

REEL #66
GRAND JURY REPORTS OF
CIRCUIT COURT OF WICOMICO COUNTY
FEBRUARY TERM, 1984 thru SEPTEMBER
TERM , 1985.

STATE OF MARYLAND

HR-RM 26
(5-1-84)
Hall of Records Commission

IN THE MATTER OF
PROCEEDINGS BEFORE
THE GRAND JURY
FEBRUARY TERM, 1984

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR WICOMICO COUNTY
STATE OF MARYLAND

REPORT OF THE GRAND JURY

To the honorable, the Judges of said Court:

The Grand Jurors for the body of Wicomico County, for the February Term, 1984, beg leave to submit the following report:

1. The Grand Jury was convened and received its Charge from Hon. Alfred T. Truitt, Judge of the Circuit Court for Wicomico County, at 9:30 A.M., Tuesday, February 14, 1984. The Court designated Clarence L. Parsons as Foreman of the Grand Jury. Charles L. Truitt, Jr. was selected to serve as Secretary.
2. On February 14, 1984, the Grand Jurors received testimony from witnesses in connection with two separate incidents in which citizens were fired upon and wounded by police officers. After receiving the evidence and testimony presented, the Grand Jurors determined that the use of lethal force was reasonably necessary and justified in both cases.
3. The Grand Jurors reconvened on May 21, 1984, for inspection of the Wicomico County Courthouse and Detention Center and the Poplar Hill Pre-Release Unit.
4. The Poplar Hill Pre-Release Unit is operated in Wicomico County by the Maryland Division of Correction, as a minimum security place of confinement. The buildings and grounds were found to be in good condition. Morale on the part of both inmates and correctional personnel appeared very good. The Grand Jurors were favorably impressed with the vocational training program being conducted at Poplar Hill, and strongly recommend that the program be extended to enable more inmates to avail themselves of the training.

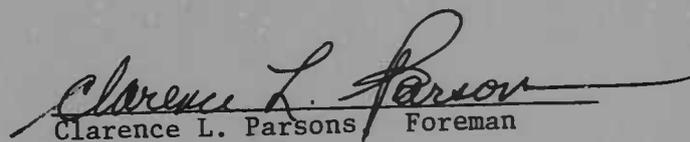
5. In contrast, the Wicomico County Courthouse was found to be overcrowded and in fair to poor physical condition. The Grand Jurors observed areas where dirt and dust had accumulated. Working conditions within the Courthouse appear to be marginal. Several offices are seriously cramped for space. Custodial service appears minimal and superficial. The public toilet on the Main Street side of the Courthouse is very dirty. Grand Jurors are seriously concerned over an obvious manpower shortage in the Central Alarm office, where personnel are on 12 hour shifts. The Grand Jury urgently recommends that the County government expedite the construction and completion of the proposed new Courts and Jail Building, and further recommends that needed repair, renovation, and maintenance of the present Courthouse should not be delayed or abandoned merely because a new building will someday be built.

6. The Grand Jurors found the Wicomico County Detention Center a stark contrast to the Poplar Hill Pre-Release Unit. Detention Center cells appeared dirty and cramped. Inmate toilets and sinks were not kept clean. The Detention Center complex itself, outside of the inmates cells, was found to be clean, orderly, and in good repair. Security, health care, and kitchen facilities all appeared adequate.

7. The Grand Jurors were informed that a new County Detention Center is to be built in the near future. Present plans call for the new Detention Center to be built on the top two floors of a new Courts Building, to be located adjacent to the existing Courthouse. Based on the observations made during the inspection of Poplar Hill Pre-Release Unit and of the Detention Center, the Grand Jurors recommend that the County Council review and reconsider those plans. The Grand Jury recommends that the new Detention Center be constructed at site separate from the Courts Building, with adequate space for future expansion, outdoor recreation activities, and meaningful rehabili-

tation in an atmosphere more conducive to good behavior and rehabilitation than is present in a facility where inmates are confined indoors in close quarters and limited access to outdoor activities.

8. The Grand Jurors wish to express their appreciation to State's Attorney Richard Warren for his assistance and advice in matters which came before and were considered by the Grand Jury.


Clarence L. Parsons Foreman


Charles J. Truitt, Jr., Secretary

FILED

AUG 31 11 13 AM '84

A. JAMES SMITH, CLERK

IN RE PROCEEDINGS
BEFORE THE GRAND JURY
FOR WICOMICO COUNTY

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR WICOMICO COUNTY
SEPTEMBER TERM, 1984

REPORT OF GRAND JURY

To the honorable, the Judges of said Court:

The Grand Jurors for the body of Wicomico County in the September Term, 1984, Term of the Circuit Court for Wicomico County, beg leave to submit the following report:

1. The Grand Jury was convened September 10, 1984 and received its charge from Hon. Alfred T. Truitt, Judge of the Circuit Court. Judge Truitt designated Susan Porter to serve as Foreman of the Grand Jury. After receiving the charge from the Court, the Grand Jurors convened in the Grand Jury Room and designated John Phillips to serve as Secretary.

2. On September 10, 1984, the Grand Jurors conducted an inspection of the Wicomico County Courthouse and the County Detention Center. The following observations were made:

A. COURTHOUSE

1. Personnel working space in the records vault of the Clerk of the Court is limited and undesireably small.
2. Custodial maintenance of the building, particularly in the Clerk's vault is poor.
3. Ventilation in the back room of the area used by Central Alarm is poor.
4. Overcrowding is a serious problem in the Sheriff's Office. The area used by the Criminal Investigations Section is cramped and dismal in appearance. The parking lot used for Sheriff's Department vehicles is not adequate to accomodate its intended use.
5. Parking is a serious problem at the Courthouse and is expected to be worse when construction of a proposed new Court building is

underway.

6. The County Bar Library is terribly overcrowded. Work space in the library only permits two attorneys to have access to table space at any one time. The limited space requires placing of books on shelves located entirely too high for normal reach, requiring users to stand on chairs or on a single portable ladder to reach the books. The potential for accidental injury is significant.

7. The State's Attorney's Office is badly overcrowded. The lack of privacy in attorneys' offices is a significant detriment to the proper performance of the function of this Office. The lack of any investigative capability hampers the performance of the State's Attorney's functions.

8. Fire protection in the building is limited to hand-held fire extinguishers.

9. The Grand Jurors were greatly concerned to learn that the Judges of the Circuit Court had requested the County to install a ventilation fan in the room used by the Petit Jury, but were unable to secure a fan through the County Purchasing Department until one of the Judges went out on his own and procured a fan to provide needed ventilation in that room.

10. File storage space for the Board of Election Supervisors is inadequate to the extent that some files were stored in the lunch room used by the custodial staff.

11. There were no screens in any of the windows of the public bathrooms, preventing adequate fresh air ventilation of those bathrooms.

12. In the bathroom located in the Grand Jury room, there was a large hole in the ceiling and wall, apparently caused by water leakage. The bathroom was generally filthy and evidenced a lack of regular cleaning.

B. DETENTION CENTER

1. There is no general congregating room for visitors. On visiting days, visitors congregate in the hallway of the basement of the Court-house, awaiting an opportunity to go to the Detention Center.
2. Bunks used for inmates appear inadequate in length to accomodate tall prisoners.
3. Electrical appliances, such as fans and televisions, were connected to wall outlets by apparently defective and unsafe wiring. This problem was brought to the attention of the Warden and corrected during the Term.
4. Fresh towels and linen are distributed to inmates no more frequently than once a week.
5. Commodes are located within cells without any screening or walls for privacy.
6. Medical services are not provided in the Detention Center on a daily basis. A nurse is in attendance a few days a week.
7. Kitchen facilities appear sanitary and adequate. The quality of food served to inmates is very good.
8. Security and cleanliness appear very good in the portion of the Detention Center used by Center employees. Cell areas are less clean and orderly. Cell areas appear to be crowded to capacity.

3. On October 15, 1984, the Grand Jury conducted an inspection of Poplar Hill Pre-Release Center, an institution of the Division of Correction, located in Wicomico County. The following observations were made:

- A. There were 135 persons serving sentences at Poplar Hill on the date of the Inspection.
- B. Medical Services at the Center are limited to a nurse, who is there two days per week, and a doctor, who is there once a week. Non-emergency hospitalization is provided by the University of Maryland Hospital in Baltimore.

Inmates requiring such hospitalization are transported to Jessup, Maryland, and then to the hospital.

C. Kitchen equipment is antiquated and in need of replacement. Many of the kitchen facilities, according to the acting Superintendent, are over 15 years old and reaching the stage where repairs are difficult and, at best, provide only temporary functioning. According to the acting Superintendent, the Center has requested funds from the Division of Correction for replacement of worn out equipment, for several years. According to the acting Superintendent, new equipment could have been purchased for the amounts spent for repairs over the last several years.

D. The buildings and grounds are kept clean and in a good state of repair.

E. A limited amount of vocational training is provided through a contract with a vocational training school in Somerset County. Educational programs are provided for those inmates who seek to avail themselves of the program.

4. Based on its inspection, the Grand Jury makes the following recommendations:

A. COURTHOUSE

1. Additional storage space should be found and provided for the Clerk of the Court. Records which are not frequently used should be retired to a separate storage area. The Grand Jury recommends that the County obtain microfilming facilities to enable microfilm storage of records.

2. Steps should be promptly taken to alleviate overcrowded working conditions in the Sheriff's Office, the Clerk's vault and the Bar Library.

3. Portable step stools should be located in the Bar Library, to facilitate access to books on top shelves.

4. The ceiling in the State's Attorney's Office should be lowered, as has been done in the offices used by the State's Attorney and Deputy State's Attorney, and floor-to-ceiling partitions erected to provide privacy in the offices used by assistant State's Attorneys.

5. The Grand Jury recommends that the State's Attorney hire at least one investigator to assist prosecutors in the investigation of complaints and in the follow-up investigations required for trial preparation.

6. A sprinkler system should be provided for fire protection throughout the Courthouse.

7. Additional file storage space should be provided for the Board of Election Supervisors.

8. Screens should be installed to cover all windows in the Courthouse, except those in which an air conditioner is installed. Screens should particularly be installed in bathroom windows.

9. Considering the antiquated physical condition of the Courthouse, and the importance of judicial proceedings, priority should be given by the County to addressing the needs of the Courthouse as certified by the Judges.

10. Damage caused by water leakage should be promptly repaired and steps taken immediately to prevent future leakage problems.

11. A staff of competent custodians should be provided on a regular daily basis to ensure that the Courthouse is kept clean and in good condition.

B. DETENTION CENTER

1. Considering the nature of a Detention Center, the fact that persons are involuntarily incarcerated there and are the responsibility of the County while imprisoned, and the potentially vandalous or destructive nature of some of the prisoners, the Grand Jurors recommend that inspections for faulty wiring, fire hazards, and other safety hazards be conducted at the Detention

Center on a more frequent basis than are routinely conducted for other Departments.

2. The Grand Jury recommends that the Detention Center have a nurse on duty five days per week.

3. Several longer length bunk beds should be obtained to accomodate taller prisoners.

4. Fresh towels and linens should be dispersed to inmates twice a week.

5. Some provisions should be made to afford reasonable privacy to inmates when using the commodes.

6. Space should be made available for visitors to await opportunity to visit inmates on visiting days, at some location other than the hallway in the basement.

7. The Grand Jurors concur with the recommendations of the February Term Grand Jury that the County Council should re-evaluate present plans to locate the new County Detention Center on the top floors of a new Courts Building, and that it is more desirable that a new Detention Center be constructed at a separate site, with adequate space for future expansion, outdoor recreation, and meaningful rehabilitative programs. The Grand Jurors observe that it is reasonable to anticipate that an already difficult parking situation will be made worse during and after construction of the proposed new Courts Building.

C. POPLAR HILL PRE-RELEASE UNIT

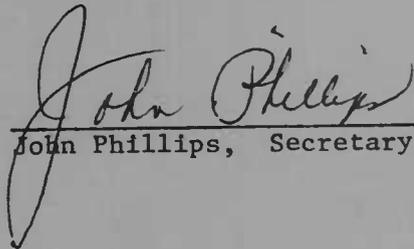
1. Antiquated and worn-out kitchen equipment should be replaced.

2. The Grand Jury recommends expansion of in-house medical services to care for routine non-emergency medical needs.

3. Increased utilization of training and educational programs
is desirable, and is recommended by the Grand Jury.

Respectfully submitted


Susan Porter, Foreman


John Phillips, Secretary

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MAR 15 2 46 PM '85

A. JAMES CLERK

Report Of The Grand Jury

FEBRUARY TERM, 1985

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR WICOMICO COUNTY
STATE OF MARYLAND

TO

THE HONORABLE, THE JUDGES OF SAID COURT

The Grand Jurors of the State of Maryland, for the body of Wicomico County, and of the aforesaid Term of the Circuit Court for Wicomico County, pray leave to submit the following Report:

FILED

Oct 18 2 19 PM '85
A. JAMES SMITH, CLERK

(1) The Grand Jury was convened and received its charge from Hon. Alfred T. Truitt, Judge of the Circuit Court for Wicomico County at 9:30AM, February 11, 1985.

(2) The Court appointed Don Herman to be Foreman. James McDonald was named secretary.

(3) State's Attorney Richard Warren reviewed the background of the Grand Jury system and discussed the types of cases we might be confronted with. The Grand Jury then proceeded to perform an inspection of the Wicomico County Courthouse and Detention Center.

(4) The Grand Jury made the following observations:

(A) The mechanical systems throughout the building are marginal to unsatisfactory.

(B) The entire building was over heated and there was insufficient local control of temperature. An engineering analysis to study relocation of existing thermostats and improving local temperature control is strongly recommended.

(C) Inspection of the Detention Center revealed the most extreme temperature control problems in the building.

(D) Some toilets in the cell areas appeared to be clogged, broken and unsanitary. The Grand Jury recommends that these be repaired immediately.

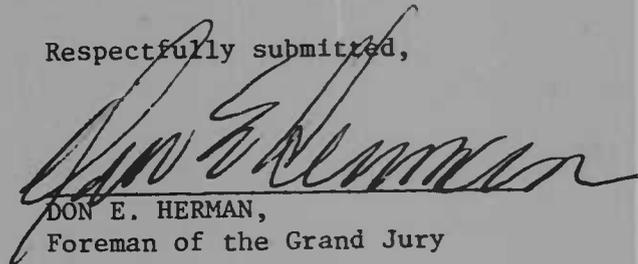
(5) The Grand Jury reassembled at 9:30AM, May 13, 1985, and the Court designated Chandler Hughes Assistant Foreman of the Grand Jury, due to the absence of the Foreman,

(6) On May 13, 1985, the Grand Jury received testimony concerning certain presentments made by the State's Attorney and conducted an inspection of the Poplar Hill Pre-Release Facility. Inspection of the facility showed it to be attractive and clean.

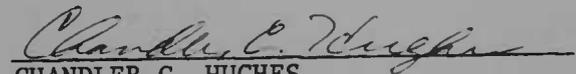
(7) The Grand Jury is concerned that the new State Prison in Somerset County should not affect the standards of Poplar Hill or the type of inmates sent there.

(8) The Grand Jurors wish to express their appreciation to State's Attorney Richard Warren for his assistance and advice in matters which came before and were considered by the Grand Jury.

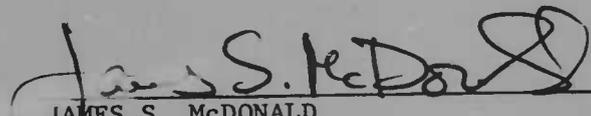
Respectfully submitted,



DON E. HERMAN,
Foreman of the Grand Jury



CHANDLER C. HUGHES,
Assistant Foreman of the Grand Jury



JAMES S. McDONALD,
Secretary of the Grand Jury

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OCT 10 2 10 PM '85

A. JAMES SMITH, CLERK

Report Of The Grand Jury

SEPTEMBER TERM, 1985

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR WICOMICO COUNTY
STATE OF MARYLAND

FILED
FEB 11 4 04 PM '86
A. JAMES SMITH, CLERK

TO

THE HONORABLE, THE JUDGES OF SAID COURT

The Grand Jurors of the State of Maryland, for the body of Wicomico County, and of the aforesaid Term of the Circuit Court for Wicomico County, pray leave to submit the following Report:

The September, 1985, Term of the Grand Jury for Wicomico County was convened September 9, 1985, and received its charge from Hon. Alfred T. Truitt, Judge of the Circuit Court for Wicomico County. Judge Truitt named Dennis Jones as Foreman and Arthur Page as Vice-Foreman of the Grand Jury.

After receiving its charge, the Grand Jury reassembled in the Grand Jury Room and selected Bobbie Cherrix to serve as Secretary.

On September 9, the Grand Jury inspected the Wicomico County Detention Center and the County Courthouse. Inspection of the Courthouse could not be completed on that date, and the Grand Jury reconvened on October 28 to complete inspection of the Courthouse. On October 29, the Grand Jury inspected Poplar Hill Pre-Release Unit.

Testimony was taken from County officials, concerning the condition of the Courthouse, on October 28 and on December 16, 1985.

The Grand Jury reconvened on January 20, 1986, and conducted an inspection of the County Health Department building on Carroll Street in Salisbury.

I. POPLAR HILL PRE-RELEASE UNIT

Poplar Hill Pre-Release Unit is a facility of the Maryland Division of Correction, located in Wicomico County. It houses State prisoners who have been certified as eligible for minimum security. Most inmates are within one year of either a targeted or mandatory release date. Many participate in a work release program, where they go to regular jobs during the day, and return to the facility after work.

The building and grounds are well maintained and kept in good order. Facilities for medical care, recreation, and education are provided and are, at least, adequate. Inmates eat at a central dining room. A balanced and nutritious diet is provided.

RECOMMENDATIONS: None.

WICOMICO COUNTY DETENTION CENTER (JAIL)

The Wicomico County jail, known as the Wicomico County Detention Center, is located on the top floor of the County Courthouse. It holds persons awaiting trial who were unable to post bond, and persons sentenced to terms of imprisonment for periods up to 179 days. Due to overcrowded conditions, the Detention Center has recently been sending several prisoners to other jails, principally, the Worcester County Detention Center. During warm weather periods, the Detention Center becomes very hot. Ventilation in the cell areas is poor.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Grand Jury concurs in the County Council's assessment of the need to build a new jail and recommends that plans for such a new facility be implemented with all practical speed.
2. Plans to relocate the jail should include planning for renovation and utilization of the Courthouse. Once considered a joint project, the needed improvements in both the jail facility and the court facilities have been separated into two projects since plans for a new Courts/ Jail Building were scrapped. Planning of a new jail facility and planning for renovation and utilization of the Courthouse are, in the estimation of the Grand Jury, inseparable.
3. Corrective action to improve ventilation in the present facility should be taken before the Summer of 1986.
4. Any new jail facility should be large enough to house an inmate population considerably larger than the present jail population, without double-celling of inmates.

COUNTY BUILDINGS

I. THE WICOMICO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT BUILDING

A. During the course of its inquiry into the condition of the Wicomico County Courthouse, the Grand Jury learned that several County officials considered rectification of problems at the Health Department Building to be a higher priority matter than at the Courthouse. On January 20, 1986, the Grand Jury conducted an inspection of the Health Department building .

B. In 1972, the Wicomico County Department of Health moved into new quarters on Carroll Street. From the very outset, the building was not adequate in size to accomodate the needs of the Department. The Department of Health currently utilizes at least four facilities to meet its needs. The main offices are located at the Carroll Street building (Fritz Center); mental health, drug, and alcohol counseling are housed in a converted house known as the Spring Hill Annex; file storage requires utilization of space in buildings near the Fritz Center; facilities for an alcoholism treatment program are located on Cedar Lane.

When originally designed, the Fritz Center was planned to be able to be expanded by additional construction. However, adequate land was not procured to enable such additional construction. According to the Director of the Health Department, a new facility is planned with proposed construction on Naylor Mill Road, near the proposed new Detention Center. Current plans call for about 60,000 square feet of space, which, according to the Director, will be barely adequate to accomodate the Department's current needs.

C. The Grand Jurors observed that the Health Department building is badly overcrowded. Working space for employees is inadequate. Storage area is virtually nonexistent; hallways and adjacent annex buildings are currently used for storage. There is no automated fire suppression system in the building.

The existent fire alarm is not connected to the Fire Department. In the event of a fire in the building, a telephone call would have to be made to summon firefighters. Although medicines and drugs are stored in the building, security is less than adequate. Detailed discussion of inadequacies in the security system is not appropriate for this Report.

A new roof is being put on the Health Department building to attempt to address water leakage problems.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Grand Jury recommends that all functions of the Health Department be centralized into a single facility.

2. The Grand Jury concurs with the County Council's assessment of the need for a new Health Department facility. The determination of priorities between this need and other County needs is, in the opinion of the Grand Jury, a political question on which comment by the Grand Jury is not appropriate.

3. Planning of a new Health Department building should take into account the growing list of services provided by that Department and the growing number of persons served by the Department. Any new facility should be large enough to fully accommodate the present and reasonably foreseeable future space needs of the Health Department. Space should be provided to enable the State Health Department's laboratory to relocate with the Health Department. If the State laboratory is not provided for, that laboratory may well relocate to Cambridge. If so, Wicomico County will lose a valuable service.

4. Current plans for a new Health Department building should be re-evaluated to determine whether the space to be provided is adequate, in order to avoid a repetition of the situation whereby the Health Department is now required to relocate from its present quarters after only 14 years of occupancy.

5. Any new Health Department building should be equipped with automated fire suppression devices and with a direct alarm line with the Fire Department. Law enforcement agencies should be consulted in regard to security measures.

II. THE WICOMICO COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The Grand Jury conducted inspections of the Courthouse on September 9 and on October 28, 1985. The conditions of the Courthouse were observed on each date on which the Grand Jury met. Testimony was taken from several County officials on October 28 and December 16, 1985.

A. OBSERVATIONS

1. The present condition of the Wicomico County Courthouse is deplorable and, in the opinion of the Grand Jury, a public disgrace. Its heating, plumbing, and climate control systems are antiquated, ineffective, and inefficient. Its working areas are hadly overcrowded and poorly arranged. Maintenance of the building appears primarily limited to temporary fixing of immediate problems without addressing long-term needs or solutions. Insect infestation is a constant and intolerable problem.

2. The hallways and many office areas are dismal in appearance. They are not conducive to good employee morale or positive public image of our County. Predictably, virtually all comments made by Courthouse employees to Grand Jurors about working conditions were negative in nature and overwhelmingly centered on the physical building facilities. The most common employee comments were (1) insect infestation, (2) lack of control of heating or cooling, (3) inadequate working space, (4) inconvenient working location, (5) water and sewage leakage, and (6) structural hazards.

3. Maintenance and cleaning of the building, as observed on September 9 and October 28 were poor. Public bathrooms were filthy. Paint was peeling from walls in several locations. A broken window was observed at the stairwell between the second and third floors; according to Courthouse employees, this window had been broken over a year ago. Since October 28, the Courthouse has appeared greatly improved in cleanliness. The broken window was repaired during the Term.

4. On September 9, 1985, one member of the Grand Jury narrowly missed injury when a large piece of the ceiling in the office of the State's Attorney fell. Grand Jurors were informed that the area of ceiling from which the piece fell was an area from which numerous water leakage problems had been experienced in the past, to such extent that files had been damaged. On October 28, the Grand Jury observed that the County had constructed a "drop ceiling" in that portion of the State's Attorney's Office, covering the area where the piece had fallen. No corrective measures had been taken to repair the original ceiling or to find and address the cause of the damage.

The original draft of this Report was to contain a prediction by the Grand Jury that further problems could be expected in this area of the ceiling. However, the "repaired" ceiling did not make it through the term of the Grand Jury. On December 20, large pieces of the "drop ceiling" fell, due to deterioration caused by continued water leakage from the original ceiling, in exactly the same spot where the ceiling piece fell on September 9. This water leakage problem is clearly the cause of both mishaps. Fortunately, in both incidents, no one was injured. The State's Attorney had moved a secretary's desk and file cabinets out of the area of the office where the ceiling problems occur; consequently there was no damage to files or typewriters or other equipment. However, the Grand Jury observes that (1) the State's Attorney can hardly afford not to utilize what little space is available in his office, and (2) the risk of personal injury and/or property damage will continue so long as the cause of the ceiling problem remains unaddressed.

5. On September 9, 1985, the Grand Jurors observed that water was leaking from the ceiling of the anteroom that separates the Judges' chambers from Court Room No. 1. This problem was being "addressed" by placing three waste baskets below the leaks, to catch the falling water.

6. On September 9, members of the Grand Jury observed a broken drain spout at the Northwest corner of the Courthouse. This was brought to the attention of County officials on October 28 and on December 16. It remains uncorrected, as of February 3, 1986.

7. The working conditions in the Sheriff's Office, as observed on September 9, 1985, were nothing short of disgraceful. The Office operated out of three different locations, not because of function distinction, but because of lack of adequate space at any one location. The main office, located at the Northeasterly corner of the basement of the Courthouse, was in generally good, but severly overcrowded condition. An interview and processing room located in the main office is, at best, barely adequate in size; it is clearly inadequate for effective or efficient accomodation of its purpose.

The Criminal Investigations Division of the Sheriff's Department was housed in a dungeon-like setting, in an "office" area set up in a part of the basement of the Courthouse that resembles the catacombs of the Middle Ages. In a third location, on the second floor of the Courthouse, an office area was set aside for use by deputies assigned to Court security.

Since September 9, the Criminal Investigations Division has been relocated to the second floor office area formerly utilized by the Court security deputies. The latter presently work out of the anteroom between the Judges' chambers and Court Room No. 1, where the water leakage was observed on September 9. Unless the cause of the September water leakage has been corrected, damage to files and equipment used by these deputies is predictable. The working space available to the Court Security deputies is grossly inadequate.

8. The Grand Jurors were informed by County officials that the total appropriation for maintenance of the Courthouse is about \$100,000. This sum includes the cost of custodial maintenance and energy (fuel) costs. This

appropriation is based on proposals and estimates given to the County Council by the County Director of Purchasing, whose office is located in the Government Office Building. No office or agency housed in the Courthouse has any direct input into proposals or estimates for Courthouse maintenance costs.

9. The Wicomico County Courthouse was originally built in 1878. Its size was greatly expanded by the construction of an addition over 50 years ago. Until the recent completion of the Government Office Building, adjacent to the Courthouse, the building housed many of the County's administrative offices, including the offices of the County Council, the County Administrator, the Director of Purchasing, and the Director of Finance. The County administrative offices, including those named above, are presently housed in the Government Office Building. Responsibility for and authority over the maintenance of the Courthouse remains with the office of the Director of Purchasing, and moved with that office to the Government Office Building. Since the relocation of the Purchasing Director, and the other County administrative offices, no agency or office actually housed in the Courthouse has any authority over or responsibility for the maintenance of the building.

10. Several years ago, the County government planned construction of a new building to house both a new Detention Center and new Court facilities. Tied in with these plans were plans for renovation of the present Courthouse. Although a present need for a new heating plant in the old Courthouse was then recognized, plans called for installation of a new heating plant in conjunction with the planned renovation of the Courthouse. Recently, the plans for a Courts/Detention Center building were scrapped, due to cost estimate overruns. Present plans call for the construction of a new Detention Center on Naylor Mill Road. The plans for new Court facilities and the plans for renovation of the Courthouse have been abandoned. The planned replacement of the Courthouse heating plant has likewise

been abandoned, although the need for replacement of the heating plant is today more critical than when the need was recognized several years ago.

11. Working conditions in the State's Attorney's Office are badly overcrowded. Files are stored at several different places within the office, due to lack of adequate space at any one location. Attorneys responsible for prosecution of felonies and other major cases have barely enough room in which to work. One attorney's "office" consists of a desk and a chair placed in what was once an entry foyer : an area of about 8 ft. by 10 ft., with neither window nor ventilation. An office area for another attorney has been arranged in a common access area by using a portable partition to divide his "office" from the area of common access. Two attorneys share an office area formerly used by the secretary to the Liquor Board. Only the State's Attorney himself has an office where consultations and interviews can be held with any degree of privacy. Files for Juvenile cases are stored in the private law office of an attorney who works part-time for the State's Attorney's Office; there is no room to store those files in the State's Attorney's Office. Nor is any space available in the office for utilization by the part-time attorneys who handle Juvenile cases, District Court cases, or Support Enforcement matters. The secretaries assigned to Support Enforcement matters, and the files associated with such matters, are located in office space being rented by the County in a building on North Division Street, due to lack of space in the Courthouse.

The State's Attorney's functions are being performed, in part, from locations in a building on North Division Street, and from the private law offices of part-time Assistant State's Attorneys. The Grand Jury observes that Article 10, Section 40(w) of the Annotated Code of Maryland requires the State's Attorney for Wicomico County to maintain and staff an office in the Wicomico County Courthouse. Lack of adequate space in the Courthouse makes compliance

with the spirit, if not the letter, of this law a physical impossibility.

Implicit in this law, in the opinion of the Grand Jury, is a requirement that the County provide space to enable the State's Attorney to comply.

12. During its inspection of the Courthouse on October 28, the Grand Jury observed that there was no carpet in one of the file rooms of the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, although there was carpeting in all other file rooms and in the remainder of the office. In response to inquiry made by Grand Jurors, employees of that office advised that the carpet that had been in that room had been ruined by water leakage from the ceiling, and had to be taken up. The "water leakage" apparently included sewage.

13. Several windows on the ground floor of the Courthouse are without screens. Windows in the public bathrooms on the second floor are likewise without screens; these windows are frequently opened to provide ventilation in warm weather. The Grand Jurors were informed that a number of screens had been removed from windows when the Courthouse exterior trim was repainted several years ago, but never replaced.

14. The Grand Jury for the September, 1985, Term notes with considerable dismay that nearly everything reported herein has been reported by previous Grand Jury Reports, dating back to, at least, 1972.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Grand Jury recommends that the broken drainspout at the Northwest corner of the Courthouse be immediately repaired.

2. The Grand Jury recommends that all windows of the Courthouse be equipped with screens, to enable Courthouse employees to cope with inadequate present climate control without allowing insect pests to enter. Windows on the

first floor and basement should be screened not only for purposes of ventilation, but also for purposes of security.

3. The Grand Jury recommends that the Courthouse heating plant be immediately replaced.

4. The Grand Jury recommends that the County take immediate action to ascertain the causes of water leakage from the ceilings in the State's Attorney's Office, the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, the anteroom adjoining the Judges' chambers, and elsewhere in the Courthouse, and that corrective action to remedy the causes of these problems be taken without delay, to minimize the potential for personal injury or property damage.

5. The Grand Jury recommends that the County undertake immediately to determine the causes of pest infestation in the Courthouse and to take corrective action to eliminate the causes and eradicate the pests.

6. The Grand Jury recommends that the County Council take immediate action to conduct a thorough assessment of needs and feasibility of major Courthouse renovation to correct structural defects, to provide adequate and efficient climate control, to replace outmoded plumbing, wiring, and heating, and to provide adequate and efficient working space for employees.

7. The Grand Jury recommends that the County government implement procedures for ensuring that problems traceable to structural defects or defects in the physical plant, including plumbing, heating, and wiring, are remedied by addressing the cause of the problem and not merely by cosmetic repair.

8. The Grand Jury recommends that the County employ a regular custodial crew for custodial maintenance of the Courthouse. If contractual crews must be employed, such crews should be screened for security risks and criminal records.

9. The Grand Jury recommends that the County Council consult with the Sheriff and the Judges of the Circuit Court to determine the adequacy of Courthouse security, and take prompt action to provide adequate security personnel, working areas, and facilities.

10. The Grand Jury recommends that the County government take prompt action to provide the Sheriff's Office with suitable and adequate facilities and working space to accommodate all functions in a single location.

11. The Grand Jury recommends that the County government take prompt action to provide the Office of the State's Attorney with suitable and adequate facilities and working space to accommodate all functions in a single location within the Courthouse.

12. The Grand Jury recommends that agencies presently housed in the Courthouse, but which are not directly connected to the operation of the Courts, be relocated to provide adequate space for the courts and court-related agencies.

13. The Grand Jury recommends that the County designate one single agency housed in the Courthouse as having authority for and responsibility for maintenance of the Courthouse building and the common hallways and other common areas of the building, or in the alternative, create a Courthouse Commission or Committee for this purpose. Such agency or committee should participate in the preparation of budget proposals for courthouse maintenance. Such agency or committee should have authority to direct maintenance actions, repairs, and purchases (within County procurement regulations) for the upkeep, repair, and maintenance of the Courthouse.

14. During its term, the Grand Jury became aware of a letter written to the County Council by Judge Richard M. Pollitt, of the Circuit Court. The

Grand Jurors have read Judge Pollitt's letter and concur with his comments concerning the condition of the Courthouse. The Grand Jury recommends that the County Council take immediate action to ensure that the matters referred to by Judge Pollitt are adequately and properly addressed and remedied.

15. The Grand Jury is aware that the University of Maryland is presently conducting a survey of the Courthouse by architectural students, to design improved accessibility for handicapped persons. The Grand Jury recommends that if any such plans are adopted, they be incorporated into any renovations that are decided upon.

FINALLY, AND IN CONCLUSION, the Grand Jury, being aware that this Report, once filed with the Clerk of the Circuit Court for Wicomico County, becomes a public record and is available for inspection by any interested person, and is made available to various County officials, nevertheless specifically requests that this Report, once it is reviewed and approved by the Court, be photocopied and that photocopies of this Report be distributed directly to each member of the Wicomico County Council, to the Administrative Director of Wicomico County, the Director of Purchasing for Wicomico County, the Wicomico County Sheriff, and the Warden of the Wicomico County Detention Cent4r.

DATE: February 3, 1986

SIGNED:

Dennis A. Jones
FOREMAN OF THE GRAND JURY

Lobbe J. Chew
SECRETARY

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A. JAMES SMITH, CLERK

*Copies delivered by
State's Attorney
Office JB*

IN RE * IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
THE GRAND JURY * FOR WICOMICO COUNTY
FOR WICOMICO COUNTY *
SEPTEMBER TERM, 1985 * STATE OF MARYLAND

* * * * *

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT OF GRAND JURY

To The Honorable, the Judges of said Court:

The September, 1985, Term of the Grand Jury for Wicomico County, having been convened September 9, 1985, and extended by Order of the Circuit Court on February 14, 1986, in order to complete its inquiry into the conditions of the Wicomico County Courthouse, begs leave to submit the following Supplementary Report:

On June 23, 1986, the Grand Jurors reconvened and received a report of a security survey conducted by the Baltimore Police Department at the request of the Sheriff of Wicomico County. An unannounced inspection of the Detention Center was conducted and the Grand Jury's Report was reviewed.

On August 4, 1986, the Grand Jurors again reconvened, and received testimony from County Administrator Matthew E. Creamer regarding the recommendations made in the Grand Jury Report, and from the Clerk of the Circuit Court, regarding water damage sustained by his Office on July 11, 1986.

Based upon the testimony received and its observations, the Grand Jurors find

1. that the broken drainspout at the Northwest corner of the Courthouse has been repaired, however a second drainspout has broken and is scheduled for repair in the near future;
2. that the County has been unable to locate screens to fit the unscreened windows of the Courthouse, and such windows (referred to in the Report) remain unscreened;

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A. JAMES SMITH, CLERK

3. that the County has replaced the broken burner of the Courthouse heating plant and has cleaned and repaired the boiler, however complete refurbishing of the heating system by replacing pipes and fixtures will not be addressed until a complete review of the feasibility of renovation of the Courthouse is completed;

4. that water leakage from plumbing remains a serious problem at the Courthouse, which is being addressed on a case-by-case basis as problems arise, with systematic over-all corrective action deferred until after relocation of the Detention Center and until a complete feasibility study of Courthouse renovation is completed;

5. that corrective action to control pest infestation has been taken, but with little chance of complete success unless and until food sources that attract pests are eliminated;

6. that the County has contracted with a consulting firm to undertake a complete study of the needs and feasibility of major renovation of the Courthouse;

7. that problems attributable to structural defects and defects in the physical facilities of the Courthouse are primarily addressed by case-by-case crisis management, with efforts being made to find and address the cause of the individual problem;

8. that custodial maintenance of the Courthouse is still being performed by contractors, but not by the same contractor that performed those services last fall; that the County submitted the names of the members of the new cleaning crew to the Sheriff's office to screen for criminal records;

9. that the County Council has consulted with the Sheriff and the judges of the Circuit Court with regard to Courthouse security, has authorized the employment of additional deputy sheriffs for Courthouse security, and has contracted for procurement of necessary equipment and hardware for increased security;

10. that the Sheriff's Department has been allocated additional space in the Courthouse, but not at a single location within the Courthouse;

11. that no change has been made in the facilities provided for the State's Attorney's Office, except that one function of that Office (support enforcement) is now being performed by the Attorney-General's Office and the Department of Social Services, thereby eliminating the need to rent additional office space outside of the Courthouse for that function;

12. that there has been no relocation of agencies not directly connected with operation of the Courts to facilities outside of the Courthouse;

13. that no single agency within the Courthouse has overall responsibility or authority for maintenance of the Courthouse;

14. that there has been some improvement in the appearance of the Courthouse, but that the building and its occupants remain beset with major problems attributable to the age of the building and the condition of its physical facilities, many of which will not be addressed until completion of a study of the feasibility of major renovation; and

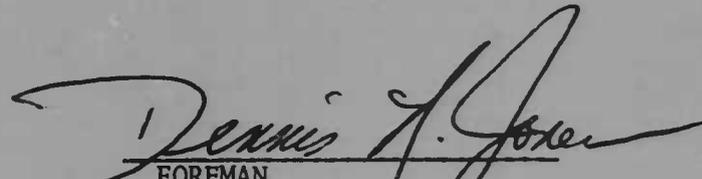
15. that the County has received no report from the University of Maryland on the results of the architectural study undertaken by students of the School of Architecture.

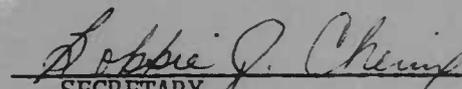
HAVING COMPLETED ITS INSPECTION OF THE WICOMICO COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND ITS FOLLOW-UP TO THE GRAND JURY REPORT SUBMITTED IN FEBRUARY, the Grand Jury recommends

1. that the County give high priority to the upkeep and maintenance of the Courthouse and to addressing problems from a long-range perspective to improve the conditions that exist in the Courthouse; and

2. that the State's Attorney for Wicomico County make available to the Grand Jury for the September Term, 1986, copies of this Supplementary Report and

the original Report of this Grand Jury, to ensure that there is continued follow-up to the problems and deficiencies observed by this Grand Jury.


FOREMAN


SECRETARY

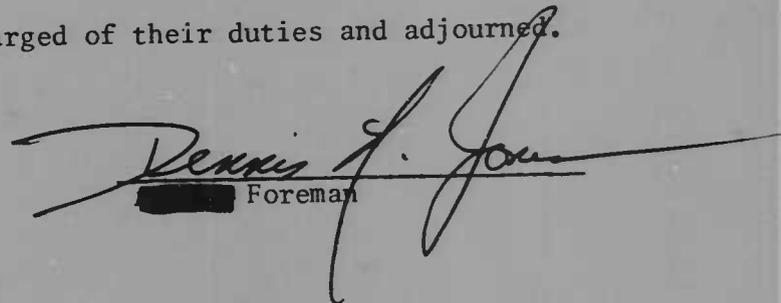
IN RE
THE GRAND JURY
FOR WICOMICO COUNTY
SEPTEMBER TERM, 1985

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR WICOMICO COUNTY
STATE OF MARYLAND

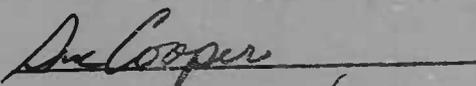
PETITION FOR DISCHARGE OF GRAND JURY

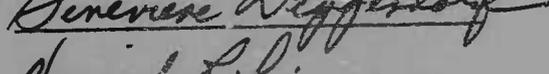
To the honorable, the Judges of said Court:

Come now the Grand Jurors for the body of Wicomico County, of the September, 1985, Term of Court and pray leave to submit the attached Supplementary Report and to be discharged of their duties and adjourned.


Foreman

MEMBERS OF THE GRAND JURY:



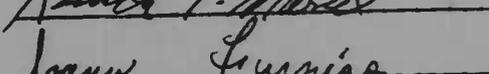
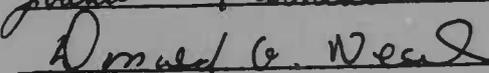



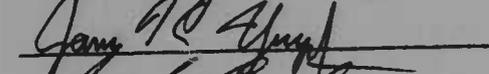
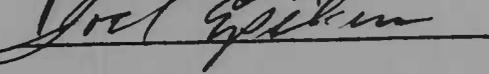






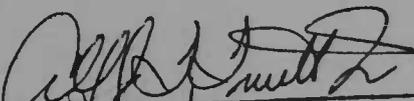



ORDER

BY ORDER OF THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR WICOMICO, the Grand Jury for Wicomico County, for the September, 1985, Term of Court is hereby adjourned and the members of said Grand Jury are hereby discharged of their duties and obligations as Grand Jurors, this 4th day of September, 1986.



JUDGE

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A. JAMES SMITH, CLERK