

DETENTION FACILITIES REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This report highlights the 2014-15 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury's inquiries into the condition and management of all public detention facilities within the County of Santa Barbara, as mandated by California Penal Code section 919, subdivision (b) and as part of the Jury's role as the public's "watchdog" over the affairs of local government.

The Jury's inquiries included inspections of all detention facilities operated by the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office, the Santa Barbara County Probation Department, and municipal police departments.

METHOD OF INQUIRY

In the fall of 2014, members of the Jury visited each of the facilities listed in this report. Deputies, police officials, and staff on site at the time of the visits were interviewed and each facility was inspected. The Jury reviewed previous detention facility reports prior to inspections in order to confirm that issues raised by previous Juries were addressed.

OBSERVATIONS

General Observations of All Facilities

Staffing

Jail facilities have fared no better than any other departments within Santa Barbara County as they all learn to function with decreased staffing. However, staffing issues at detention facilities pose a more imminent threat in light of public safety and inmate issues. Although the hiring process is lengthy due to stringent qualifications, recruitment is not a problem as hundreds of applicants apply for vacant positions.

Staff interviewed at all facilities were professional, courteous and knowledgeable. The Jury recognizes the challenges the decreased staffing issue has created and commends everyone on the professional manner in which they handle their law enforcement duties.

Monitoring

All facilities appear to make good use of video monitoring equipment.

Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office Budget Process

Input from detention personnel to the Sheriff's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) during the budget process is limited. Under the Sheriff's Office's current budget preparation protocol there seems to

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be a lack of communications between the CFO preparing the budget and personnel actually operating and working in the various facilities. Staff input to the budgeting process, as early as possible, can be invaluable when evaluating needs specific to individual divisions especially in times of financial constraints. The Jury learned the pre-2008 budget process will resume with the 2015-16 budget process where divisions heads will be consulted as to their needs for the fiscal year.

Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office Custody Facilities

Santa Barbara County Main Jail

The Main Jail (Jail) houses pretrial detainees as well as sentenced inmates. It is a facility with male and female offenders housed separately. While the Jail population fluctuates, on August 12, 2014, the Jail had a rated capacity of 659 with an average daily population of 726.¹ The Jail receives offenders from the Sheriff's Patrol and Santa Maria Branch Jail; the Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, and Lompoc Police Departments; and the California Highway Patrol.

Overcrowding

As in past years, the Jury was notified of and observed overcrowded conditions in the Jail. Passage of AB 109 in October 2011, which forced the transfer of inmates from overcrowded state prisons to county jails, has adversely affected the entire jail environment within California. Prior to AB109 the average length of stay in the Jail was 20 days. It has now increased to over one year due to the incarceration of serious long-term offenders.

The following actions have been implemented to resolve crowding issues:

- Two large conference rooms in the basement of the Jail have been converted to accommodate 120 beds
- Under the Early Release Program, when the Jail reaches 80 percent of capacity inmates who are within seven days of being released are released early
- The creation of alternative court-ordered sentencing methods including the Electronic Monitoring Program and the Sheriff's Work Alternative Program, available to both qualified male and female inmates
- Reopening of the Santa Maria Sheriff's Branch Jail with a capacity of 25 inmates

The new Northern Branch Jail, scheduled to be open in 2018, will ease overcrowding. Once the new facility is operational, sections of the existing Jail may be shut down, including the medium security area (formerly known as the honor farm) and the converted basement area.

Santa Maria Sheriff's Branch Jail

At the time of the Jury's visit there were 25 inmates housed in this facility, which is the maximum capacity. Unlike the Jail in Santa Barbara and the Lompoc Jail, the Santa Maria Sheriff's Branch Jail facility is adequately staffed with one custody deputy lieutenant, two custody deputy sergeants, 11 custody deputies and two support staff. This facility accounts for 32 percent of the total Santa Barbara County bookings.²

¹ Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office, Custody Operations, 2014 Fact Sheet, Updated on 8/12/14.

² www.SBSheriff.org/SantaMariaJail.html last visited on December 11, 2014.

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The Jury received information from staff that the jail is in need of operational equipment such as utility and transportation vans, popper ball launcher, gas masks, protective gear and office furniture.

Court Holding Facilities

General Observations

Transporting inmates from the Santa Barbara Main Jail to any one of the four Santa Barbara County courthouses is a significant endeavor. Inmates transported to either the downtown Santa Barbara, Lompoc or Santa Maria court holding facilities start their day at 4 a.m. and 15 percent of the jail population can be in transit five days a week. Complicating the transportation issue is the need to segregate inmates for safety reasons based on gender, medical, inmate classification and/or gang affiliation.

Santa Barbara Sheriff's Court Holding Facility

This facility consists of four isolation cells and eight holding cells holding up to 12 inmates each. The court holding facility is often overcrowded especially on heavy court days. The overcrowding has created safety issues for staff and inmates. Safety of the general public is a major concern when inmates who must appear in courtrooms in the historic courthouse are escorted in handcuffs and leg irons across Figueroa Street.

These safety issues will be addressed by the future construction of the new criminal court complex behind the existing Figueroa Street Superior Courthouse in downtown Santa Barbara. It will be designed so that inmates can be transferred via a secure route to their court appearances.

Lompoc Sheriff's Court Holding Facility

This facility consists of five holding cells. Three of the cells are used to hold inmates who cannot be kept with others due to gender, medical or other reasons. No discrepancies were noted.

Santa Maria Sheriff's Court Holding Facility

This facility consists of 17 holding cells. No discrepancies were noted.

Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Substations

General Observations

Satellite Sheriff's Substations are used as temporary holding facilities and do not house inmates overnight. The maximum holding time is four hours. All holding cells were clean, contained a toilet, access to drinking water and were unoccupied at the time of inspection. General procedure dictates that whenever possible arrestees are taken immediately to either the Jail or the Santa Maria Branch Jail for booking. Information regarding the treatment of juveniles in custody was clearly posted in all facilities.

Isla Vista Foot Patrol

The Isla Vista Foot Patrol (IVFP) building is relatively new and well maintained. No discrepancies were noted.

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The IVFP works closely with the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) police. The UCSB police help patrol the Isla Vista (IV) area. In response to recent violence, UCSB has increased its law enforcement staffing.

Under normal operating conditions staffing is adequate. However, when large unsanctioned community events take place, such as Halloween and Deltopia gatherings, up to 100 extra officers are called in to provide security. Creative modifications to normal operating practices have been developed to deal with the large number of intoxicated individuals and arrests. The IV Theater is rented and used for briefing the large number of officers. A portable booking station is set up in the IVFP parking lot and a Sheriff's van is used to transfer multiple arrestees to the Main Jail. This practice maximizes the effectiveness of law enforcement personnel.

Solvang Sheriff's Holding Cell

There is one holding cell at this facility. No discrepancies were noted.

Carpinteria Sheriff's Substation

The Carpinteria Sheriff's Substation has two holding cells and is located on the east side of Carpinteria's City Hall.

The Substation has lost its administrative staff due to budget cutbacks. Per the agreement between the City of Carpinteria and Santa Barbara County Sheriff, staff go directly to the City of Carpinteria to request supplies.

As noted by previous Grand Juries, the tile floor in front of the two holding cells is cracked and has not been replaced or repaired. Asbestos is part of the tile material and due to the more serious potential health hazard and cost in removing asbestos, the cracked tiles will not be removed.

Lompoc Sheriff's Substation

Located on Harris Grade Road, the facility has one holding cell and one interview room used mainly for interviewing inmates prior to being escorted to the Main Jail in Santa Barbara. The interview room can be used as a holding cell. No discrepancies were noted.

Santa Maria Sheriff's Substation

The Santa Maria Sheriff's Substation services the unincorporated areas of the Santa Maria Valley including Casmalia, Orcutt, Los Alamos and Garey. No discrepancies were noted.

New Cuyama Sheriff's Substation

The holding cell in New Cuyama is rarely used, and then only for a very short time before a detainee is transported to the Sheriff's Santa Maria Branch Jail for booking. The last time this cell was used was in December of 2011. No discrepancies were noted.

Municipal Jails

City of Santa Barbara Jail

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There are two holding cells. It was noted that because the building was built in 1960 and is over 50 years old, there are many maintenance problems. Most notable was the air conditioning. The bid for the air conditioning upgrade/repair has been budgeted and is working its way through the process.

City of Santa Maria Jail

There is one holding cell. There were no discrepancies noted. The City has plans to relocate the jail to a larger facility in early 2015.

City of Lompoc Jail

This facility was opened in 1959 and is rated for 23 beds. On the day of the inspection there were two inmates housed at the facility. The facility consists of six cells, a sobering cell, booking area and a small kitchen.

The Lompoc Jail has updated its Policy and Procedure Manual in response to a prior inspection conducted by the California Board of State and Community Corrections (CBSCC) noting significant lapses with hourly jail checks. The Jury's review of documents indicated that the lapses have been corrected.

Two security concerns were noted by the Jury. On an average day, inmates can be left unsupervised for short periods of time when the single jailor escorts an inmate to court. Inmates left unsupervised for any length of time could be of danger to themselves or others. This situation sets the stage for the possibility of inmates passing contraband, fighting in cells, assaults and other unforeseeable possibilities that can occur in a correctional setting. The October 2013 CBSCC³ report identified this as a safety issue and recommended the hiring of more staff.

The Santa Barbara County court holding facility in Lompoc is located across an enclosed and gated parking lot where at least two sheriff's custody officers are on duty after having transported inmates from the Santa Barbara Main Jail for their court appearances. A safer solution to leaving the Lompoc jail prisoners unsupervised would be to have a sheriff's custody officer escort the Lompoc jail inmate from the Lompoc jail to the court holding facility thereby allowing the Lompoc jailor to remain in his facility.

The second security concern involves key control. Some staff carry facility keys in an unsecured manner while transporting an inmate to court. This procedure presents the potential for inmates to overpower the officer and gain access to all facility keys, which could lead to a dangerous situation.

County Probation Department

General Observations

The Probation Department maintains three juvenile detention facilities:

- Susan J. Gionfriddo Juvenile Justice Center, Santa Maria
- La Posada Juvenile Hall, Santa Barbara
- Los Prietos Boys Camp Santa Barbara

³ California Board of State and Community Corrections Adult Detention Facility Inspection Cycle Information, October 1, 2013.

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Susan J. Gionfriddo Juvenile Justice Center, Santa Maria

This is the only 24-hour maximum security facility for youthful offenders in Santa Barbara County. Males and females, ranging from 12 to 18 years of age, are housed here. Youth placed in this facility come from the juvenile justice system. The facility has six units with a total capacity of 140. At the time of the Jury's visit, half of the units were not in use. The number of wards has steadily been decreasing. During the Jury's 2013 visit there were 94 minors in custody and at this year's visit there were 51; 41 males and 10 females. The average age of 16 years has remained the same.

Units I, II and III are currently not in use. Unit IV is coed and houses females and vulnerable males. Units V and VI house only male youths who are completing the adjudication process. Unit VI serves as the primary housing unit for long term detainees.

The Grand Jury visited Unit I, which is being redesigned with mental health staff's input to address the special needs of female offenders who have been victimized and are experiencing emotional trauma. This unit is smaller, older and is being redecorated with bright colors and furnished with couches. Eligible female offenders will have access to more personal items and closer contact with each other which, as explained to the jurors, is important in their rehabilitation.

Programs

The following programs are available:

- Education -- Youth are required to work on their education through the Santa Barbara County Education Office, which provides a complete high school program with classroom time
- Treatment Plan - Each youth has an individual treatment plan designed in conjunction with the family, probation officer, mental health counselor and teachers
- Baby Elmo Program - This is the parenting program created to foster a nurturing environment to promote bonding between incarcerated youth and their children. This program is part of an on-going research project at Georgetown University

According to information provided and staff interviews at the time of this inspection, 83 percent of the youth have open mental health cases, while 22 percent are on psychotropic medication.

La Posada Juvenile Hall, Santa Barbara

La Posada is used as a temporary holding facility in Santa Barbara for South County wards held at the Santa Maria Juvenile Justice Center while they wait to attend court in Santa Barbara. The status of this facility is currently being discussed.

The facility has 60 cells which are used if a large number (considered more than six) of juveniles are awaiting court. The facility has also been used when the Los Prietos Boys Camp has been evacuated due to a fire.

The Main Jail will be using the La Posada kitchen facilities to prepare meals for the Main Jail while their kitchen is being remodeled. The La Posada kitchen has been cleaned and modified as it has not been used in many years.

Los Prietos Boys Camp

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Los Prietos Boys Camp is a program designed to help male youth return to the community as more responsible and productive citizens. All youth committed are required to complete a program with positive reinforcement and encouragement.

The Santa Barbara County Education Office operates Los Robles High School on the campus of Los Prietos Boys Camp. In addition, vocational programs are offered for specialized training in landscape design, printing, computer technology and culinary arts. High school graduates are offered online college course work in addition to vocational training. Graduates can also apply for scholarships for higher education offered by local service organizations.

CONCLUSION

The 2014-15 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury visited all detention facilities within the County. The Jury met with helpful and courteous supervisory staff during each visit. The facilities were found to be functional. Overcrowding continues to be an ongoing issue at the Santa Barbara Main Jail.

The Jury was impressed with the operation of juvenile facilities and the quality of programs available to juvenile offenders within the County. Juvenile crime prevention programs appear to be having a positive impact.

The Jury learned that Sheriff's detention facility heads were not consulted during the annual budget preparation process.

Santa Maria Branch Jail indicated a need for specific operational equipment.

The Jury identified two City of Lompoc jail concerns. One concern is that the jail is left unattended when the jailor transports inmates to the adjacent court holding facility. The other concern is Lompoc jail key security.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1

The Sheriff's detention facility heads were not consulted during the budget preparation process.

Recommendation 1

That the Sheriff's detention facility heads be consulted during the annual budget preparation process.

Finding 2

The Santa Maria Sheriff's Branch Jail is in need of operational equipment.

Recommendation 2

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That the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office evaluate the need for the requested operational equipment.

Finding 3

Inmates of the City of Lompoc Jail are left unattended when the jailor escorts other inmates across the parking lot to the court holding facility.

Recommendation 3

That a sheriff's custody officer from the court holding facility escort the inmates from the City of Lompoc Jail to the court holding facility.

Finding 4

Some City of Lompoc jailors carry jail facility keys in an unsecured manner on their person.

Recommendation 4

That the City of Lompoc jailors carry the jail facility keys in a secure manner.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSE

Pursuant to California Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, the Jury requests each entity or individual named below to respond to the enumerated findings and recommendations within the specified statutory time limit:

Santa Barbara County Sheriff – 60 days

Findings 1, 2, and 3

Recommendations 1, 2, and 3

City of Lompoc – 90 days

Findings 3 and 4

Recommendations 3 and 4