

Tuolumne County
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Sonora, California 95370



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SEP 23 2014

Superior Court of California
County of Tuolumne

By: *E. Royce* *Evan Royce, Third District Clerk*
Karl Rodefer, *Fifth District*

September 16, 2014

The Honorable Donald Segerstrom
Tuolumne County Superior Court
60 North Washington Street
Sonora, CA 95370

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report - Implementation Review of Several
Agencies and Departments

Dear Judge Segerstrom:

The following is offered in response to the 2013-14 Grand Jury Report as it
pertains to the Columbia Fire Protection District, Building Code Division, Probation
Department and Sonora Regional Medical Center.

Grand Jury Findings

- F3. The public land that comprises a large portion of CFPD's (Columbia Fire
Protection District's) district pays no taxes, therefore generating no revenue for
CFPD.

Response: Agree

- F6. Due to low staffing at the Building Code division, building inspections take
precedence over collection of penalty fees.

***Response: Disagree. There is no connection between Building Division
staffing levels, building inspections and the collection of penalty fees.***

Perhaps the Grand Jury was trying to suggest that if there were more Building Inspectors, more time could be spent on code enforcement activities and the assessment of penalties where warranted. If that was the intent of this finding, the response would be: "agree".

- F11. The Probation Department continues to be unable to accept credit card payments.

Response: Agree

- F15. There is no secure room currently available for patients awaiting medical clearance and/or mental health evaluations.

Response: Agree

Grand Jury Recommendations

- R3. The Jury recommends that the County follow the recommendation from Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to expand the CFPD (Columbia Fire Protection District) boundaries.

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis.

First, consistent with finding F3, the County should investigate having the State begin contributing an amount of money equivalent to what would be paid to the CFPD if State properties were under private ownership. This may at least resolve the inequity of the majority the CFPD being comprised of property (Columbia State Park) which is not contributing income to help support fire and first responder services provided by the CFPD.

Second, interest has been expressed over the years by several fire districts (not just CFPD) to expand their boundaries via annexation. Such annexations may prove helpful to the individual districts and potentially benefit fire insurance ratings for properties within annexed lands, but they will also reduce revenues to the Tuolumne County Fire Department (TCFD) with unknown service and insurance impacts in areas of the County covered by TCFD. A proper and independent analysis of these funding, service and fire insurance rating issues would best be completed by an independent consulting firm with expertise in all of these areas. To this end, the Board will direct staff to issue a Request for Proposals for consultant services and consider funding a comprehensive, county-wide study of such issues instead of studying CFPD concerns alone.

Both of the above actions are complicated, politically sensitive (requiring input and buy-in from multiple agencies) and staff time intensive. The second activity could also be very expensive. Despite the Grand Jury's desire for such an analysis to be completed within six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury Report (i.e. December 2014), action on this matter will need to lapse well into calendar 2015.

- R6. The Jury recommends that the County increase staffing at the Building Code Division to allow for the collection of penalty fees.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. There is no connection between Building Division staffing levels, building inspections and the collection of penalty fees.

Perhaps the Grand Jury was trying to suggest that if there were more Building Inspectors, more time could be spent on code enforcement activities and the assessment of penalties where warranted. If that was the intent of this recommendation, the response would be: "The recommendation has been implemented with the addition of one Building Inspector mid-way through FY 2013-14 and one Plans Examiner in the FY 2014-15 Final Budget. These two positions were intended to support the processing of building plans and conducting inspections; however, they will also provide a small boost in the Division's overall staff capacity to support code enforcement activities. The approval of additional positions would need to be considered in future budgets in the context of other department requests and Board priorities at the time"

- R11. The Jury recommends that the County make every effort to implement a system to accept credit card payments at the Probation Department.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. Payments of this type can already be paid in the Office of Revenue Recovery (the central payment and tracking point for same) or via the County's website.

- R15. The Jury recommends that SRMC and the community partners make every effort in FY 2014-15 to establish a secure room for potential 5150 patients.

Response: The recommendation will be implemented to the greatest extent possible by the Behavioral Health Department as a partner to the team of care and response to potential 5150 patients awaiting acceptance and transfer of persons to secure settings for treatment of their mental health needs. In addition to utilizing law enforcement partners to respond to uncooperative patients, the Behavioral Health Department is informed that SRMC hired security staff to provide an alternative solution to reduce risk and improve safety to potential 5150 patients. However, SRMC reported legal limitations preventing establishment of a secure room in its facility unless SRMC establishes itself as a facility designated to provide 72 hours of evaluation and treatment of mental illness.

Questions regarding any of the responses provided above can be directed to County Administrator Craig Pedro.

Sincerely,



EVAN ROYCE
Chairman

Cc: Craig L. Pedro, CAO
Josh White, County Fire Warden
Paul Avila, Assistant County Fire Warden
Bev Shane, CRA Director
Doug Oliver, Chief Building Official
Adele Arnold, Chief Probation Officer
Shelley Piech, Treasurer-Tax Collector
Ann Connolly, HSA Director
Steve Boyack, Assistant HSA Director
Rita Austin, Behavioral Health Director

I hereby certify that according to the provisions of Government Code Section 25103, delivery of this document has been made.

ALICIA L. JAMAR
Clerk of the Board

By: 