



HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

WILLIAM F. HONSAL, SHERIFF/CORONER

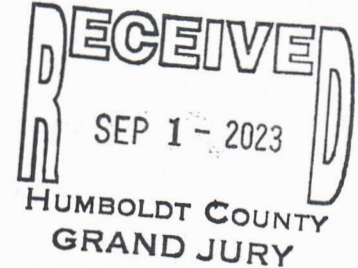
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August 30, 2023

Grand Jury
Humboldt County Superior Court
825 5th Street
Eureka, CA 95501



RE: Grand Jury 2023 Report: Custody, Corrections, and other County Facilities

Dear Honorable Grand Jury Members,

Attached is my response to the 2023 Grand Jury Report Custody, Corrections, and other County Facilities. I agree with the report's findings. I appreciate the Grand Jury's report, thoroughness, and opinions on current state of the county infrastructure and facilities. The County struggles to appropriately plan for facility maintenance, replacement schedules, and for future expansion. Thank you for addressing these issues in the report and my hope is that the County can create a strategic plan that addresses long term facility maintenance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "W. Honsal".

William F. Honsal
Sheriff, County of Humboldt
707.268.3618

CC: Judge Kelly Neel

MCKINLEYVILLE STATION
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CORONER'S OFFICE
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2023 RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: Custody and Corrections

Report Date: 06/09/2023

Response by: W. Honsal, Sheriff, County of Humboldt

FINDINGS

- F1: Agree
- F4: Agree
- F7: Agree
- F8: Agree
- F13: Agree
- F14: Agree

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1: This recommendation is in the process of being implemented.
- R2: This recommendation will not be implemented.
- R3: This recommendation has been implemented.
- R4: This recommendation is in the process of being implemented.
- R5: This recommendation requires analysis.
- R8: This recommendation will not be implemented.
- R9: This recommendation requires analysis.
- R12: This recommendation is in the process of being implemented.
- R13: This recommendation is in the process of being implemented.
- R14: This recommendation has been implemented.

Date: 8/30/2023

Number of pages attached: 5

Signed: 

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT – RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSE SUMMARY STATEMENT

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

Every employee is evaluated on how they adhere to the Mission, Vision, Values, and Principles of the Sheriff's Office. We take pride in treating all persons with dignity and respect.

Sheriff's Office Mission:

To protect and serve our community and to earn the public's trust through compassion and accountability.

Vision:

To be the safest rural community in California where peace, justice, and freedom thrive.

Values:

***D** – Dedication – Committed to our purpose*

***E** – Excellence – Being outstanding at everything we do.*

***P** – Professionalism – More than a Job, We are skilled and possess the knowledge and character to be CALLED to protect the community.*

***U** – Unity – We are one team, one family. Not one of us is more important than the other. Together we can do mighty things.*

***T** – Trust – Trust is everything. There is strength in our belief in each other and the communities belief in us.*

***I** – Integrity – Strong Character is the foundation that a person and department is built on.*

***E** – Engagement – Committed to build ongoing relationship with our community.*

***S** – Service – We serve by putting others first and respect for the constitutional rights of others. We give our top priority to protecting the innocent and holding those accountable for breaking the law.*

5 Principles:

*We are **Prepared** to do what is necessary every day.*

*We are trusted with the **Protection** of our community and hold this above all else.*

*We are dedicated to **Prevention** of crime and abuse of all types.*

*We put an emphasis on **Problem Solving**, always being innovative and solution driven.*

*We seek trust and engagement through **Partnership** with our employees and everyone in our community.*

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.

Response: Agree

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.

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.

Response: Agree

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.

Response: Agree

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.

Response: Agree

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R1. 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.

This recommendation is in the process of being implemented.

Recruiting and retaining Correctional Deputies has consistently been of a primary importance to the Sheriff's Office. A notable step was taken by the Board of Supervisors two years ago when they approved a substantial contractual raise for Correctional Deputies. This wage increase was substantial, significantly elevating Correctional Deputies' salaries to a level nearly on par with

those offered by similar-sized counties. Furthermore, the Sheriff's Office has introduced a recruitment incentive program, which includes a bonus for experienced correctional deputies who choose to apply with the County.

R2. 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.

This recommendation will not be implemented.

Mental Health clinicians' recruitment is not in my ability to control. Please refer to the Health and Human Services response.

R3. 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.

This recommendation has been implemented.

The Sheriff's Office has implemented a new recruitment process for all specialty assignments in the correctional facility. The recruitment is open 1-2 months in advance to identify the replacement Deputy taking on the position. By selecting the position in advance, this allows for an upward of two months to training and pass on the knowledge to ensure that there is a smooth transition, and no productivity is lost. This is the ideal situation however, staffing the correctional facility is the primary focus. The jail is currently short staffed and there is mandatory overtime that every deputy must work.

R4. 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.

This recommendation is in the process of being implemented.

Funding has been identified and a project request has been submitted to public works in 2021 for the roof repairs. I have a project manager working with County Building Maintenance and the Public Works Department in attempt to speed up the timeline to repair the Animal Shelter Roof. We are working with County IT to determine the necessary repairs to the security cameras. We are optimistic that all these repairs will be implemented by March 31, 2024.

R5. 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.

This recommendation requires analysis.

A project request has been submitted to Public Works for the damaged and broken lighting at the Animal Shelter. Public Works has removed the poles that have fallen or were in danger of falling. Funding has not been identified to fix the lighting. The other light poles in the area will also need to be fixed due to the same structural deficiencies. The County needs to come up with a plan to fund and fix the lighting at the Animal Shelter. The Sheriff's Office has not been provided a deferred maintenance budget for upkeep on the Shelter Building or repairs to the facility.

R8. 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.

This recommendation will not be implemented.

The coroner's department and its facility are in dire need of an upgrade. As identified by several Grand Jury reports, the facility requires a new operating area to facilitate autopsies in a suitable environment for forensic pathologists to perform their work. It is crucial that the facility is equipped with sterilizable and cleanable equipment, tables, cabinets, and flooring to ensure that the department can maintain a contaminant-free environment.

Regrettably, the County has not given priority to upgrading the Coroners facility. Unless grant funding or an external source of funding becomes available, it will not be possible to implement this recommendation.

R9. The Humboldt County Coroner evidence room be re-organized no later than March 31, 2024. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #9.

This recommendation requires analysis.

This recommendation for the evidence storage area will be analyzed to determine the best course of action. We do not have the funding to upgrade the facility or to remodel the evidence room. I will work with the coroner's office personnel to address the immediate needs of the facility and evidence room.

R12. 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.

This recommendation is in the process of being implemented.

The Sheriff's Office staff will be working with public works to implement the signs.

R13. The Humboldt County Sheriff request and secure directional signs on US-101 from the California State Department of Transportation no later than March 31, 2024. For funding recommendations see the wording below recommendation #14.

This recommendation in the process of being implemented.

The Sheriff's Office will be working with Public Works and CALTrans to implement the signage.

R14. 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.

This recommendation has been implemented.