

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF HINDS COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

First Judicial District Empanelled July 2014 TERM

**FILED**

TO THE HINDS COUNTY CIRCUIT JUDGES:

REPORT OF THE GRAND JURY

OCT - 2 2014

BARBARA DUNN, CIRCUIT CLERK

BY \_\_\_\_\_ D.C.

Jail

We have made a personal inspection of the County Jail located in the First Judicial District of Hinds County. While at the jail, we witnessed the immediate after effects of arson, a prisoner exposed himself to us and we witnessed a prisoner in possession of a cell phone (a felony). Jail staff informed the Grand Jurors inspecting the Jail that occurrences like these were beneath the Sheriff's notice. Additionally, we noted that there were not enough officers to secure the Jail. Those officers that were on duty there were frightened of the inmates. The inmates seemed to be in control of the Jail as a result of the shortage of guards. Because of the noted problems, we issued subpoenas for County and Jail staff to appear before the Grand Jury and explain the situation at the Jail in addition to our inspections.

As to the physical facilities, we find the Jail building in the First Judicial District of Hinds County is in adequate condition, and sufficient for the safekeeping, accommodation, and health of prisoners except as noted below:

Control room/ booking:

Control room needs updated cameras/ colored monitors.

Monitors are very dim it is necessary to turn out lights in order to see the images on the screen.

Elevator breaks down and has an odor.

The interview room, mold is visible on the air vent and ceiling.

The air vents are rusty and the building is not well ventilated. In addition, there are tiles missing from the ceiling. Water is visible on the floor.

Inmate area:

Mildewed tiles are in shower.

Tissue in door frames to prevent the doors from locking.

3rd floor lights are out in the hallway.

Room 307 has a 3" hole in window. (This in not the first report of this problem)

782-316

The 4th floor ceiling tiles hanging down from the ceiling.

Room 401d shower tiles missing and there is a crack in the glass.

Room 402 has a deadbolt missing. We are told that inmates disable lights in this area.

Room 406 has a window that is cracked.

Room 408 is completely destroyed.

Room 409 has a broken window. It is shattered and dangerous.

Room 412 has a crack in window and a sheet in top of door.

The kitchen and laundry room were okay at the time of inspection.

#### Staffing:

Lastly, the staffing appeared to be inadequate in quantity and quality. A female deputy was supervising male inmates alone. Inmates were attempting to break glasses as we entered the floor. Neither staff nor inmates were initially aware that we were there.

More training and staff presence are recommended by this Grand Jury. Specifically, we recommend that guards be paid a rate that is competitive with surrounding counties. We recommend that additional training for guards be instituted. Current training is insufficient.

#### Jail Conclusion:

After hearing from the Sheriff and his team, we are of the opinion that Sheriff Lewis is incompetent to oversee the jail or keep pretrial detainees or state inmates in a safe manner or to keep the public safe from the inmates. Therefore, we recommend that any Hinds County Circuit Judge or Chancellor remove the jail from the sheriff's control and remove any power Sheriff Lewis has to supervise pre-trial detainees or inmates pursuant to Mississippi Code Ann. § 19-25-9 as he is incapable and unfit for this duty of his office.

Finally, our findings relate only to the fitness of Sheriff Tyrone Lewis to competently execute his office and should not be construed to interfere with any other agency or individuals review and attempts to improve the Hinds County Jail or detention facilities.

## Courthouse

We have made a personal inspection of the County Courthouse located in the First Judicial District of Hinds County and find it is in good and safe condition except as noted below:

General- The security cameras are inadequate for the safety of the public. They are more than 25 years old.

All Courthouse elevators are in poor repair although some have been under repair.

Basement- The vents have suffered water damage.

Basement security cameras are put up with tape.

There are sharp metal edges on some corners that need to be repaired.

There is damage to the ceiling of the Election Commission's Office.

Carpet is a hazard and needs to be replaced.

Public men's restroom- urinals will not flush.

Public women's bathroom has a damaged vent, a sink with a broken handle, and poorly functioning toilets.

Circuit Clerk's Office- The linoleum style tile is a hazard in that it was laid on top of the previous carpet and keeps coming up. Some of the tile is currently held down with tape.

There is a constant drip of water from the ceiling that is damaging the Clerk's Office.

The air conditioner in the Clerk's Office has not worked for two or three years. When turned on it makes sparks and is a fire and electrical hazard.

All other floors are adequately safe.

Tax Related Books and Reports

We have examined the Tax books, reports and settlements of the County and find them in good condition and order as far as we can tell.

We now ask that we be excused.

AFFIDAVIT:

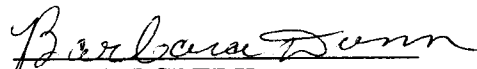
I am the foreman of the Grand Jury, and this is inspection report of the Grand Jury

  
FOREMAN OF THE GRAND JURY

The above-named Grand Jury foreman personally appeared before me and made the above affidavit.

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED before me this the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of

October 2014.

  
CIRCUIT CLERK  
HINDS COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI