

2013

CLACKAMAS COUNTY CORRECTIONS

GRAND JURY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

ORS 132.440 requires “once yearly a grand jury shall inquire into the condition and management of every correctional facility and youth correctional facility . . . in the county.” A seven-member grand jury addressing this issue in Clackamas County was empaneled December 2, 2013.

As a grand jury we inspected all of the County’s correctional facilities including: the Clackamas County Jail; the Clackamas County Corrections Facility; the Clackamas County Juvenile Intake and Assessment center (JIAC) and the Clackamas County Courthouse Holding Facility. Following is a list of positives, concerns and recommendations.

COUNTY JAIL

Positives

- Especially considering its age (44 years), we were impressed by the appearance of the jail. There is a management commitment to keeping the jail clean and painting a different area each year. There was no “institutional smell” and all available space is maximized and everything is organized.
- The jail’s use and commitment to expand technology, including video court appearances, security and monitoring system with both cell block and control room operations, and finger printing.

- Again, considering age, nature of the work, and the sheer volume of inhabitants and their movements, things are well organized and protocols exist for all actions.
- We were pleased to see the commitment to staff training. 2012 deputy training was up 85% over 2011. Use of on-line training that allows staff to train while on regular duty and covers a variety of subjects is very positive.
- Management reported budget efficiencies and improved health services as a result of the new privatized health care contract.

Concerns

- The age and design of the facility create more expenses and complications in staffing, security, and operations. Since a new facility is not imminent, other concerns include:
 - o The HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) system is outdated and creates inconsistent and frequent changes in the air temperature.
 - o Opportunities for more efficiencies in meal purchases are limited by the lack of storage and refrigeration and current buying practices.
 - o We saw no evidence of a staff break room/exercise room.
- Staffing levels and hiring are a concern for several reasons:
 - o Jail staff have become accustomed to it taking up to a year to fill regular vacancies.
 - o The new "medical wing" built in 2010 is not anticipated to be opened until 2015 solely because of the length of time to fill vacancies.
 - o Time is wasted on applicants not interested in work at the jail, but applying to meet unemployment benefit requirements.
 - o Gaps or interruptions in the recruitment and hiring process are reported to create significant problems 12 to 18 months later.
 - o While overtime is an expected part of jail operations, over a million dollars a year is an excessive necessity because of hiring issues.
- Seventy percent recidivism for men and nearly as high for women is an issue. While a small percent of inmates are fortunate enough to go to

Community Corrections Residential Services, for the vast majority, the education, treatment and training received while in jail is all they receive.

- Estimates are between 30% and 60% of inmates have mental health problems. The anticipated reduction of on-site mental health workers will be significant.
- The Police Officers Association representative indicated a significant gap in communication and collaboration between labor and management at the jail. This includes lack of deputy input on policy and operations, favoritism, failure to do annual performance appraisals and other issues.

COUNTY JUVENILE DEPARTMENT

This was a very short visit. The philosophy, programs, follow-up, and facility were all very positive. We are concerned no longitudinal data analysis or research has been done to identify linkages between youth seen at the Juvenile Department and the likelihood they will eventually be seen as adults at the jail.

COURTHOUSE HOLDING FACILITY

Courthouse personnel were excited and appreciative of the significant upgrades that improve security and efficiency. The sally port and holding process is far more efficient to contain and separate multiple inmates and witnesses. The addition is impressive and the opportunity for Sheriff's patrol and jail deputies to work together is very positive.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Resident personal stories were moving and high praise for the quality and impact of the CSAP (Corrections Substance Abuse Program). Data reported on recidivism was incredibly impressive, especially in light of the long and hardened lifestyle of

many participants. The reported loss of medical coverage for residents is a concern.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conduct an independent review of the hiring processes within the County to determine if there are unique needs (such as dedicated staff) and/or other changes needed to meet reasonable timelines for filling vacancies in the Corrections Department.
2. Use historical trends and available data on current employees to set on-going fixed or variable level of "attrition hiring," so hiring is done in anticipation of vacancies instead of after they occur.
3. Develop and implement a community education plan targeting middle school children for prevention goals and adults to enhance understanding and generate support for funding corrections facilities and programs.
4. County Commissioners, Sheriff, DA, and others as necessary, review the Washington County Public Safety Assessment done a few years ago to decide if something similar would be beneficial.
5. Pull data on the language and culture of current inmates and clients. Compare it to the composition of deputies, and consider surveying clients to determine if they've received culturally and linguistically adequate services. Look at future population trends and incorporate that data in recruitment and hiring decisions.
6. Create a break room and exercise room for staff at the jail and encourage a healthy lifestyle.
7. Work with a food service expert or broker to expand vendor options and improve purchasing, nutrition and efficiency.
8. Analyze data on the likelihood that youth entering the juvenile justice system in our county will eventually land in the adult corrections system. Identify best practices from around the country that may be pilot tested here.

9. County Health, Housing, and Human Services work with the Sheriff's office to expand education and training to target groups of inmates where services are most likely to address recidivism (e.g., GED's).
10. The Sheriff's office look for areas of common ground that permit collaboration with the union and/or processes that can begin to heal the rift.
11. Institute a new practice of providing both the reports from the previous two Grand Juries, as well as a summary of any actions taken in response to the recommendations to future Grand Juries.

Dated this date: 12-10-13

Linda Sorber

Foreperson