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NAPA COUNTY GRAND JURY 2023-2024

April 10, 2024

FINAL REPORT

SKYLINE ACADEMY AT JUVENILE HALL DELAY AND DISORGANIZATION

SUMMARY

As required by California Penal Code Sec. 919 (b), the Jury performed its annual review of the Napa County Juvenile Hall (NCJH). After conducting interviews with directors and staff at NCJH, the Jury found that previous challenges continue to exist. Staffing shortages, an underutilized facility, and irregular development of a camp program are issues that have been highlighted in previous Grand Jury reviews.

The 2023-2024 Jury's primary concern is the delayed development of Skyline Academy. Despite approval in 2020, there has been little progress towards opening. Repeated requests for a detailed project plan and progress reports by the Jury were not fulfilled. Two tours of the facility months apart revealed that few of the planned changes to the physical space have been implemented. One room had been remodeled for use as an office.

By the conclusion of its investigation, the Jury was not able to determine if a formal project plan for the formation of the Skyline Academy camp program is being followed or even exists or, if there is any measure or documentation of progress.

Additionally, the Jury found little ownership of who is charged with making progress towards opening Skyline Academy. Without the appointment of a dedicated project manager this endeavor has little chance of success.

BACKGROUND

California Penal Code Sec. 919 (b) mandates a yearly inquiry into the management and conditions of all detention facilities in the County. Napa County Juvenile Hall (NCJH) qualifies as one of the two detention facilities in Napa County. It is administered by the Napa County Probation Department under the direction of the Chief Probation Officer and managed by a Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent.

Under Senate Bill 823, signed into law September 30, 2020 and effective July 1, 2021, all juvenile justice responsibilities were realigned from the State to the County. SB 823 initiated the closure of juvenile detention facilities at the state level and transferred custody of juvenile offenders to local counties throughout the State of California. The age level of jurisdiction for youth was raised to 21, 23, or 25, depending upon the offense.

The past several years have seen a reduction in the number of youth in Juvenile Hall due to the recent change in state policy of not incarcerating most juvenile offenders. While the Napa Juvenile Hall was designed to accommodate up to 60 youth detainees, the average daily population has been much below that for several years. In the past few years, the average daily population has ranged from 10 to 15.

Currently, the Juvenile Hall is divided into two wings. The Prospect Wing, used for short-term incarcerated youth and a second wing currently being converted to a camp program. Following lifting of covid restrictions, normal operations have been resumed.

A camp program is intended to provide services to youth in detention while allowing them to remain locally connected to families and community. On January 14, 2020, the New Horizons camp was approved by the Board of Supervisors as an alternative to sending local youth to Short Term Residential Treatment Programs outside the county. On January 27, 2020, the Napa County Chief Probation Officer signed a request to the Board of State and Community Corrections for approval of a camp allocation for the fiscal year. Documents provided to the Jury contain inconsistent past start-dates for New Horizons. By July 2022, New Horizons had been suspended due to Covid restrictions and a low population in Juvenile Hall.

Using the already approved New Horizons grant funds, plans were initiated to develop a new camp program in Juvenile Hall. The new camp, renamed Skyline Academy, was slated to open by the end of 2023. On its visit on January 29, 2024, the Jury found that only one room had been remodeled into a future office. Jury members were told that the camp might be opened by July 2024.

METHODOLOGY

For purposes of this report, the Grand Jury completed the following:

- Tour of entire Juvenile Hall
- Second tour of Camp Area of Juvenile Hall
- Interviews with Juvenile Hall Administrators
- Review of previous Napa County Grand Jury Reports from 2014 to 2023
- Review of Board of State & Community Corrections May 23, 2023 Inspection Report
- Review of Contract with B.I. Correctional Services, Inc, approved by Board of Supervisors on February 26, 2024
- Review of Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council Meeting Minutes from September 20, 2023
- Review of Informational pamphlet for Skyline Academy
- Review of Board of Supervisors Approval for New Horizons January 14, 2020
- Review of Napa County Juvenile Justice Plan (2023-2024)
- Napa County Website, <https://www.countyofnapa.org/bids.aspx?bidID=373>

DISCUSSION

The 2023-24 Napa County Grand Jury reviewed the upcoming Skyline Academy camp program as part of its annual mandate to assess the management and conditions of the Juvenile Hall.

Between October 2023 and February 2024, four interviews with representatives from Juvenile Hall and Probation were conducted and two on-site visits to the facility occurred. Skyline Academy was scheduled to open at the end of 2023. The Jury found no significant progress on the allocated space between site visits in October 2023 and January 2024. One room had been remodeled with intended use as a future office, and a pamphlet had been created.

Repeated inquiries, both email and telephonic, requesting specific documentation of current activity yielded minimal information. This lack of concern or willingness to provide verified evidence of progress or a working project plan is documented in the Methodology section and demonstrated in the chart below.

The Jury did receive documentation detailing the 2020 approval of the County ordinance for the original (now defunct) juvenile camp program New Horizons. On March 15, 2024, the Jury also received a two-page general spreadsheet budget for Skyline Academy. The information provided in this document did not include a complete record of budget spending, current allocations, or record of monies spent to date.

The Jury found a Request for Proposal (PRO102501) on the County website regarding the current camp Skyline Academy. The RFP describes the camp's purpose and function and asks approval to retain a Juvenile Treatment Provider to furnish the programming. On February 26, 2024, the Board of Supervisors approved a contract with B.I. Correctional Services, Inc. for the time period from March 1, 2024 to June 30, 2026 as the service provider.

Essentially, the Jury was unable to ascertain if a formal project plan for the creation of the Camp is being followed or even exists. The Jury was given no documentation of progress. From the Jury's perspective, the County would greatly benefit by more effective project management.

Record of requests for documentation includes, but is not limited to:

Date	Correspondence	Response
12/15/2023	Email to follow up on 11/29/23 Interview where it was agreed the Jury would be supplied with a formal project plan, progress, and the procedures being followed in the creation of the Camp. An additional request was made for any architectural drawings or renderings of the future Camp space	No Response
01/02/2024	Follow up to above email with same request	Out of office, return 07/24/2023, referred to another administrator
01/02/2024	Email seeking documents listed above and included specific requests for documents verifying the funding grant, project plan, and timeline.	01/03/2024 email response saying will comply, but no doc received; 01/05/2024 email with long discussion but no docs
01/08/2024	Email seeking documents listed above and included specific requests for documents verifying the funding grant, project plan, and timeline.	1/9/2024 email, no docs, copy of another dept. email
01/12/2024	Email requesting documents on the original plan for the Camp describing its mission, any information on its evolution, and again requesting information on funding.	01/17/24 email response, no docs
03/04/2024	Email requesting expenses for construction, RFP cost for services to be rendered, relevant financial information, and documentation of expenses already allocated.	03/05/2024 email, will get it together, will be out of town for a week
03/07/2024	Email requesting final report from Shared Visions.	Response saying no report exists
03/09/2024	Email requesting previously promised CAD drawings of the facility plan.	No Response
03/12/2024	Second request asking for multiple docs that were requested at a prior interview.	Email response, docs will be available by end of week; two docs were received.

FINDINGS

F1. Although Skyline Academy was scheduled to open at the end of 2023, the Jury’s investigation detected limited organized effort toward the opening, no urgency, and minimal forward progress.

F2. Repeated requests for details on the development of Skyline Academy went unmet, leading the Jury to conclude that no formal project plan is being implemented.

F3. The Jury found that normal operations in the Prospect wing of Juvenile Hall (which houses short-term youth) have been resumed following the suspension of Covid restrictions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. By October 1, 2024, the Board of Supervisors direct the Napa County Probation Officer to develop and implement a detailed project plan for the Skyline Academy. The plan should formalize the project scope, be updated monthly, and provide a timeline, steps toward completion, assigned tasks, progress towards goals, available resources, and a budget.

R2. By October 1, 2024, the Board of Supervisors direct the Napa County Probation Officer to identify a project manager to be accountable for the timely and successful completion of Skyline Academy.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSE

Board of Supervisors-R1, R2

Napa County Probation Officer-R1, R2

Superintendent of Juvenile Hall-R1, R2

Assistant Superintendent of Juvenile Hall-R1, R2

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.