

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: CUSTODY AND CORRECTIONS, AND OTHER COUNTY FACILITIES

Report Date: June 9, 2023

Response by: Board of Supervisors

FINDINGS

The county agrees with Findings 1, 4, 7, 13 and 14.

The county partially agrees with Findings 8 and 9.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations 4 and 5 are in the process of being implemented.

Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13 and 14 will not be implemented.

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Steve Madrone,
Fifth District Supervisor & Chair of the Board

Number of pages attached: 6



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

839 4th Street, Eureka, CA 95501

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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FROM: COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO 2022-23 GRAND JURY REPORT "CUSTODY AND CORRECTIONS, AND OTHER COUNTY FACILITIES"
DATE: SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

In the Grand Jury Report, "CUSTODY, CORRECTIONS AND OTHER COUNTY FACILITIES," the Grand Jury has requested that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors respond to the following findings and recommendations:

Humboldt County Correctional Facility: **F1, R1, R2**
Sheriff's Work Alternative Program: **F4, R3**
County Animal Shelter: **F7, F8, R4, R5**
Sempervirens: **F9, R6**
Public Administrator: **F13, F14, R8, R9**
Sheriff's Garberville Station: **R12, R13, R14**

I am proposing the following response as detailed below.

HUMBOLDT COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY FINDINGS

Finding 1: The Humboldt County Correctional Facility staff makes an effort to treat the resident population with respect and compassion, often under very difficult conditions.

Response: Agree

HUMBOLDT COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: By March 31, 2024, the Humboldt County Sheriff create and implement an incentive plan to retain dedicated current Correctional Deputies at the Humboldt County Correctional Facility. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #2. (F2)

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

This recommendation must be implemented by the Sheriff, and the Sheriff is in the process of implementing this recommendation. Recruiting and retaining Correctional Deputies has always been a priority for the Sheriff and the Sheriff's Office has a recruitment incentive program in place, which includes a bonus for experienced Correctional Deputies who choose to apply with the county. Two years ago, the Board of Supervisors approved substantial contractual raises for Correctional Deputies which significantly elevated Humboldt County's Correctional Deputies salaries to bring them to a level on par with counties similar in size to Humboldt County.

Recommendation 2: By March 31, 2024, the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services create and implement an incentive plan to retain dedicated current Behavioral Health Clinicians within the Humboldt County Correctional Facility, and recruit and hire new Clinicians to staff the unfilled allocated positions. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #2. (F2)

- **Funding Recommendation:** The Grand Jury recommends the Humboldt County Sheriff provide funding for R1, and the Department of Health and Human Services provide funding for R2, with appropriations in the current fiscal year. If current appropriations are not sufficient, the Grand Jury recommends the Department of Health and Human Services, at its next earliest opportunity, pursue additional funding from an appropriate agency, including state or federal agencies, or submit to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, a request for additional funding, sufficient to fund the above recommendations.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) covering AFSCME employees which includes Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) Behavioral Health Clinicians, Section 12.12, staff assigned to work in the correctional facility receive a 95 cent per hour differential as hazard pay. The availability of licensed clinicians statewide remains an issue, with some clinician positions remaining unfilled for over a year. Behavioral Health is looking at a variety of approaches to address critical staffing issues across Behavioral Health, and position-specific approaches could have unintended consequences. The possibility of additional retention or recruitment incentives can be discussed when negotiations begin for the MOU that will be effective January 1, 2025.

SHERIFF'S WORK ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM FINDINGS

Finding 4: Incoming and outgoing Correctional Deputies at the Sheriff's Work Alternative Program - Sheriff's Farm do not regularly have an overlapping period at the Farm, resulting in a lack of transferred knowledge and skills. (F4)

Response: Agree

SHERIFF'S WORK ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 3: By March 31, 2024, the Humboldt County Sheriff schedule no less than one month of overlap between incoming and outgoing Correctional Deputies at the Sheriff's Farm.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

This recommendation must be implemented by the Sheriff. That being said, the Sheriff has implemented this recommendation. The Sheriff's Office has a new recruitment process in place for all specialty assignments in the Humboldt County Correctional Facility which allows, in ideal circumstances, for an upward of two months to train and pass on necessary knowledge for these positions. It should be noted that staffing the Humboldt County Correctional Facility remains the primary focus for the Sheriff's Office.

COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER FINDINGS

Finding 7: The Sheriff's Office Animal Shelter has multiple building maintenance issues such as the compromised roof and obsolete security cameras requiring immediate attention. The security camera issue was also noted by the 2021-2022 Grand Jury. (R4)

Response: Agree

Finding 8: Several lamp posts in the parking lot of the Sheriff's Office Animal Shelter have collapsed, and others are showing signs of continued deterioration, weakening the integrity of the metal, thereby endangering the public, staff, volunteers and parked vehicles. (R5)

Response: Partially Agree.

The county agrees that work needs to be done to improve the condition of the posts, however Humboldt County Public Works staff has completed work to make the existing poles safe for the public, volunteers and parked vehicles until the replacement project can be fully completed.

COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 4: The Humboldt County Sheriff review and schedule the repair of deferred maintenance items, specifically the ongoing roof leaks and outdated security cameras in the Animal Shelter. These repairs should be completed no later than March 31, 2024. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #5. (F7)

Response: This recommendation is in the process of being implemented.

The Sheriff's Office has partnered with the Humboldt County Information Technology Division to determine what needs to be done to repair the security cameras. The leaking portion of the roof is expected to be replaced by the Humboldt County Public Works Department prior to March 31, 2024.

Recommendation 5: The Humboldt County Sheriff schedule maintenance to replace or repair exterior lamp posts in the Humboldt County Animal Shelter parking lot. These projects should be completed no later than March 31, 2024. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #5. (F8)

- **Funding Recommendation:** The Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Sheriff provide funding for R4 and R6 with existing appropriations in the current fiscal year. If current appropriations are not sufficient, the Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Sheriff, at their next earliest opportunity, pursue additional funding from an appropriate agency,

including state or federal agencies, or submit to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, a request for additional funding, sufficient to fund the above recommendations.

Response: This recommendation is in the process of being implemented.

The Humboldt County Department of Public Works is in the process of implementing this recommendation. As previously mentioned, Humboldt County Public Works staff has completed work to make the existing poles safe for the public, volunteers and parked vehicles until the replacement project can be fully completed. The Department of Public Works anticipates this work will be completed by March 31, 2024.

SEMPERVIRENS PSYCHIATRIC HEALTH FACILITY FINDINGS

Finding 9: The Sempervirens Psychiatric Health Facility is a building in disrepair. The deferred maintenance issues concerning rain water leaking from windows, the ceiling, and drafty dormitory windows cause discomfort and increase anxiety for residents and staff. (R6)

Response: Partially Agree.

The county agrees that the advanced age of this facility poses deferred maintenance challenges such as drafty windows. For regular maintenance issues such as a broken window, Sempervirens staff submit work orders when needs arise, and the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) facilities team arranges to do the repairs.

SEMPERVIRENS PSYCHIATRIC HEALTH FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 6: The Department of Health and Human Services Behavioral Health Branch review and create a maintenance schedule to repair the leaking roof and broken windows throughout the Sempervirens Psychiatric Facility by no later than March 31, 2024. For funding recommendations see the wording directly below. (F9)

- **Funding Recommendation:** The Grand Jury recommends that the Department of Health and Human Services Behavioral Health Branch provide funding for (R6) with appropriations in the current fiscal year. If current appropriations are not sufficient, the Grand Jury recommends the Department of Health and Human Services Behavioral Health Branch at its earliest opportunity, pursue additional funding from an appropriate agency, including state or federal agencies, or submit to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, a request for additional funding, sufficient to fund the above recommendations.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

The recommendation is not warranted. As previously stated, for regular maintenance issues such as a broken window, Sempervirens staff submit work orders when needs arise, and the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) facilities team arranges to do repairs.

Some building deficiencies are not repairable due to the advanced age of the building; for example, the drafty windows. It should be noted that these windows have been evaluated and the temperature and draftiness have been found to be within the acceptable range.

A new building is the long-term solution, and additional funding must be secured for this purpose. The DHHS Behavioral Health team continues to search for available funding that would support the construction of a new or refurbished location for Sempervirens. Until funding can be secured, DHHS Behavioral Health continues to pay for upgrades to the ever-aging facility to ensure staff and patients have a safe environment in which to work or receive medically necessary treatment.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR FINDINGS

Finding 13: The Humboldt County Coroner’s autopsy room cabinets and countertops are constructed of wood, a porous material, creating a potential biohazard for the staff. (R8)

Response: Agree

The Department of Public Works agrees that cabinets and countertops are constructed with wood and sanitation could be approved with alternative materials.

Finding 14: The Humboldt County Coroner’s evidence room lacks organized storage cabinets and has limited space, potentially compromising the secure storage and preservation of material needed for forensic, legal, and administrative purposes. (R9)

Response: Agree

The Department of Public Works agrees that the evidence room has limited space.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 8 No later than March 31, 2024, the Humboldt County Coroner’s autopsy and cadaver storage rooms be upgraded to meet modern standards and best practices, including the removal of porous surfaces that can absorb biological materials. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #9. (F13).

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

Humboldt County Department of Public Works staff will need to investigate and document the standards and best practices that can be implemented at the facility, develop cost estimates for the scope of work, and secure funding before this recommendation can be implemented.

Recommendation 9: The Humboldt County Coroner evidence room be re-organized no later than March 31, 2024. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #9. (F14)

- Funding Recommendation: The Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Sheriff’s Office provide funding for (R8) and (R9) with appropriations in the current fiscal year. If current appropriations are not sufficient, the Grand Jury recommends the Humboldt County Sheriff’s Office at its earliest opportunity, pursue additional funding from the Board of Supervisors, sufficient to fund the above recommendations.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable for the Board of

Supervisors to implement.

The Sheriff's Office will determine the best course of action to address the immediate needs of the evidence room.

SHERIFF'S GARBERVILLE STATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 12: The Humboldt County Sheriff request and secure directional signs on Redwood Drive and Cedar Street no later than March 31, 2024. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #14. (F18)

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

The Humboldt County Sheriff must implement this recommendation. The Sheriff's Office is in the process of implementing this recommendation in partnership with the Department of Public Works.

Recommendation 13: The Humboldt County Sheriff request and secure directional signs on US-101 from California State Department of Transportation no later than March 31, 2024. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #14. (F19).

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

This recommendation must be implemented by the Sheriff. The Sheriff's Office has noted that they will be working with CalTrans and the Department of Public Works to implement this recommendation.

Recommendation 14: The Humboldt County Sheriff direct the staff at Sheriff's Garberville Station to post the hours of operation and contact telephone numbers no later than December 31, 2023. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #14. (F20)

- Funding Recommendation: The Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office provide funding for R12, R13, and R14 with appropriations in the current fiscal year. If current appropriations are not sufficient, the Grand Jury recommends the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office at its earliest opportunity, pursue additional funding from the Board of Supervisors, sufficient to fund the above recommendations.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

This recommendation must be implemented by the Sheriff, and the Sheriff's Office has implemented this recommendation.