

Yolo County Detention Center: Facing Challenges

SUMMARY

The Yolo County Detention Center is well maintained and well managed for an outdated facility. The Detention Center includes the Monroe Detention Center and Leinberger Memorial Center (hereafter, this report will frequently use "Center" in place of Yolo County Detention Center).

The implementation of Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109) has led to major changes in the make-up of the inmate population. Temporary holding cells are being used to house prisoners needing close supervision, causing the Center to be out of compliance with state regulations.

Staff has been creative in developing and implementing programs that adapt to inmates with longer sentences, more serious convictions, and unique problems. The Center is staffed by long term employees who function together as an efficient unit to ensure the Center is run in a manner that benefits both the employees and the detainees.

REASON FOR VISIT

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 919(b), "The Grand Jury shall inquire into the conditions and management of the public prisons within the county."

ACTIONS TAKEN

The Grand Jury toured the Yolo County Monroe and Leinberger facilities in Woodland in November 2012. The Grand Jury met with the members of the Correctional Command Staff. The tour included the following locations in the Monroe facility:

- sally port and intake area
- records department
- clothing exchange and property storage areas
- control center
- detention pods (male and female) and visiting areas
- medical and dental facility
- kitchen
- laundry

The tour of the Leinberger facility included the control center, day room, and dorm area in the medium security area.

The Grand Jury reviewed the Corrections Standards Authority (CSA) report dated December 11, 2012. This is a biennial report required by Penal Code Section 6031. The Grand Jury met again with members of the Correctional Command Team in February 2013 for clarification on several points. The Grand Jury also reviewed the Yolo County Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual for Contracting and Purchasing regarding contracts and the Contract Amendment for California Forensics Medical Group (CFMG) June 2011.

WHAT THE GRAND JURY DETERMINED

Consent Decree

In 1990, a consent decree capped the inmate population at the detention facility at 267. This number was legally amended in 2002 to a maximum population of 303 inmates. When the 2002 modification was made, each cell was designed to hold a single inmate. Yolo County consulted with the State Board of Corrections to see if the County could increase the number of beds by making some cells “doubles” and comply with the consent decree. The result was a total of 455 beds, with inmate releases to begin when the total reaches 90% of that figure, or 409. The consent decree also determines the order under which inmates are to be released to avoid overpopulation.

Impact of AB 109 on Detention Center Population

California Law AB 109 went into effect in October 2011. The state law aims to reduce overcrowding and decrease recidivism rates for state prisons. County detention facilities may receive AB 109 inmates in three ways: parole violators who are sent to the county of their last known residence, violators of mandatory supervision, and prisoners who are convicted of one of the three "nons" (non-violent, non-sexual, and non-serious offenses). As of November 2012, 147 beds of the 455-bed facility were being used by AB 109 inmates.

The Grand Jury was told that this new population has changed the dynamics of detention management in several ways:

- Sentences in county facilities used to be one year or less. Monroe now serves inmates with much longer sentences, including one prisoner with multiple sentences totaling 18 years, thereby increasing the medical and dental care that needs to be provided to long term inmates. The Grand Jury was told that one inmate has cost \$44,000 in medical treatment.
- The inmates no longer rotate in and out as often because of extended sentences, so the Center reaches the maximum population more often and sooner than prior to AB 109.

- State prison "politics" and culture have followed the inmates to the county facility, meaning there is a difference in inmate attitudes and a more hardened, criminal mentality.
- Due to the nature of current detainees, some inmates need a two officer escort instead of just one officer, resulting in the use of more manpower.
- In some cases, inmates must be housed separately; for example, when they have different gang affiliations. Thus, valuable bed space is lost.
- More inmates need to be released before their sentences are completed to avoid overcrowding.
- Records provided to the Grand Jury show the Center operating at or near capacity in 2010 (before AB 109) and in 2012 (after AB 109). In November 2012, AB 109 inmates made up 32% of the detention facility population, leaving less bed space available for the type of inmate that used to be incarcerated at the county level.

Staff Response

The staff has responded to these challenges of AB 109 in several ways. The inmate court holding area has been moved to an underutilized hallway to prevent certain inmates from mingling. Records staff has adapted software for better tracking and reporting. The staff developed and instituted a color-coded system to identify gang members, inmates with mental health issues, and gang dropouts, making it easier to isolate some inmates from others to avoid conflict. Staff receives gang awareness training for better coordination with other agencies. They have expanded and improved communications between the Center and Sheriff's patrol personnel.

In-home custody is also encouraged where appropriate. Well-screened inmates can live at home with ankle monitors and a home check every day by an officer. Being in the community allows inmates to maintain their employment or deal with medical issues.

Buildings

There are 313 available beds in the Monroe Center, sixty-two of which are reserved for females. There are an additional 142 beds for men in the Leinberger section.

During the Grand Jury visit, hallways in both facilities were clear of debris and doors were closed and locked electronically. All areas were clean and well maintained, well lighted and kept at a comfortable temperature. Some areas, particularly those slated for expansion or improvements, are past their prime and need updating due to the age of the facility, increasing inmate population, and constant use.

The Monroe Center opened in 1988 and has been in continuous use since then. In many areas the floors need to be resurfaced. The plumbing in the kitchen, which also services the nearby Juvenile Detention Facility, was meant to last only 20 years.

Yolo County has requested a \$40 million state grant to renovate the kitchen, property room, and laundry facilities. Additional medical beds and an expanded booking area are in the expansion plans. Meanwhile, temporary holding cells are used to house prisoners needing close supervision. As set forth in the CSA 2012 report, this use of temporary holding cells is out of compliance with California Code of Regulations, Title 24, and Section 1231.2.2 (Title 24). The proposed improvements would bring the facility into compliance. Unless the grant is funded, there will not be sufficient funds to complete the renovation necessary to comply with Title 24.

Leinberger acts as an overflow facility and is a medium security building set up in a dormitory configuration. This building was completed in 1991 with a 20-year life expectancy. In the last three years, \$100,000 in security enhancements have been installed, including razor wire, barred windows, and lighting. Kitchen workers, inmates who have gained trust and privileges, are housed here with lighter security.

Medical

Because some inmates now have longer incarceration times, under California Code of Regulations, Title 15, the Center is responsible for annual exams as well as mental health and dental assistance. Longer incarceration at county facilities produces more serious and expensive health issues that must be treated at county expense. Some AB 109 funds have been directed to the facility, but most of those funds have been focused on the expansion of rehabilitation and home custody programs.

The medical contractor, California Forensics Medical Group (CFMG), is the vendor for 32 counties in the state. The Center has been pleased with the service provided by CFMG. Medical services are available 24/7. Because the Monroe Center now houses inmates with longer terms, there is a need to deal with more serious medical ailments. This need has been adequately met by CFMG. It is less expensive to have CFMG treat inmates at the facility rather than transport them to the emergency room at the local hospital. The CFMG medical contract was renewed as a sole source provider upon advice of the County Counsel.

Dental services are outsourced with a dentist visiting one day per week. Psychological exams are performed by remote TV.

The three medical cells were clean, well maintained, and well monitored by medical and detention staff.

CFMG Medical Contract

The 2011-2012 Grand Jury noted that CFMG has held a contract for providing medical services at the detention facility since 1990. The last competitive bid for these services was in 2005. In 2011, the County Board of Supervisors approved a five-year extension of the medical services contract without a competitive bid. The most recent five-year

contract is for over \$3 million. The 2011-2012 Grand Jury recommended that the contracting practice be reviewed to determine if contracting requirements had been met.

The current Grand Jury reviewed the Yolo County Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual for Contracting and Purchasing. The document states: "Medical services contracts shall not extend for more than a total period of five (5) years, either by original contract or by renewals or amendments, unless a competitive selection process has been used or unless exempted elsewhere in this Policy." One exemption would be the determination that "there is but a single source from which the goods or services may be acquired." The policy fails to define the terms "single source" and "sole provider." The justification from the Health Department is that CFMG is the only provider of Detention Center care in Yolo County, making it a sole source provider. If satisfaction with current service is the requisite for bypassing a competitive bidding process, the CFMG contract could then be extended in perpetuity.

Personnel

Due to budgetary constraints, sixteen correctional officers have been laid off and the positions have not been refilled. Furloughs have been in place and the impact on staff has been approximately a seven-percent cut in pay. Due to the reduction in staff, there has been some mandatory overtime, which has been disruptive to employees' family and personal lives and day care needs.

The Center is operating at a minimum staffing level. This means that supervisors are stepping in to cover breaks, days off and sick days. Because the number of Sheriff personnel on the streets has decreased, Center staff is often needed to assist in the transport of prisoners. Sometimes a female officer is needed to assist with a female detainee outside the detention center, a situation which unexpectedly depletes the staff available at the detention center. Situations like these leave gaps in the shifts at the Center, making it difficult to operate fully staffed.

The Center staff is experienced and dedicated to finding ways to creatively solve problems with decreased funding and personnel. Everyone we spoke with was eager to continue to find ways to solve the problems facing the Center.

The Center has saved money with a "train the trainer" program in which some staff receive formal training and then go on to train the remaining staff.

The staff tries to implement new programs when they feel there is a positive impact for the inmates and a potential decrease in recidivism. Sessions in substance abuse, anger management, and parenting are offered. Vocational programs, such as GED classes, counseling, construction skills, and job placement are in place with the support and assistance of other agencies and community resource organizations. Members of these agencies meet to discuss how to prepare inmates scheduled to be released in the next 90 days.

FINDINGS

- F1. Detention Center officials and staff are working creatively to deal with changes made by AB 109 and the resulting changes in inmate population and cost.
- F2. The Center's buildings and grounds are as well-kept and maintained as possible, considering the age and condition of this much used facility.
- F3. Portions of the facility scheduled for upgrades or expansion, including the kitchen, laundry facility, medical section, and the booking area, are in immediate need of improvement. The facility is currently out of compliance with Title 24 because of the way the temporary holding cells are used.
- F4. The “single source” exception to the County’s general policy of obtaining competitive bids for contracts to provide County services is unclear. The policy fails to clarify what constitutes a “sole provider” or “single source.”
- F5. The staff of the Center are dedicated, experienced personnel, who have been vital in making the system work regardless of budget and staff cuts, while always keeping the well being of the detainee population in mind.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The plans for facility upgrades and expansion should be implemented as a first priority as funds become available. The Center should be brought into compliance with Title 24.
- R2. As the final entity in determining the Detention Center budget, the Yolo County Board of Supervisors should tour the facility by December 1, 2013 to review the need for structural updates to meet existing code and to determine the need for additional staff to ensure the Center is fully staffed for each shift at all times.
- R3. The Yolo County Administrator’s Office should review the “single source” exception contained in its Contracting and Purchasing policy and more clearly define the standards under which a contract for services may be approved without a competitive bid.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code 933(c) and 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

From the following individual:

- Yolo County Administrator: Recommendation R3

From the following government body:

- Yolo County Board of Supervisors: Recommendation R1, R2

The governing body indicated above should be aware that the comment or response of the governing body must be conducted subject to the notice, agenda and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.