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becoming."

Walker agreed, saying it was not the council's practice to denounce the committee.

Stipe also pressed Walker for an accounting of money resulting from drug forfeitures and bogus check collections, saying he had repeatedly asked for such reports but that they had never been supplied. Walker immediately distributed a report concerning the funds from the 1995 fiscal year and added that he had made the reports available as required by statute.

"Do you have a problem giving it to me, specifically?" Stipe asked. "No," replied Walker, assuring the senator that he would be sure he had the most recent reports.

As it has with other agencies, the subcommittee delayed consideration of the bulk of the council's request, approving only the state employee pay raise and associated benefits increase portions of the request.

The council asked the panel to consider allocating \$66,994 for an increase in district attorneys salaries mandated by law and effective Jan. 1, 1997; \$5.6 million to cover the cost of 140 FTEs in district attorneys offices to deal with increased workloads resulting from violent crime; and \$114,000 to cover the increased cost of testimony from expert witnesses.

The subcommittee is expected to take up those requests, along with the requests from other agencies not related to the state employee pay raise, at a later meeting.

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with a new facility in Holdenville, the department has been forced to temporarily house inmates in condemned cellhouses at the Oklahoma State Reformatory in Granite and at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester.

Larry Fields, DOC director, has also asked Governor Frank Keating to consider invoking the emergency release provision of the state's prison population management act. That would allow the department to release inmates meeting certain statutory conditions. The governor has yet to respond to the request.

In a related request, Fields asked the subcommittee to consider allocating \$26.5 million for the lease of additional private prison bed space.

"Our projections, unfortunately, have been on target," Fields said of the prison system's ever increasing population.

Specifically, the department estimates it will exceed its population limit by some 866 inmates by the end of the current fiscal year. In addition to space to house those inmates, Fields said, the department's projections

show the need to phase in 1,530 more prison beds by the end of the 1997 fiscal year in order to handle the growing inmate population.

The department's request is more than double that recommended by the governor. Keating has proposed funding for 1,603 additional prison beds, including 1,383 private prison beds, 60 additional contract county jail beds and contracts for 160 beds in Mexico.

Asked by Sen. Gene Stipe, D-McAlester, what it would take to bring the prisoners housed in Texas back to Oklahoma, Fields and other DOC personnel pointed to the same thing: Money.

"There aren't sufficient beds in this state to bring them home," a DOC employee attending the meeting said.

Following the procedure set in its previous meetings, the subcommittee approved allocations to the department for the state-wide employee pay raise at a cost of \$6.5 million and the associated OPERS contribution of \$558,375. Also approved was full funding of the department's contribution to the teacher's retirement system of \$22,500.

Capitol Network News

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