

Cruz

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Jail money shocker:
state refuses aid

by Richard Cole

The state has pulled the financial rug out from underneath Santa Cruz County's plans to build a \$4.5 million jail by refusing to provide \$2 million in Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) funds the county thought it had in the bag.

The difference will have to be made up from local taxes and revenue sharing money, if no other source of funding is found.

County Administrative Officer Ted Durkee says his office is appealing the decision by the State Office on Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP) staff to turn down the county's funding application.

Durkee informed individual supervisors of the setback in an October 1st memo

that stated "it is clear that the size of our request precluded our receiving favorable consideration from state officials . . ."

Only about \$1.7 million will be available statewide next year for construction, according to Durkee, and a partially constructed jail in Imperial County is now scheduled to receive almost all of that money. Durkee noted that the Imperial County jail is under strict supervision of a federal court, making funding of that project — at least in the state's eyes — a higher priority than Santa Cruz's new facility.

The county's appeal of the decision to the OCJP's parent board, the California Council of Criminal Justice (CCCJ) is scheduled for October 22nd. But even to have a chance for success at that meeting, Durkee had to reduce his request for money from \$2 million down to \$1.2 million.

"We concluded that our request . . . would have to be substantially reduced to receive any consideration," Durkee wrote the supervisors.

When contacted by the *Independent*, Durkee said, "It's not the final inning yet." He said he was hopeful that the Imperial County jail might receive funding from other sources, including two new federal public works bills recently signed into law.

But he conceded that if no outside funding was found for the new Santa Cruz County Jail, present programs aimed at senior citizens and other low income residents may have to be cut back, or else taxes would have to be raised.

The jail's strongest proponent on the board of supervisors, Dan Forbus, told the *Independent* that if the county does not receive more outside funding "we're in trouble."

"I hope we don't have to use revenue sharing for the jail," said Forbus, "because that means that a lot of good programs we have initiated through revenue sharing would have to take it on the chin."

The state's latest action promises to add more fuel to the continuing controversy over the building of the new jail. In August the board's majority refused to put on the ballot an initiative designed to prevent construction of the facility. That decision was appealed by the initiative's sponsors, Citizens Against a New Jail, a wide coalition of taxpayers and criminal justice reform groups. Their appeal is scheduled for October 19th before the state appellate court in San Francisco.

The architects for the new jail, the San Francisco firm of Kaplan and McLaughlin, also claim that renovation of the Front Street Jail would be at least as expensive as building a new jail in the county center parking lot. But that claim is disputed by opponents of the new jail, who state that Kaplan and McLaughlin have used "inflated" figures to bias their study in favor of the new jail. □

Council unites,
wants changes
in city charter

by Michael McGuire

In a rare display of solidarity, the city council made clear Tuesday its intention to review and revise the city charter. Councilmember Sally DiGirolamo said it succinctly,

"This revision is long overdue. The charter and past amendments to this charter have never given the people of Santa Cruz access to their representatives and we, as their representatives, haven't been as effective as we could be because of this charter."

The current charter was adopted by a vote of the people in 1948. With minor amendments, the same document governs the conduct of city hall today.

One of the major problems expressed by each of the councilmembers at one time or another is the council's relationship to the city manager.

Under the charter, Santa Cruz is governed by a city council/city manager government. In this arrangement, the city council is essentially made up of volunteers who determine general policy direction.

The city manager, now paid \$35,000 a year, hires and fires the directors of the city's various departments, and has responsibility for implementing council policy and administering the services of city government.

The council, with Larry Edler absent, seemed unanimous in agreeing with councilmember Bert Muhly that they should be in a position to "take positive action, rather than react to management concerns," and that it would take a charter change to accomplish that goal.

The council informally agreed to empower a new committee to recommend changes in the charter. The proposed committee will have 14 members, each councilmember making two appointments.