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AND JUVENILE COURT  
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2013 SEP 13 AM 11:58

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF RICHMOND COUNTY**

LEWIS S. JOHNSON, CLERK  
RICHMOND COUNTY, GA.

**STATE OF GEORGIA**


IN RE: GRAND JURY PRESENTMENT FOR THE JULY TERM 2013

The Grand Jury having returned the attached general presentment for the July Term 2013, and the same having been reviewed and accepted by the Court on September 13, 2013, 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 September 2013.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael N. Annis  
Superior Court Judge  
Augusta Judicial Circuit

*Mary T. Crace*

Mary T. Crace

*Suk Cha Gallaher*

Suk Cha Gallaher

*G. W. Pope, Jr.*

G. W. Pope, Jr.

Jennifer Diann Cobb

*William E. Wood*

William E. Wood

Beth LeGail Cosnahan

Phillip Antwan Law

*Veronica M. Williams*

Veronica Meleta Williams

*Edith P. Jason*

Edith Pennington Jason

*Tamise McElrath*

Tamise Reshawn McElrath

*David C. Hill*

David Clois Hill

Pierre Montrell Cave

*James Ardena Skelton, Jr.*

James Ardena Skelton, Jr.

*John Charles Thompson*

John Charles Thompson

James Johnson

TO: The Honorable Michael N. Annis  
Judge, Superior Court

FROM: Richmond County Grand Jury  
July Term 2013

DATE: September 13, 2013

RE: Grand Jury Presentment

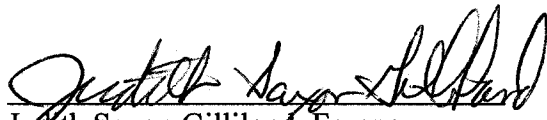
We, the members of the Augusta-Richmond County Grand Jury for the July Term 2013, having been duly sworn by the Honorable J. Carlisle Overstreet on the 15th day of July 2013, submit our presentment on the 13th day of September 2013, our last day as an official body of the Grand Jury.

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.

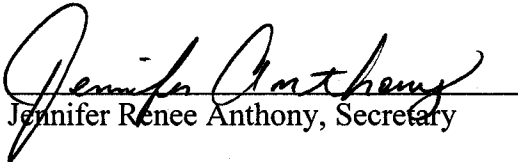
Sub-Committees were formed to inspect the Charles B. Webster Detention Center and the 911 Call Center; reports are attached.

In addition to our assigned duties, this Grand Jury appointed three individuals as members/alternates to the Board of Equalization. The report is attached.

The Grand Jury respectfully submits this presentment on the 13th day of September 2013 and requests that it is published.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Judith Saxon Gilliland, Foreperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Crystal Faye Seago, Asst. Foreperson

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Renee Anthony, Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Taylor Moore Ingram

\_\_\_\_\_  
Justin A. Greenway

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Braswell English

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lauren Ashley Dansby

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lee-Marie Norton

## **SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE JULY TERM 2013 GRAND JURY REPORT ON THE CHARLES B. WEBSTER DETENTION CENTER**

A nine-member Sub-Committee of the July Term 2013 Grand Jury toured the Charles B. Webster Detention Center on August 13, 2013. We arrived at approximately 12:45 p.m. and were met by Captain Chester Huffman. Captain Huffman escorted us to the Visitor Center to provide basic information concerning the facility, the tour and more specific facts related to the Visitor Center. We were shown the process by which family members and other visitors visit with inmates. Several Sub-Committee Members were surprised by the Visitor Center's modern technology. Captain Huffman told us that, even though the inmates are not in close proximity to their visitors, the visitation experience has actually been improved by this new facility. Visits are now via remote cameras located in the various common areas of the main facility and corresponding cameras in the Visitor Center. Captain Huffman reported that, in the past, family members had to enter the main facility and travel via elevator to the visitor area; the inmates had to be taken by staff from the cell block areas to the visitation area. In this area, visitors and inmates were separated by thick glass and it was actually harder for the two parties to hear each other and visual acuity was not optimal. The new process reduces the time and risks involved in physically moving inmates from the cell area to the visiting area. Also, family members/other visitors do not have to enter the main facility. Booths allow more privacy during visits and this element can be beneficial for some visits, especially for a more private or sensitive-nature conversation, i.e. problems with children, death of a family member, etc. A larger conference area is available for family conferences/interventions and can also be used by attorneys representing the inmates.

Captain Huffman explained the history of the facility in Augusta beginning with the 401 Walton Way Jail up to and including the current building/renovation projects for the Charles B. Webster Detention Center. Captain Huffman then led Sub-Committee Members to the main facility and explained the demolition/renovation project just inside the facility. The Lobby is being demolished and a satellite courtroom will take its place to allow on-site court procedures with a judge and attorneys physically present. Captain Huffman also mentioned plans that will allow an off-site judge to be present via remote camera while conducting procedures with other participants in the satellite courtroom. These options will reduce the costs associated with transporting inmates to the Judicial Center as well as reduce security issues and result in improved safety for correctional facility staff.

Next, Captain Huffman ushered us down a hallway past the Main Control Tower area. He explained the workings of the equipment in this area and how it relates to the individual control tower areas in other areas of the facility. We then went into the staff dining area and ate a delicious lunch. The menu included fried and barbequed chicken, green beans, butter beans, mashed potatoes, a salad bar, three dessert options and several beverages. Captain Huffman asked how much we thought it cost per meal to feed the inmates. Various guesstimates were offered and all were quite surprised to learn the average cost

per meal is just 84 cents. We had a chance to speak briefly to some of the inmate workers in the dining area. Captain Huffman explained the differences in the meal plans as each relates to staff and inmates. Inmates who are allowed to work in the kitchen and other supporting jobs, such as maintaining the cell block areas, are given larger portions than other inmates.

Major Gene Johnson then met us and accompanied Captain Huffman and Sub-Committee Members for the remainder of the tour. We were taken down a very long corridor to the medical area of the facility; the technology was impressive. We were given an opportunity to go in the control tower of this cell block area and were again impressed with the cutting-edge technology. We saw the cell areas for the Men's Medical, Men's Mental Health and Women's Medical and Women's Mental Health inmates. We learned that any inmate with serious medical or mental health issues has to be housed in special areas and cannot be with the general inmate population. We learned that male inmates wear either solid orange jumpsuits or orange and white-striped jumpsuits. We were told the striped suits indicate inmates prone to violence. One Sub-Committee Member noted that all the women wore striped jumpsuits and we were told those with violent tendencies wear a red wrist band. There are plans to change the female inmates' clothing to make determining violent tendencies easier and more quickly. We were told the per-visit and per-medication costs for inmates in the main facility to be seen in the medical area by a nurse or doctor is \$5.00/visit and \$5.00/prescription, mainly for over-the-counter medications. We were shown the technology to communicate with the guards and inmates. We were shown modifications that have been made to address issues related to inmates who actively seek to harm themselves. We also learned about the kiosks in the common areas that allow inmates to purchase necessary items and snacks. Family members can add funds to inmate accounts. All personal items are purchased via this kiosk system. We observed a mounted, flat-screen television in each common area. We were told that the basic cable tier is available to the inmates. Inmates also have the opportunity to use a computer. Forms for complaints, requests for visitors, requests for medical and various other communications are completed on-line by the inmates in the common areas.

We then stopped at one of the original control towers to see the difference between the technologies in the original areas versus that in the newest areas. We were provided with the average facility population and the breakdown for male and female in the general and medical areas. We learned that long-range plans include increasing the facility to house up to 1,200 total inmates. It is anticipated this should cover the local needs for many years to come.

All Sub-Committee Members indicated their general impressions were very positive and many mentioned having the general idea that correctional facilities would be dark and depressing environments. Several mentioned being surprised at how bright the facility was inside. Another misconception is that the facilities are very cramped for space. Several noted being surprised at how wide the corridors are inside the facility. Even though the common areas and cells were Spartan, Sub-Committee Members were also

surprised that they seemed to be adequate in size for the number of inmates in the various areas. We were told that the medical cell block areas are a bit more spacious. This is due to federal space regulations related to the nature of the medical/health needs of inmates residing in this area. For example, some inmates are missing limbs; others require the use of crutches and wheelchairs. We toured quite an extensive area of the facility to include the Visitor Center, two control towers (observed the different cell blocks), the dining area and the medical area. Sub-Committee Members were impressed with the cleanliness of the facility. Attempts are being made to keep the demolition and construction areas as clean and safe as possible. We viewed two of the outdoor areas. We were told the outside areas are not really exercise yards, but rather a place that offers some fresh air and sunlight while maintaining security. We were surprised the open overhead of the outside areas are secured to prevent possible escape. All agree that this is a great idea; we had just not considered the need. One Sub-Committee Member noted that some inmates are not allowed out of their cells due to infractions of rules. The opportunity to have time outdoors and in the common area can be used as an incentive for the inmates to comply with rules. Several Sub-Committee Members mentioned how impressed they were with Captain Huffman and Major Johnson; both are very knowledgeable of the facility and did a fantastic job informing the Sub-Committee about basic information regarding the facility and answered all of our inquiries. Several Sub-Committee Members noted very professional behavior by all of the staff we came in contact with during our tour. It was also noted that interactions with inmates were professional and carried out with the proper amount of respect that should be expected. We were reminded that it is to the staff's advantage in regard to safety and security to keep the inmates at least satisfied. If they are not kept basically satisfied, given the ratio of inmates to staff in the facility, there might be far more security issues and far more assaults and injuries to staff.

Another interesting fact we learned was the difference between jails and prisons. Many Sub-Committee Members assumed the terms were interchangeable. We now know they are separate entities meeting specific requirements and needs.

#### Sub-Committee Members

Jennifer Diann Cobb  
Beth LeGail Cosnahan  
Mary T. Crace  
Suk Cha Gallaher  
Judith Saxon Gilliland  
Edith Pennington Jason  
Crystal Faye Seago  
James Ardena Skelton, Jr.  
Veronica Meleta Williams

## **SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE JULY TERM 2013 GRAND JURY REPORT ON THE RICHMOND COUNTY 911 CALL CENTER**

A seven-member Sub-Committee of the July Term 2013 Grand Jury toured the Richmond County 911 Center on August 20, 2013. We were met by Mr. Dominick Nutter, Director of the Center, upon our arrival. Mr. Nutter gave us a brief description which included all services offered by the Center. We learned the building houses the EOC, the 911 Call Center and the County's Dispatch Center. Most Sub-Committee Members were unaware that emergency and fire and police dispatch calls are handled by the Center. Mr. Nutter indicated the Center also responds to administrative call lines in addition to calls reporting emergencies or requesting emergency assistance. He stated we would hear two different ring tones when we entered the main work area of the Center. The employee knows from the tone whether the call is an emergency or an administrative-line call. The Center has 10 telephone lines for 911 calls and 12 telephone lines for administrative issues. The dispatcher must answer 911 calls within 10 seconds. There is a release from liability for the Center during extreme emergency situations when the telephone lines may be overwhelmed with calls. We learned of certain protocol that must be followed by the operators when receiving calls. This involves a set of specific questions to elicit important information and is especially crucial when the call may have to be transferred to another agency. The staff must get the name of the person reporting, the telephone number from which the call is being made and the address of the emergency. This helps staff contact the scene again if the connection is lost. We also learned that, while the staff is inputting information into the computer program, other agencies are also being notified. If the caller indicates the need for an ambulance, police and/or fire departments, each are being notified as the dispatch operator takes the call. We learned that, even though a request is immediately put in for an ambulance should there be a need, the operator also immediately relays information to the person that dispatches firefighters. The County has far more fire departments than ambulance locations. The Fire Department is called because all firemen have, at the very least, EMT training, if not advanced EMT training. The Fire Department will usually be the first responders on the scene and can begin to address the emergency. Mr. Nutter informed us that approximately 60% to 70% of calls the Fire Department makes are related to medical issues rather than to fires. The Call Center is divided into different regions of the County with additional operators/dispatchers assigned specifically to fire calls. The operators/dispatchers are able to determine the units available to respond and will dispatch the ones that will be able to arrive the quickest. There is a provision for transferring responders from one region to another should the availability of responders in a region become depleted due to calls.

Mr. Nutter told the Sub-Committee that all calls are recorded and are available for use in court should there be a need. The staff does random checks on approximately 3% of the calls on a routine schedule. This gives the Center and staff feedback on how well they are doing in responding to the County's needs including following protocols established by the Center. Mr. Nutter informed us that the staff will also respond to calls for the Sheriff's Department, Marshal's Office, Board of Education Police Staff, Staff of Augusta

Technical College and Georgia Regents University Police Staff. The Call Center's main emphasis is to take calls for medical emergencies and reports of crimes and fires, but the staff does assist with many other duties as needed. We learned that most first-responder staff from the different agencies has a #32 Button on their communication device. This can be quickly pressed should first responders find they need assistance. Some devices are set to activate the #32 Button should the communication device be in a horizontal position for a set amount of time as this might indicate the responder is down. The staff also monitors police and firefighters while on calls and during their shifts. If they do not get a communication from those in their area within a specified amount of time, they will contact them to make sure all is okay. If no response, they will dispatch someone to assist them. The staff is informed of when firefighters, EMT's and police are on meal breaks. The staff will also monitor calls from staff who may be working specials, such as at the mall, stores, and the fair and other venues. They also keep track of Special Operations Officers, Crime Suppression Officers and Housing Officers.

Many Sub-Committee Members were unaware that calls for police, fire and medical emergencies all come to the same Center. One Member asked what would happen to the Center in case of a power outage. We were told a generator is on-site that can keep the Center running for at least a week. Another Member asked what the contingency plan was should the Center itself be threatened by an outside force. Mr. Nutter informed us that there are several other locations available for the staff to be transferred in such an event. Many Sub-Committee Members were surprised at how relatively quiet the Center was in that most thought a 911 Center would be in a state of "organized chaos" and it was far from that. The staff was very professional. There was a feeling of calmness in the Center even though many may have been assisting with dispatch help to very difficult situations. The telephones ring almost constantly, but the volume of the two distinct tones is not blaring in the Center. The operator/dispatchers can hear the tones and react quickly, but one does not feel overwhelmed by the noise level. The need for the Center to remain as quiet as possible is reason a special, minimum-noise vacuum cleaner was purchased at a cost of over \$1,000.00.

The Center operates 24 hours a day/seven days a week. The Center has to be maintained while staff is working. The staff must participate in various training sessions to maintain their certification. This must be done on designated "off the clock" time to maintain coverage at the Center. Sub-Committee Members were interested to learn that one of the on-going training sessions relates to the use of Text Telephones (TTY), also known as Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD). Staff realizes if they answer a call and hears no one, the caller may be deaf. They have to know how to use the TTY/TDD equipment to communicate with deaf callers. All staff has to maintain specific training to include CPR along with specific medical, police and fire training. The Center has four shifts of staff and attempt to ensure all staff has at least every other weekend off, although some may be on call during "off duty" time. One Sub-Committee Member inquired as to training and retention of staff. Mr. Nutter informed us that the training process generally lasts from four to eight months with the length of time being determined by job-duty proficiency rather than a defined amount of time. There are several stages of training that include classroom instruction, working paired with a



mentor followed by mentor monitoring but not sitting side-by-side. As to retention, Mr. Nutter said this is one of the biggest challenges for the Center. He told us that the job is filled with stress for the staff. They are in the know of some horrendous accidents, crimes and other heart-wrenching events. The pay is not commensurate to the stress level of the job. Also, the staff does not have closure regarding these stressful situations. The police, fire and medical responders do get a feeling of closure as they are on the scene. These personnel actually see the victims in the situation and know what ultimately happens whereas the 911 Center staff dispatches assistance, but may not know the outcome of a situation until seeing it in the paper or on the news. The Center was very clean. The staff was professional at all times. Mr. Nutter is very knowledgeable and answered all of our questions. He did an excellent job in explaining the workings of the 911 Center to us.

#### Sub-Committee Members

Jennifer Diann Cobb  
Mary T. Crace  
Suk Cha Gallaher  
Judith Saxon Gilliland  
David Clois Hill  
Edith Pennington Jason  
Lee-Marie Norton

BOARD OF EQUALIZATION APPOINTMENTS

BY THE JULY TERM 2013 GRAND JURY

Having been asked to appoint members/alternates to the Richmond County Board of Equalization, this Grand Jury hereby appoints:

Milford "Ray" Jones, Jr.

Patrice M. Lofton

Anthony Bernard Roberson