

Detention/Holding Facilities 2003-2004 Grand Jury Report

I. Reason for Investigation

The California Penal Code §919 (b) mandates that the Grand Jury inquire into the conduct and management of public prisons within the County.

II. Procedure

The Grand Jury inspected detention/holding facilities in each of the following:

- City of Benicia
- City of Dixon
- City of Fairfield
- City of Rio Vista
- City of Suisun City
- City of Vacaville
- City of Vallejo

III. Background

1. The California Board of Corrections, in accordance with the California Code of Regulations “Title 15 Crime Prevention and Corrections”, closely monitors the various detention/holding facilities. The Grand Jury conducted visits to the various facilities throughout the County. The local police departments control the detention/holding facilities in their cities. These are facilities where detainees are held temporarily until transported to the County Jail in Fairfield.

2. Local Fire Marshals and the Board of Corrections annually inspect these facilities. To ensure compliance with Title 15, the Grand Jury also does an inspection.

IV. Findings and Recommendations

Each finding is referenced to the background paragraph number.

Benicia Police Department

Finding #1- Holding cells and booking area are old but adequate. The Benicia facility is located in an old school. There is no Sally Port (enclosed, secure parking area for transferring prisoners from a vehicle to the detention facility) and no separate toilet facilities for prisoners. The building is seismically unsafe. The 2003 bond issue on the ballot to replace/upgrade the facility failed. (1)(2)

Recommendation #1- The city of Benicia should explore alternatives to correct deficiencies.

Dixon Police Department

Finding #1 – Police facility is considered a “temporary holding facility”, not holding cells, because staffing levels are not adequate to qualify for standard holding procedures. The facility is clean and appears safe. (1)(2)

Recommendation #1 – Review the need for holding cells in light of projected population growth.

Fairfield Police Department

Finding #1 – Holding cells and booking area appeared safe and clean. (2)(3)

Recommendation #1 – None

Finding #2 – The Sally Port was a combination of a prisoner transfer area, supply storage and the maintenance facility for department vehicles. Tools and supplies, which could be used as weapons, were within easy access of prisoners. General clutter was observed. The same deficiencies were noted in the 2002-2003 Grand Jury report and have yet to be corrected. Statements by city personnel indicate the maintenance facility will not be relocated to a former fire station until approximately September 2004. (1)(2)

Recommendation #2– All items stored directly adjacent to the prisoner transfer area should be moved and/or secured. Better safety precautions should be in place for the protection of maintenance personnel during prisoner transfer. The Sally Port should be used for safely transferring prisoners from vehicles to holding cells. Any other use should be secure enough to prohibit possible injury to prisoners or staff from items in the area used as weapons. The transfer of the maintenance facility out of the Sally Port should be expedited.

Rio Vista Police Department

Finding #1 – The booking area appeared clean and safe. A secured bar is available to attach restraints for violent prisoners. There are no holding cells on site so prisoners are transported directly to the County Jail. (1)(2)

Recommendations #2 – The Rio Vista Police Department should consider adding holding cells to current or future facilities to accommodate projected population growth.

City of Suisun City Police Department

Finding #1 – The Booking area and the holding cells appeared clean and safe. (1)(2)

Recommendation #1– None.

Vacaville Police Department

Finding #1– The holding cells and booking area are cramped but adequate. Areas appeared clean and safe. There is a separate cell for holding juveniles. (1)(2)

Recommendation #1 – None.

Finding #2 – The Department does not have a Sally Port. However, a new police facility with a Sally Port is planned with ground breaking in the Spring of 2004 and completion estimated in the summer of 2005. (1)(2)

Recommendation #2– None

Vallejo Police Department

Finding #1 – The holding cells and booking area appeared clean and safe. (1)(2)

Recommendation #1– None.

V. Comment

The Vallejo Police Department Sally Port is a model facility and should be used as a standard for other Police Departments.

VI. Affected Agencies

- California Department of Corrections (Courtesy Copy)
- City of Benicia Police Department
- City of Benicia City Manager
- City of Dixon Police Department
- City of Dixon City Manager
- City of Fairfield Police Department
- City of Fairfield City Manager
- City of Rio Vista Police Department
- City of Rio Vista City Manager
- City of Suisun City Police Department
- City of Suisun City - City Manager
- City of Vacaville Police Department
- City of Vacaville City Manager
- City of Vallejo Police Department
- City of Vallejo City Manager