

CLERK OF SUPERIOR, STATE
AND JUVENILE COURT
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2012 SEP 14 AM 9:36

ELAINE C. JOHNSON, CLERK
RICHMOND COUNTY, GA.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF RICHMOND COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA

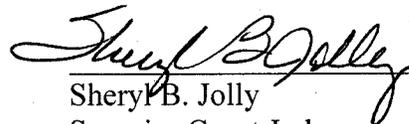
IN RE: GRAND JURY PRESENTMENT FOR THE JULY TERM 2012

The Grand Jury having returned the attached general presentment for the July Term 2012, and the same having been reviewed and accepted by the Court on September 14, 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 14th day of September 2012.


Sheryl B. Jolly
Superior Court Judge
Augusta Judicial Circuit

TO: The Honorable Sheryl B. Jolly
Judge, Superior Court

FROM: Richmond County Grand Jury
July Term 2012

DATE: September 14, 2012

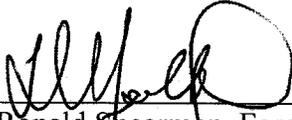
RE: Grand Jury Presentment

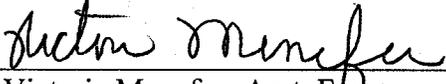
We, the members of the Augusta-Richmond County Grand Jury for the July Term 2012, having been duly sworn by the Honorable Daniel J. Craig on the 16th day of July 2012, submit our presentment on the 14th day of September 2012, our last day as an official body of the Grand Jury.

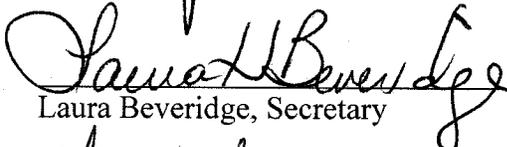
To discharge our sworn duties, as prescribed by the laws of the State of Georgia, we met on eight (8) dates during our term and acted upon Bills of Indictments presented to us by the District Attorney's Office.

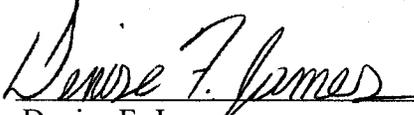
Sub-Committees were formed to inspect the Charles B. Webster Detention Center and the Coroner's Office; reports are attached.

The Grand Jury respectfully submits this presentment on the 14th day of September 2012 and requests that it is published.


D. Ronald Spearman, Foreperson


Victoria Menefee, Asst. Foreperson

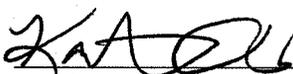

Laura Beveridge, Secretary

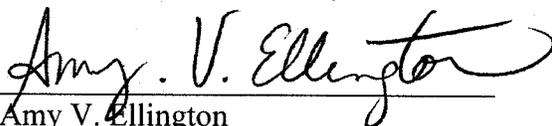

Denise F. James


Wanda Howard McBee

Dennis K. DeLong

Walter Rhodes Seeger


Katrina Phoenix


Amy V. Ellington

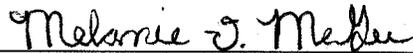

Anthony G. Hayes



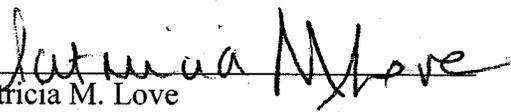
Alicia Mechelle Walker



Teresa Ann Lucas



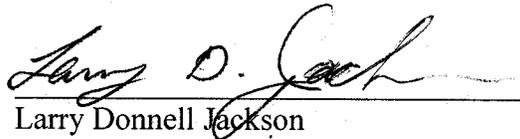
Melanie T. McGee



Patricia M. Love



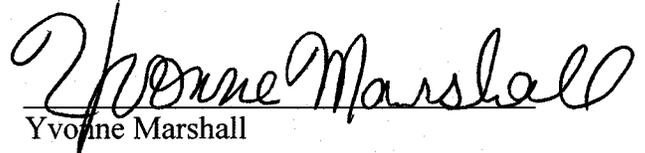
Gwendolyn B. Hopkins



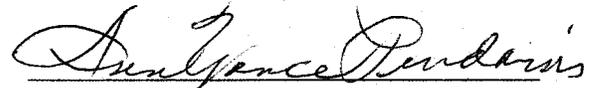
Larry Donnell Jackson

Maxwell R. Smith

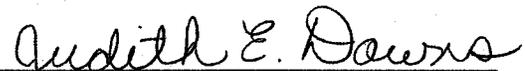
Jordan Barker Noe



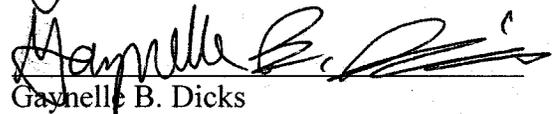
Yvonne Marshall



Ann Yonce Pendarvis



Judith E. Downs



Gaynelle B. Dicks

Joseph Adrian Norman, Jr.

**SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE JULY 2012 GRAND JURY TERM
REPORT ON THE AUGUSTA-RICHMOND COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE**

Grand Jury Sub-Committee Members met with Grover Tuten and received a guided tour of the Coroner's Office on 8th Street on August 7, 2012. Based on Grand Jury records and Mr. Tuten's comments, the last review was believed to have been in 2004.

Background:

The Coroner's Office sees 1,300 to 1,400 cases per year and is the busiest office in the State of Georgia. Three deputy coroners assist Mr. Tuten in providing support to Richmond County as well as assisting other counties when requests are made. The building also presently houses the Crime Scene Unit.

Needs:

Needs requested by the Coroner's Office are made to Fred Russell and Augusta-Richmond County. Requests met over the last few years include a generator, carport, shed to house 20 cadavers, new freezer to store 40 bodies and enhanced safety inside the building.

Current staff includes Mr. Tuten, Mark Bowen and three deputies. Lacking part-time employees, help is not allowed by medical students from GHSU as in past years due to HIPAA guidelines. This does not permit flexibility in sending employees for additional training, cross training and certification updates that are needed to maintain the appropriate level of expertise. The Sub-Committee suggests the County look into the concept of Per Diem employees to cover these needs. Per Diem personnel costs would be minimal. Another suggestion would be to re-investigate the appropriate approvals and HIPAA documentation that would once again open the relationship with GHSU. This is a tremendous opportunity to provide experience to medical residents while providing resources badly needed in this County.

With no overtime pay within this office, it was concerning those personnel limitations could be a substantial obstacle in meeting any slight increases in workload.

The building currently needs a new roof (\$65,000.00) and cooling unit (\$12,000.00). Sub-Committee Members noted there were multiple areas of damage already occurring to the ceiling due to the many leaks throughout the entire building. Over the last year, fifteen work orders have been initiated to address the water pouring through the old chimneys (which were part of needed ventilation when the building was used for lab testing). Many ceiling tiles also need to be replaced. The cooling unit has been in this building since 1977.

An abandoned building next door requires immediate attention. Empty for twenty years, it needs to be torn down and cleared away (former home of the Augusta Neighborhood Improvement Commission and owned by the Augusta Housing Authority). A rodent problem will not go away until this building comes down. The trees and brush need to be cleared from this property to protect the Coroner's Office from falling limbs, etc. Sub-Committee Members view this abandoned and neglected building and lot as a health and safety risk to employees of this office and the surrounding area of the city.

The exterior of the building is not very inviting and the Sub-Committee suggests low maintenance landscaping at the entrance. This is where some families see their loved one for the very last time and the entrance should look clean and well-kept.

Of additional interest to the Sub-Committee is the fact that the Allgood Bill does not give the Coroner jurisdiction within nursing homes. We are concerned about the potential to overlook neglect and mistreatment that leads to nursing home deaths and feel strongly that this is a major fault in the system. It gives the nursing home an opportunity to cover an unnatural death and prevents families from getting the answers they deserve when a death is questioned.

Sub-Committee Members

Laura Beveridge
Gaynelle B. Dicks
Amy V. Ellington
Jordan Barker Noe

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

On July 31, 2012, a five-member Sub-Committee of the July 2012 Grand Jury toured the Charles B. Webster Detention Center located at 1941 Phinizy Road in Augusta, Georgia. Captain Chester V. Huffman, Jr. provided an informative tour of the pod-style detention facility.

The Detention Center is owned and operated by the Richmond County Sheriff's Office. The facility opened November 17, 1997. The total bed count is 1,050. There are 84 beds for females. Included in the total bed count are 150 medical beds and 32 mental health beds for male and female inmates.

Inmates are booked at the Richmond County Jail located at 401 Walton Way. Renovations will soon be complete and booking will occur at the Phinizy Road facility. Renovations will also allow for a trustee dormitory.

Medical Services:

Medical services are provided by a contract with Correct Care Solutions. Services include medical, mental health, dental and psychiatric care. There are isolation cells available for suicidal inmates. Emergency services are provided by University Hospital and inmates requiring emergency care are transported to University Hospital. Provisions are made for inmates with disabilities.

Food Services/Inmate Services:

A private food service vendor prepares meals for inmates and staff. Inmates receive full meals twice a day for breakfast and supper. Inmates are provided a bag lunch. Employee meals are served in a small dining room. Inmates assist in serving the meals to the employees and assist in laundering. Utilizing a vendor for meals has saved in excess of \$300,000.00 this year.

Inmates are allowed to purchase items, such as toiletries and snacks, through the commissary. Kiosks are in day rooms where inmates can request commissary items. The facility receives 30% of the proceeds from sales of commissary items. Necessary items, such as toiletries, are provided for inmates who do not have funds available for the commissary.

Security and Surveillance:

A double-lock door system is in use throughout the facility. Cells are monitored by a guard via video camera. Guards are also visible anytime an inmate is transported throughout the facility.

Visits to inmates are made by using a video system. Visitors are in the Visitor Center which is a separate building from the detention facility. Recently, Tasers were purchased for use by the guards. There has been a decrease in inmate non-compliance since the guards began carrying Tasers.

Issues:

Staff salaries continue to be lower than the surrounding counties, resulting in a high turnover rate at the facility. The maximum salary for certified deputies is \$29,000.00.

Remarks and Observations:

Sub-Committee Members were impressed with the operations of the facility. Policies and procedures are in place to maintain a safe environment for staff and inmates. The facility is very clean and orderly. This Sub-Committee suggests an increase in deputy salaries. Taxpayers' dollars are being used to train officers only to have them leave due to the low salary. This requires hiring and training new staff. This turnover also contributes to a less-trained staff. Retention of trained officers can improve the safety and efficiency of the facility.

Sub-Committee Members

Gaynelle B. Dicks
Amy V. Ellington
Anthony G. Hayes
Denise F. James
Victoria Menefee