

CHEROKEE COUNTY

STATE OF GEORGIA

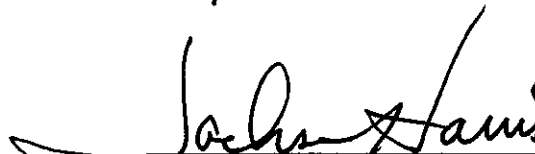
ORDER

The within and foregoing Grand Jury Presentments having read and considered, let the same be filed.

Let a copy of the Presentments, along with a copy of the Order, be sent to the Cherokee Tribune and Radio Station WCHK for publication and the usual fees paid thereon.

It is further ordered that the Clerk of Superior, Cherokee County, Georgia mail a copy of these presentments to each legislator who represents Cherokee County, to each Cherokee County Commissioner, to the Atlanta Journal Constitution, the Cherokee Ledger News and to radio station WLJA.

This the 18 day of April, 2007.



Judge, Superior
Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit

Filed in Office, Cherokee County, Georgia
This 18 day of April, 2007
At 10:00 am.
Patsy Baker Deputy Clerk
PATTY BAKER, Clerk
Superior, State and Juvenile Courts

CHEROKEE COUNTY

STATE OF GEORGIA

GRAND JURY PRESENTMENTS

TO:

The Honorable Frank C. Mills, III
Chief Judge, Superior Court
Cherokee County, Georgia

The Honorable N. Jackson Harris
Judge, Superior Court
Cherokee County, Georgia

Filed in Office, Cherokee County, Georgia

This 18 day of April, 2007

At 10:00 a.m.

Patty Baker - Deputy Clerk

PATTY BAKER, Clerk

Superior, State and Juvenile Courts

We, the members of this Grand Jury, chosen and sworn to serve the January 2007 term of the Superior Court of Cherokee County, hereby submit the following report and several recommendations.

We, the January 2007 Grand Jury, heard 292 indictments and returned 292 true bills.

PRESENTMENT NO. 1

We would like to commend Jane Johnson for her assistance arranging the material for the Grand Jury, managing the schedule of cases to be presented, coordinating the Grand Jury payroll, and helping the Grand Jury to run as smoothly as possible. We thank Jane for her friendliness and support of this Grand Jury.

PRESENTMENT NO. 2

Thanks to District Attorney, Garry Moss, the Assistant District Attorneys, other staff members and all law enforcement personnel who submitted indictments to us.

PRESENTMENT NO. 3

We would like to thank Jerry Cooper, Cherokee County Manager, for meeting with the Grand Jury.

At the request of the September 2006 Grand Jury, Mr. Cooper addressed the safety and access of the Historical Court Building. Improvements on handicapped signage, access and handrails have been made and Mr. Cooper provided photos of the improvements. Railings were placed on the front of the building. Signage was placed in front entry on the north side of the building with access from the parking lot at the back of the building.

We also thank Mr. Cooper for spending a substantial amount of time answering the many questions of the members of the Grand Jury regarding issues of landfills/trash/recycling, and over-development in the community that were creating traffic safety and school

problems. He addressed the need for increased budgetary funding in order to improve county staffing of law enforcement officers.

PRESENTMENT NO. 4

We would like to thank Corporal, Ronnie Reese for our tour of the Justice Building. Also we appreciate his discussion with the Grand Jury regarding the large turnover of officers.

According to Mr. Cooper, Cherokee County Manager, there were 42 vacancies last year, and now there are only 6 or 7. One of possible reasons given for high turnover is the competing salaries in surrounding areas of other county law enforcement departments.

PRESENTMENT NO. 5

We commend the Cherokee County Multi-Agency Narcotics Squad for their tireless efforts in combating drug abuse problems in Cherokee County.

PRESENTMENT NO. 6

We, the January 2007 Grand Jury are concerned about the lack of judicious controlled residential growth in Cherokee County. In discussion of this issue with Cherokee County Manager, Mr. Cooper, the Grand Jury learned that state law needs to be changed in regard to city's rights to annex land from the county thus usurping power from the County Commissioners to restrict unplanned growth.

PRESENTMENT NO. 7

The Grand Jury commends the Cherokee County Airport Authority for development and expansion of airstrips that will accommodate corporate jets in order to promote a large corporate and industrial tax base for the county. The time frame for the improvements is 3 to 4 years.

PRESENTMENT NO. 8

We would like to thank Capt. Karen Johnson and Lt. Joe McDonald for a tour of the Cherokee County Adult Detention Center. We thank them for their professionalism and time in answering our many questions. We commend them for their work and candidness with the detainees.

We observed the facility to be well maintained and the sanitary conditions to be above accepted standards.

We would like to thank Sheriff Roger Garrison for setting up the tour, and commend him and his staff for operating an efficient and secure facility in a highly professional manner.

PRESENTMENT NO. 9

We recommend that the May 2007 Grand Jury continue to address the expressed need for additional staffing at the Cherokee County Adult Detention Center. The need for additional staffing has been expressed by both the existing Adult Detention Center staff and members of the May 2006 Grand Jury and the January 2007 Grand Jury.

The staffing is necessary so that the old section of the facility can be opened to provide the much needed space. It was noted that there was a huge need for some mental health assistance due to the unstable or diminished condition of many of the detainees.

PRESENTMENT NO. 10

We would like to extend a special thank you to Renee Cornelison and Capt. Karen Johnson of Cherokee County Adult Detention Center for our tour of the EMS and 911 facilities, and for their excellent presentation of our county's state of the art disaster center.

Several Grand Jury members noted the Cherokee County Standards were superior to many other counties that they had visited.

PRESENTMENT NO. 11

We, the January 2007 Grand Jury followed up with the status of Cherokee County Fire and Emergency Services Department regarding staffing issues. Cherokee County Manager, Mr. Cooper reported that the department had met the goal of more than one responder per emergency response vehicle.

In January 2007, the department had hired 35 new recruits to insure 2 responders per emergency response vehicle. Mr. Cooper said that the morale in the department was excellent.

PRESENTMENT NO. 12

The January 2007, Grand Jury would like to commend Joan D. Roebuck for diligent pursuit of taxpayer dollars in theft through welfare fraud.

PRESENTMENT NO. 13

We would like to recommend that the May 2007 Grand Jury continue to explore the need for a non-loitering ordinance which would assist in cleaning up several unsafe and unsightly areas in the county along Bells Ferry Road and Hickory Flat Highway.

In addressing this problem, there is also the problem of finding appropriate funds and a facility for dealing with loitering.

Also the county has to find a way to better interface with ICE on this problem.

PRESENTMENT NO. 14

The Grand Jury would like the County Commissioners to address issues regarding littering, trash, landfill(s) and recycling.

PRESENTMENT NO. 15

Review of Audit of Tax Collector, Commissioner, Probate Court, Superior Court, and County Treasurer. (See attached)

PRESENTMENT NO. 16

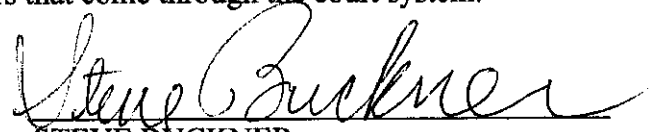
The Grand Jury recommends that the Probate Court not be moved to the Historic Courthouse.

PRESENTMENT NO. 17

The Grand Jury recommends that our local legislators investigate funding for mental health services within our county.

PRESENTMENT NO. 18

The Grand Jury would like to thank, Kipling L. McVay, Judge for her valuable time explaining the broad range of responsibilities of the Probate Court and specifically her efforts in handling health and safety matters that come through the court system.


STEVE BUCKNER
FOREMAN

Report of Audits by Grand Jury Committee

Date of Audits: March 13, 2007

Committee: Rob Kelly, Scott Price, and Roger McClure

Offices Audited/Interviewees:

Probate Court/Bryan Wood

Clerk of the Superior Court/Patty Baker

County Treasurer/Amy Davis

Findings:

1. Probate Court
 - a. Receipts and disbursements appear to be properly controlled and efficiently managed.
 - b. Pertinent observations
 - i. Cost-beneficial computerized system installed September 2006 is major improvement over previous manual system.
 - ii. "Cash-only" payment procedure for marriage licenses was recently initiated due to 6-7 bad checks per year. Cure is effective.
 - iii. Cash received for marriage licenses is reconciled daily and monthly against receipts; system being studied to include reconciliation against transactions as well.
 - iv. Rotation of office clerks to service window customers contributes to cross training and to integrity of financial operations.
 - v. Disbursements are calculated and dispersed per law; zero balance at end of each month.
 - vi. Computer operations backed up nightly.
 - vii. Independent annual audit conducted by M&J
2. Clerk of the Superior Court
 - a. Receipts and disbursements appear to be exceptionally well controlled and managed.
 - b. Pertinent observations.
 - i. Computerized system effectively tracks and controls cash and receipts against transactions.
 - ii. Computer system installed by Patty Baker January 2005 eliminated large backlog of transactions. Operations remain backlog free due to effective management.
 - iii. Stopped taking personal checks due to bad checks; installed ATMs to compensate.
 - iv. Each window clerk has own individual computer terminal, computer account, and lockable cash box.
 - v. Receipts (cash, checks, receipts, transactions) reconciled daily by window clerk, supervisor, and office bookkeeper.
 - vi. On-line traffic fine payments reconciled against list of payable fines.
 - vii. Disbursements are calculated and made per law by bookkeeper. Zero balance at end of each month.
 - viii. Office operations audited annually by independent audit firm, M&J
 - ix. Computer operations backed up nightly by two systems.
3. County Treasurer
 - a. Receipts and disbursements appear to be processed properly and efficiently.
 - b. Observations
 - i. All funds are received as transfers from Probate Court, Superior Court, County revenues, and investments; no cash operations.
 - ii. Annual receipts total \$184 million for County.
 - iii. All disbursements made per instructions of authorizing documents on file.
 - iv. Disbursements to vendors are verified to assure proper competition.
 - v. Office audited annually by M&J.