

Walton County Georgia Grand Jury Jail Inspection Report

February-July 2013 Grand Jury

Audit Date: July 11, 2013

Grand Jury Audit Participants: Andy Cain, Dianna Callahan, Robert Davis

Overview:

Sherriff Joe Chapman led the tour of the facilities and answered all of our questions. We toured the offices, garden, new and old wings of the jail, pod satellites, officer gym, medical clinic, holding cells, visitation areas, library, and kitchen. This report contains the information provided to us by Sherriff Chapman and our observations from our tour. At the conclusion of the tour Sherriff Chapman presented several site plans for a new jail in the county, the details of which will be attached subsequently to this report.

Statistical Data:

Walton County is the 46th fastest growing county in the country and the 6th fastest in the State of Georgia according to the Sherriff. The Sherriff's office employs nearly 200 people in total. The date of the audit the jail housed 365 inmates and has 376 total beds available. Last year the Sherriff's office housed an average of 448 inmates per day. In the jail there are approximately 14-15 officers directly overseeing the inmates per shift. Based on last year's average for inmates it puts the inmate to officer ratio approximately 30:1. Each inmate carries a financial burden of about \$32USD per day. Overcrowding is managed by utilizing jail space at both Barrow and Oglethorpe counties; a fee for each inmate is required. The Grand Jury audit of November 30 2012 noted this fee as \$35USD per day.

Facility:

The first thing that is hard to miss about the facility is the level of cleanliness. Literally every corner was clean and organized. The jail has 2 main wings, the first of which is the "older" wing. Each has pods for male inmates and separate pods for female inmates. The layout of the jail though dated provides the ability for 1 officer to have direct view into all cells in all blocks for the pod via the satellite. This is benefited by the angle of view from the satellite to each cell door. The "newer" wing opened in 2004 was not designed to the same layout, it has long hallways and the cell doors are laid out in a hallway format making it impossible for the officer in the satellite tower to see into each cell without physically walking past each cell in each pod of blocks. This requires more manpower to operate and make for a much more dangerous environment for the officers. This layout creates easier opportunities for inmates to do things the officer does not have sight to. All of the inmate suicides have occurred in this wing. There are 2

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Karl K. Spont

Clerk, Walton Superior Court

copy given to Kathi TPA

officers patrolling all of the cells in each pod of blocks in the male section and 2 in the female section.

The jail has a full gym on site for officer use. The equipment was donated by residents and other local groups and not acquired from taxpayer funds. Officers are required to pass a fitness examination prior to hire and required to a fitness evaluation twice a year.

There is a medical clinic on site. Several services are provided including dental, minor medical and mental health services. The clinic has an annual operation cost of 1.3 million, however the clinic saves the county about 3 million annually by providing care in house. Inmates fill out a medical request and are treated after evaluation by trained medical personnel. One significant challenge is space for record storage. The jail is required by law to retain inmate medical records for 7 years from their last offense. It is obvious this requirement absorbs a lot of space and manpower to maintain.

Inmate labor is used throughout the jail. Non-violent crime inmates perform many duties including grounds work, kitchen duty, laundry, garden maintenance and janitorial duties. Garden seeds are provided by a grant and the food harvested is donated to the FISH which distributes the food to local families in need. The garden does not incur any expenses that are provided by taxpayers. Sherriff Chapman offers inmate labor as an opportunity to shorten their sentences; he is given authority by law to do so at his discretion. This presents significant savings to taxpayers.

The kitchen is operated by inmates; the jail is required to provide a set amount of calories to inmates. The cost of feeding each inmate is about \$1.50 per day. The kitchen is within the secured area of the older wing of the jail.

The visitation area requires most of the manpower for the jail. Officers are constantly on the lookout for contraband. Personnel are required to transport inmates from the pod as well as monitor the visitation areas. The inmates are separated from visitors by a secure glass window.

Personnel

We observed several officers performing their duties during our tour. They were all very friendly and personable. Their demeanor clearly shows they are valued by their superiors and they in turn place value in what they do. All areas were well organized and each attentive to the tasks at hand. Communication between personnel on the floor and those in the control room was constant and effective. It was easily observed they are led well and buy into the vision of the Sherriff for the jail.

The jail is required by law to adhere to a standard operating procedure. At times laws change or a circumstance may occur in the jail system that requires the SOP be amended. Officers are retrained and evaluated by command staff and all officers including the Sherriff are

subject to a board that oversees cases involving officers, for example auto accidents involving law enforcement. Officers are also required to receive 20 hours of updated training annually.

Future Planning

Overcrowding is being managed at the jail but there are limitations to the current process. The federal government has the right to take over the jail from the county and mandate jail expansion and improvements through the courts. In these cases the county citizens are responsible for the financing and have no influence in jail oversight or a voice in the type of facility to be designed. There is a significant need for more beds available to the inmates. In 2012 the jail averaged 1.2 inmates to each bed. There are currently 4 site plans presented for the jail expansion which will be funded by a SPLOST tax already passed by vote of the county citizens.

Option 1: Existing Site

Space is limited for building additions. The only available land is wetlands with a creek. The land must be significantly backfilled and the EPA petitioned for approval to move the creek. Estimated costs for the land improvements are \$2.25 million, with final building costs estimated at \$30,035,000.00. This will add 448 beds; no room for future expansion will be available.

Option 2: Highway 11/ Mt Paron Church Road

The lot is about 1.5 miles from the current jail towards Social Circle. The track is almost 67 acres and land can be purchased for 800K. An initial building to house 448 inmates will be built with space to increase that to over 2000 should it ever be warranted. The down side is sewage is not on the property and 2 pump stations must be installed totaling \$1.4 million for land and preparation just to build. Also the longer distance from the courthouse adds to the security and costs in prisoner transport. Estimated final building costs total \$29,030,000.

Option 3: East Church Street/Hammond Drive

The lot is behind the current government center. Tract size is roughly 24 acres. Upsides include the short distance to the government building, allowing for a walkway to be built for prisoner transport from the jail. The facility will house 448 inmates. Downsides are land cost at \$1 million and more limited space for future expansion. Also the location would be surrounded by several residential areas and the jail is not wanted by those residents at said location. Estimated final building costs total \$28,610,000.

Option 4: Highway 78/ Cherry Hill Drive

This lot is near the old Monroe Area High School and is sized at 89 acres. Land price is currently 1.3 million but still in negotiations. The site will house initially 448 inmates with plenty of room for future expansion. This site will be closer to the government building than the

current jail. Upside to the land is the residential surroundings are minimal, it's adjacent to a county waste center, and the space will not only allow for adequate future expansion of the jail system, but opens the door for other government buildings to make use of the space. Final building costs total \$28,860,000.00

Conclusion:

By our observation the county can put a band aid on the current situation by adding to the facility to increase capacity. This option has highest cost of all options as does not allow for any future expansion down the road.


It is the recommendation of the Grand Jury that the county leadership strongly consider the site plan (Option 4) for Hwy 78 and Cherry Hill location as its primary choice for the new location of the Walton County Jail. This option will allow for further expansion down the road including the option to build the courthouse on the site in the future. This would greatly reduce transportation cost as well as cut down on the risks of transporting inmates.

A copy of the site summaries will be attached to this report.

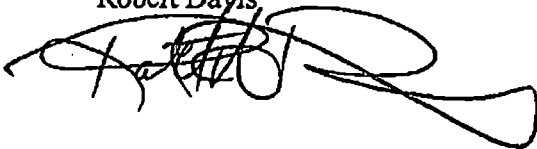
Respectfully Submitted by Walton County Grand Jury February-July 2013, July 19, 2013

~~Andy Cairn~~

Dianna Callahan



Robert Davis



Cost Summary

Existing Site

Hard Cost	
Site Development	\$2,225,000
Jail Housing: 2 each, 224 bed pods x 9 mil. Each	\$18,000,000
Jail Support Space (28,000 SF x \$190)	\$5,320,000
Existing Jail Renovation (Allowance)	\$0
Hard Cost Budget	\$25,545,000
Soft Costs	
Land Acquisition	\$0
FF&E Allowance	\$750,000
A/E Fees	\$1,750,000
Testing	\$250,000
Soft Cost Budget	\$3,490,000
Subtotal	\$29,035,000
Owner's Contingency	\$1,000,000
Total Project Budget	\$30,035,000

Hwy 11 / MT Paron Church Road

Hard Cost	
Site Development	\$1,420,000
Jail Housing: 2 each, 224 bed pods x 9 mil. Each	\$18,000,000
Jail Support Space (28,000 SF x \$190)	\$5,320,000
Existing Jail Renovation (Allowance)	\$0
Hard Cost Budget	\$24,740,000
Soft Costs	
Land Acquisition	\$800,000
FF&E Allowance	\$750,000
A/E Fees	\$1,500,000
Testing	\$240,000
Soft Cost Budget	\$3,290,000
Subtotal	\$28,030,000
Owner's Contingency	\$1,000,000
Total Project Budget	\$29,030,000

East Church Street / Hammond Drive

Hard Cost	
Site Development	\$1,000,000
Jail Housing: 2 each, 224 bed pods x 9 mil. Each	\$18,000,000
Jail Support Space (28,000 SF x \$190)	\$5,320,000
Existing Jail Renovation (Allowance)	\$0
Hard Cost Budget	\$24,320,000
Soft Costs	
Land Acquisition	\$800,000
FF&E Allowance	\$750,000
A/E Fees	\$1,500,000
Testing	\$240,000
Soft Cost Budget	\$3,290,000
Subtotal	\$27,610,000
Owner's Contingency	\$1,000,000
Total Project Budget	\$28,610,000

Highway 78 / Cherry Hill Drive

Hard Cost	
Site Development	\$1,300,000
Jail Housing: 2 each, 224 bed pods x 9 mil. Each	\$18,000,000
Jail Support Space (28,000 SF x \$190)	\$5,320,000
Existing Jail Renovation (Allowance)	\$0
Hard Cost Budget	\$24,620,000
Soft Costs	
Land Acquisition	\$750,000
FF&E Allowance	\$750,000
A/E Fees	\$1,500,000
Testing	\$240,000
Soft Cost Budget	\$3,240,000
Subtotal	\$27,860,000
Owner's Contingency	\$1,000,000
Total Project Budget	\$28,860,000