

Solano County Board of Supervisors  
Response to Grand Jury  
Issued March 27, 2009

Part II

Juvenile Hall

Solano County Board of Supervisors responses to the Grand Jury Report:

Finding #1

There are no courtroom facilities in Juvenile Hall. Juveniles must be transported to the Superior Court for appearances. Any transportation involves safety issues to juveniles, transporting staff, as well as additional expense.

Chief Probation Officer's Response to Finding #1

The Probation Department agrees with this finding.

**Board of Supervisors Response to Finding #1**

*The Board of Supervisors concurs with the Department's response to the Grand Jury's finding.*

Recommendation #1

As soon as possible funds should be reallocated to construct two courtrooms at the Juvenile Hall site. This should resolve the transportation expense and safety issues resulting in a cost savings to the County.

Chief Probation Officer's Response to Recommendation #1

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. This matter is not under the control of the Probation Department. Discussions between Solano County and the Solano Courts regarding construction of court facilities at the Juvenile Detention facility site have taken place, but securing funding for the project continues to be a major obstacle.

**Board of Supervisors Response to Recommendation #1**

*The recommendation will not be implemented. In an ideal situation Juvenile Courts would be collated with a Juvenile detention facility. Unfortunately, at this time there is no funding for a project of this scope and size.*

**Finding #2**

Staffing levels are based on facility capacity, rather than actual population. There appears to be a wide margin between capacity and population.

Chief Probation Officer Response to Finding #2

The Probation Office partially disagrees with the finding. Staffing levels are based on a capacity of 110 for the detention facility and 30 for New Foundations; however, there is not a wide margin between capacity and population on a regular basis. The detention facility population varies significantly throughout each month. As an example, the month of February 2008 had the lowest combined average daily population (ADP) of the year at 93. However, this number was artificially low due to a remodeling project at New Foundations which required closure of a 15 bed wing. The range for the month went

from a low of 82 to a high of 109. The month of July had the highest combined ADP of the year at 131, ranging from a low of 111 to a high of 145. The detention facility was over capacity 9 days during July. During October, the month of the Grand Jury inspection, the combined ADP was 109, ranging from a low of 92 to a high of 128.

### **Board of Supervisors Response to Finding #2**

*The Board of Supervisors concurs with the Department's response to the Grand Jury's Finding.*

### **Recommendation #2**

Staffing levels should be reviewed and adjusted as appropriate by the Chief Probation Officer.

### **Chief Probation Officer Response to Recommendation #2**

This recommendation has been implemented. At the time of the Grand Jury inspection an analysis was being completed to determine the ideal staffing level to accommodate the high population variance with maximum cost effectiveness, while achieving the primary mission of safe and secure detention. As a result of the analysis, cost saving measures were implemented including using the daily population number to determine replacement coverage for employees absent due to illness, vacation or training and modifying assignments to absorb seven vacancies. Additional modifications are being discussed with the labor union representing group counselors.

### **Board of Supervisors Response to Recommendation #2**

*The Board of Supervisors concurs with the Department's response to the Grand Jury's Recommendation.*

### **Finding #3**

At the time of this report there were remaining issues relating to the communication problems between the Sheriff's Dispatch Center and Juvenile Hall Counselors. When Juveniles are in the courthouse, Sheriff's Dispatch Center is unaware of movement of juveniles, which is under the control of Juvenile Hall Counselors.

### **Chief Probation Officer Response to Finding #3**

The Probation Office disagrees wholly with this finding as the Sheriff's Department indicates that although Solano Dispatch monitors jail radio communication, they do not have primary responsibility for responding to any requests for assistance from juvenile counselors, correctional officers assigned to the court, or tunnel holding officers. Rather, this responsibility belongs to the Sheriff's Court Security staff. There have been no reported communication problems between Sheriff's Department staff, including Court Security, and juvenile hall counselors since Probation assumed full responsibility for supervision of juveniles in court holding in January 2009, after juvenile hall staff received training in radio use.

### **Board of Supervisors Response to Finding #3**

*The Board of Supervisors concurs with the Department's response to the Grand Jury's Finding.*

### Recommendation #3

All movement of juveniles within the courthouse should be communicated to and monitored by the Solano County Sheriff's Dispatch Center for the safety of the juveniles and Juvenile Hall Counselors.

### Chief Probation Officer Response to Recommendation #3

The recommendation will not be implemented because this matter is not under the control of the Probation Department.

### Sheriff/Coroner Response to Recommendation #3

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The Sheriff disagrees with the recommendation of the Solano County Grand Jury. While it appears logical and operationally efficient to have the Sheriff's Dispatch Center manage all Sheriff's Office radio traffic, in practice this has proved to be counterproductive to Court Security operations. Court Security operates on Sheriff radio channel #3, a lesser used frequency. Although monitored by Dispatch, the volume of Sheriff radio channel #3 is normally turned down to prevent this frequency from interfering with dispatchers monitoring a higher volume of priority radio traffic on other law enforcement and fire frequencies. To minimize Dispatcher overload and better manage radio traffic specific to Court Security operations, Court Security is now responsible for primary monitoring of Sheriff's channel #3. Response to requests for assistance on Sheriff's channel #3 are received and directed by Court Security and the Sheriff's Dispatch center monitors as back-up. This has proven to be an efficient method of communicating the security needs of Juvenile Counselors, Correctional Officers and Court Security staff. As of the date of this response there are no outstanding or unresolved communication issues relative to the movement of juvenile offenders within the Courthouse.

### Board of Supervisors Response to Recommendation #3

*The Board of Supervisors concurs that the recommendation will not be implemented.*