

MENDOCINO COUNTY SHERIFF'S COAST SECTOR SUB-STATION AND HOLDING CELLS IN FORT BRAGG

November 3, 2005

Summary

In accordance with duties required, the Grand Jury visited the Mendocino County Sheriff's Coast Sector Sub-Station and Holding Cells.

Background

California Penal Code §919 (b) states that "The Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county." The 2005/2006 Mendocino County Grand Jury undertook their charge with visits to the Mendocino County Sheriff's Coast Sector Holding Cells.

Methods

The Grand Jury toured the Mendocino County Sheriff's Coast Sector Holding Facility, including the Sally Port (inmate delivery), Booking Area, and Holding Cells. The Grand Jury interviewed Sheriff's Department personnel.

Findings

1. The Mendocino County Sheriff Coast Sector Sub-Station is staffed in accordance with its budget: one Lieutenant, three Sergeants, eleven Deputies, one Bailiff, one Detective, and one Secretary.
2. The Sheriff's Department designates the area between Rockport and Gualala as the Coast Sector.
3. A Coast Sector deputy sheriff generates approximately 20 hours of overtime every two weeks.
4. Coast Sector patrol work is generally limited to dispatch responses, process serving, transportation of detainees, and other departmental duties.
5. Deputies have recently been issued Tasers and instructed in their use by POST-trained officers (Police Officer Standard Training).
6. Storage space for evidence is inadequate.

Response (General Services): The General Services Director partially disagrees with the finding. The statement, "Storage space for evidence is inadequate," requires further analysis because the space may be adequate if programmatic changes were made to cycle out the evidence more frequently. This would avoid the expense of constructing an additional building to store evidence.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board of Supervisors agrees with the

response of the General Services Director.

7. Detainees at Fort Bragg are normally booked and transported to the County Jail in Ukiah or to another facility within two hours.
8. Detainees on the South Coast (from Navarro to the south County line) are taken directly to the County Jail in Ukiah.
9. The Coast Sector Sub-Station Holding Cells are clean.
10. The Coast Sector Holding Facility lacks an audio monitoring system.

Response (General Services): While this finding was correct at the time the Grand Jury made its investigation, the General Services Director disagrees with the finding because the situation was remedied in December 2005.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board of Supervisors agrees with response of the General Services Director.

11. The handicapped rails, benches, air duct screens, wall panel, and faucet handles in the Holding Cells could be used by a prisoner to hang him/herself.

Response (General Services): The General Services Director agrees with the finding.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding.

12. The central heating and cooling system in the Sheriff's Coast Sector Sub-Station is inadequate.

Response (General Services): While this finding was correct at the time the Grand Jury made its investigation, the General Services Director disagrees with the finding because the situation was remedied in January 2006.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board of Supervisors agrees with response of the General Services Director.

13. Given the heavy use of the Sheriff's Coast Sector offices, cleaning and routine maintenance beyond the regularly scheduled janitorial service provided by County General Services must be performed by the Sub-Station staff.

Response (General Services): The General Services Director agrees with the finding.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding.

14. The emergency button/bell system installed in the Sub-Station is unmonitored and connected only to offices that are often unoccupied.

Response (General Services): The General Services Director agrees with the finding.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding.

15. In the opinion of the Sheriff's Department Coast Sector Sub-Station, methamphetamine, along with other drugs including alcohol, is a major factor in most arrests.

Recommendations

The Grand Jury recommends that:

1. the Evidence Room (storage space for evidence) be enlarged and upgraded. (Finding 6)

Response (General Services): The recommendation requires further analysis by the Sheriff's Department. The space may be adequate if programmatic changes were made to cycle out the evidence more frequently. This would avoid the expense of constructing an additional building to store evidence. This suggestion has already been given to the Sheriff.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board of Supervisors agrees with the response of the General Services Director and suggests that any remedies be included in the FY 06-07 budget discussions.

2. an audio monitoring system be installed to bring the Sub-Station into compliance with California Code of Regulations §6031. (Finding 10)

Response (General Services): The recommendation has been implemented. An audio monitoring system was installed in December 2005, with notification to the Mendocino County Sheriff's Coast Sector Sub-Station.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board of Supervisors agrees with the response of the General Services Director.

3. components in the Holding Cells that present a danger to inmates be corrected. (Finding 11)

Response (General Services): The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Most items have been

corrected; the balance will be corrected by June 1, 2006.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board of Supervisors agrees with the response of the General Services Director.

4. the heating and cooling system in the Sub-Station be upgraded. (Finding 12)

Response (General Services): The recommendation has been implemented. Upgrades to the HVAC system, including boiler valve replacement, were performed in January 2006.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board of Supervisors agrees with the response of the General Services Director.

5. the frequency of janitorial services in the Sub-Station be increased. (Finding 13)

Response (General Services): The recommendation requires further analysis. This recommendation would require additional staffing and additional funding to the Buildings and Grounds budget. The item will be discussed during FY 06-07 budget hearings with the County Executive Office and Board of Supervisors.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board of Supervisors agrees with the response of the General Services Director and requests that further analysis and proposed solutions be included in the FY 06-07 budget requests submitted by the Sheriff and the General Services Department.

6. the emergency button/bell system installed in the Sub-Station be monitored at all times. (Finding 14)

Response (General Services): The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. A monitor will be installed to notify 911 Dispatch in case of emergency by June 1, 2006.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board of Supervisors agrees with the response of the General Services Director.

7. that the BOS amend the County budget to remedy the problems in the Sub-Station Facility. (Findings 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board of Supervisors agrees in part with this recommendation. Most of the recommendations have already been implemented this year within the adopted budget. Other items require further analysis and proposed solutions should be included in the FY 06-07 budget requests submitted by the Sheriff and the General Services Department.

Comments

Despite the excessive workload and the problems with the facility, the staff of the Mendocino County Sheriff Sub-Station in Fort Bragg is providing excellent services. In the opinion of the Sheriff's Department, overtime would not be reduced by additional staff. Adding a substantial number of deputies to the roster would allow the Department to increase the hours of community policing.

Response Required

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, Findings 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and Recommendations 1 through 7.
Sheriff, Mendocino County Sheriff's Department, Findings 1 through 15 and Recommendations 1 through 6.

Response Requested

Director, Mendocino County Department of General Services, Findings 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and Recommendations 1 through 6.