

Supervisors OK funds for expansion of Juvenile Hall

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From page A5 | December 18, 2013 | Leave Comment

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WOODLAND — County supervisors on Tuesday unanimously approved spending nearly \$1 million to expand the juvenile detention facility on Gibson Road in Woodland in order to provide treatment services, contact visits from family members and recreational space.

Yolo County received a \$4.8 million state grant in 2010 for the proposed expansion and needed to approve a \$966,061 cash match, which supervisors did on Tuesday.

Chief Probation Officer Brent Cardall told supervisors the county will be able to recoup some of that money simply by providing more services on-site.

Currently, Cardall said, youth offenders who a judge deems in need of treatment are sent as far away as Long Beach because there is no treatment capacity on-site or elsewhere in Yolo County. Right now, the county has 12 youths in out-of-county treatment at a cost of \$8,000 to \$9,000 per youth per month.

Of those 12, eight could be served by the proposed on-site treatment facility, which also would provide life skills and job readiness workshops, re-entry programming and family services. The remaining four would remain in placement that provides extremely specialized support services.

Simply keeping more youth offenders closer to their families will be beneficial, Cardall said, because family involvement reduces recidivism.

“Currently, they receive treatment but families aren’t aware of what (they’re doing), so they go home and go back to their old habits,” Cardall said. “We’re wasting money.

“Treatment with families is what works,” he added.

Along those same lines, the expansion would allow for a contact visiting room where multiple youths and their families can be together in the same space.

The current visiting room, Cardall said, is more like that in a maximum-security prison, with youths separated from family members by glass and communicating over a phone line.

Cardall said emerging state regulations favor contact visitation for juveniles, so preparing now will put the county in alignment with state regulations down the line.

Finally, the expansion will provide a classroom for youths and family members to participate in programs as well as an indoor gymnasium that would make physical activity possible year-round. Currently, Juvenile Hall does not have a large enough indoor space for recreational activities during inclement weather.

The supervisors voted 4-0 in favor of allocating the \$966,061, with Supervisors Don Saylor and Jim Provenza of Davis speaking in support.

“This is in alignment with our efforts on the adult side,” Provenza said. “And it’s the juveniles who funnel into that system. We need to have the facilities to deliver the services and involve the families.”

Supervisors Matt Rexroad of Woodland and Duane Chamberlain of the rural 5th District also voted in favor of the funding. The board’s fifth seat — from which former Supervisor Mike McGowan of West Sacramento recently resigned — remains vacant until Gov. Jerry Brown appoints a replacement.

