



COUNTY OF SISKIYOU

Board of Supervisors

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October 15, 2024

The Honorable JoAnn Bicego
Presiding Judge, Siskiyou County Superior Court
411 Fourth St.
Yreka, CA 96097

Subject: Response of Board of Supervisors to 2023-2024 Grand Jury Report "Jail Overcrowding the County has an Option"

Dear Judge Bicego:

The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors appreciates the time and dedication the 2023-2024 Grand Jurors contributed to their charge. Please find attached responses to the findings and recommendations, as requested by the 2023-2024 Grand Jury. The Siskiyou County Sheriff will be submitting his response directly to the Board.

GRAND JURY FINDINGS:

Grand Jury Finding – F1: The Siskiyou County jail does not have sufficient bed space for adult felony offenders.

- *BOS response: The Board partially agrees. The Board is fully aware of the current capacity of the jail, and we commend the Sheriff's Department and jail staff for their work.*

Grand Jury Finding – F2: The County leadership has not addressed jail overcrowding since 2020.

- *BOS response: The Board fully disagrees. County leadership has discussed options to utilize the Charlie Byrd facility as an adult correctional facility, however, the County does not have the funding available to operate, maintain, or sustain a new, relocated, or additional correctional facility.*

Grand Jury Finding – F3: Siskiyou County owns a modern multi-million-dollar 40 bed jail available to house adult offenders.

- *BOS response: The Board partially disagrees. The County does own the Charlie Byrd facility, but it is not available to house adult offenders as the County does not have the funding available to make required modifications or operate, maintain, or sustain the facility as a correctional facility.*

Grand Jury Finding – F4: The County failed to keep the Charlie Byrd correctional facility certified as a correctional facility.

Brandon Criss
District 1

Ed Valenzuela
District 2

Michael Kobseff
District 3

Nancy Ogren
District 4

Ray Haupt
District 5

- *The Charlie Byrd facility is not utilized as a correctional facility; consequently, there is no requirement to adhere in Title 15 or Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations, which mandates inspections by the Board of State and Community Corrections.*

Grand Jury Finding – F5: The Charlie Byrd correctional facility is being converted to office space, eliminating its ability to operate as a correctional facility.

- *BOS response: The Board agrees.*

Grand Jury Finding – F6: Office space options exist within the County to accommodate the Probation Department elsewhere.

- *BOS response: The Board partially disagrees. The County does not currently have additional space to adequately and reasonably house the Probation Department, and it was determined that it is most economically feasible to relocate the Probation Department to the existing Charlie Byrd facility.*

Grand Jury Finding – F7: The County did not get documented required inspections by certified building inspectors for work completed on Charlie Byrd correctional facility by County staff.

- *BOS response: The Board fully disagrees. Work completed by County staff was not required to be inspected. County Maintenance staff is certified to complete the electrical work and is trained to perform the work as needed.*

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Grand Jury Recommendation R2: The BOS, in conjunction with the Sheriff, should identify and decide on a plan for funding the operational costs for Charlie Byrd correctional facility as a branch jail facility by January 2025. This may entail new grants, new taxes and/or shifts in funding from other priorities.

- *BOS response: The Board fully disagrees, and the County will not pursue this recommendation. The County does not have the funding available to modify, operate, maintain, or sustain a new, relocated, or additional correctional facility. In 2020, it was determined that the cost to operate a new jail would increase the Sheriff's budget by approximately \$960,000 annually and would increase Public Health's budget by approximately \$267,000 annually to provide inmate care. In addition, the County was required to provide in-kind and cash match to the grant and to fund required modifications to the Charlie Byrd facility, which totaled more than \$3 million. These figures do not address rising labor or supply costs since 2020, nor do they include rising costs or potential additional requirements associated with modifying the Charlie Byrd facility. After the County was awarded grant funding to construct a correctional facility, it explored options to fund its ongoing operation. The County sought two ballot measures to increase local sales tax to cover the funding gap and Siskiyou County voters rejected both measures. The County has exhausted every option available, and all options were deemed cost-prohibitive or infeasible to pursue. The County will continue to explore options to modify, operate, maintain or sustain a new, relocated, or additional correctional facility as potential opportunities become available.*

Grand Jury Recommendation R3: Utilize the Charlie Byrd correctional facility as a branch of the County jail operated by the Sheriff by July 2025.

- *BOS response: The Board fully disagrees, and the County will not pursue this recommendation. The County does not have the funding available to operate, maintain, or sustain a new, relocated, or additional correctional facility.*

Grand Jury Recommendation R4: The County should have the Charlie Byrd facility recertified by June 2025.

- *BOS response: The Board fully disagrees, and the County will not pursue this recommendation. The County does not have the funding available to operate, maintain, or sustain a new, relocated, or additional correctional facility. For the reasons listed above in R2, it is unreasonable and unwarranted to recertify the Charlie Byrd facility as a correctional facility.*

Grand Jury Recommendation R5: By December 2024, the Board of Supervisors should act to remove the building modifications at the Charlie correctional facility to have it returned to its original design build.

- *BOS response: The Board fully disagrees, and the County will not pursue this recommendation. The County does not have the funding available to operate, maintain, or sustain a new, relocated, or additional correctional facility.*

Grand Jury Recommendation R6: Relocate the Probation Department out of the Charlie Byrd correctional facility by March 2025.

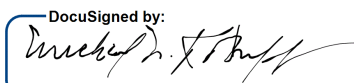
- *BOS response: The Board fully disagrees, and the County will not pursue this recommendation.*

Grand Jury Recommendation R7: Develop a policy and procedure by January 2025 whereby General Services work gets building department review and inspections on projects involving occupancy changes, significant structural changes, electrical work, plumbing and any changes that compromise fire sprinkler coverage.

- *BOS response: The Board fully disagrees, and the County will not pursue this recommendation. Any County work is completed in adherence to any requirements associated with a project.*

This concludes the responses of the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors to the 2023-2024 Grand Jury Report entitled "Jail Overcrowding the County has an Option".

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Michael N. Kobseff, Chair
Board of Supervisors

cc: Grand Jury Foreperson