

# Study On The Jail Passes

BY PEGGY RUDNICKI

Sentinel Staff Writer

County supervisors still aren't sure what to do about the county jail, but they agreed this morning to hiring an architect to first find out whether the existing facility is capable of handling inmates in the future.

The architect's study is expected to include a cost analysis to see if the Front Street jail can handle projected inmate populations in the coming years.

Following that study, supervisors said they would be able to decide whether to build a new jail complex or to go ahead with renovation of the existing one.

The board's approval of the architect selection included a provision which sets the jail population in 1985 at 85 inmates.

The figure — projected as a result of a study done by the county administrative office — is based on the inmate growth rates and the effect of new diversion programs, according to Ted Durkee, county administrative officer.

Originally, he had projected a jail population of 110 inmates in 1985.

But, he said the effects of a "full diversion program" would bring that number down to 85.

A check of jail populations today showed that 94 prisoners were housed in the Front Street facility Monday night.

A total of 82 inmates were listed this morning.

Supervisor Gary Patton pressed for a board commitment to reduce inmate populations in the jail by the setting up of various programs as "alternatives to incarceration."

He suggested that the county administrative officer make a study of the type of inmates in the jail to see what type of programs could be set up to help them.

Patton objected to the inclusion of the 85-inmate population projection in the board's decision to hire an architect.

"The board does have control over how many people we will have in the jail in 10 years," said Patton. "We have to make a commitment."

Other board members weren't so sure that supervisors had that much control over jail populations.

Crime rates, court policies and the extent of diversion programs played an important role in the board's determination of how many prisoners would be housed in the jail.

Supervisors also said they couldn't bind future boards as far as commitments to jail populations.

Supervisor Ed Borovatz added he couldn't "see designing a facility that is too small. I don't see any sense in that."

At least two supervisors put in a plug for design of a new jail. Supervisor Dan Forbus and Dale Dawson both suggested there

(Continued on Page 2)

# New Study On The Jail Is Approved

(Continued from Page 1)

was some doubt that the Front Street jail could ever be renovated to provide adequate housing for prisoners.

"I wouldn't give renovation a second thought," said Forbus. He added that if people were really concerned with the prisoners' welfare "they would walk away from the Front Street jail."

He pointed out that the facility had no room for a decent recreation yard.

Dawson said it "didn't seem" the facility could be redesigned, but added he wanted to see a cost analysis of the proposal before making a final decision.