel from the Mono County Chief Administrators Office, a Mammoth Lakes City Council member, Visitors Bureau and the Sheriff's Office. The Grand Jury was informed that currently, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, Mono County and Mammoth Hospital are negotiating a land exchange with the Forest Service for 10.3 acres which boarder the Mammoth Unified School District, Mammoth Hospital and the Recreational Vehicle Park/Community Church. A land exchange does not allow for future planning for the development of the land parcel, therefore nothing specific has been planned for this plot of land. Preliminary discussions between the three entities involved how the designated land would be proportionally divided. Each entity has many more needs for land than this property can satisfy, but shared Town/County Government facilities, parking space and a helipad were some of the important items recognized as current needs.

The land exchange is scheduled to be completed by July 2007. If the process is successfully completed, there is a five to ten year window for a community needs assessment to be completed, planning by all involved entities, bond propositions for funding, architectural plan development and submission of those plans to the varying State entities for approval. Therefore it is expected that it will be 7 – 10 years before ground is broken on any project.

Members of the Town Council and the Visitors Bureau were of the opinion that if there is a shared Government Facility between Mono County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes to be built, a jail/holding facility will be included in the project. The stated concern from both the County and the Town is that funding for a project of the magnitude of a shared use facility is going to be difficult and time consuming to obtain.

Several other pieces of property have been discussed as locations for designing a holding facility closer to Mammoth Lakes. All entities interviewed expressed an interest in

developing a facility to hold local inmates closer to Mammoth Lakes. These entities share the same financial, spatial and safety concerns expressed in the statement portion of this report. Many options for a new and enlarged holding facility are in the discussion phase, but until the land exchange is completed, no further action will occur. At this point in time nothing has seriously been looked at or researched

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury determined and concurred, that there is awareness on both the Town of Mammoth Lakes and Mono County's part that the current Jail Facility in Bridgeport is potentially inadequate with the growing population of Mono County. Mammoth Lakes needs and wants to house inmates from their town closer to the Courts in Mammoth Lakes. Once the land exchange deadline is passed, and whether acquisition of the aforementioned parcel of land happens or not, interested parties will move forward in researching possibilities for a location for a new and/or additional Holding Facility in or around Mammoth Lakes. The recommendation from the 2006 - 2007 Grand Jury to future Grand Juries is to make certain that the concern over a new and/or holding facility is discussed and addressed in any and all future development plans by either the Town of Mammoth Lakes and/or Mono County.