

BK 3, p. 123-131  
CLERK OF SUPERIOR, STATE  
AND JUVENILE COURT  
FILED FOR RECORD

2012 MAY 18 AM 9: 27

ELAINE C. JOHNSON, CLERK  
RICHMOND COUNTY, GA.

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF RICHMOND COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA**

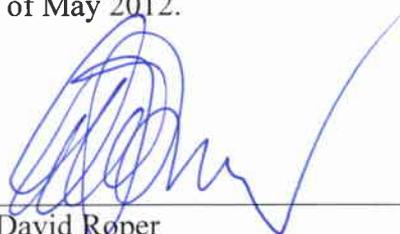
IN RE: GRAND JURY PRESENTMENT FOR THE MARCH TERM 2012

The Grand Jury having returned the attached general presentment for the March Term 2012, and the same having been reviewed and accepted by the Court on May 18, 2012, 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 May 2012.



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J. David Roper  
Superior Court Judge  
Augusta Judicial Circuit

TO: The Honorable J. David Roper  
Judge, Superior Court

FROM: Richmond County Grand Jury  
March Term 2012

DATE: May 18, 2012

RE: Grand Jury Presentment

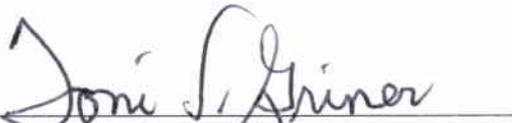
We, the members of the Augusta-Richmond County Grand Jury for the March Term 2012, having been duly sworn by the Honorable Daniel J. Craig on the 19th day of March 2012, submit our presentment on the 18th day of May 2012, our last day as an official body of the Grand Jury.

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, the District Attorney's Office and the Drug Court Program; reports are attached.

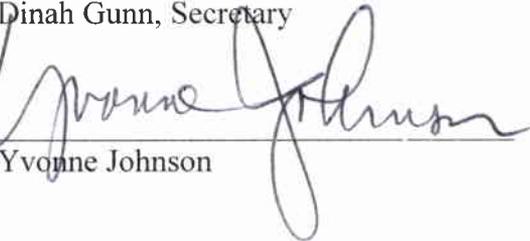
The Grand Jury respectfully submits this presentment on the 18th day of May 2012 and requests that it is published.

  
Karl Frazier, Sr., Foreperson

  
Toni L. Griner, Assistant Foreperson

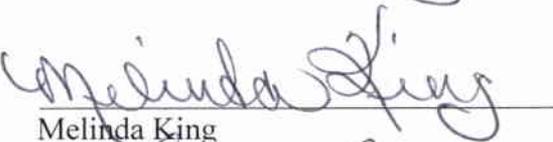
  
Dinah Gunn, Secretary

  
Robin Copeland

  
Yvonne Johnson

  
Patricia Walling

\_\_\_\_\_  
John Hutchens

  
Melinda King

  
Connie Hankerson

  
David Postell

*Sarah T. Ferrell*

Sarah T. Ferrell

*Tomekia Darrisaw*

Tomekia Darrisaw

Thomasina Stewart

*Mary J. Howard*

Mary J. Howard

Marlon McCreary

*Shawn E. Patterson*

Shawn E. Patterson

*Jimmy L. Hughes*

Jimmy L. Hughes

*Linda F. Johnson*

Linda F. Johnson

*Wayne R. Bruner*

Wayne R. Bruner

Tyrone L. Williams, Jr.

*Salvatore R. Oliveri*

Salvatore R. Oliveri

Benjamin M. Kohn

## **SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE MARCH 2012 GRAND JURY TERM REPORT ON THE CHARLES B. WEBSTER DETENTION CENTER**

On April 24, 2012, a twelve-member Sub-Committee of the March 2012 Grand Jury toured the Charles B. Webster Detention Center located at 1941 Phinizy Road in Augusta, Georgia. We were greeted by Captain Chester V. Huffman, Jr. and Major William E. Johnson.

The Detention Center, classified as an adult pre-trial detention center, owned and operated by the Richmond County Sheriff's Office, opened on November 17, 1997. According to Captain Huffman, the total bed count is 1,050. There are 84 beds for females, with a total of less than 900 inmates. Of the total beds, 150 are in the medical unit with 32 mental health beds each for men and women inmates. Family member inmates are generally not housed in the same unit.

On an annual basis, approximately 15,000 inmates were booked into the Richmond County Jail located at 401 Walton Way. All inmates have been transferred to the Detention Center on Phinizy Road. The Richmond County Jail continues to book the inmates. Once this process is complete, inmates are taken to the Charlie B. Webster Detention Center. This will change as renovations in Phase II continue; a new booking area will be built. Additionally, an area will be converted into a trustee dormitory with 22 cells. Trustees are assigned work opportunities such as cooking, laundry and cleaning and are housed separately at the Detention Center.

Richmond County's Recreation, Parks and Facilities Department provides electrical services while medical care and food services are outsourced. Richmond County has a half-million dollar contract with a company to provide meals. The meals average 81 cents per tray, providing the County with substantial savings as the previous cost was over a dollar.

### Medical Services

Correct Care Solutions, the medical contractor costing \$4.2 million annually, employs 50 staff members, 20 of whom are at the facility during the day. If medical care costs exceed the allotted amount, taxpayers must make up the difference. Correct Care also manages the electronic records system for the Detention Center. Staff includes two mental health counselors, three nurses, a Family Nurse Practitioner, a Director of Nursing and a Health Services Administrator, physician and/or a PRN physician who is routinely at the facility two days per week. Contracted services not only include medical, but also dental and psychiatric care. There are eight dental exam rooms containing digital x-ray machines. Suicidal or psychotic inmates are put into one of the 12 isolated cells for their own protection as well as the safety of others. Upon entry into the building, inmates are screened to detect any physical or mental problems they may have and are medically accredited with a history and complete physical that must be conducted within 14 to

21 days of incarceration. When inmates are with a healthcare provider, a guard has visual contact of the inmate at all times. University Hospital also serves as a medical contractor.

The Sub-Committee toured the H Building, or medical unit, which houses the medical and dental units as well as holding cells. Eighteen cells have double bunks; two of the cells have remote, guard-activated toilet flushing. The medical unit is staffed by two deputies 24/7. An emergency medical gate enables swift departure from the facility to a hospital, if needed.

### Food Services

A private food service vendor is in charge of meal provisions while trustee inmates work in the kitchen preparing, serving food and cleaning. Breakfast assembly begins at 2:00 a.m. Inmates receive meals and medications, when applicable, in their cells. Employees eat in a small dining room adjacent to the kitchen which is where the Sub-Committee ate lunch with the Captain and Major after an orientation of the Detention Center.

### Security and Surveillance

A maximum security fence borders the perimeter of the 52-acre site. In addition to the double-layered security of two fences (14 feet in height), a decked midway with razor wire topped with three rows of barbed wire and a three-foot underground concrete wall lines the fence bottom. Camera monitoring and touch-screen computers enhance security and surveillance. The main central control manages 60 cameras. Lights, speakers, locks, televisions and telephones are remotely controlled by the guards in the control towers. The Detention Center follows the four-minute rule whereby going from the end of a 1,000-foot corridor (1/4 mile) to the central control station can be done in four minutes. The double-lock door system provides additional security between units, hallways and exits.

### Disaster Preparedness

Plans are compiled and entail a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with surrounding counties to provide law enforcement personnel and services. In the event of an emergency, an estimated 350 inmates can be transported via bus and van at one time.

### Expansion

Phase II's design and development is currently underway. Anticipated improvements include expanded housing and digital technology to enable video arraignments, including court hearings, planned for summer 2013. Video-transmitted first court appearances and bond hearings are planned within the next year. A bar-code system using wristbands enables inmates to access

their prisoner accounts through an automated commissary. They must enter their orders by Sunday evening to receive them by Tuesday. Family members, friends, etc. may put money into an inmate's account via a kiosk located in the reception area; the same location used by the Sub-Committee to enter the Detention Center. Video visitation will be available through teleconference technology. A new visitor's center is almost completed. Visitors will go there to "visit" an inmate via the new teleconference system. The visitor's center can accommodate 78 visitors at one time. Inmates are allowed to have three, 30-minute visits per week.

### Issues

According to Captain Huffman, the biggest issue facing the Detention Center is a lack of funds for salaries resulting in a deficit in staff at the Detention Center. A deputy's salary begins at \$27,000 and increases to \$29,000 if he/she is a trained/certified deputy.

### Remarks and Observations

Sub-Committee Members were impressed with the state-of-the-art technology and safety precautions at the Detention Center. All personnel were courteous and helpful, answering any questions we had. The medical facility was quite comprehensive and well maintained. The inmates were relatively quiet during our tour. It was obvious that taxpayers' money is being well spent in managing the Detention Center with such efficiency.

### Sub-Committee Members

Wayne R. Bruner  
Robin Copeland  
Karl Frazier, Sr.  
Sarah T. Ferrell  
Dinah Gunn  
Toni L. Griner  
John Hutchens  
Melinda King  
Connie Hankerson  
Linda F. Johnson  
David Postell  
Patricia Walling

**SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE MARCH TERM 2012 GRAND JURY  
REPORT ON THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

A Sub-Committee was formed from members of the March Term 2012 Grand Jury to inspect the District Attorney's Office. On May 1, 2012, after a regular meeting of the Grand Jury, the Sub-Committee met with District Attorney Ashley Wright in the Grand Jury Room. Ms. Wright briefed the Sub-Committee on the District Attorney's responsibilities and gave a very thorough overview of the functions and operations of the office.

Ms. Wright expounded upon the duties of her office in support of the three counties in the Augusta Judicial Circuit. The District Attorney's Office has 43 employees; two Chief Assistant District Attorneys (ADA's) oversee the efforts of the ADA's and staff as well as Victim Advocates. We were told that one vacancy currently exists. We discussed the budget for the District Attorney's Office and reviewed the General Ledger Budget and Actuals with Encumbrances for Fiscal Year 2012 report dated 03/21/2012.

After answering questions and explaining her position on the state of the community, Ms. Wright informed us that they moved into the Judicial Center in April 2011 and court services began in May 2011. We toured the office space provided and noted individual offices for several attorneys and partitioned cubicle space. There appeared to be adequate storage space and there was a separate Library stocked with references. The Sub-Committee noted that Victim Advocates had interview rooms so that privacy can be afforded, if necessary. There are restrooms located within the office away from the general public.

It was noted that members of the staff are trained police officers with arrest powers even though they do not work for the Sheriff's Department.

The Sub-Committee advocates that the District Attorney's Office and the Public Defender's Office should not receive the same amount of funding. Because of the vast amount of work the District Attorney's Office has, the funding seems inadequately distributed. The Sub-Committee recommends that State funding be reinstated for the Victim's Advocate Program.

We, the members of the Sub-Committee, wish to thank the District Attorney, Ashley Wright, for taking the time from her busy schedule to personally escort us on the tour of her office. She and her staff were professional, courteous and exhibited a genuine concern for the communities they serve.

Sub-Committee Members

Wayne R. Bruner  
Dinah Gunn

Connie Hankerson  
John Hutchens

Melinda King  
David Postell

**SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE MARCH TERM 2012 GRAND JURY  
REPORT ON THE DRUG COURT PROGRAM  
JUDGE JAMES G. BLANCHARD, JR. PRESIDING**

On April 26, 2012, a Sub-Committee of the March Term 2012 Grand Jury initially met with Assistant District Attorney Falin Syms for an overview of the Drug Court Program. Mrs. Syms explained the five phases, the procedures and requirements for the participants of the program. She said that each participant must attend an AA or NA meeting six days a week, plus do community service every Saturday. Each participant must be gainfully employed or be a full-time student. Each participant must pay restitution for any crimes they have committed and must undergo drug screens three times a week. They must be involved in counseling and pay a \$150.00 monthly fee to help pay expenses of the program. Also, each participant has a 9:00 p.m. curfew which is monitored by the Richmond County Sheriff's Department.

Mrs. Syms explained the goal of graduation from the program and the arduous progression each participant must make in order to achieve the goal of a changed life to productive living. She said they have had 39 graduates thus far. The next graduation is scheduled for July 12, 2012.

Drug Court began with Judge Blanchard calling the All-Start List of all who have completed all the requirements during the past week. Rewards of gift certificates were given. Also, award certificates were given for those individuals' graduation from one phase to the next. There was one curfew violation, but applause was given for only one having any "dirty drug" screens the past week.

Cases heard included new participants admitted into the Drug Court Program, participants sentenced to RSAT (Regional Substance Abuse Treatment) and a participant was sentenced to prison for a felony violation, but was retained in drug treatment.

Judge Blanchard called participants by name, asked them where they saw themselves in five years and gave encouragement for them to follow through with their plans. Then, these participants were asked to quote all 12 steps of the 12-Step Program which most of them were able to do.

Some participants stood and read their "letter of consequences" in which they admitted to past regressions and summarized ways that will help them become more successful in their recovery and in their lives.

Judge Blanchard gave admonitions and instructions for certain participants who have signed up for SHRM (Society of Human Resource Managers) where they learn how to interview and prepare for seeking a job.

Participants work with Jones Counseling Services as part of their treatment program. Following Drug Court, Mr. Jones met with the Sub-Committee and shared details of the

program. Jones Counseling Services have five counselors who use a holistic approach, mainly through group counseling with some individual counseling.

Mr. Ted Wiggins, Jr., Drug Court Coordinator, explained details of the program and savings to the community. He explained that it costs \$7.00 per day for each participant in the program as opposed to the \$50.00 per day it costs to incarcerate a person in the county jail

. Plus, participants pay \$150.00 a month to be in the program. Each individual's fees are monitored and tracked in an Excel spreadsheet. All fees must be paid before a participant can move from one phase to another.

Mr. Wiggins explained that 198 have entered the program. There have been 30,408 drug screens with only 423 positives. Of the participants in the program, 7,856 have had to return to jail, but 88,056 have been kept out of jail. This has saved over \$4 million the County would have spent to incarcerate these participants if the Drug Court Program did not exist.

Judge Blanchard explained the Mentor Program in which a mentor is assigned to a participant who is on probation to keep them accountable and help encourage and mentor the participant for six to eight hours a week.

Overall, the entire Drug Court Program is very impressive and is bringing much hope to participants who would otherwise not be able to overcome their drug addiction and return to productive living.

#### Sub-Committee Members

Wayne R. Bruner  
Dinah Gunn