July-September 2006 Term
Grand Jury Final Report

Earlier this year when we were selected for Davidson County Grand Jury duty most of us were taken aback when we discovered the length of service was for three months. Now, as our term comes to an end, we are cherishing each moment of our service and sincerely wonder exactly where did those three months go? We feel confident that we have significantly contributed in the judicial process and have gained tremendous insight into the crimes that occur within our city and communities.

Members of the Grand Jury would like to thank our Grand Jury Foreman, Stan Fossick, for not only his leadership and knowledge of the system but the personal, heartfelt discussions each of us may have had with him during our tenure. We laughed, we cried, we even acted a little silly but Stan was always there to get us back on task. Thank you, Stan!

There are many folks this Grand Jury would like to recognize (in no particular order.)

1) ***Lt. Randy Hickerson*** – As a member of the Special Investigation Division MPD, Randy gave a presentation on the various types of drugs (their official names and their street names), drug paraphernalia, and pictures of drug users depicting the negative effects of drugs on the human body. We discovered the names of modern-day drugs and even saw examples of them that many of us did not know existed.

2) ***Capt. Rita Baker*** – Rita shared with us a discussion about domestic violence and how assault differed from battery. As we heard cases we were able to make better judgments based on this discussion.

3) ***Flt. Officer Andy Smeltzer, Sgt. Gary Duncan, Sgt. James Johnson, Capt. Mike Hager, Lt. Glenn Hayes*** - We met each of these gentlemen on our first visit to the Metro Police Training Academy where we learned first hand about the structured training offered by the Academy. The aerial view of Nashville provided us with insight as to the layout of the city. At the K-9 demonstration we were informed that some of the police dogs are currently being trained in bomb/arson as well as drugs. On our second visit to the Metro Police Training Academy we actually participated in a Shoot/Don't Shoot computerized, hands on training system. Here we gained knowledge about the split decisions that our officers must make during their shifts.

4) ***Judge Betty Adams Green*** – Judge Green was kind enough to invite us to tour the Juvenile Justice Center and have lunch with her and a few members of her staff. The Grand Jury would also like to extend our condolences to Ms. Green on the loss of her beloved husband, Ron, during our service.

5) ***Judge Seth Norman and Janet Hobson*** – A visit to drug court was very surprising. After being served lunch prepared and served by the inmates (residents), Judge Norman gave us a tour of the facility along with Ms. Donna and Mr. Donnie, two of the inmates. We saw the field where they grow much of their own food, the automotive and wood shops where trades can be learned; and lastly, the meeting rooms where knowledge and rehabilitation can be discussed. We feel that this drug court is making a wonderful difference in so many young lives.

6) ***Chief Ronal Serpas*** – This Grand Jury was invited to attend a CompStat meeting held at the North Precinct of the MPD. At this meeting we heard about crime statistics as it relates to each neighborhood….were the figures up or down? We also heard about arrests and saw pictures of offenders. Meeting Chief Serpas was an eye-opening experience in which he laid out the changes in securing the city since he has been Chief and how he plans to increase the number of police officers.

7) ***Metro Police Officers and Detectives*** – Many members of the Grand Jury were afforded the opportunity to individually ride with a member of the MPD. We witnessed how hectic their jobs can be trying to juggle radios, typing on computers and listening to dispatched calls. The ride alongs definitely gave us all a greater appreciation for what officers deal with day to day while protecting our city. We would like to give a special thank you to all our wonderful Metro Police Officers.

8) ***Justice A. A. Birch*** – We were most honored to have Mr. Birch visit us especially since he was nearing retirement and never had met the members of the Davidson County Grand Jury.

In final notes of recognitions, we would like to thank the ***District Attorney's Office*** and their staff members, specifically ***Donna Dale, Sgt. Ryan Casada, Assistant D. A. Rodney Faulk, Assistant D.A. Mary Hausman, Judge Blackburn's Court Officer, David Whitworth*** and ***Secretary, Donna Draper.***

We would be remiss to not mention the observations we made and suggestions we have going forward.

a) ***MNPD Staffing and Morale*** - There seems to be a shortage of staff as we discovered in the CompStat meeting as well as the Metro Training Center. Specifically, the two flight officers were way overworked since they could be called upon any hour of the day/night and only one at a time could be used. We understand the

concept of "doing more with less" but many of the Metro Officers have young families that need their quality time or just their time.....period.

b) ***Juvenile Justice Center*** – We noticed that the recreation area did not have a roof therefore the weather limits its use. Why couldn't we put the adult inmates at the Sheriff's facility to work as opposed to having them sleep, rest, or just hang out all day? Youth when sitting together will many times brag or talk about how not to get caught in free or idol time. Could we give them a better place to exercise or have supervised activity year round? There appeared to be a shortage of teachers as well. Two teachers, one of which is a special education teacher, does not seem appropriate.

c) ***DUI issues*** - It would be a recommendation of this grand jury to create a subset of jurors or create another jury to hear any misdeamenor cases especially as it pertains to repeat offenders. Would it be feasible to designate one specific day of the week and/or month to hear nothing but DUI cases?

d) ***Illegal Immigration*** – This needs more attention especially by the Federal government. They need to empower the State and local authorities to enforce immigration laws even if new legislation needs to be encouraged.

e) ***Police Paperwork*** – It seems that there is much duplication of paperwork during the course of an officer's shift. For example, on a domestic violence or assault the officer must complete a form denoting any bodily injuries then another form with the narrative. Other than the actual drawings, would it be possible to draw these reports from the current software used by the MNPD?

f) ***Grand Jury Room*** – It would be an enhancement to have a paper shredder to ensure proper disposal of confidential documents. This should be a nominal purchase of less than $20. Also, "extra" juror parking passes should be given to the foreperson for any members and/or alternates needing one.

We would like to conclude that in our three months of service we heard 902 cases. Of these cases, 887 were voted "A True Bill" and therefore sent forward in the judicial process. Only 15 were voted "A No True Bill".

Thank you, Judge Blackburn, for giving us this outstanding chance to serve as Davidson County Grand Jurors. Such a magnificent opportunity to learn so much about the Davidson County government, as well as the State of Tennessee.

Gayle L. Ayers*

Geraldine Steele

Dianne Hubble

Tamala Frietas*

Yolanda Woodruff

Todd P. Love**

Brenda Quarles***

Phyllis Burt

Benjamin Frye

Larry Williams

Kenneth Lush

Tonya Reed***

Stan Fossick, Foreman

* Served as Record Keepers.
** Served as Deputy Foreman
*** Served as backup Record Keepers