

August 10, 2004

Honorable Clifford R. Anderson, III
Presiding Judge
Santa Barbara County Superior Court
P.O. Box 21107
Santa Barbara, California 93121-1107

**Board of Supervisors' Response to the 2003-04 Grand Jury Report on:
*"Criminal Justice and Detention Facilities"***

Dear Judge Anderson:

During its regular meeting of Tuesday, August 10, 2004, the Board of Supervisors adopted the following responses as their responses to the 2003-04 Grand Jury's report on "Criminal Justice and Detention Facilities". The Board of Supervisors thanks the Grand Jury for its findings and recommendations.

Special Report: Video Arraignment

(1) FINDING 1: The installation of a video arraignment system would be a cost cutting and safety enhancing method of conducting the arraignment of prisoners in Santa Barbara County.

Response: Partially agrees with the finding. While the Board agrees that safety would be enhanced, by the use of a video arraignment system per the Sheriff's response, the actual cost savings of such a system is yet to be determined.

RECOMMENDATION 1: The Grand Jury recommends that a video arraignment system be installed in both North and South Santa Barbara County.

Response: The Board adopted the Sheriff Department's response as its response, with the additional comment:

A study and a report will be made to the Grand Jury via the Board as to whether or not a video arraignment system should be installed in both North and South Santa Barbara County, before November 25, 2004 (statutory deadline to implement Grand Jury recommendations).

(This recommendation requires further analysis. Until a north county jail is constructed, transportation will still be required on a daily basis to the North and South County for other criminal hearings and arraignments that require mandatory appearances. The reduction of the number of inmates transported to and from an arraignment court will probably not result in the relief of an entire transport vehicle or the personnel needed to perform this duty. The definite benefit of this program would be the reduced ratio of inmates to officers. This will increase safety and security for both the inmates and staff.

In addition to the concept of a video arraignment system, a combination of an "on-campus" arraignment court with video arraignment capabilities is being considered on the property of the main jail.

Through collaboration with the Superior Court, Public Defender, District Attorney and the Sheriff's Department, this project will need to be developed with all of these interests considered. A committee of members from the criminal justice system has been formed to research the cost/benefit analysis and the procedural aspects of this system.)

Special Report: Early Release

(2) FINDING 1: Different criteria are used to release male and female inmates when overcrowded conditions exist at the Main Jail in Santa Barbara County. Males are released based on the seriousness of the crime committed; females are released on time served only – "first in, first out."

Response: The Board adopted the Sheriff Department's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding).

(2) RECOMMENDATION 1: The disparity between the male and female early release criteria should be eliminated for the sake of equality and public safety.

Response: The Board adopted the Sheriff Department's response as its response. (Has not yet been implemented), with the additional comment:

The Sheriff's Department will request from the Superior Court a modification to

the court order regarding the early release criteria for female inmates in the main jail to mirror the release criteria for the male inmates in the main jail.

Santa Barbara Juvenile Hall

(3) FINDING 1: The furlough program, which has been discontinued, was a positive activity that offered juveniles a positive work experience and provided a valuable community service.

Response: The Board adopted the Probation Department's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding)

(3) RECOMMENDATION 1: This valuable program should be reinstated when funds become available.

Response: The Board adopted the Probation Department's response as its response, with the additional comment:
The Furlough program will not be implemented at this time but will be considered if or when additional funds become available.

(Will not be implemented. The recommendation will not be implemented at the present time due to ongoing departmental budget reductions. Although realizing the overall value of this community-wide weekend work program to the youth and to the community, the Probation Department had to curtail its operation in July of 2002 due to budget constraints. It is the intention of the Probation Department to reinstate this non-mandated work program when the local and state budget environments improve.)

Los Prietos Boys Camp/Tri-Counties Boot Camp

(4) FINDING 1: The facilities at the Boot Camp and Boys Camp are underutilized due to a lack of sufficient staffing. Beds remain empty.

Response: The Board adopted the Probation Department's response as its response. (Disagrees with the finding. It is noted that at the time of the referenced Grand Jury inspection of the Boys Camp facilities, the programs were subject to waiting lists delaying the transfer of wards from the Juvenile Halls to the Camp. Although the Camp facilities are utilized less than in previous years and the populations are now less than the Board of Corrections rated bed capacity, the primary reason for this reduction was the discontinuation of the Memorandums of Agreement between Santa Barbara, Ventura, and San Luis Obispo Counties in Fiscal Year 2003 – 2004 for the operation of the Tri-Counties Boot Camp. Historically Ventura County leased 20 beds and San Luis Obispo County reserved 5 beds for out of County wards. These revenues significantly offset general operating expenses for the Camp facilities that were maintained at

maximum capacity.

Camp operations were reorganized and the facility downsized as of January 1, 2004, from 96 beds (Los Prietos Boys Camp - 56 beds/Los Prietos Boys Academy - 40 beds) to 75 beds (Los Prietos Boys Camp - 40 beds/Los Prietos Boys Academy - 35 beds). However, it should be noted that when the facility was at a maximum capacity of 96 beds, only 71 of the beds were utilized for wards from Santa Barbara County. After the downsizing and the withdrawal of Ventura and San Luis Obispo Counties as fiscal partners, there was actually a net increase of four additional beds, since all of the current 75 Camp beds are available for wards from Santa Barbara County.

(4) RECOMMENDATION 1: Funds should be made available to increase the staff at the Camps so that the additional placements can be made.

Response: The Board adopted the Probation Department's response as its response. (The recommendation will not be implemented at this time. Budget reductions within the Probation Department do not presently allow for the addition of more staff to the Camp programs. Should the need arise to house more than 75 wards at the Camp, then additional staffing will be required. With the reduction of aftercare services, the loss of low-level sentencing options like the Weekend Work Project, a well-documented increase in gang activity countywide, and the potential reduction of other local treatment alternatives, there is an imposing potential need for more Camp beds than the present total of 75.

To date, staffing reductions have included two Supervising Juvenile Institutions Officers and seven Juvenile Institutions Officers. Although the Probation Department would welcome additional staffing at the Camp to enhance services, treatment, supervision, community service, and aftercare services, staffing levels for the current 75 bed occupancy at Los Prietos Boys Camp and Los Prietos Boys Academy meet the minimum standards set by the State Board of Corrections for staff-to-ward ratios within juvenile camp facilities. In the event that the use of private placements increase, or sizeable and long-term waiting lists develop for wards awaiting placement in the Camp programs, the reallocation of Institutions Division personnel will be reviewed, or a formal request will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors for consideration of funding for the allocation of additional Camp staff.)

Carpinteria Station

(5) FINDING 1: The Carpinteria Police Department/Sheriff's Coastal Station is outgrowing the existing facility.

Response: The Board adopted the Sheriff Department's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

(5) RECOMMENDATION 1: Expansion or relocation, if not already under consideration, should be taken under advisement.

Response: The Board adopted the Sheriff Department's response as its response. (Has been implemented. The issue of adequate space for the Coastal Bureau Station is and has been addressed since the past visit by the Grand Jury. The current Bureau Lieutenant has developed a plan for additional locker room space. Cost estimates have already been obtained and we hope to proceed with the project in the new budget year. This remodel was included in the budget request for FY 2004-05.

A remodel plan for the report/evidence area and is waiting for the new fiscal year to proceed. We expect to complete this modification within the 2004-05 Fiscal Year.

The Department has arranged for a storefront office in the Montecito area. The Montecito Association has dedicated a desk, computer and phone for deputies to use 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This alleviates some of the space needs at the Coastal Station and provides a visible presence of Sheriff's personnel in the Montecito area as well and greater community interaction.)

Coroner's Bureau

(6) FINDING 1: There is no signage on Hollister Avenue at San Antonio Road, indicating the Coroner's Bureau location further down San Antonio Road (especially needed for bereaved clientele). The signage at the Bureau's driveway is also inadequate.

Response: The Board adopted the Sheriff Department's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding).

(6) RECOMMENDATION 1: Place a county sign on Hollister Avenue at San Antonio Road, indicating "Coroner's Bureau," and another at the driveway entrance to the office.

Response: The Board adopted the Sheriff Department's response as its response, with the additional comment:

The signs will be posted before November 25, 2004 (statutory deadline to implement Grand Jury recommendations).

(Will be implemented. The Coroners Bureau supervisor will contact the County Roads Department and research the feasibility of placing a sign on Hollister Avenue at San Antonio Road. The Coroners Bureau can also replace the current sign, at its driveway, with a larger sign).

(7) FINDING 2: Staff time is not used efficiently while autopsies are performed at Cottage Hospital and there is a possibility of worker's compensation issues due to the current system of transporting corpses from the Coroner's Bureau.

Response: The Board adopted the Sheriff Department's responses as its

response, with the additional comments:

Although there may be a possibility of worker's compensation issues due to transporting corpses there still would be additional workers compensation costs for an additional Sheriff's Department part-time Morgue Technician. In addition, the level of efficiency of staff time used will be verified.

(Partially agrees with the finding).

(7) RECOMMENDATION 2: All autopsies should be performed at the Coroner's Bureau.

Response: The Board adopted the Sheriff Department's response as its response, with the additional comment:

A study and a report will be made to the Grand Jury via the Board as to whether or not all autopsies will be performed at the Coroner's Bureau, before November 25, 2004 (statutory deadline to implement Grand Jury recommendations).

(This recommendation requires further analysis. In reviewing the Grand Jury's report, we discovered that the issue of conducting autopsies at the Coroners Bureau, instead of Cottage Hospital, may not just be an efficient operation. At the present time, the \$175.00 cost to use Cottage Hospital includes the salary of a Cottage Hospital Morgue Technician and all other necessary equipment and supplies such as needles, tubes and medical gowns. This fee does not cover the cost of tissue slides, which Cottage Hospital supplies to us for a fee that ranges between \$15.00-\$25.00 per autopsy. Even though the trip to Cottage Hospital takes an investigators time, an evaluation would have to be made to see if we would truly save money. The salary for the Morgue Technician and the other additional supplies would have to be factored into our budget, as well as the additional Workers Compensation costs for the additional Sheriff's Department part-time employee. We would also have to check and verify if there are any State Health requirements, which we would need to adhere to, prior to conducting autopsies at our facility on a full time basis. We believe that a full study should be made prior to any change in our current procedure).

(8) FINDING 3: The toxicology laboratory is only able to run a limited range of tests.

Response: The Board adopted the Sheriff Department's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

(8) RECOMMENDATION 3: All laboratory testing can be outsourced to a contracted facility at a savings to the county.

Response: The Board adopted the Sheriff Department's response as its response, with the additional comment:

A study and a report will be made to the Grand Jury via the Board as to whether or not laboratory testing can be outsourced to a contracted facility at a savings to

the County, before November 25, 2004 (statutory deadline to implement Grand Jury recommendations).

(This recommendation requires further analysis. The Grand Jury is correct in their finding that the Toxicology Laboratory currently can only run a limited range of tests. Currently 79% of the tests that the Toxicology Laboratory conducts are for County Probation. The other 21% is for the Sheriff's Department. A current study of our laboratory's efficiency is in progress.

The use of the laboratory affects two County Departments, the Sheriff's Department and the Probation Department. Part of the study is to verify how the laboratory should operate and what its capabilities are; the other part of the study is to research the financial benefits of having a County laboratory versus sending all required tests to an outside contract laboratory. At the conclusion of the study, a recommendation will be made to either keep the laboratory, give it to another county department, or close it and send all required tests to an outside laboratory. We believe that this study will be completed and submitted for Sheriff's Department staff review within the next fiscal year).

Sincerely,

Joseph Centeno
Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: David Clous, Grand Jury Foreperson 2003-04, Grand Jury room, County Courthouse, Santa Barbara, Ca 93101