

TO: The Honorable E. John Flythe  
Judge, Superior Court

FROM: Richmond County Grand Jury  
September Term 2017

DATE: November 17, 2017

RE: Grand Jury Presentment

CLERK OF SUPERIOR, STATE  
AND JUVENILE COURT  
FILED FOR RECORD

2017 NOV 17 AM 9:27

HATTIE HOLMES SULLIVAN  
CLERK, RICHMOND CO., GA.

We, the members of the Augusta-Richmond County Grand Jury for the September Term 2017, having been duly sworn by the Honorable E. John Flythe on the 18th day of September 2017, submit our presentment on the 17th day of November, 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 nine (9) dates during our term and acted upon Bills of Indictments presented to us by the District Attorney's Office. A Sub-Committee was formed to inspect the Charles B. Webster Detention Center; the report is attached. Another Sub-Committee was created to interview personnel with the Augusta Utilities Department; this report is attached.

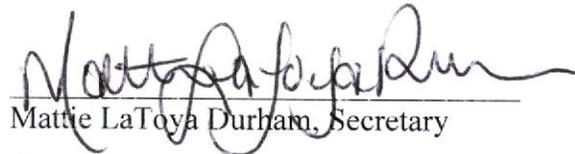
The Grand Jury respectfully submits this Presentment on the 17th day of November 2017 and requests that it is published.



Torrence Lerone Williams, Foreperson

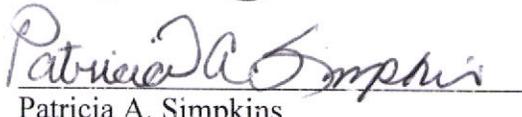


Leanne W. Mulherin, Asst. Foreperson



Mattie LaToya Durham, Secretary

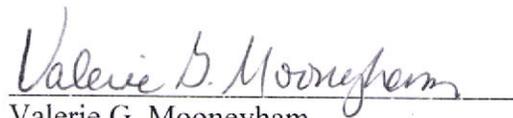
Melissa Dawn Crosby



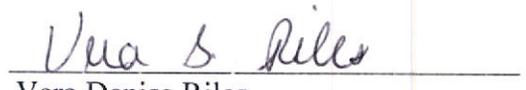
Patricia A. Simpkins



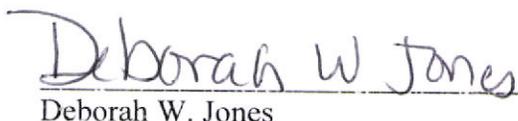
Jeffery Stewart Mehaffey



Valerie G. Mooneyham



Vera Denise Riles



Deborah W. Jones



Paula Bridges Bland

Gloria Williams  
Gloria Williams

Julie Diana Lough  
Julie Diana Lough

Leola Bryant Hawes  
Leola Bryant Hawes

Catherine A. Weathersbee  
Catherine A. Weathersbee

Gloria Ellen Johnson  
Gloria Ellen Johnson

Vincent Ferrer Cordaro  
Vincent Ferrer Cordaro

Sandra Elise Johnson  
Sandra Elise Johnson

Andrew James Worzala  
Andrew James Worzala

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mario H. Newman, Jr.

Jerry R. Fullwood  
Jerry R. Fullwood

\_\_\_\_\_  
Barbara Jean Kraft

Brenda McFarlin Finley  
Brenda McFarlin Finley

Richard Dale Edmunds  
Richard Dale Edmunds

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kendra Sheree Smith, Alternate

Regina Lynette Miller  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
Gordon L. Willis, Jr., Alternate

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF RICHMOND COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA

CLERK OF SUPERIOR STATE  
AND JUVENILE COURT  
FILED FOR RECORD  
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HATTIE HOLMES SULLIVAN  
CLERK, RICHMOND CO., GA.

IN RE: GRAND JURY PRESENTMENT FOR THE SEPTEMBER TERM 2017

The Grand Jury having returned the attached general presentment for the September Term 2017, and the same having been reviewed and accepted by the Court on November 17, 2017, 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 17th day of November 2017.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
E. John Flythe  
Superior Court Judge  
Augusta Judicial Circuit

## **SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE SEPTEMBER TERM 2017 GRAND JURY REPORT ON THE CHARLES B. WEBSTER DETENTION CENTER**

On October 10, 2017, a Sub-Committee consisting of ten members of the September 2017 Grand Jury was formed to inspect the conditions and operations of the Charles B. Webster Detention Center located at 1941 Phinizy Road in Augusta.

The Sub-Committee visited the Detention Center on October 24, 2017. Prior to arriving, District Attorney Natalie S. Paine advised us of the policy and procedures required to enter the Detention Center. We were asked to provide a valid ID before entering the secured area. Major Robert Leverette, Captain Bill Reeves and Captain Sheila White greeted Sub-Committee Members.

We were offered lunch in the staff cafeteria where we learned the food is prepared and served by non-violent female inmates wearing in solid-pink, jail-issued uniforms. After lunch, we visited the Detention Center's laundry facility where female inmates, dressed in jail-issued, pink-and-white-striped uniforms to indicate the inmate is charged with a violent crime, were working that day. Captain Reeves told us the same concept applies to male inmates; however, their uniform colors are solid-orange and orange-and-white-striped.

The next area visited was the processing center for the release and booking of inmates. Before an inmate can be released, the inmate's identify must be verified through fingerprints and matched against and coincide with all charges for which the inmate was being detained. These checks and balances ensure staff properly handle an inmate's release. Inmate clothing and property is in the Detention Center's custody and will be returned, as well as any remaining balance in the inmate's account, at the time of their release. Inmate belongings not claimed after release have to be signed off by a judge and are subsequently sent to auction; most, however, is not worth auctioning and is destroyed. Families of inmates transferred within the Department of Corrections have 45 days to collect their property; any property left over 45 days will be destroyed.

Inmates being processed must be searched and are subjected to a full-body scan. This scanning device detects objects/contraband on a person's body for security purposes. The inmates are then photographed, fingerprinted and placed in a holding cell. A paper record, as well as a digital copy, is kept for every inmate in case of power loss. Wristbands identify inmates. The holding cells are extremely clean and contain a bench and a toilet. Inmates that pose a threat to themselves or others are placed in holding cells that includes a safety-restraint chair. Before assigning the inmate to a pod, they must shower. Chemicals are pumped directly into the water to prevent lice and bedbugs from entering the living quarters.

After exiting the processing center, we were taken to the medical clinic. By law, Richmond County is required to provide healthcare services to inmates currently in custody. The Detention Center operates an on-site medical clinic to manage the healthcare and dental needs of inmates. The clinic is staffed 24/7 by medical professionals. The on-site clinic helps reduce transportation costs and liability issues while maintaining public safety and security. Inmates are charged a \$5.00 per-visit fee to help offset costs. Inmates with no money in their account at the time of a medical clinic visit will have the funds withdrawn when money is deposited. The clinic is setup as any other doctor's office would be. Due to HIPPA laws, guards are stationed directly outside of the room.

The next section we visited was the male and female pods. A pod has six blocks and each can hold 150 to 180 inmates at a time. The division of these pods was designed to separate inmates charged with non-violent and violent crimes and mentally unstable inmates.

The Detention Center offers several programs for inmates, i.e. general education diploma classes, Narcotics and Alcohol Anonymous classes and religious services. Inmates with funds in their accounts can purchase a radio and headphones to listen to music.

The Video Visitation Center, a freestanding building located directly outside the Detention Center, was the final area toured. Video conferencing allows children under the age of 17 years old to visit a parent/family member whereas face-to-face visitation prevents a child under the age of 17 years from visiting. A section of the Video Visitation Center provides private rooms for attorney/client-privileged communication.

The Charles B. Webster Detention Center is understaffed. On the day of our visit, 961 inmates were being housed at the Detention Center, which has bed space for 1,050 inmates, and a security and support staff of approximately 30-35 per shift. Security and support staff should be 45-50 per shift. Should the Detention Center reach maximum capacity, new inmates can be housed in another county; this is very costly and must be approved by the reciprocal sheriffs whereas some inmates may qualify for the early release program. Considering the lack of funds, understaffing and lack of incentives for the deputies, the Detention Center was impressive. Of concern, is what level of priority the Detention Center and its employees have with regard to salary, incentives and funding.

Sub-Committee Members would like to recognize the leadership of Major Leverette, Captain Reeves and Captain White as they encourage and motivate staff to achieve the highest quality of professionalism.

#### Sub-Committee Members

Paula Bridges Bland  
Melissa Dawn Crosby  
Mattie LaToya Durham  
Sandra Elise Johnson  
Julie Diana Lough  
Valerie G. Mooneyham  
Leanne W. Mulherin  
Patricia A. Simpkins  
Catherine A. Weathersbee  
Gloria Williams

**SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE SEPTEMBER TERM 2017 GRAND JURY  
REPORT ON THE AUGUSTA UTILITIES DEPARTMENT**

On Tuesday, November 14, 2017, Sub Committee Members conducted an interview with Director Tom Wiedmeier and Customer Service - Branch Manager Christina Lawson of the Augusta Utilities Department. The scheduling of this interview was at the request of the September 2017 Term Grand Jury Sub-Committee.

Sub-Committee Members had questions regarding billing, water and sewage usage, storm water fees and department responsibilities.

Director Wiedmeier was present and answered the following questions:

Q = How are meters read?

A = Meters are read a couple of ways depending on the residents' neighborhood.

Q = Who is responsible for meter reading corrections and how long does it take to correct?

A = The billing gap is eight weeks at times and should be no more than three weeks. This issue will be discussed with Ms. Lawson.

Director Wiedmeier explained how sewer charges are billed and why there are two different charges for storm water fees.

Ms. Lawson advised the Utilities Department is currently working and training on the new release of an application that is clearly not designed for the staff's day-to-day for the billing process.

Concerning the billing gap, Ms. Lawson finds it is impossible to bill residents in three weeks or less and would speak with Mr. Wiedmeier in more detail about this subject.

Sub Committee Members

Brenda McFarlin Finley  
Jerry R. Fullwood  
Gloria Ellen Johnson  
Deborah W. Jones  
Gloria Williams  
Andrew James Worzala