



**GENERAL PRESENTMENTS
of the
2006
JANUARY/FEBRUARY
GRAND JURY
IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
COBB COUNTY, GEORGIA**

**THOMAS S. GERBECK, FOREPERSON
TOD L. BRUNSON, ASSISTANT FOREPERSON
SHARON ANDERSON SAXTON, CLERK**

January/February Term of the Cobb County Grand Jury

Consisted of the Following Panel Members:

Officers:

Thomas S. Gerbeck, Foreperson

Tod L. Brunson, Assistant Foreperson

Sharon Anderson Saxton, Clerk

Eudora Lee Marie Grimes

Frank A. Kellert

Angela Marie Brown

Jonathan Eric Hopper

James Douglas Ray, Jr.

Melissa Moody Boatwright

Christine P. Schindewolf

Groover Parks Chase, Jr.

Michael H. Dean

Marilynn S. Braude

Darryl D. Wilson

Inell Eve Hollar

Catherine Sacklyn

Lisa Marie Ball

Erin Stella Bovat-Patterson

Maribeth Jobson Cunningham

Heidi Carissa Bradley

Kathleen Ann Gray Plumer

Sue Faucette Martin

Barbara Jefferies Coleman

Courtney Elizabeth O'Connor

John Brian Walther

GRAND JURY PRESENTMENTS

We, the Grand Jury, selected and sworn for the January/February 2006 Term, respectfully make the following presentments:

This Grand Jury has acted on _____ Indictments, returning _____ True Bills and _____ No Bills during the term.

COBB COUNTY PROBATE COURT COMMITTEE

Committee Members:

Darryl Wilson	Brian Walther
Angela Brown	Sue Martin

We interviewed the Probate Clerk, Charles Evans, on January 24, 2006. The Court has three basic functions: 1) administer estates and property 2) determine guardianship and 3) preside over mental health issues.

They issue and store marriage, gun and game licenses too. Judge David Dodd presides over the jury trials for contested wills, etc.

There are no issues of concern found by the committee. We would recommend they hire an additional processor. Their storage space is approaching capacity and they have Social Security numbers in plain view.

COBB COUNTY PENAL COMMITTEE

Committee members:

Melissa Boatwright	Catherine Sacklyn	Tod L. Brunson
Michael Dean	Christine Schindewolf	Groover P. Chase
Marilynn Braude	Lisa M. Ball	Heidi Bradley
Inell Hollar	Courtney O'Connor	Sharon A. Saxton

The January/February 2006 Cobb County Grand Jury Penal Committee inspected two Cobb County penal facilities: 1) Marietta Regional Youth Detention Center and 2) Acworth Jail.

An unannounced inspection of the Marietta Regional Youth Detention Center was conducted on the 24th of January 2006. Upon our arrival the director of the facility, Mr. Leander Parker gave us a summary of the daily operations and the programs and services provided to each youth. Mr. Parker informed us that the center has 70 single beds, but in times of need can hold up to 84 residents. Currently the facility is holding 74 juveniles. This number consists of 60 boys and 14 girls. The length of stay for each resident varies from three to six days to two to three years, depending on the seriousness of the charge. While in the detention center the residents are provided education services equal to that of public school students.

However, MRYDC is considered its own school district that operates under its own curriculum. The facility supports its residents through a behavior management program that consists of three levels. Resident behavior earns level placement and each level has its own set of privileges. The committee toured that facility and observed a number of residents attending school classes. We also observed the female and male living quarters, recreational areas, intake unit and the medical unit. The committee agreed that the facility appeared to be superbly managed and its cleanliness was exceptional.

The committee found no issues of concern at the Marietta Regional Youth Detention Center.

The penal committee conducted an unannounced inspection of the Acworth Jail on the 24th of January 2006. The inspection was conducted due to concerns made by the November/December 2005 Grand Jury. Officer Vega conducted the tour. The committee was informed that currently the Acworth Jail has only one police officer on duty at all times. Officer Vega did state the department was currently in the process of interviewing officers. The floors near the visitors area appeared extremely dirty; however, Officer Vega explained that the only people cleaning the facility are two trustees. The November/December 2005 Grand Jury stated that the Georgia State flag, flying outside the building appeared torn and tattered. We observed that the flag had been replaced. Upon the completion of our inspection we felt that the only major concern was the fact that at present there is only one police officer on duty at all times. Our concern is for the safety of the officer. We would like to see more than one officer on duty at any given time.

COBB COUNTY CHILD ABUSE COMMITTEE

Committee members:

Heidi Bradley	Courtney O'Connor	Melissa Boatwright
Christine Schindewolf	Lisa M. Ball	Sharon A. Saxton

The Cobb County January/February 2006 Grand Jury committee met with detectives from the Crimes against Women and Children's Unit of the Cobb County Police Department on the 24th of January 2006.

The committee met with Assistant District Attorney Eleanor Dixon, Major Paula Sparks and Detective Kristy Nervin to discuss the procedures for reporting and investigating child abuse in Cobb County. Major Sparks and Detective Nervin explained the unique partnership between their unit and DFACS. The committee was pleased to hear that the two departments worked so closely together. We felt that having DFACS workers stationed at the Crimes against Women and Children's Unit was a wonderful way to ensure good communication. The committee had no concerns to report regarding the Cobb County Crimes against Women and Children's Unit of the Cobb County Police Department.

COBB COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

On Tuesday, January 24, 2006 members of the Department of Transportation (DOT) committee met with Charles Law and Joe Fletcher of the Operations Division of the DOT.

The committee members present were: Barbara Coleman, Maribeth Cunningham, Thomas Gerbeck, Eudora Grimes, Jonathan Hopper and Kathleen Plumer.

The following topics were discussed and are briefly summarized:

1. The committee inquired about the possibility of synchronizing traffic lights along long stretches of roads and highways in Cobb County. Committee members shared their knowledge of and familiarity with this pattern as witnessed in other cities throughout the United States. Details were given about road signs that alert drivers to the fact that if they obey the posted speed limits they will “make all the green lights.” The objectives of this suggestion were: 1) Better traffic flow management 2) Compliance with speed limits 3) Reduction in fuel consumption. Specific cities having this system in place were cited for the DOT for further investigation.
2. The intersection of Macland Road and Powder Springs Road during peak travel times is exceedingly congested. The DOT reported this intersection received a high volume of complaints and that it is under constant evaluation and reassessment for improvement.
3. Every complaint the DOT received is investigated and situations are constantly being reassessed with respect to the complaints.
4. A fiber optic network is in place and being utilized by over half the traffic signals in Cobb County. This network provides communication to a base where traffic signals are adjusted in real-time according to traffic volume.
5. Traffic signals are also coordinated and automated to favor the direction of travel during peak times. There are approximately 50 of these coordinated systems.
6. A \$3 million project to replace all remaining incandescent lights to LED’s will begin in the spring.
7. Many roads that need widening or are in need of traffic signals are met with strong opposition, and are usually overrepresented at public meetings.

We have no recommendations for the DOT.

Respectfully submitted this the _____ day of March, 2006

Thomas S. Gerbeck, Foreperson