

**REPORT OF THE  
VIRGINIA STATE CRIME COMMISSION  
TO  
THE GOVERNOR  
AND  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF VIRGINIA  
ON  
IMMEDIATE CAPITAL OUTLAY NEEDS FOR CORRECTIONS**



**SENATE DOCUMENT NO. 30**

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
Department of Purchases and Supply  
Richmond  
1975**

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



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GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA

AND

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA

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Appointments by the Governor  
Erwin S. Solomon, *Vice Chairman*  
William N. Paxton, Jr.  
George F. Ricketts

Mindful of overcrowded conditions within the physical facilities of the Department of Corrections through its study of Corrections and study of Local Jails, which indicated considerable overcrowding with inmates being held for transfer into the corrections system, the Crime Commission named a Capital Outlay subcommittee that functioned in complete cooperation with the State Board of Corrections and knowledge of the administration to determine the immediate capital outlay needs in corrections so that the Governor and the members of the General Assembly, as well as the general public, would be aware of these needs prior to the start of the 1975 General Assembly.

This report is also included with other information as part of the Annual Report of the State Crime Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Stanley C. Walker".  
Stanley C. Walker,  
Chairman

MEMBERS OF COMMISSION

Stanley C. Walker, Chairman

Erwin S. Solomon, Vice Chairman

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Report	Page 4
Recommendations	Page 12

#### IMMEDIATE CAPITAL OUTLAY NEEDS FOR CORRECTIONS

Concerned about the capital outlay needs for adult corrections facilities during the next several years, the Crime Commission and the State Board of Corrections determined that an analysis should be made utilizing the services of consultants experienced in correctional administration and planning as well as in architectural planning, design and construction.

This concern was pinpointed because of overcrowded conditions within the facilities of the Department of Corrections, continued escapes and other institutional problems in addition to the grossly overcrowded conditions within the local jails. In the Jail Study a number of sheriffs contended that the facilities they operate were becoming "holding areas" and "reservoirs" for the Department of Corrections.

For approximately a year the Crime Commission pointed out the imminent need for adequate reception and classification within the department. This was first brought out in the "Penitentiary Report" issued in December, 1973, which was the result of a six months' study of that correctional center that was characterized to be the most dangerous section within the entire institution.

The analysis was undertaken by the Crime Commission. Senator Stanley C. Walker, the Commission chairman, named a Capital Outlay Subcommittee that included the chairman, Senator George S. Aldhizer, II, of Harrisonburg, Delegate A. L. Philpott of Bassett, Delegate-elect Erwin S. Solomon of Hot Springs, vice-chairman of the Crime Commission, and the assistant director, Laurence Leonard, to serve on the committee. The chairman then contacted Walther B. Fidler of Sharps, chairman of the State Board of Corrections and himself a former delegate, to develop a cooperative approach. Chairman Fidler agreed that the State Board of Corrections' Capital Outlay Subcommittee, including Mrs. John J. DeHart of

Richmond, William P. Kanto of Norton and Director Jack F. Davis and the board's chairman, would cooperate.

Four nationally recognized consultants were engaged. They include Sanger B. Powers of Green Bay, Wisconsin, Sidney J. Folse of New Orleans, Louisiana, Ellis MacDougall of Columbia, South Carolina, and Roland McCauley of Madison, Wisconsin. Powers and MacDougall are former presidents of the American Correctional Association. Folse is chairman of the Committee on Correctional Architecture, American Institute of Architects, and has had that honor three years. Powers recently retired after a distinguished career as administrator of the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, being succeeded by his long-time associate, McCauley, now acting director. MacDougall is a partner in the consulting firm of MacDougall, Pope and Medberry and is a former director of the departments of corrections in South Carolina, Connecticut and Georgia. Folse is senior vice-president, Curtis and Davis Architects and Planners, a firm that has planned correctional facilities in more than 25 states.

At the initial meeting October 7, with the Capital Outlay Subcommittee of the Crime Commission, and with the Chairman of the State Board of Corrections and the Director of Corrections, the Chairman of the Crime Commission made it clear to the consultants that a most pressing problem requiring the earliest possible solution is that of providing suitable space to accommodate a reception-classification program for adult offenders. This program, up until last February, had been carried out at the State Penitentiary and at Southampton Correctional Farm.

Space available at the Penitentiary for this purpose is considered inadequate and in view of plans to phase out the Penitentiary and because of its overcrowded population an alternative facility to accommodate the classification process must be provided. As a stopgap measure, part of the classification process is being



carried out at Powhatan Correctional Center (formerly the State Farm). Reception and classification of the young first offender continues to be carried out at the Southampton Correctional Farm.

The Crime Commission Chairman strongly feels that the desire of the administration, the members of the General Assembly, and the Department of Corrections is to determine whether a new institution must be built to accommodate a suitable classification process (this was the original plan of the Division of Corrections, now the present Department of Corrections), or whether some existing facility could be adapted for this purpose. Time is of the essence in this matter and additionally, in view of the paucity of finances, the lowest cost reasonable alternative must be ascertained.

At the briefing session the Chairman of the Crime Commission outlined the Commission's, as well as the Department of Corrections', concern about immediate capital outlay needs and noted the stringency of funds available. He indicated that it was the desire of the Commission to have an analysis at the earliest possible date to form the basis for recommendations to be made to the legislature. All steps were to be taken with each capital outlay subcommittee and the administration being fully briefed. He named Leonard to coordinate the Capital Outlay Analysis.

The consultants met in a briefing session October 8 at the offices of the Department of Corrections and discussed how the problem might best be approached. During this session, it was pointed out that the most immediate capital outlay need was that for the provision of a suitable facility for the reception and classification of newly admitted adult offenders. Consultants were told there would appear to be three choices--construction of a totally new center, locating the center at the site of an existing field unit such as Unit Number 2 in Caroline

County, or adapting facilities at Powhatan Correctional Center and Southampton with such new construction as might be needed.

The consultants determined that it would be desirable to visit some of the facilities which might be considered for the site of the reception-classification process and also in order to formulate some idea as to the need for other immediate capital construction. Accordingly visits were scheduled for Field Unit Number 2, the Powhatan Correctional Center, the Southampton Correctional Center, Bland Correctional Center, and Saint Brides Correctional Center.

Later, during the briefing session, consultants were joined by Director Davis and selected members of the staff of the Adult Division of the Department of Corrections. During this discussion it was pointed out by Adult Division staff members that they would regard as especially important the provision of appropriate classification facilities at the earliest possible time, the completion of the Mecklenburg Maximum Security Facility, the purchase and conversion of Saint Brides Correctional Center into a permanent unit to accommodate approximately 200 offenders, improvements at Bland Correctional Center to provide single cell occupancy and space for education and recreation, and the provision of \$1,200,000 in planning money for three 500-bed single cell units to be located strategically about the state. The above listing of immediate needs by the department is in the order noted and not necessarily in their proper priority.

Following visits to Caroline, Baskerville, Pocahontas, the Powhatan Correctional Center, the Southampton Correctional Center, the Bland Correctional Center and Saint Brides Correctional Center, the consultants met in Norfolk for a briefing session with the two subcommittees. At that time each of the facilities was discussed in detail.

Quickly the consultants ruled out the Virginia Penitentiary, located at 500 Spring Street in downtown Richmond. The building dates back to 1800 and is in

generally poor physical condition, outmoded, antiquated, dismal, dreary, poorly maintained and suitable only for the earliest possible abandonment. They said that under no circumstances should any consideration be given to spending any further money for construction at this site.

They studied the Bland Correctional Center, located in Bland County and established in 1946 as the first of two regional farms for misdemeanor offenders, and found it more useful. However, they said the Bland facility is poorly located with respect to adaptation for a central reception point and should not be considered for reception purposes unless at some point in the future a decision is made to provide for regional reception of adult offenders. In the meantime, the institution should be continued as it is, except for some badly needed additions and improvements in the physical plant. These would include elimination of dormitory housing and substitution of single rooms or cells. Additional school facilities should be provided within the fenced enclosure in order that the educational program may be substantially upgraded and made available to a larger number of offenders. A building should also be constructed to provide for gymnasium/leisure time activity. The lack of such a facility, in view of the cold and inclement weather during much of the year at Bland, cannot help but contribute to an inmate management problem. Adequate space must also be provided for classification and treatment, medical services and warehousing.

The view of Powhatan Correctional Center was more impressive. This institution consists of two facilities one of which is located in Goochland County while the second is located in Powhatan County. The south or Powhatan facility is the newer of the two and is located on a 2,600 acre site. The buildings are relatively new and of acceptable architectural design, utilizing the conventional telephone pole building arrangement. The north side facility (Goochland) is

substantially older, having been constructed before the turn of the century, and is located on 1,200 acres directly across the James River from the south facility. The north facility is old, small and not suited in any way for any additional use.

The south side facility, however, would lend itself ideally to the location of a reception-classification program for adults. The addition of one cell block, which was originally planned for this institution, would be needed and is recommended. With the construction of this added cell block, there would be two blocks available for the housing of offenders in reception status and with only minor remodeling there would also be space available under the cell blocks which could be utilized for program purposes--testing, dining, recreation, counseling, and other phases of the reception process. All supports--water, sewage, food, storage--are already available. The addition of the cell block being recommended and appropriate remodeling would make it possible to separate offenders in reception status totally and completely from the balance of the State Farm population. The classification-reception unit then could be separately operated, directly under the Adult Division rather than by the State Farm administration. The classification-reception unit at the Penitentiary should be closed upon completion of the remodeling at Powhatan, the consultants said.

The utilization of Powhatan Correctional Center for reception purposes is certainly the most viable alternative available and would provide adequate reception facilities for a fraction of the cost that would be involved in establishing a separate central reception institution.

Next they reported on the Southampton Correctional Center, located in Southampton County approximately 70 miles south of Richmond. It is located on 2,780 acres of land and provides treatment and training for selected young first felony offenders under 23 years of age. The program stresses vocational

training and academic education. Most offenders are in academic or vocational school half days and are employed either on the extensive farm or at other occupations the remaining half day.

The institution was established in 1937. Most buildings were constructed by inmate labor. Facilities are reasonably adequate with two glaring exceptions--the lack of a gymnasium to provide a constructive outlet for the leisure time of a relatively young group of offenders and grossly inadequate reception facilities. A gymnasium is being provided. Surplus timber cut on the center's property was sold on competitive bids, the highest being \$520,000, thus providing necessary funds.

The Southampton Center serves as the reception facility for first offenders under age 23 who are determined by the central classification office to be suited for reception at Southampton and possibly further treatment and training there. When the institution was established, it was not intended to serve as a reception point but subsequently, because of an intake larger than could be handled at the Penitentiary, the institution was asked to develop a reception-classification program. Offenders sent to Southampton for classification are housed in the basement in one of the cell blocks in a situation which is inadequate under whatever standard one might care to apply. The reception quarters lack space for supporting services--testing, counseling, and recreation as well as suitable housing for the offenders--and must be replaced.

The consultants recommended that Southampton continue as the reception point for the young first felony offender, but that a building adequate to support the classification-reception process be constructed. Such a building shall have a capacity of 100 with offenders being housed in single rooms.

The consultants were not overly impressed with the Saint Brides Correctional Center, formerly the Norfolk City Farm. This facility was leased in August, 1973,

by the state at an annual rent of \$125,000 with an option to purchase at a cost of \$1,125,000. The lease which runs for three years covers the buildings and 200 acres of land. Additional substantial farm acreage adjoining the facility is said to be available for purchase from the city. Twenty percent of the annual rental can be applied to the purchase price.

The center consists of six concrete block buildings within a chain link fenced inner perimeter. An additional 14 buildings of varying size are located outside the inner perimeter, but within an outer chain link fenced perimeter.

Buildings within the inner perimeter include three inmate housing buildings, a food services building and two small buildings utilized for commissary, library, clothing issue and dispensary. Buildings between the two perimeters were previously used for storage, maintenance shops, laundry, butcher shop and garages.

Saint Brides is in a poor to fair state of repair with buildings ranging from dilapidated and unusable to structurally sound buildings in need of and capable of renovation.

If the facility is to be purchased, the consultants felt it should be for temporary use only until more suitable permanent facilities for the care and treatment of offenders can be made available. The temporary use might most appropriately be for medium security offenders in need of education and vocational training for which sufficient space can be made available through remodeling. The Department of Corrections shows present capacity to be 142, expandable to 200. This appears to be realistic, but inmate living spaces must be substantially upgraded and the large multiple cells replaced by rooms or cubicles of smaller size. Other facilities will need renovation or remodeling to permit utilization for education and vocational training as well as leisure time activities.

The Bureau of Correctional Field Units, an institution in the aggregate, consists of 17 permanent units, and 10 temporary units or "stick" camps. The headquarters of the Bureau is located in Richmond. The field units accommodate felony offenders transferred from the Penitentiary, Southampton, or State Farm along with misdemeanor offenders committed directly by the courts.

The consultants felt that none of the field units could accommodate the central reception-classification process unless the site of a field unit was to be utilized as a place to construct a central reception facility. This would be tantamount to constructing a separate free standing institution with full support at a prohibitive cost and they did not recommend it for reasons of excessive costs and because existing facilities can be logically changed at greater expediency and lower costs.

They felt that certainly the "stick" camps should be phased out at the earliest possible time, hopefully as a result of decline in population which could come about if full use is made of probation and parole. If the population does not decline, then present temporary units should nonetheless be closed and be replaced by alternate facilities.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Cognizant that part of the classification program had been moved to Powhatan in February and that an average of 100 newcomers were received monthly without incident, both the Crime Commission and the Capital Outlay Subcommittee of the State Board of Corrections accepted the consultants' report on December 6. Chairman Walker, in the presence of several Crime Commission members, Corrections Chairman Fidler and the board's Capital Outlay Subcommittee presented the report to Governor Godwin.

The Crime Commission unanimously endorsed the consultants' report and unanimously recommended to the Governor and the General Assembly that the program be implemented in several phases, if necessary, as quickly as funds are available.

A summary of recommendations follows:

1. That the Powhatan Correctional Center be remodeled and that construction of a new 120-bed wing be started to provide housing for an adult reception and classification center at a cost of \$3,425,631. No land acquisition would be needed.
2. That Southampton Correctional Center be used for first-felon offenders 23 years of age and younger, and that construction begin on the reception and classification center there at a cost of \$2,310,000.

Because of the urgent need for an adequate and effective reception and classification program, it is strongly recommended that work begin as soon as feasible on the necessary improvements at Powhatan and Southampton and that these be given top priority.

3. That Bland Correctional Center be earmarked for recommended improvements and new construction at a cost of \$3,282,334 and that as a temporary facility for continuing education there, a temporary classroom center be constructed at a cost of \$10,000.
4. That the Saint Brides Correctional Center now leased from the City of Norfolk be purchased at a cost of \$1,125,000 and that, in the meantime, permission be obtained from the City of Norfolk to remodel certain facilities there at a cost not to exceed \$500,000.
5. That planning funds for prototype 500-bed institutions and comprehensive long-range utilization and facility planning be made available, not to exceed \$1,200,000.
6. That any planning for future institutions should take note of the fact that there are now sophisticated intrusion alarm systems that would materially reduce the personnel costs associated with the maintenance of perimeter security, the last zone of defense, and protection of the public.

The Crime Commission believes that to adopt these recommendations as early as practical would result in significant savings to the Commonwealth and enable the Department of Corrections to move forward progressively within two years.