



OFFICE OF  
WALTER A. BURCH  
SHERIFF

# GUILFORD COUNTY

LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER  
(919) 373-3690  
401 W. WASHINGTON STREET

FREE

Post-It™ brand fax transmittal memo 7671 # of pages **6**

To <b>J. Maywell</b>	From <b>B. Jones</b>
Co.	Co.
Depl.	Phone #
Fax #	Fax #

May 26, 1988

*Approved by  
Manning  
See page 3*

MEMORANDUM #88-82

TO: John V. Witherspoon, County Manager

FROM: Walter A. Burch, Sheriff

SUBJECT: JAIL COMMISSARY SYSTEM AND INMATE WELFARE FUND

One of the principal shortcomings that we have in our jail operations is the easy availability of cash to inmates. Inmates are allowed to have up to \$20.00 in cash on their person in order to purchase items from vending machines. With the cash in the inmates hands, we are providing them with an easy medium of exchange for illicit activities in the jail.

Another great security problem to us is the introduction of contraband into the jail by way of toiletry items dropped off for inmates by family and friends. We have had some inmates who have received as many as four family size tubes of toothpaste in one week. Detention Officers have discovered the slit-open tubes discarded after contraband was obviously removed. We have improved our ability to detect items concealed in toothpaste and shampoo containers but experience, a continuing problem in this area.

Accounting for cash and in each inmate's account has been an extreme draw on staff resources.

The obvious solution for all these problems is to establish an inmate accounting system and commissary so that inmates would use chits to purchase items from the jail which would be charged against the inmate's account. The jail would operate a commissary through which

cigarettes, snack food, and basic hygiene items could be provided to inmates at a fair retail cost. Inmates would not be allowed to have cash but their accounts would be debited for the items purchased. When an inmate left the facility, a check for the balance of his account could be cut and forwarded to him at his new location. Under such a system inmates would not have cash, staff would not have to keep up with cash other than to credit it to the inmate's account and deposit it, hygiene items such as toothpaste and shampoo would no longer be accepted from family and friends, and we would have tighter accountability for inmate funds.

The JAILTRAC computer system which will come on line sometime in July will provide us the capability of accounting for inmate funds. This is a necessary first step to support a commissary system. But before we can establish an inmate account system, we need to receive approval for the establishment of the necessary revenue accounts and line items through the County Finance and Budget Departments. Additionally, there are a number of policy and legal issues which impact the decisions on how funds should be handled, specifically with respect to how profits on the commissary system and other inmate generated revenues are received and spent.

Most jurisdictions that have considered the issues have mandated that funds generated on account of sales, telephone calls, and other inmate activities be set aside in an inmate welfare fund which is expended for jail related items and operations.

Attached is a short description of the inmate welfare fund concept.

During the past year we have communicated with George Seay and Tom Cashwell concerning the establishment of a fund and what impact it might have on current contracts with vendors. We have also spoken with Ms. Parham about the possible earmarking of revenues from inmate telephone calls to the inmate welfare fund. By copy of this memo I am apprising those persons of our present request.

It is respectfully requested that we be given approval to establish an inmate commissary system and inmate welfare fund along the line set out in the attachment.

We would like to have all the necessary mechanisms in place by July 1st so that we may fully implement the system as soon as our computer system will allow us.

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If you need any further information concerning this request, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

*Walter A. Burch*

Walter A. Burch  
Sheriff

WAB/lpw

Attachment

cc:

George Seay  
Annie Parham  
Tom Cashwell  
J. D. Rowland  
Bob Cote

*Approved set up with  
Budget, Finance, Purchasing +  
Telephone Co.*

*[Signature]*