

Juvenile Hall declared “Unoccupied”

September 24, 2023



The Board of Supervisors has eliminated the Juvenile Hall Division within the Del Norte Probation Dept. and all associated staff positions within. Supervisors then declared Juvenile “Unoccupied,” and directed staff to notify the Board of State and Community Corrections(BSCC) of this change in status.

Chief Probation Officer Lonnie Reyman requested the change. “After much work and effort, we’ve reached the point of elimination of the Juvenile Hall Division and the closure of the Hall as a custody institution,” Reyman lamented. The Chief Probation Officer called the closing of the Hall “a loss to the community.”

Supervisor Valerie Starkey, a three decade retired Probation officer asked, “What’s next?” Reyman stated, “options will remain open by the declaration of “unoccupied” status. The building will continue to be inspected by the BCCS periodically. The changes will save approximately \$640,000 in General Fund expenditures. Reyman spoke about mostly cosmetic changes but underscored the necessity to remove (and store) and replace the many security doors with conventional access portals. Reyman allocated a budget to implement those changes for the new Youth Opportunity Center.

Reyman predicted the opportunity to do good work for Del Norte youth. He continued, “The restructure of the department and creation of a Reentry Unit will provide the opportunity to leverage those resources and experience of existing staff to increase programing and education for justice-involved at-risk youth.

Supervisor Chris Howard asked about partnership with the Del Norte Unified School District. Reyman responded positively but when asked about the inclusion of 5150 youth (mental crisis affected), Reyman was

reluctant to engage in the discussion stating he was unsure of who or what agency assumes jurisdiction in providing services for this population.

The status of an “unoccupied” custodial institution will allow Probation to maintain the facility on the role of the BSCC with requiring Probation to meet Titles 15 and 24 of the Community Corrections governing document.

Supervisor Dean Wilson expressed his concern and doubt the State would change its position on re-opening of the Hall. “We’re in this position because the State has changed its model on how youth are disciplined. I don’t agree with these changes. We longer hold adults and now our youth responsible for their personal behavior,” Wilson lamented.

All changes effectuate October 12, 2023.