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AND JUVENILE COURT
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10 MAR 12 AM 9:03

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF RICHMOND COUNTY
LYNNE D. JOHNSON, CLERK
RICHMOND COUNTY, GA.

STATE OF GEORGIA

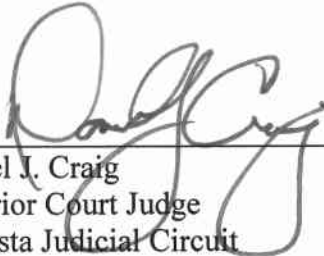
IN RE: GRAND JURY PRESENTMENT FOR THE JANUARY TERM 2010

The Grand Jury having returned the attached general presentment for the January Term 2010, and the same having been reviewed and accepted by the Court on March 12, 2010, 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 12th day of March 2010.



Daniel J. Craig
Superior Court Judge
Augusta Judicial Circuit

TO: The Honorable Daniel J. Craig
Judge, Superior Court

FROM: Richmond County Grand Jury
January Term 2010

DATE: March 12, 2010


RE: Grand Jury Presentment

We, the members of the Augusta-Richmond County Grand Jury for the January Term 2010, having been duly sworn by the Honorable Daniel J. Craig on the 19th day of January 2010, submit our presentment on the 12th day of March 2010, 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.

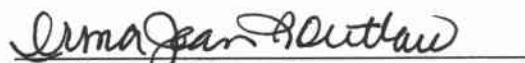
Three Sub-Committees were formed to inspect the Charles B. Webster Detention Center, the 911 Center and Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and the Utilities Department. Reports from each Sub-Committee are attached.

The Grand Jury respectfully submits this presentment on the 12th day of March 2010 and requests that it is published.


Mac Andrew Bowman, Foreperson


Jennifer Dill, Assistant Foreperson


LaDema S. Jones, Secretary


Irma Jean Outlaw


Daniel R. Williams


Christopher Michael Bryant



Charles Carpenter

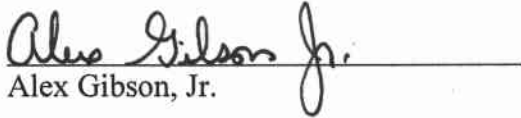

Lisa Barney


Mel Jewett


Jason Fish

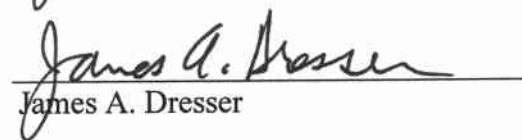

Charles Raycroft


Ray Walters

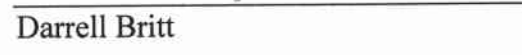

Alex Gibson, Jr.


John Phillips

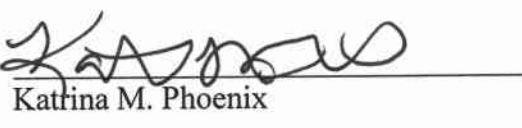

Wayne Coleman


James A. Dresser

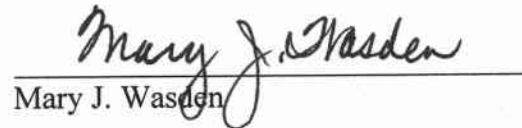

Alvin Forrest


Darrell Britt


Cherry B. Cofer


Katrina M. Phoenix


Ann Cubitt


Mary J. Wasden


Joe Mabery

**SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE JANUARY TERM 2010 GRAND JURY
REPORT ON THE CHARLES B. WEBSTER DETENTION CENTER**

On January 26, 2010, a group of six members from the Richmond County Grand Jury January Term 2010 toured the Charles B. Webster Detention Center on Phinizy Road in Augusta, Georgia.

Upon our arrival, we were greeted by Captain Chester V. Huffman, Jr., who oversees the daily operation of the Detention Center. After a warm welcome, Captain Huffman escorted us to the employee cafeteria where a delicious lunch was enjoyed by the Sub-Committee Members. Captain Huffman proceeded to tell us the history of the Detention Center located on Phinizy Road. He stated the facility was opened in November 1997 to alleviate the overcrowding of inmates at the Law Enforcement Center on Walton Way. The Detention Center houses mostly non-violent prisoners with both felony and misdemeanor charges; most have short-term sentences.

It was noted that the inmates were well treated. Inmates are fed three times a day with nutritious meals similar to the employee meals. Only slight changes are made to the inmates menu due to safety concerns such as bones in the meat that could be used as weapons. The inmates are allowed time once a day to go into the yard for exercise and exposure to the outdoors.

The physical condition of the pod-style building is excellent. The 552-bed facility has four pods – three male and one female. The jail's current population is 589 inmates which is below the normal average of 650. Overcrowding requires inmates to sleep on four-inch thick mattresses on the floor. An addition to the Detention Center is currently under construction with 500 more beds, including 100 for medical and mental health. 140 beds will be dedicated to women and the current women's pod of 84 beds will house men when the addition is opened. The Augusta-Richmond County Law Enforcement Center is expected to close with those inmates being transferred to the Charles B. Webster Detention Center.

Though Captain Huffman would like to have more people on staff, the Detention Center seems to run safely with the current staff of 20 jailers per shift. We visited two pods to observe the on-duty officers and view the inmates. Conditions of the Detention Center seem to be sanitary and very reasonable.

Sub-Committee Members:

Darrell Britt
Cherry B. Cofer
Jennifer Dill
Alvin Forrest
Joe Mabery
Daniel R. Williams

**SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE JANUARY TERM 2010 GRAND JURY
REPORT ON THE 911 CENTER AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

On Tuesday, February 17, 2010, following the conclusion of court activities in the Grand Jury Room in the Municipal Building, Sub-Committee Members journeyed to the 911 Center and Emergency Management Agency (EMA) on Taylor Street. After entry into the secured facility, we were greeted by Ms. Karima Holmes, Standards Manager, who conducted the tour and provided background information as well as superbly answering a multitude of questions. Shortly after the tour's commencement, we were joined by EMA Chief Howard "Bubba" Willis. Ms. Holmes was supremely knowledgeable about the workings of the 911 Center and the EMA. She and Chief Willis answered a myriad of questions from the Sub-Committee Members. They noted that the Centers were well staffed and that morale was good. The atmosphere among employees was like a "family." Each employee is impressed with the profound importance of their mission and come prepared daily to do all they can to lessen risks and save lives during the course of their duties. They detailed the 911 operations training and reviewed the call screens which specifically show from whence an emergent call emanates. The equipment is "state of the art." We discussed yearly funding for EMA. They receive approximately \$300,000.00 from Augusta-Richmond County and \$.015 (1-1/2 cents) per cellular phone and land line in the County. The yearly budget is three million dollars. There is good interaction with surrounding county EMA/911 staffs, especially as it relates to larger emergency or dynamic occurrences such as chase or mobile events which cross boundary lines. The local EMA submits the local plan to Georgia EMA for approval yearly; otherwise, the EMA has a locally-driven mandate.

Ms. Holmes and Chief Willis noted that the 911 Center and EMA were top priority of funding in the County. They took us through the Emergency Operation Center which is the "situation room" where all chiefs of services, i.e. fire, police, utilities and medical, report and work from in the event of a major occurrence or community emergency, including weather emergencies such as the recent snow storm. Ms. Holmes informed us that all calls, personal and otherwise, coming into the Center are recorded. This frequently comes into play for legal cases. She reviewed how 911 calls are received as profiled by priority severity status of one (1) to five (5). We actually watched as an emergency call was received and appropriate aid dispatched. She noted that Augusta is separated into North and South sections divided by Gordon Highway. The Pro-QA software quickly moves through questions and answers resulting in the most accurate and expert response from the fire department, police department, EMS or special operations.

In discussions with Chief Willis, he noted that the EMA Center is not optimally located secondary to traffic and access concerns, particularly during frequent periods of area road and street flooding. He also noted the adversity of area railway traffic and the fact that frequently noxious substances, such as were involved with the Graniteville accident, are transported on these rail lines through this heavily traveled and populated area. A more advantageous location is already being discussed in South Augusta in the Richmond Hills/Windsor Springs area. Topographically, this area is among the highest in altitude in the County with more logistically-friendly traffic flows than the present location. Chief Willis noted that there have been some discussions with the County Commission with more hopefully to come as the present budget constraints lessen.

In summary, Sub-Committee Members had an excellent visit to the 911 Center and Emergency Management Agency Headquarters and were impressed that our County has great leadership and personnel. We came away feeling confident and comfortable with our level of preparedness and emergency response capability. We would certainly encourage our County Commission and appropriate County leaders to further consider the Center's relocation concerns as budget and funding allow.

Sub-Committee Members:

Mac Andrew Bowman
Cherry B. Cofer
Ann Cubitt
Jennifer Dill
James A. Dresser
Alvin Forrest
LaDema S. Jones
Joe Mabery
Irma Jean Outlaw
Katrina M. Phoenix

**SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE JANUARY TERM 2010 GRAND JURY
REPORT ON THE UTILITIES DEPARTMENT**

On Tuesday, March 2, 2010, a Sub-Committee of the Grand Jury visited the Utilities Department Office, Room 118, in the Municipal Building. Our tour was conducted by Ms. Sharmene Tutt, Administrative Assistant in the department for the past several years. Ms. Tutt noted that there were two Utilities Administrative Offices – the one in the Municipal Building and another located on Peach Orchard Road. She noted that her long-time Director, Ms. Alma Stephenson, recently retired after 42 years of service. The new Director is Tom Wedemeyer. Ms. Tutt noted that there were different divisions in the Utilities Department, including Meter Reading and Customer Service. The latter is the major focus of the downtown administrative facility. She stressed that “proactive” billing services was emphasized, making all attempts possible to lessen the likelihood of service interruption or adverse billing interaction. She noted that even though much of the administrative interaction with the Utilities Department could be done on line, most users of the downtown branch come in for face-to-face help.

Augusta is fortunate in that it has had its water treatment and provision services upgraded during extensive capital improvement projects at the Augusta Canal Pumping Station as well as the Highland Avenue Water Treatment Facility. They both draw water from the Savannah River which pumps to reservoirs holding about 125 million gallons of water. Another source of water is from the Cretaceous Aquifer hundreds of feet below ground in South Augusta. According to a printed summary recently released, “Combined, our treatment facilities provide roughly 15.5 billion gallons of clean drinking water every year.” The same summary noted that the new Max Hicks Plant on Tobacco Road, which also gets water from the Savannah River for processing, provides 15 million gallons of water to citizens in South Richmond County. Ms. Tutt noted a confidence and ease in provision of utility services because of ample supply and outstanding employees. When asked if she could do anything possible to improve the Department, she was complimentary of the capital improvements noted above, but noted pressing needs should also include salary increases for the rank-and-file administrative and service employees. She noted the expanding responsibilities of the staff not just in billing issues, but also issues regarding water purity and safety. Additionally, as of March 2008, the Utilities Department became responsible for providing safe, clean drinking water to the more than 25,000 citizens and soldiers at Fort Gordon.

Augusta-Richmond County is fortunate to have the outstanding water resources, treatment, processing and storage facilities which provide an abundant supply of water for the use of its citizens. We are also fortunate to have good administrative and service personnel who “make it all happen” as it relates to Augusta’s Utilities Department.

Sub-Committee Members:

Mac Andrew Bowman
Cherry B. Cofer
Ann Cubitt

James A. Dresser
Alvin Forrest
Joe Mabery

Katrina M. Phoenix
Daniel R. Williams