

CLERK OF SUPERIOR, STATE
AND JUVENILE COURT
FILED FOR RECORD

2012 JUL 13 AM 10:17

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF RICHMOND COUNTY

ELAINE C. JOHNSON, CLERK
RICHMOND COUNTY, GA.

STATE OF GEORGIA

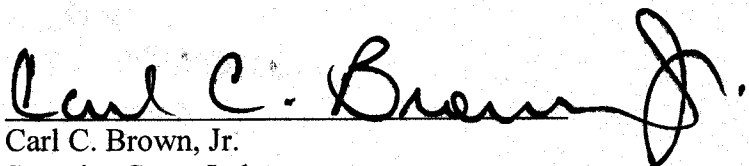
IN RE: GRAND JURY PRESENTMENT FOR THE MAY TERM 2012

The Grand Jury having returned the attached general presentment for the May Term 2012, and the same having been reviewed and accepted by the Court on July 13, 2012, it is now,

ORDERED that the said presentment shall be filed in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court for Richmond County, and that it shall be published once in the *Augusta Chronicle*, the legal gazette for said County; and

FURTHER ORDERED that the said general presentment shall be posted by the Director of Information Technology on the Augusta-Richmond County website for public access through the Internet (World Wide Web).

It is so ORDERED this 13th day of July 2012.



Carl C. Brown, Jr.
Superior Court Judge
Augusta Judicial Circuit

TO: The Honorable Carl C. Brown, Jr.
Judge, Superior Court

FROM: Richmond County Grand Jury
May Term 2012

DATE: May 21, 2012

RE: Grand Jury Presentment

We, the members of the Augusta-Richmond County Grand Jury for the May Term 2012, having been duly sworn by the Honorable Carl C. Brown, Jr. on the 21st day of May 2012, submit our presentment on the 13th day of July 2012, our last day as an official body of the Grand Jury.

To discharge our sworn duties, as prescribed by the laws of the State of Georgia, we met on eight (8) dates during our term and acted upon Bills of Indictments presented to us by the District Attorney's Office.

Sub-Committees were formed to inspect the Charles B. Webster Detention Center and the Judicial Center; reports are attached.

The Grand Jury respectfully submits this presentment on the 13th day of July 2012 and requests that it is published.

Shannon Bradley, Foreperson

Ferdinand J. Fortune

Ferdinand J. Fortune, Asst. Foreperson

Kathleen C. Moore, Secretary

Kathleen C. Moore, Secretary

Mary C. Gegg

Mary C. Gegg

Sharolyn Denise Turner

Sharolyn Denise Turner

Ken Jenkins

Ken Jenkins

Kenneth Jackson

Kenneth Jackson

Roy Jones

Roy Jones

Corvis Stewart

Corvis Stewart

Edna R. Henderson

Edna R. Henderson

Kimberly Sutton
Kimberly Sutton

Willie Crawford III
Willie Crawford, III

Stefanie Frickey
Stefanie Frickey

Jeffery Jones

Todd Schultz

Robert Thompson Jr.
Robert Thompson

Linda Givens
Linda Givens

Megan Sasser

Daniel Martin
Daniel Martin

Willie Morning
Willie Morning

Laura Johnson
Laura Johnson

Lisa Jones
Lisa Jones

Aidel Rivera

**SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE MAY 2012 GRAND JURY TERM
REPORT ON THE CHARLES B. WEBSTER DETENTION CENTER**

On June 11, 2012, a five-member Sub-Committee of the May 2012 Grand Jury toured the Charles B. Webster Detention Center located at 1941 Phinizy Road in Augusta, Georgia. Captain Chester V. Huffman, Jr. and Major William E. Johnson provided an informative tour of the facility.

The Detention Center is owned and operated by the Richmond County Sheriff's Office and opened on November 17, 1997. The total bed count is 1,050. There are 84 beds for females, with a total of less than 900 inmates. Included in the total bed count are 150 medical beds and 32 mental health beds for male and female inmates.

Inmates continue to be booked at the Richmond County Jail located at 401 Walton Way. When renovations are completed, a new booking area will be built that will allow booking to be done at the Phinizy Road facility. Renovations will also allow for a trustee dormitory.

Medical Services:

Medical services are provided by a contract with Correct Care Solutions. Services include mental health services, dental and psychiatric care. There are isolation cells available for suicidal inmates for their protection. Emergency services are provided by University Hospital and inmates requiring emergency care are transported to that facility. Appropriate provisions are available for inmates with disabilities.

Food Services/Inmate Services:

A private food service vendor prepares meals for inmates and staff. Inmates receive full meals at breakfast and supper. A bag lunch is provided for the mid-day meal. Employee meals are also provided in a small dining room adjacent to the kitchen. The Sub-Committee was provided lunch during the tour. The food quality was excellent. Securing a vendor to provide meals has proven to be an excellent cost savings venture with \$300,000.00 realized in savings so far this year.

Inmates with funds are able to purchase items through the commissary. The facility receives 30% of the revenue from these sales. Necessary items, such as toiletries, are provided for those inmates who do not have funds available.

Security and Surveillance:

A double-lock door system is present throughout the facility. Cells are monitored by a guard via video camera as well as officers who are visible inside the cells. Visits to inmates are made via a video system. Visitors do not make face-to-face visits, but rather video visits through the Visitor Center which is separate from the detention facility. Recently, Tasers were purchased for use by the guards. While some staff has completed training, other guards continue to receive training. Major Johnson was very pleased with the acquisition of these tools for inmate control.

Issues:

An ongoing issue that has been presented in previous Grand Jury Reports continues to be the lack of funding for staff salaries. Salary rates for Richmond County deputies are lower than surrounding counties which contributes to the high turnover rate at the facility. The maximum salary for certified deputies is \$29,000.00. There is no potential for growth for officers.

Remarks and Observations:

Sub-Committee Members were impressed with the operations of the facility. Policy and procedures are in place to maintain a safe environment for staff and inmates. Captain Huffman and Major Johnson are apparently very involved with the staff as they greeted them by name during the tour. The facility was clean and orderly. This Sub-Committee strongly suggests that an increase in deputy salaries be truly explored. Taxpayers' dollars are being used to train officers only to have them leave which require additional dollars to hire and train new staff. This turnover also contributes to less-seasoned staff on board whereas the retention of trained officers can only improve the safety and efficiency of the facility.

Sub-Committee Members

Ferdinand J. Fortune

Edna R. Henderson

Laura Johnson

Kimberly Sutton

Sharolyn Denise Turner

**SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE MAY 2012 TERM GRAND JURY
REPORT ON THE AUGUSTA JUDICIAL CENTER
735 JAMES BROWN BOULEVARD**

Grand Jury Sub-Committee Members received a guided tour of the new Augusta Judicial Center, including the lobby, clerk's offices, holding cells, courtrooms, judicial offices, courtroom holding cells and attorney/client meeting rooms.

It is apparent that considerable thought went into the planning of the layout and traffic movement within the building. There is excellent separation of flow between the public, prisoners and judicial staff.

The judges have a secured entrance, hallways and elevators ensuring their safety. Each office suite is shared by two judges and their staff. Historical portraits have been refurbished and are being displayed with care.

The Sub-Committee was able to tour the secured sally port and holding cells. State-of-the-art security measures are in place to ensure the prisoners are kept separate from the public and under observation at all times. Prisoners being transported to court enter a secured area in the back of the building and are placed in holding cells on the first floor, after which they are brought up on a secure elevator to be placed in group or individual holding cells until they are taken into a courtroom. Adjacent to the courtroom holding cells is a secure area provided for the prisoners to meet privately with their attorneys.

There are 16 courtrooms, 8 jury and 8 non-jury to accommodate the needs of an assortment of cases. All woodwork is environmentally friendly and careful attention was paid to the acoustics in each courtroom. There are private areas available for attorney/client conferences.

Jurors have been provided spacious, clean meeting rooms on secure hallways behind each courtroom. Additionally, the main jury room on the first floor is comfortable with many amenities for jurors who must spend extended hours on site.

The main entrance leads to the lobby where all people entering the building must go through security and metal detectors. This appears to be the only place in the building where traffic flow may be an issue. The doors open at 8:30 a.m. with employees, jurors and anyone with business at the Judicial Center all attempting to enter at once. Perhaps a staggered timeframe would be better? One suggestion would be to have court start an hour later, allowing employees to enter before the public, attorneys and jurors.

The lobby has an excellent layout with all offices clearly marked. Apparently, the bottom of the staircase has been a safety issue, but is already being addressed. The television screens displaying the court schedule are clear and easy to understand.

Parking has also been an issue for the new building. The answer has been to open an adjacent lot across the railroad tracks. At the beginning of our term, it was not general knowledge that this was courthouse parking. Since then, signs have been posted and people are becoming more aware. There is also the issue of crossing the rough tracks on foot, but we understand that discussions with CSX are underway to create a safer crossing.

In summary, it appears that a majority of the issues from the old Municipal Building have been addressed and corrected in the new Judicial Center. We were able to speak with several staff members who expressed satisfaction with the design.

Shannon Bradley
Grand Jury Foreperson