

**NAPA COUNTY GRAND JURY
2013-2014**

FEBRUARY 19, 2014

FINAL REPORT

**NAPA COUNTY JUVENILE HALL
ANNUAL REVIEW**

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SUMMARY

California Penal Code Section 919 (b) mandates that the Grand Jury annually inspect detention facilities within the County. The 2013-2014 Grand Jury found the Napa County Juvenile Hall (NCJH) to be a safe, secure, well-maintained and professionally run facility, providing custody, rehabilitation, educational and medical services to delinquent juveniles. The Grand Jury commends the administration and staff for their dedication and professionalism. In order to enhance their efforts, the Grand Jury suggests two changes:

1. All on-duty staff should wear readily identifiable clothing/uniforms.
2. The video surveillance system needs to be updated.

BACKGROUND

The Napa County Juvenile Hall, located at 212 Walnut Street, in Napa, California, was built in 2004. Designed as a state-of-the-art detention and rehabilitation center, the facility can house up to 60 juveniles, although the department has limited the maximum census to 50. NCJH currently employs 23 full time and 16 extra-help staff. The Napa County Probation Department oversees the operation of the Hall. The Chief Probation Officer serves as Director, while the day-to-day operations are the responsibility of the Juvenile Hall Superintendent. The NCJH budget for FY2012-2013 was \$4,082,139.51.

NCJH is a secure, twenty-four-hour facility. Detained juveniles are provided a safe custodial environment, necessary medical attention, nutritious home-style meals, counseling, guidance and a full educational program, operated in-house, by the Napa County Office of Education. It is the goal of NCJH, in collaboration with the Napa County Probation Department, to provide each youth the opportunity to successfully transition from the Hall back into the community as a law-abiding citizen.

METHODOLOGY

The 2013-2014 Grand Jury conducted the annual review of the Juvenile Hall on September 23, 2013. The Superintendent and several of his senior supervisory staff directed a thorough tour of the facility and informally responded to questions posed by Grand Jury members. Subsequently, senior staff from Juvenile Hall and Probation were interviewed.

Documents reviewed included the current NCJH Policy and Procedures Manual, Juvenile Hall

Organizational Chart, Grand Jury reports from 2009 through 2012, Napa County Juvenile Justice Commission 2012 Annual Inspection Report, emails to and from Rebecca Craig, Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) field representative, and the biennial inspection report of NCJH by the BSCC for the years 2011-2012. The BSCC inspection report for the period 2013-2014, and the Napa County Juvenile Justice Commission Report for 2013 had not yet been published at the time of this writing.

DISCUSSION

The 2013-2014 Grand Jury's annual review of the NCJH revealed a professionally-run, well-maintained facility that provides custodial care for up to 50 detained juveniles by 36 full-time staff and 16 extra-help employees. At the time of our visit, 23 youths were housed in two units, each containing a classroom. Merit is a co-ed unit and Prospect is an all-male unit. The combined daily census for both units fluctuated between 20 and 36 youths during 2013.

Staff wears clothing of its choice. We noted that a number of the staff appeared very youthful, while a few of the juveniles looked mature beyond their years. We were advised that the immediate identification of staff has posed a problem in the recent past. Several months ago, during an altercation, an adult dressed in a gray sweatshirt similar to those worn by the boys on Prospect unit, was not immediately identified as a staff member. We were further advised that many staff members believe that a uniform of some kind – possibly a monogrammed polo-style shirt – would enhance their professional identity, as well as ensure that they were readily identifiable should an emergency situation arise.

During our thorough tour of the facility, we were made aware of the surveillance cameras throughout the interior of the Hall and outside in the yard. We were advised that the video system was antiquated and inefficient. The video images were “not very clear” and it was difficult to accurately identify the individuals on the screen. Staff could not reliably determine the sequence of events because the video often “jumped frames”. Staff had concerns about the surveillance of several blind spots inside the building and on the perimeter of the yard, where camera coverage was not available.

FINDINGS

F1. NCJH provides a safe, secure, and well-maintained environment for delinquent juveniles.

F2. NCJH administration and staff demonstrate a high level of professionalism.

F3. NCJH counselors and supervisors do not wear uniforms or monogrammed clothing that makes them readily identifiable as staff.

F4. The video/camera system at NCJH is outdated and insufficient for surveillance of juveniles in the perimeters of the yard, and some blind spots inside the facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Grand Jury recommends that by the end of FY 2014-2015, all on-duty NCJH employees should wear clothing that clearly identifies them as staff.

R2. The Grand Jury recommends that by the end of FY 2014-2015, video equipment should be updated to current state-of-the-art standards, and cameras added to the system to ensure that there are no blind spots within the facility or along the perimeter of the yard.

COMMENDATIONS

The 2013-2014 Grand Jury commends the Director, Superintendent and staff at NCJH for their dedication to redirecting the lives of troubled juveniles by providing a safe, secure, humane correctional environment, and facilitating a successful reentry into the community.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

The Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

- Napa County Juvenile Hall Director: R1, R2

It is requested that the NCJH Director certify above her signature that the responses conform to the requirements of section 933.05 of the Penal Code.

The foregoing was duly approved by the 2013-2014 Grand Jury at regular session on February 11, 2014.

/s/

Alan Galbraith
Foreperson, 2013-2014 Grand Jury