



LAKE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

MEMORANDUM

To : **The Honorable Judge Stephen O. Hedstrom**
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court

From : **Undersheriff (Interim) Chris J. Macedo**
Lake County Sheriff's Office

Date : **August 18, 2014**

Subject : **Response to 2013-2014 Grand Jury Final Report**

Per California Penal Code Section 933.05, the attached document consists of the Lake County Sheriff's Office responses to the 2013-2014 Grand Jury Final Report.

Lake County Hill Road Jail Oversight

Summary:

The Public Safety Committee (Committee) of the Lake County Civil Grand Jury performed an annual mandatory oversight of the Lake County Detention Facility, commonly referred to as the Lake County Jail. Three visits were conducted by the Committee.

Background:

The Lake County Jail, Hill Road facility is located at 4913 Helbush Drive, Lakeport, California. Construction of the jail was completed in 1997. The facility consists of a reception area, booking area, minimum security pods, maximum security cells, observation towers, laundry room, kitchen, dining/visitation room, including an American Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible visitor space, and administrative offices. A pod is an area designed to house up to 40 inmates and it combines dayroom space with sleeping space. The jail houses inmates before and after sentencing. The jail is under the command of the Sheriff of Lake County. The Lake County Undersheriff is the overseer of the jail. Day-to-day management is provided by lieutenants who alternate day and night shifts. The jail staff consists of correctional officers, administrative staff, nurses and numerous volunteers including chaplains of various denominations. Medical services are provided by California Forensic Medical Group (CFMG). There is a dedicated mental health pod. Acute medical care is provided by community hospitals. There is an inmate grievance process to address concerns of the inmates.

Methodology:

On August 19, and October 7, 2013, the Committee visited the jail and met with representatives of the administrative staff. A tour of the facility was conducted. The Committee was provided samples of that day's meal served to inmates. On October 21, 2013 the committee met with CFMG to discuss policy and procedures for medical attention at the jail.

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Discussion and Analysis:

1. Overcrowding appears to be a significant issue. The Lake County Jail was designed to house a maximum of 286 inmates. Between August 19, 2013, and November 18, 2013, the number of inmates fluctuated from 300 to 325. At some point in 2014, it is estimated that the jail could house 365 inmates. This is partially caused by the fact that the California Assembly Bill # 109 (AB 109) mandates inmates who are sentenced for non-serious, non-violent, non-sexual felonies, and previously sentenced to state prison are instead to be sentenced to local jails.
2. Security was a problem in the minimal security area due to inadequate fencing. This resulted in the transfer of minimal security inmates to a higher security area, causing overcrowding in these pods and the mixing of higher and lower security inmates. During a jail oversight, it was noted that one of the higher security pods presently housed 51 inmates in a pod that was designed for 24. The overflow inmates are sleeping on the common area floor on foam mattresses in containers that are called boats.
3. The committee addressed an issue raised by a prior Grand Jury regarding the need for a Spanish language inmate handbook.
 4. It was relayed to us that a significant number of inmates had mental health issues. There are only 13 cells available to accommodate these inmates.
5. Jail administrators have applied for state grant SB 1022 that would provide for a new Type II, 40-bed women's jail with a new stand-alone 39-bed Medical/Mental Health Services building with program space, and a new administration building. The grant was submitted on October 24, 2013. The Lake County Jail was awarded the grant on January 16, 2014.

Findings:

- F 1 Overcrowding will continue to be a significant issue as long as AB 109 exists. Jail administrators are addressing these problems. They have applied for a grant to expand the jail. The mental health housing issue is being addressed in the grant proposal.
- F2 There are also creative steps being taken to resolve the security issue in the minimal security area. To prevent inmates from escaping, security fencing was to be constructed in order to enclose the outside area. Upon completion, some of the inmates will be moved back to the minimal security area from the higher level security discussed above. As of November 18, 2013, the security fencing had been erected and the project would be complete, pending some corrections by the contractor.
- F3 The Spanish language handbook is complete and will be available to all Spanish speaking inmates.

Recommendations:

R 1 Given that there are overcrowding and other issues that are beyond the control of the Lake County jail and administrators, our only recommendation at this time is to continue with their creative and innovative problem solving strategies.

Sheriff's Office Response:

The Lake County Sheriff's Office was awarded the SB1022 Grant. Preliminary discussions and planning have begun on the plan to expand the jail and provide a new Type II 40-bed women's facility as well as 39-bed Medical/Mental Health Services building with programming space. A new Administration building will also be constructed which will allow space for training for correctional personnel.

Correctional staff has begun the process to ease overcrowding in the jail by developing a pre-trial release program which is currently under development and consideration by the Lake County Board of Supervisors.

F2 Jail administrators are embarking upon multiple innovative programs to improve safety and address overcrowding. Successful models in other counties that address overcrowding, such as ankle bracelets for inmates who are not incarcerated, are being studied. Jail administrators are researching use of electronic and remote telephonic methods to improve communications between inmates and their families.

F3 The Committee was favorably impressed with the improvements in the jail and the ongoing efforts, because Lake County will benefit from their achievements.

Sheriff's Office Response:

The Sheriff's Office will continue to seek options that will assist in reducing the inmate population as well as recidivism. The Sheriff's Office will continue to research successful programs that are currently being utilized by other county jails and either implement them locally or make adjustments to the programs that will ease the overcrowding and or recidivism that plagues Lake County.