Del Norte Triplicate

NEWS

Board approves Shasta as back up for juvenile services

January 11, 2024



A special board of supervisors meeting was called to discuss and approve an expiring juvenile rehabilitation agreement with Shasta County for placement and back up services. Chief Probation Officer Lonnie Reyman reported to the supervisors that Humboldt Juvenile Hall is the primary facility used for detention for many reasons, and the desired location for detaining youth, However, there are occasions Humboldt Juvenile Hall may not be able to accept a ward due to over-population, under-staffing or poor road accessibility.

Reyman addressed the board, “I’ve stated since we began discussions regarding the closure of our own Juvenile Hall, back up contracts are needed to ensure we have access to safe and appropriate detention facilities when that need arises.”

Reyman worked to establish a contract with Shasta County after Sonoma County was under-staffed and unable to add a Del Norte ward to a Sonoma sex offender program. In late September 2022, the board approved a contract with Shasta which expired December 21, 2023, thus requiring this special meeting.

Probation has maintained the contract with the Shasta Juvenile Rehabilitation facility, as a redundant ward detention option.

Del Norte County counsel expressed its opposition to the agreement. County counsel's opinion was any contract is required to include and operate under joint powers language.

The joint powers language is included with Del Norte's agreement with Humboldt. 2nd District Supervisor Valerie Starkey expressed her "heartburn," as she put it, and concern the board was not adhering to county counsel advice and the agreement should not be signed until counsel approved the additional joint powers language that, again, does exist in the Humboldt contract.

Shasta County declined to alter or include in the current contract the joint powers language. The Shasta County youth facility was built with SB 81 funding and mandates all oversight be approved by both the California State Public Works Board and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Shasta probation administration cited complicating the agreement by attempting to modify the existing custody contract was problematic. According to Reyman‘s board report, Del Norte counsel indicated it could accept the absence of no joint powers language on the condition a local court standing order would delineate Humboldt County as the primary detention facility and Shasta would be utilized in an "overflow" capacity.

Reyman also further clarified his department currently enjoys a custody contract with Sonoma County that is due to expire at the end of this month. Reyman cited the additional 1.5 to two-hour, one-way travel time to Santa Rosa and approximate $125 more than Shasta County per day for each additional ward.

The vote to approve the Shasta agreement was 3-1, with Supervisor Starkey dissenting, and Supervisor Howard absent from the special meeting.

The board met Tuesday, January 9, at 10 a.m. at the Flynn Center.

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