



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

HOWELL COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

1106 MISSOURI AVENUE, WEST PLAINS, MO. 65775
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MO 0460000

8 April 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Jail Conditions Report

1. Authority

- a. Pursuant to RSMo §57.407, the sheriff in counties of the third class shall on January first of each year and every three months thereafter file with the circuit court of the county a report on the conditions of the county jail, the number of prisoners confined in the jail, together with recommendations relating to its operation.

2. Reference(s)

- a. U.S. Department of Justice – Sheriff's Guide to Effective Jail Operations Handbook
- b. Missouri Sheriffs' Association – Missouri Core Jail Standards Handbook

3. Facts

- a. Date of examination: April 8, 2024
- b. Total number of inmates present: 32
- c. Total facility max capacity for inmates: 50 *Not counting holding
- d. Jailor to inmate ratio per shift: 1st Shift: 4/50 2nd Shift: 3/50 3rd Shift: 2/50
- e. Supervisor to jailor ratio per shift: 1st Shift: 1/4 2nd Shift: 1/3 3rd Shift: 0/2

4. Findings

a. We are operating consistently at or over max capacity. Numerous inmates were transported to another facility in preparation for eclipse activity to make room for additional holding. This facility does not meet the needs of our Criminal Justice System in our County. Major infrastructure within this facility is failing; plumbing, lighting, brick, and mortar, and recently the dryer was upgraded. The food preparation area is dated with little to no storage. Ovens and cooktops are failing and cannot keep up with demand of food preparation in a timely manner. No space for dry storage or cold storage for food items. Consistent plumbing issues throughout the facility to include non-functioning fixtures. Some issues will be fixed after obtaining the awarded funds on a secured grant; to include food preparation area, storage, and cleaning. Leaks in the roof recently discovered along with some windows.

b. Lighting within the facility is inadequate and not tamper resistant and can be reached from a standing position inside the cells. Locking mechanisms and passthrough doors rusted and non-functioning. Security glass damaged and not replaced in medium and minimum cellblock and holding area.

c. HVAC system failures are common and several units have been replaced at a major expense. Improperly ran ventilation or lack of throughout the facility. HVAC runs staff offices as well as inmate holding areas. The way ventilation is currently running within facility it can cross contaminate between cell blocks and affect staff areas. Security risks related to type of construction material and manner of buildout. This lack of insulation and concrete adds to cost of heating and cooling facility.

d. Layout of facility for functionality is inadequate for movement of inmates. No perimeter security fencing around grounds. Electrical system at max or over capacity. 15% of population are mentally challenged or not fit for confinement in a county level facility making custody, care and control difficult for staff. Lack of space for proper segregation of medical needs or those housed for sexual related crimes.

e. Transportation issues related to court cases; numerous times inmates requested with short time frame to appear in court. At times larger requests such as 20 or more inmates for court inability/unable to transport with current transportation vans or proper security. Progress is being made to ensure consistent training related to jail operations and staff ownership of assigned tasks and task management. All new Jailers are being sent through a 48 hours Jail Academy to ensure consistent training on procedures and the systems approach.

5. Recommendations

a. Educate the Commission and our community on the need for bigger and updated facility that meets the needs of our Criminal Justice System. Food preparation area and lack of storage possible retro-fitting for some additional space, with more efficient ovens and dishwasher with sanitation function. With demo of existing cabinets some space can be gained for dry good storage and purchase of a larger refrigerator unit. Plumbing through the facility was improperly installed; creating issues with waste moving into adjoining cells blocks, and clogging issues with proper drainage. Local plumbing specialist are in the facility on a weekly basis. Grant money secured to update dishwasher and storage area. Containers that are insulated, have humidity and HVAC units retrofitted have been purchased and working on installation at current facility for storage and space needs.

b. Fixtures that have failed are expensive, but we are currently attempting to locate replacements. A majority of the fixtures in facility are no longer supported by replacement parts. Bids have been obtained for additional lighting and companies contacted for tamper resistant lighting options. Locking mechanisms were not serviced as required for maintenance of the locks. We have located a company dealing with locking mechanisms to conduct assessment and repair costs. This will be scheduled and put on a yearly inspection and service. Security glass replacement is difficult due to the manner of how the doors are constructed. Industrial dryer purchased and replaced failing dryer.

c. Several of the HVAC units have been replaced and we are under maintenance contract with local distributor/service company. Additional units need to be purchased to separate inmate areas from staff areas within building. Proper ventilation needs to be built to properly ventilate each secured area of the facility; female, medium, medium, maximum, and holding/processing area. Construction material or lack of concrete in existing block walls, no solution but new construction. Grant money secured to update and build out proper ventilation systems/fans. Current HVAC under repair at the time of this report.

d. Layout and proper security movement and handling can only be met by new construction. Electrical issues are corrected as issues arise but currently running out of breaker space for facility. Mentally challenged inmate population, education of staff and coordination with judicial and mental health resources to get them out of criminal system. Grant position obtained to coordinate with area resources on mental health cases, and assist in linking inmates with area resources.

e. Transportation to court challenges limited seating in our transport van, along with better coordination and communication with Judicial scheduling system. As we scale up, dedicated staff will be assigned from Judicial to assist in transport, along with Jail and Patrol coordination. We have identified points of failure and deficiencies in training and working toward solutions with proper staffing and supervisor oversight structure. Task management, ownership, and time management are consistent issues and are currently being evaluated and addressed.

6. The point of contact for this memorandum is the undersigned at sheriff@howellcountysheriff.gov

Respectfully,

BRENT H. CAMPBELL
Sheriff, OSN 237
County of Howell

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