



County of El Dorado

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DATE: October 12, 2012

TO: Chairman John Knight
Supervisor Ray Nutting
Supervisor Jack Sweeney
Supervisor Ron Briggs
Supervisor Norma Santiago

FROM: Don Ashton 
Principal Analyst, CAO

SUBJECT: South Lake Tahoe Juvenile Treatment Center (JTC)

This is to provide you with a summary of actions taken as a result of the concerns raised by the Chief Probation Officer in his letter to your Board dated September 27, 2012.

The immediate concerns identified by the Chief Probation Officer relate to a lack of available staff resulting in the closure of half of the JTC as well as the closure of the facility to female wards beginning September 21, 2012. Specifically, the JTC is allocated 20 positions (17 Deputy Probation Officer - Institution positions and 3 Supervising Deputy Probation Officer - Institution positions); however, at that time only 11 staff were available to work as a result of two vacancies and seven staff on leave.

Prior to the Chief Probation Officer's September 27, 2012, letter, a meeting was held with staff from the CAO, Probation and Human Resources on September 19, 2012, to discuss staffing issues affecting the JTC. Subsequently, on September 27, 2012, an action team consisting of staff from the Probation Department, Human Resources, Risk Management, County Counsel and the CAO's office met to discuss the issues and identify short-term, mid-term and long term actions to address each issue. A third meeting was held with the action team on October 9, 2012, and a fourth meeting has been scheduled for October 24, 2012, to continue addressing the issues identified.

Current Status

As indicated above, at this time the JTC is allocated 17 Deputy Probation Officer - Institution Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) and three (3) Supervising Probation Officer - Institution FTEs. While the JTC has a maximum capacity of 40 beds, if all allocated positions were filled and staff were available to work, this staffing model would be sufficient to meet minimum staffing levels of a 30 bed facility. However, the actual staff available to work since mid-September only allow the Probation Department to meet minimum staffing levels for a 20 bed facility consisting of male detainees.

As of October 12, 2012, two Deputy Probation Officers returned to work with no restrictions and two Deputy Probation Officers returned to work on light duty, leaving three staff on leave along with two vacancies. As a result of the four staff recently returning to work, Probation Administration is re-evaluating the closure of half the facility as well as the closure of the facility to female detainees.

The following is a summary of the actions taken in response to the issues identified:

Short-Term

- The Probation Department has been working with Human Resources to clear an existing Deputy Probation Officer recruitment list. Currently, there is one remaining Deputy Probation Officer applicant interested in a position at the JTC.
- The Probation Department is working with Human Resources on a new Deputy Probation Officer recruitment which is anticipated to open during the week of October 15, 2012.
- Interviews of six Supervising Deputy Probation Officer applicants are scheduled for Thursday, October 18, 2012.
- The Probation Department worked with the CAO to amend an existing contract between the Sheriff's Office and Madeira Group International (MGI) to allow the Probation Department to utilize MGI for pre-employment background investigations to supplement the Probation Department's existing contract.
- To maintain minimum staffing requirements, the Probation Department is using field staff and staff from the Placerville Juvenile Hall to work in the JTC.
- Currently, the Probation Department allows staff in the Placerville Juvenile Hall to utilize OC spray under appropriate circumstances; however, staff assigned to the JTC are not authorized to use OC spray. The Probation Department is updating internal policies and procedures to allow staff in the JTC to utilize OC Spray, and is working with the Sheriff's Office to train Probation staff on the use of OC spray by the end of October 2012.
- In the event staffing levels reach a critical level that impacts the safety of employees, the Sheriff's Office has agreed to assign Correctional Officers to assist on a temporary, short-term basis.

Mid-Term:

- The Probation Department and the CAO are in the process of identifying a consultant to conduct a staffing and operational analysis of the JTC and the Placerville Juvenile Hall.
- The Probation Department is requesting approval to create a "Permanent Relief Staffing Model" at the JTC and the Placerville Juvenile Hall by adding 3 Deputy Probation Officer - Institution FTEs and 1 Supervising Deputy Probation Officer - Institution FTE at each facility.

- Human Resources will run recruitments at least three times per year for Deputy Probation Officers.
- The Probation Department and the CAO will assess the feasibility of allowing staff assigned to the Placerville Juvenile Hall who provide emergency coverage at the JTC to stay in South Lake Tahoe overnight under extraordinary circumstances, such as poor weather, a short turnaround between shifts, etc.

Long-Term:

- The CAO, Human Resources and Probation Administration will review the salary/compensation structure, including salary differentials for staff assigned to the JTC, with any adjustments being made during the labor negotiation process.

Summary/Conclusion

It should also be noted that the positions allocated to the Placerville Juvenile Hall are sufficient to meet minimum staffing levels of a 40 bed facility. Under this staffing model, in the event of unanticipated vacancies or injuries to staff, the Placerville Juvenile Hall will be faced with the same challenges as the JTC.

Approval of the Probation Department's recommendation to add three Deputy Probation Officer - Institution FTEs and one Supervising Deputy Probation Officer - Institution FTE to the JTC and the Placerville Juvenile Hall will allow the Probation Department to immediately hire sufficient staff to absorb unanticipated vacancies or other issues that prevent existing staff from working. In addition, when these positions are filled it will allow staff to attend mandatory, offsite trainings without significantly impacting the operation of the Juvenile Hall or the JTC.

Along with addressing the immediate staffing need, the CAO, Human Resources and Probation will continue to develop a long term strategy to address staffing challenges facing the Probation Department. Unless additional immediate concerns are identified, the CAO and Probation Department will provide your Board with a status report in 90 days on the mid and long term actions being taken.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

c. Terri Daly, CAO
Clerk of the Board
County Counsel