

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FROM: AMY S. NILSEN, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
SUBJECT: RESPONSES TO 2016-17 GRAND JURY REPORT *RURAL POLICING*
DATE: AUGUST 10, 2017

The 2016-17 Grand Jury has issued a report titled "Rural Policing in Humboldt County," and the Board of Supervisors is required to respond. I recommend that the Board respond as follows.

Recommendation No. R1: *The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors increase funding to the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office to greater serve our rural population.*

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The Fiscal Year 2017-18 budget contains more than \$1 million in additional funding for the Sheriff's Office, which includes more than \$600,000 from Measure Z

Recommendation No. R2: *The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors find a permanent funding model to replace the temporary Measure Z funds the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office relies upon, which expires in 2019.*

Response: This recommendation will be partially implemented. Measure Z is unique in its size and scope as it represents a significant source of locally controlled funding that can be spent to address local needs. A permanent funding source that replaces Measure Z in both the amount of revenue it generates and the flexibility in its use is difficult. Permanent funding in this amount (more than \$11 million in Fiscal Year 2017-18) often comes from a combination of state and federal sources and must be spent in certain ways. In addition, funding from these sources can be competitive, and small counties like Humboldt have challenges going up against larger, more urban counties. However, the county and the Sheriff's Office are always seeking new sources of funding to provide services needed by the community and will continue to do so.

Recommendation No. R3: *The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office conduct a comprehensive review of its hiring procedures and staff retention protocol and, as much as possible, take measures to streamline and enhance these processes.*

Response: This recommendation will be partially implemented. The Sheriff's Office has stringent state and federal requirements when it comes to hiring and the county has no authority over changing those rules. Human Resources and the Sheriff's Office are currently evaluating ways to streamline and enhance hiring procedures.

Recommendation No. R4: *The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office conduct a thorough evaluation of 911 calls and response times and actively take measure to improve this valuable function for the safety of our citizens.*

Response: This recommendation will be partially implemented. The Sheriff's Office would be the appropriate agency to evaluate 911 calls and response times. The Board of Supervisors has shown

consistent dedication to supporting the Sheriff's Office, most recently by allocating more than \$1 million in additional funding to the Sheriff's Office in FY 2017-18.

Recommendation No. R5: *The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office consider the purchase of modern emergency communication equipment such as satellite phone to enhance the safety and response times of deputies.*

Response: This recommendation will be implemented. The Board of Supervisors this year chose to fund the Sheriff's Office Measure Z application for replacing and upgrading radio equipment around the county. This funding totals more than \$350,000 to conduct a study of the county's aging radio infrastructure and to begin purchasing replacement equipment. The project will positively impact not only the Sheriff's Office, but other agencies as well, including Probation, Public Works, Department of Health & Human Services, local fire agencies and schools.

Recommendation No. R6: *The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office actively pursue ways to engage in greater communication and utilization of local Tribal Police agencies, in order to increase and enhance public safety for our rural areas.*

Response: This recommendation will be partially implemented. The Humboldt County Sheriff is an elected position and therefore the Board of Supervisors does not direct his activities. However, the Board has shown commitment to the Sheriff's Office and agrees that these actions could improve public safety and stands ready to find ways to support these efforts.