



TUOLUMNE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"Serving with Professionalism and Pride"

Bill Pooley
Sheriff-Coroner

July 5, 2022

The Honorable Laura L. Krieg
Tuolumne County Superior Court
12855 Justice Center Drive
Sonora, CA 95370

Re: Response to the Grand Jury Report- Tuolumne County Jail

The following is offered in response to the 2020-2022 Grand Jury Report as it pertains to the Dambacher Detention Center.

Grand Jury Recommendations

Recommendation #1: The Grand Jury recommends to have facilities maintenance test HVAC air conditioning systems by June 1, 2022, and if the problems are not resolved and the system is not functioning correctly by July 1, 2022, then hire a third party consultant to analyze and recommend a solution by August 1, 2022. (F4)

Findings #4: Mechanical HVAC systems at Dambacher Detention Center have not been working properly or reliably, which endangers some inmates with heat sensitivities. The new system problems which could be caused by design or installation errors, have persisted for an unreasonable amount of time.

Response: Agree – The HVAC system is currently operating correctly. We will continue monitoring it with county maintenance's assistance and take prompt action.

Recommendation #2: The Grand Jury recommends that inmate complaints about the availability of hot water continue to be monitored. If complaints continue, then a third-party consultant should be hired to analyze and recommend a solution by August 1, 2022. (F5)

Findings #5: The hot water system has not been reliable, causing hardships to inmates who have to take cold showers and cannot have hot beverages. The new system teething problems, which could be caused by design or installation errors, have persisted for an unreasonable amount of time.

Response: Agree – Currently, the hot water is working consistently, and we are not receiving complaints. We will continue to monitor the hot water with assistance from county maintenance.

Recommendation #3: The Grand Jury recommends that virtual education and programs be offered during COVID-19 restrictions and continue as additional programs when in-person education and programs are offered September 1, 2022. (F6, F7)

Findings #6: Education programs were largely suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic and this has adversely affected inmates by failing to keep inmates occupied with productive activities that focus on positive behavior. These programs can impact public safety with reduced recidivism and increase prison safety with improved conduct; this opportunity is being missed.

Findings #7: While Dambacher Detention Center has the technological infrastructure in place to be able to offer virtual education and programs it has not done so during COVID-19 when in-person programs have been limited. This lack of programs has adversely affected inmates by failing to keep inmates occupied with productive activities that focus on positive behavior. These programs can impact public safety with reduced recidivism and increase prison safety with improved conduct; this opportunity is being missed.

Response: Agree – Since your visit, we have been able to start some in person programs. As a result of this, we had one inmate graduate with their high school diploma and enrolled inmates in our GEO program. In addition, we are currently working with Columbia College to establish online college course work and the County Schools to provide GED testing and Save Serve certificates online. We are also working with a local Pastor to provide religious services through streaming.

Recommendation #4: The Grand Jury recommends that the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors consider an off-cycle increase in the pay level of the respective jail staff. It is recommended that a class and compensation study be performed of the parity of salaries be completed and the salary adjustments made before the end of the calendar year 2022. (F8, F9)

Findings #8: The staffing shortage at Dambacher Detention Center causes mandated overtime which can lead to staff burnout, lower staff retention and adversely affects the County budget.

Findings #9: The discrepancy in pay compared to other counties leads to higher staff turnover and recruitment challenges.

Response: Agree – The staffing shortages at the jail have caused retention issues. The County is about to begin negotiations with the Deputy Sheriff's Association.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the findings and recommendations. Please feel free to contact the Sheriff's Office if you should have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Bill Pooley
Sheriff-Coroner