

CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT
AND JUVENILE COURT
FILED FOR RECORD

2009 SEP 18 AM 9:18

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF RICHMOND COUNTY

G. JOHNSON, CLERK
RICHMOND COUNTY, GA.

STATE OF GEORGIA

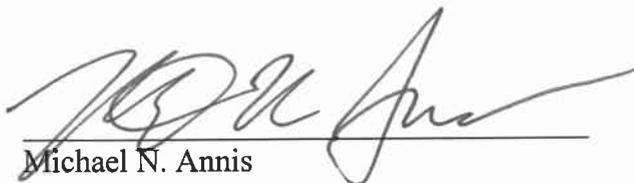
IN RE: GRAND JURY PRESENTMENT FOR THE JULY TERM 2009

The Grand Jury having returned the attached general presentment for the July Term 2009, and the same having been reviewed and accepted by the Court on September 18, 2009, 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 18th day of September 2009.



Michael N. Annis
Superior Court Judge
Augusta Judicial Circuit

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

FROM: Richmond County Grand Jury
July Term 2009

DATE: September 18, 2009

RE: Grand Jury Presentment

We, the members of the Augusta-Richmond County Grand Jury for the July Term 2009, having been duly sworn by the Honorable Michael N. Annis on the 20th day of July 2009, submit our presentment on the 18th day of September 2009, our last day as an official body of the Grand Jury.

To discharge our sworn functions, as prescribed by the laws of the State of Georgia, we met on nine (9) dates during our term and acted upon Bills of Indictment presented to us by the District Attorney's Office. Two Sub-Committees were formed; one to inspect the Augusta-Richmond County Law Enforcement Center and the other to observe Drug Court; applicable reports are attached.

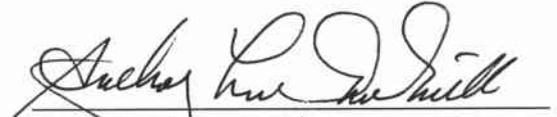
As part of our duties, we appointed Ralph J. Simons, Jr. as a member to the Richmond County Board of Equalizations.

Respectfully, we submit this presentment on the 18th day of September 2009 and request that it be published.

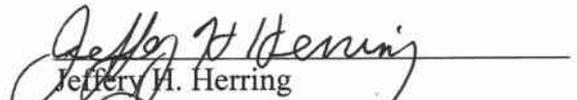

Wanda B. Hatfield, Foreperson

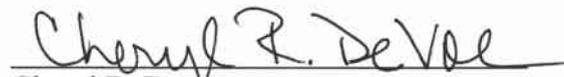

Billie I. Jones, Assistant Foreperson

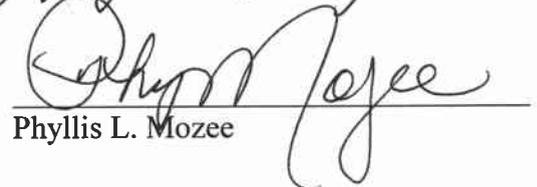

Elizabeth W. Dunbar, Secretary


Anthony L. McNeill


Thomas F. Garren


Jeffery H. Herring


Cheryl R. Devoe


Phyllis L. Mozee

Barbara M. Peacock

Olivia L. Sabory

Walter R. Seeger

Edeltraud Coleman
Edeltraud Coleman

R. J. Simons, Jr.
Ralph J. Simons, Jr.

James E. Leader
James E. Leader

Ronnie H. Beard
Ronnie H. Beard

Timothy S. Whitfield
Timothy S. Whitfield

Meredith M. Newman
Meredith M. Newman

Eric M. Dixon

Tiffany W. Powell
Tiffany W. Powell

Virginia Y. Nickles

Gerald M. Carter, Jr.
Gerald M. Carter, Jr.

Caren D. Bricker
Caren D. Bricker

Karen Y. Claussen

SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE JULY TERM 2009 GRAND JURY
REPORT ON THE RICHMOND COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

On August 25, 2009, a Sub-Committee of the July Term 2009 Grand Jury met with Captain Billy Reeves. Captain Reeves, a third generation police officer with 15 years of service, received us warmly and professionally. We began our meeting and tour in the Administrative Office's Conference Room. Captain Reeves provided us with a short agenda describing how we would be spending the next couple of hours, i.e. start with a question/answer session, followed by lunch and finish with an in-depth, guided tour of the 358-prison-cell Law Enforcement Center.

Our initial inquiry was with regard to the sheetrock repair and painting project underway in the lobby and first-floor hallways. Apparently, several evenings prior to our arrival, a restroom facility's plumbing system failed on an upper floor and dumped an estimated 6" of water down into the first-floor area. Captain Reeve's team immediately proceeded with water extraction and dry-out measures. The painting to follow was to be performed in-house by members of the inmate population and would be done incrementally every evening until complete.

Next we were joined by Major Gene Johnson, a man with 44 years of law enforcement experience. Major Johnson's responsibilities include the over site and supervision of the day-to-day operations of both the Richmond County Law Enforcement Center and the Charles B. Webster Detention Center. Major Johnson welcomed us and indicated that he would be happy, as well, to answer any questions we might have. We asked both men if there was anything they needed to better carry out their responsibilities, their people's responsibilities or the Law Enforcement Center's mission as a whole. Two concerns noted by the men were the need for additional new deputies and a full-time staff psychiatrist.

We were next brought up to speed on the 5 million dollar Phase I renovation work being performed at the Charles B. Webster Detention Center, commonly referred to as Phinizy Road. Phase I work will include a new medical center, new female population jail cells and new male population jail cells. The new cells, at the completion of Phase I, will total 464. The pre-existing number of cells at the facility today totals 552. The combined Phase I and pre-existing number of cells at completion, which is estimated to be in November 2010, will equal 1,016 total cells. This is an increase from 910 cells available today at both Phinizy Road and the Richmond County Law Enforcement Center.

Looking further out, they explained the Phase II Phinizy Road improvements that would include the addition of a Booking Facility. The end result of all these improvements will be the eventual closing of the Richmond County Law Enforcement Center at 401 Walton Way.

We were then lead to the small employee cafeteria were we were served a very good lunch. We were treated politely by the inmates in charge of food preparation. The cafeteria was clean and organized.

We were next escorted by Captain Billy Reeves throughout the entire facility. Stops included the Criminal Investigation Division or C.I.D., Administration, Records Room, Finger Printing Room, Photo Room, Booking Room, Transportation Room and lastly the Medical Center. We met a number of very friendly staff members in the Medical Center including a dentist and a nurse named Mrs. Lee. She also echoed the sentiments of the Major and Captain with regard to the need for a full-time psychiatrist.

We also visited several East/West Central Control Areas on different floors and noticed in both areas that only one officer was posted. In effect, the one officer had the heavy responsibility to perform the work of two; each in charge of observations in two different day rooms, simultaneously. Both day rooms have a television. The fourth floor houses a mixture of lower-felony inmates while the violent criminals are segregated on the fifth and sixth floors. Inmates have access to visitation at predetermined times. We were informed that eventually all visitation will be complete with live video. Visitors sit and talk from one room and inmates from another. This is to prevent any problems that occur when face-to-face contact or person-to-person contact is permitted. Additionally, inmates with good behavior are entitled to a "store call" every evening. Basically, inmates place orders and receive vending food and drink items. This privilege can be taken away as quickly as it can be given.

Finally, we had the pleasure to meet with and talk to the honorable Chief Deputy, Sid Hatfield. When we arrived, he was in the process of having his ear chewed off by an irate citizen. Oddly enough, this citizen was unhappy with the cross-guard protection that the Richmond County Sheriff's Department was providing for one of our local downtown churches. The citizen was complaining about having to wait in traffic. The law enforcement officer was simply providing orderly and controlled exit for members of the congregation that were leaving after the church service ended. Chief Deputy Hatfield took the call seriously and appeared to be the right man to calm the concerned. He offered us a seat after the call and asked us what we thought. We thanked him for his service and those many more that report up the chain. He gave us a little background on the facility and told us that he himself has had to deal with roof leaks in his own office. He pointed to his ceiling showing us the stains that are still evident today. He thanked us for our service on the Grand Jury, but reminded us that year after year, report after report, the outcome is the same. The Grand Jury Sub-Committee writes the report, makes it conclusions and recommendations, but the support for the changes are not always there. Maybe this will be his year.

Sub-Committee Members

Eric M. Dixon
Elizabeth W. Dunbar
Billie I. Jones
Ralph J. Simons, Jr.

SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE JULY TERM 2009 GRAND JURY
REPORT ON DRUG COURT

On September 10, 2009, a Sub-Committee of the Grand Jury had the opportunity to watch Drug Court and observe some of the activities that take place in court. It was a very informal court; the participants were addressed on a first-name basis. They were required to know the 12 steps of the program and the Serenity Prayer. If a participant violated any of the conditions of the program, it was brought to their attention and the appropriate sanctions were given at that time. Everyone was very supportive of each other; they all seem to want each other to succeed.

Drug Court is a court where people with drug addiction problems attend to help kick their habit. Although they meet every Thursday in court, we understand this is only the beginning of their treatment.

We learned that Drug Court is not a free-ride program and not just any one is allowed into the program. If you have a qualifying offense, you must be thoroughly screened before being allowed to participate in the program. It is a two-year program, but it is not an EASY program. Once the program is successfully completed, your guilty sentence can be dismissed from your record; however, you sign a waiver to have your criminal record checked every year on your birthday for the next five years. You have to seek gainful employment and you receive help in doing so. You have to pay for your treatment and become a responsible person in society. Drug tests are given three to four times a week so there is no opportunity to alter your results. You have curfews and you must be at the assigned locations ON TIME; being late is not tolerated!

Participants are required to attend a treatment program every day and, as they complete different stages of the program, their time can decrease in the number of times they are obligated to attend. Jones Behavioral Center has been credited for contributing to the success of this program. Occasionally, you may have persons assigned to in-house treatment because of the severity of their addiction before they are allowed to participate in the Drug Court Program.

Many people are involved in this program to aid in its success. We met with Judge Blanchard, Tanya Jeffords, Ted Wiggins, Ashley Wright, law enforcement officers and other staff members; each is passionate about this program and work hard to make it successful. One of their greatest needs is sponsors to support the program. They have talked with staff at the Medical College of Georgia to assist with the psychiatric needs. Assistance is needed to house participants so they are in a nurturing environment rather than return to the surroundings that may have contributed to their problems. Other sponsors are needed to help with jobs and any other support they can give. Last, but not least, is the great need for financial support for this program to continue.

This is a pilot program, but if it can help to get just one person off of their addiction to drugs, it is well worth the time spent helping. They say it takes a village to raise a child, but it takes the compassion of everyone who is willing to fight for their survival, keep their family together and start life anew.

Elizabeth Dunbar on behalf of the
Drug Court Sub-Committee

The July Term, 2009 of the Richmond County Grand Jury appoint the following people to serve as members or alternate members on the Board of Equalization:

1. R J Simons Jr []Member []Alternate
2. _____ []Member []Alternate
3. _____ []Member []Alternate
4. _____ []Member []Alternate
5. _____ []Member []Alternate
6. _____ []Member []Alternate
7. _____ []Member []Alternate
8. _____ []Member []Alternate

Wanda Hatfield, Foreperson

This 15 day of Sept, 2009