

Legislators To Tour Detention Center In Bid To Decide Fate

By JON HALL
and PETER BILODEAU
Staff Reporters

State legislators from the New Haven area today plan to tour the boarded-up juvenile detention center here as a second step in their bid to agree on what needs to be done to upgrade the state's ailing juvenile system.

Even as the legislators planned their inspection of the downtown center, Alderman John C. Daniels, D-21, was asking them to look at the former Whalley Avenue jail site for a future juvenile justice complex.

State Rep. Rosalind Berman, R-92, said the legislators invited Supreme Court Justice John A. Speziale and Superior Court Judge Philip E. Mancini Jr. to join them in the 9:30 a.m. tour of the facility. The center had been closed last September after state officials declared it unsafe.

Speziale is the chief administrator of the state's court system, while Mancini just completed a report lambasting the juvenile justice system. His report focused on problems at the New Haven center before it was closed.

She said today's tour follows a meet-

ing last Friday in Hartford at which several of New Haven's legislative contingent discussed the problems in the juvenile system highlighted in Mancini's report.

She said the local legislators are considering what legislation might be needed to bring about changes in the juvenile system.

"I was a little disturbed when I read the governor's message," she said. "I would have thought one of the priorities would have been the overhaul of the juvenile justice system. But I want to

reserve final judgment until I go over the entire budget package."

Gov. Ella Grasso submitted to the General Assembly a \$2.39 billion budget proposal on Wednesday. It was generally agreed by state capital observers that it was a tightfisted spending proposal which leaves little money for new projects.

Mrs. Berman also noted that the legislature's joint judiciary committee is awaiting copies of Mancini's 64-page report, before deciding whether to create a subcommittee to consider legislative remedies to juvenile system problems.

In a letter to State Sen. Joseph Lieberman, and State Rep. Irving Stolberg, Daniels said that use of the former jail site for that purpose will reduce the gradual blight the vacant building is producing in the neighborhood.

"I don't have to repeat the litany of problems we are having on Whalley Avenue. However, abandonment, crime and blight are in evidence and I believe a building on this site would do wonders to turn Whalley Avenue around," Daniels said.

He said that there is already a jail on that street — the new Whalley Avenue

jail — and the neighborhood, part of his ward, would not likely object to another one. He said the state already owns the land, and there are no plans for another type of facility there.

Since businesses are moving away from Whalley Avenue, it is not likely a commercial enterprise would take over that site soon, he said.

Daniels said, however, that if use of the jail site is too costly or not feasible for the juvenile complex, the a downtown site would probably be the best alternative.

New Mural Depicts Poor

The faces, aspirations and emotions of workers and clients of the Welfare Department on Bassett Street, were reflected in a mural unveiled Thursday.

The mural by Terry Lennox and Ruth Resnick, workers under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, was completed after a year's work.

Mayor Frank Logue commended the artists on the work and noted "Through this mural, these two women have displayed a tremendous sensitivity to the needs and hopes of the people of our city."

City Manpower and Training Administrator Thomas Corso Thursday said the mural reflects people's feelings and aspirations. "After CETA winds down, the mural will be lasting evidence of the work that was done," Corso said.

"A symbol of hope," is how Welfare Department Director Leota Tucker characterized the mural. "It portrays the problems urban dwellers face, but it also reflects the strength and dignity of people," the director said.



Logue, between artists Lennox, left, and Resnick, helps unveil the mural. (Staff Photo by James Meehan)

Chief Predicts Police On Feet If Budget Nixed

By JANET KIPPHUT
Staff Reporter

"There will be a lot of walking beats next year," if the Board of Finance eliminates a \$300,900 line item for police cars, commented Police Chief Ed Morrone.

The Police Department Thursday afternoon presented to the Finance Board its \$9.6 million budget request for the 1979-80 fiscal year. This represents an increase of \$1.6 million over current allocations.

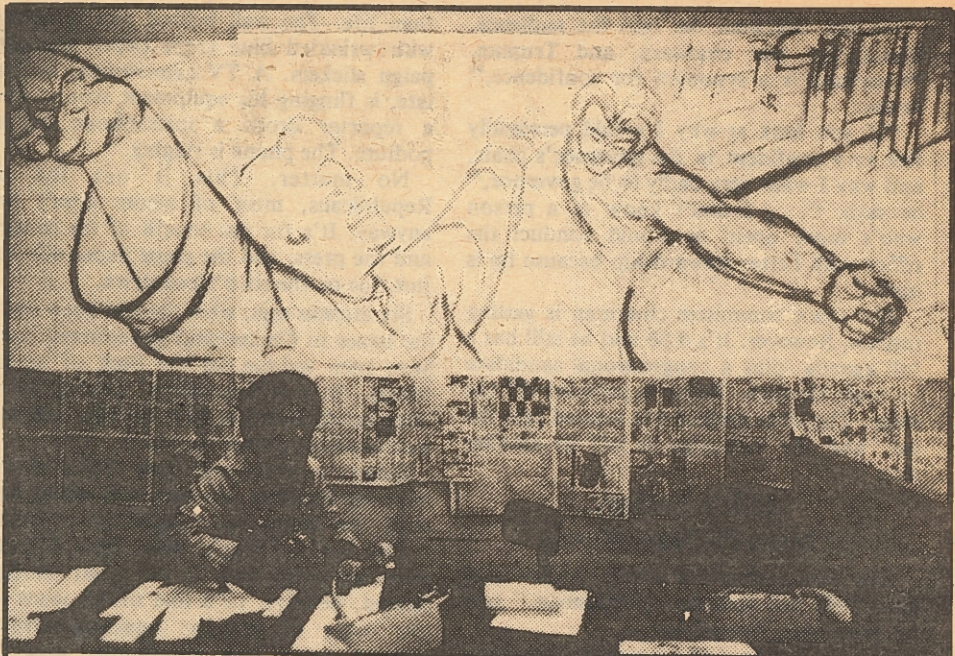
Morrone told the board the request for 51 new cars, or about one-third of the department's fleet, is one of the most critical areas in the budget. A similar request last year was denied.

It was noted as common practice among police departments to replace patrol vehicles every three years. Some of

some others not in the union are budgeted at \$35,000. Another salary item is \$40,000 to comply with an agreement between the department and Local 530 giving patrolmen serving as detectives the difference between the two rates of pay.

The department also is asking for \$115,000 to hire 13 civilians to serve as investigative aides, do clerical work and maintenance. In addition to about 20 patrolmen on light duty, some of these positions are being filled by personnel who could be on the street, Guidone and Morrone emphasized.

It also was noted the cost of folding the Housing Authority police into the New Haven Police Department is \$300,000 for salaries alone.



CETA is supporting two artists to create a mural at the city welfare office.
(Virginia Blaisdell photo)

Murals

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sagging tenements—the first with windows all cracked; the second “CONDEMNED,” black inside; the last one flaming and smoking, leaned so far right it’s about to fall over. In the street in front of the buildings, a woman hangs out in a red midriff tube top. A man cruises up to her, open shirt, hat, shades, smoking a reefer. Three men crouch, poised, around three green bills on the pavement. One man holds another by the arms so his buddy can beat on him.

Then, in the center, an orange man—bare-chested, big as the tenements—pushes the ghetto away with one sweep of his muscular forearm.

A man and a woman reach across the right side to join hands. Above their arms are Eleanor Roosevelt, Kareem Abdul Jabbar, Huey Newton, Roberto Clemente and Aretha Franklin—all smiling. Below, kids of different races study together; a girl in a cap and gown flaunts her diploma in her outstretched black-power fist; youths wait in line to cast ballots; a young woman clutches a book, a young man a hammer and pencil. To the far right, joyful citizens stream from their rainbow-capped neighborhood.

More to Come

Ruth and Terry are glad they’ve had CETA backing for summer projects like “Path of the World,” that give young city artists a chance to get paid while developing their skills. Sometimes CETA’s federal guidelines restrict them, though. Ruth says CETA policy stresses “punctuality, responsibility and always being occupied with a concrete task.” Ruth and Terry argue creative, fulfilling work needs a more flexible atmosphere.

CETA Arts Coordinator Ellen Payne agrees, and says her department plans to limit the size of the mural teams this summer to improve the creative conditions. This is one of the few ways the agency has begun to tailor its programs to the artists. Another is the special grant they gave to fund the Welfare mural.

The grant is good for three murals. Ruth and Terry hope to paint one in the city’s Unemployment Office next, but haven’t

found a spot for the third yet. After only two years of painting, they are having trouble finding walls. New Haven redevelopment plans threaten a number of buildings, and many of the city’s older walls have the kinds of leaks that rule out painting. The two hope they can start getting commissions for murals as new buildings are constructed. “If you could catch a building in the design stage and there’s the community spirit to say, ‘We want our voice on the buildings,’ you could do it,” says Terry.

Ruth and Terry believe they can “do it.” They say murals are catching on in New Haven, that people are starting to see how art can speak for and move a community.

While murals are still fairly new to New Haven, city mural movements have been taking root for several years all over the country. In 1976, New York hosted the first National Convention of Muralists, where 200 painters came from as far as San Francisco to share techniques, problems and stories. This April, Ruth and Terry flew to Chicago to represent New Haven in the second convention.

Terry thinks that if the Welfare project works, other city institutions will want murals. And the Welfare project seems to be working. Now that they’ve had a hand in changing the drawing, nearly all the Welfare employees are pleased with the plans for the mural. Even the harshest critics have come to admire Ruth and Terry’s openness, skill and dedication, and look forward to seeing the drawing on the wall. Along with the early supporters, they watch from their desks as Ruth and Terry climb the scaffold and paint the first strokes.

Working from a few of the photographs, using their grid transfer system, they sketch three large figures in a ring clasping hands. Workers perch on desks or cluster by the scaffold as their colleagues—Ronnie Wright, Julio Vidro and John Popolizio, who stand for uniting three races—take form. The likenesses are good ones, and a few workers surround Ronnie Wright, looking from her profile to the mural, shaking their heads and exclaiming.

The question remains whether the Welfare clients will like it, but the department’s new director, Dr. Leota Tucker, is optimistic. She says the mural will offer a clear message of hope. “It says that the people who come into Welfare aren’t to blame for their condition. It says they shouldn’t be afraid to seek help, to band together to move beyond poverty.” □