



NEWS RELEASE
GREENE COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
DAN PATTERSON

Contact: Rhonda Ogden, Office Manager – (417) 868-4061
1010 Boonville
Springfield, MO 65802

November 30, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GREENE COUNTY GRAND JURY COMPLETES SERVICE AND REPORT

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Dan Patterson, Greene County Prosecuting Attorney, announces that the final report of the 2018 Grand Jury was delivered today to the Honorable Mark A. Powell, Judge of Associate Division Twenty-Four of the 31st Judicial Circuit. Attached is a copy of that report. The grand jury was empaneled on May 11, 2018, and was discharged on November 8, 2018, after serving a six-month term.

Prosecutor Patterson thanks the grand jurors for their dedicated service. Over the past six months, the grand jurors devoted two days each month to hear cases. During their service, the grand jurors made decisions on cases involving eighty-three individuals issuing eighty-two indictments and finding one no true bill. Several of the cases indicted involved violent offenses that the grand jury heard within weeks of the events. Prosecutor Patterson said, “Grand juries are an important way for our citizens to be directly involved in the criminal justice system as provided for by both the United States Constitution and the Missouri Constitution. The grand jury assists in expediting indicted cases to the Circuit Court for trial or disposition. The work of these citizens helped minimize the number of times domestic, sex and child victims would have to testify, facilitated the consolidation of cases involving offenders who continued to commit crimes while on bond, more efficiently charged multiple victim property offense cases, allowed the rapid charging in Circuit Court of dangerous offenders, and assisted charging in complicated homicide cases.”

###

Grand Jury Report

November 8, 2018

This Grand Jury was called by The Honorable Michael J. Cordonnier, Presiding Judge, 31st Judicial Circuit, Greene County, Missouri, at the request of the Prosecuting Attorney. The Grand Jury was charged and sworn on May 11, 2018, by The Honorable Mark A. Powell who presided over the Grand Jury. We were charged with making inquiry and returning indictments for all grades of crimes in Greene County, Missouri. Additionally, the Grand Jury inspected Greene County public buildings and the jail.

Pursuant to State law, Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson acted as our legal advisor. Assistant Prosecuting Attorneys acted as our legal advisors from time to time as well.

Criminal Indictments

This Grand Jury heard testimony and voted to return a “True Bill” in the following categories of cases:

Murder.....	<u>19</u>	indictments
Adult Sex Offenses	<u>6</u>	indictments
Property Fraud Offenses.....	<u>16</u>	indictments
Violent Crime.....	<u>22</u>	indictments
Drugs.....	<u>5</u>	indictments
Crimes against children including sex offenses.....	<u>14</u>	indictments

This Grand Jury voted to return a “No True Bill” in 1 case(s).

County Facilities Report

Overall Campus

Parking Situation

In the process of constructing new facilities, the county has lost a significant amount of parking space. The parking situation is serious enough that it frequently causes courtroom delays and traffic congestion. We encourage the county to develop a plan to create more parking. We also recommend the county install security features in all parking areas, especially in parking areas used by judges, court personnel, and law enforcement.

Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers have not been maintained or inspected throughout the campus. In the interest of the safety of county employees and citizens, we strongly recommend the county conduct regular annual inspections and ensure that all fire extinguishers and other safety equipment is properly maintained.

Storage

A majority of the offices we toured were struggling to make due with insufficient storage area. We recommend the county look for ways to assist all departments in converting paper files to an electronic format wherever possible. These improvements will likely result in safer buildings, cost-efficient storage practices, organized county offices, and room for continued growth.

Medical Examiner's Office/Morgue

During our tour of the Medical Examiner's Office, we observed that smells from the autopsy area escape into the office area, posing a possible health risk. We also observed that sounds from the autopsy room loudly reverberate throughout the facility.

We recommend the county fix the ventilation system to ensure no smells or particles escape when the exhaust fan is used during autopsies. We also recommend the county install soundproof panels to contain sensitive conversations to the autopsy room only.

Public Safety Center

Office of Emergency Management

We commend the county for having the foresight to provide the Office of Emergency Management with a beautiful new space in the Public Safety Center building. During our tour, we learned the Office of Emergency Management shares meeting spaces with the Sheriff's Office and the community at large. This occasionally results in scheduling conflicts. We also noted the Office of Emergency Management is using technology that is eight years old.

We suggest that the county evaluate the procedures for reserving training rooms in the Public Safety Center to ensure the most efficient use of the county's newest facility. We also suggest the county explore the feasibility of upgrading the technology used by the Office of Emergency Management.

Cox Medical Tower

This section provides an overall critique from tours of the following departments: Greene County Commissioner's Office, Public Administration Office, and Prosecuting Attorney's Office

The aforementioned county offices are located on the sixth, seventh, eighth, and tenth floors of the Cox Medical Tower. After a tour of this building, we are happy to report that the offices are clean and attractive and they provide enough space to accommodate the respective county departments for the immediate future.

However, we have serious concerns about the safety of county employees at this off-campus location. As part of the county's lease agreement, Cox Health provides intermittent security sweeps and surveillance, but it does not offer a constant security or law enforcement presence. County employees have no secure parking, elevators, or stairwells. There are also no metal detectors in the main lobby of Cox Medical Tower even though county employees share this entrance with employees and patrons of several important community organizations, including the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Burrell Behavioral Health, Jordan Valley Community Health Center, and Missouri Job Center. The potential security threat is exacerbated by the fact that many county employees at the Cox Medical Tower must drive a personal vehicle or walk several blocks to the main campus several times a day.

We are also concerned about the expenses incurred by the county in leasing four floors of an off-site location. We consider not only the cost of the lease itself, but also the incidental costs associated with maintaining several county offices outside of the main campus. For example, we note that the majority of the Prosecuting Attorney's Office is now located at Cox Medical Tower, but the Victim/Witness Office is still located at the Judicial Court Facility.

We strongly recommend that the county take immediate action to increase the safety of county employees and the security of county resources currently located at Cox Medical Tower. We would like to see the county evaluate the long-term practicality of leasing office space rather than building or repurposing office space nearer to the main campus.

Archives and Records Center

We are very impressed with the new voting machines used by the records center. We also commend the county for taking steps to make the Archive and Records Center a LEED-certified building. We are concerned, however, that the HVAC system does not keep the temperature and humidity levels of the building stable enough to adequately preserve and archive documents. We also observe that storage space continues to be an issue and more cabinets are needed for the storage of maps in particular.

We suggest the county reassess the feasibility of maintaining the Archive and Records Center as a LEED-certified building when climate control is such a vital aspect of safely preserving historical documents. Additionally, we believe more space could be created in the Archives and Records Center if they had more assistance with scanning and microfilming new documents.

Juvenile Court and Detention Center

Many portions of the Juvenile Court and Detention Center have fallen into disrepair. Of critical importance, we found that the elevator is unreliable. We found that the sump pump is not reliable or adequate after finding that a portion of the basement floods and has a lingering smell. We also discovered noticeable cracks and leaks in the skylight and determined the glass will likely need replacement. We noticed the lawns are unkempt and observed that the inmate cells and gym need new paint and taping. We observed that the Juvenile Court and Detention Center urgently needs a new control board and cameras. Finally, we learned the staff would prefer to return to using their own cook and menu to ensure better nutrition for the inmates.

The Juvenile Court and Detention Center is also short on adequate space. It needs a bigger and cozier waiting area, because there is often no room for everyone who comes to the Center. The Center needs additional bathrooms and more than one attorney/client meeting room. During our tour, we learned that the Juvenile Court and Detention Center might potentially need even more space by 2021, in order to comply with a new law that will require them to assist minors under the age 18. As a short-term solution, we suggest the Center may be able to free up more space by scanning and shredding large amounts of stored files.

We recommend the county make repairs to the facility as soon as practicable for the health and safety of the many employees and families who use the Juvenile Court and Detention Center every day. We also recommend the county assess the long-term utility of the Juvenile and Court Detention Center to determine whether an expansion is needed.

Judicial Court Facility (Courthouse)

Circuit Clerk's Office

The Circuit Clerk's Office is still in urgent need of more storage space and additional staff to assist the office in moving boxes of files into electronic or microfilm storage. We also note there is a continuous staffing shortage in the Circuit Clerk's Office due to frequent turnover. We recommend the county allocate resources to the process of converting files from paper to electronic format.

The Family Justice Center

We are impressed with the new Family Justice Center and feel it is a very promising endeavor. We have no suggested changes for this facility. We look forward to seeing how this new county resource improves the lives of Greene County families.

Courtrooms

During our tour, we learned of exciting new upgrades to the courtroom video-conferencing equipment and looked at the new screens and projectors in each courtroom. We appreciate the

county's efforts to improve the audio equipment and soundproof each courtroom. We were also advised additional technological updates have already been approved in the current budget. We feel these expenditures are appropriate uses of county resources and expect that the resulting upgrades will be beneficial.

We observed some room for improvement in the court facilities as well. We would like to see the county create more attorney-client meeting rooms and holding cells for prisoners preparing to be seen by judges. During our tour, we noticed that the family court is too close in proximity to the front door and would benefit from a larger intake area so that opposing parties can maintain a comfortable distance from each other. We also recommend the county consider building a dedicated Grand Jury room so that the county may maintain a standing grand jury.

Sheriff's Office

During our tour of the facilities, we discovered several serious health and safety concerns. For example, leaks in the plumbing system have caused sewage to repeatedly soil carpets in the Sheriff's Office. Such conditions are unacceptable to this Grand Jury. We advise that the county immediately repair the leaks and fully remedy the sanitation issue in order to prevent any further sickness or contamination.

We observed that there is a shortage of space in the current facilities as well. We found filing cabinets in the hallways and near exit doors, which creates a possible fire hazard. There are three men's bathrooms but only one women's bathroom. There is also a need for an attorney-client room somewhere within the Sheriff's Office. Most importantly, we found that the evidence room does NOT have enough space to appropriately organize and safely store evidence.

We recommend the county proceed with its plans to expand the Greene County Jail. These improvements will likely create more space for the entire Sheriff's Office. We also recommend the county allocate resources to create one large evidence room that allows for anticipated future growth.

County Jail Inspection Report

Although the jail staff does an exceptional job of fully utilizing all security measures at their disposal, it is evident from our tour that the jail is dangerously overcrowded. We discovered that the unacceptably high ratio of inmates to deputies poses a critical safety risk to both deputies and inmates. We strongly recommend that the county immediately hire more deputies and detention officers.

The shortage of available space is also evident in the medical care facility and the booking area. Medical staff need more space to conduct intake assessments and treat inmates. Additional space would be especially helpful in cases where medical staff are assisting inmates with

infectious diseases and detoxification. We found that the booking area is dirty and worn and in need of more space as well.

We again stress the importance of the county's plan to expand the Greene County Jail, and encourage the county to consider the feasibility of increasing the size of the medical care facility and booking area. We are hopeful that these improvements will increase deputy safety and provide safe and sanitary housing for the growing number of inmates.

We also encourage the county to give attention to the overall condition of the current jail facility. During our tour of the jail, we discovered leaks from the roof and stained ceiling tiles. We also noticed mold, odor, and humidity issues in the jail. It is our opinion that an upgrade to the HVAC system would improve air quality, decrease humidity, and prevent mold in the jail. We recommend the county allocate resources to repair all leaks and possible plumbing issues.

Historic Courthouse

Despite its age, the Historic Courthouse is surprisingly clean and functional. We found room for improvement in only a few of areas of the Courthouse, as follows:

Treasurer's Office

The Treasurer's Office seems to be in good working order except for an overall lack of storage space. As previously suggested, this problem may be remedied by converting files from paper to electronic format.

County Clerk's Office

We were pleased to learn The County Clerk's Office has reached a point where it has a good level of staffing. However, we were troubled to find a breakroom that is not safe or appropriate for preparing or eating food. The breakroom was more of a converted storeroom with mold on the walls and electrical wires hanging down. We recommend the county make improvements to this space or create a new area where employees may safely prepare and eat food.

We also learned that the County Clerk's Office has been trying to work with a broken Cardex System. It is now broken to the point of being unusable and the repair parts are no longer available. We recommend the county provide this office with a replacement Cardex System as soon as possible.

Collector's Office

We were impressed with the condition and functionality of this office. No changes are recommended for this office at this time.

Recorder of Deed's Office

We found several unsealed windows in the Recorder of Deed's Office. We also found a leak in the storage room. We recommend the county make these repairs as soon as possible.

Auditor's Office

We found unsealed windows in this office as well. We recommend the county make these repairs as soon as possible.

Assessor's Office

We were satisfied with the overall condition of this office. During our tour, we learned not all departments using information from the Assessor's Office are using the same software system. We recommend the county take steps to streamline the exchange of information between departments where possible. While this is an outlay of budget dollars, time and frustration will be saved with the increased efficiency.

Highway Department

During our tour of the Highway Department facility, we found this department does not have enough space to store its expensive and critical equipment under one roof. We were concerned to learn there are health concerns at this location due to creosote in the groundwater. We also observe this facility is located in an unsafe area of town. We suggest the county look at the feasibility of moving this facility to a more appropriate location with room for growth in the coming years. It was suggested (by director) that the county consider purchasing 20-30 acres of land.

Facilities Tour Summary

This Grand Jury is pleased to observe so many offices of the county government working hard for the benefit of the community. It is encouraging to find so many departments putting county resources to good use and making improvements in multiple areas. Recognizing that resources are limited, we ask the county to give top priority to the following concerns:

- Provide temporary quarters to, or move, the sheriff's staff affected by sewer leaks.
- Increasing the safety and security of the entire campus
- Alleviating parking and traffic congestion
- Free up immediate space by hiring temps to scan every possible document to disk.
- Repair existing buildings that will be kept before building new. It is more costly to let buildings continue to deteriorate.
- Improving staffing, especially in the Greene County Jail

The Grand Jury would like to thank the following individuals for their support and collaboration with the Greene County Prosecuting Attorney's Office; United State District Court Judge Douglas Harpool, United States Magistrate Judge David Rush, United State Attorney Timothy Garrison, and Steve Burch, Division Manager, United State District Court Clerk.

The preceding report was compiled by the following Grand Jurors, who convened as a Grand Jury from May 11, 2018 to November 8, 2018:

John M. ...

Harold ...

[Signature]

Stephanie ...

Andy ...

Curtis ...

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]