

Board commits funds to enlarge county jail

By BUD O'BRIEN

The Board of Supervisors authorized county staff yesterday to finalize the county's application for \$6.1 million in state funds for the construction of Phase 2 of Santa Cruz County's new jail.

In so doing, the board committed the county to contribute 10 percent of the amount allocated by the state to the project, but only if the county's could be raised by methods authorized by recent state legislation.

Under that legislation, counties are authorized to impose surcharges on parking fines and criminal penalties, including vehicle code violations, for the purpose of building "criminal justice facility capital projects." The board's action puts a \$1.50 surcharge on parking violations and a \$1 surcharge on "each \$10 or fraction thereof on all other criminal fines." It was estimated this would raise some \$750,000, more than enough to match the state's 10 percent requirement.

As County Administrative Officer George Newell noted, there was some irony in the fact that approval for the final application for Phase 2 funds was being sought just after

the first escape from Phase One of the new jail. However, Newell was able to tell the board that the escapees — murder suspect Billy Mansfield and another inmate — were recaptured yesterday morning.

Newell assured the supervisors that analyses would be made of security at the new facility in light of the escape and the information would be incorporated in specifications for the new addition.

Only Board Chairman Gary Patton, who has fought the construction of a new jail for 10 years, voted against the CAO's recommendation Tuesday. Patton made the observation that in his view adding new jail facilities would just mean more people being incarcerated without really addressing the fundamental problems involved. San Lorenzo Valley Supervisor Joe Cucchiara saw no choice but to support the recommendations, even though he said it was his belief that "this was going in the wrong direction."

Cucchiara said he would rather see the money going toward "alternatives to incarceration," but that such solutions were not in the hands of the board, but rather involved other agencies, such as the courts,

over which the board had no control.

To which Watsonville Supervisor E. Wayne Moore Jr. replied that more room was indeed needed to lock up dangerous criminals, of which, Moore said, there are many more than his liberal colleagues seemed to believe.

Midcounty Supervisor Robley Levy said, however, the supervisors were faced with only two questions, whether to apply for the state funds and whether to approve the "needs assessment" drawn up by the county staff regarding detention facilities. The answer to both questions, Mrs. Levy said, should be "yes."

Only Chairman Patton disagreed and the recommendations were approved.

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