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# 1897

OCT 5 - RECD

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September 21, 2004

GRAND JURY

TO: The Honorable Allan Hardcastle  
Presiding Judge, Sonoma County Superior Court

FROM: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: **Response to Final Report of the 2003-2004 Grand Jury**

The Board of Supervisors' response to the 2003-2004 Grand Jury's findings and recommendations follows the same order as the Table of Contents of that Grand Jury Report.

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
RESPONSE TO THE 2003-2004 GRAND JURY REPORT**

**ANIMAL REGULATION DIVISION**

**RECOMMENDATIONS: Page 15**

**R1. Beginning immediately the Agricultural Commissioner must fill vacant positions, especially at the critical Veterinary Technician and Field Officer positions. Until more staff can be hired, the commissioner should consider shortening the hours that the shelter is open to the public.**

RESPONSE: The recommendation has been implemented.

The countywide hiring freeze ended in early August allowing the Department to recruit to fill their vacant positions that were budgeted for 04/05.

**R2. The Agricultural Commissioner must create a new position; Assistant Animal Regulations Director, whose responsibilities would include managing and coordinating personnel and daily shelter operations, establishing a more effective public relations program and improving staff training programs.**

RESPONSE: The recommendation requires further analysis.

This recommendation will be considered in discussions regarding countywide staffing needs with the County Administrator during the next budget cycle.

**R4. The selection criteria for the next Agricultural Commissioner must include that she/he work closely with shelter management and demonstrate a passion for the welfare of animals. This individual must be committed to increasing adoptions, spaying/neutering more animals and transferring more animals to appropriate rescue groups thereby lowering euthanasia rates.**

RESPONSE: The recommendation has been implemented.

On August 17, 2004, the Board appointed Lisa Correia as Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer, who has among her priorities, the effective and efficient operation of the Animal Regulation Division.

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#### **CORRECTIONAL OFFICER OVERTIME UNDERSTAFFING AND INJURY IN THE COUNTY JAIL.**

*FINDINGS: Page 30.*

**F7. Most overtime hours are planned a year in advance. Since fiscal year 1997-98, between 70% and 90% of all Detention Division annual overtime hours were anticipated at the time the budget was approved by the Board of Supervisors. Beginning fiscal year 2000-01 85% or more of overtime hours were budgeted.**

RESPONSE: The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding

**F19. When disability costs are considered, it is often cost effective to hire more permanent correctional officers than to fill positions with overtime hours.**

RESPONSE: The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.

**F24. On May 5, 2004, the Board of Supervisors approved the hiring of 10 more correctional officers. But even with 10 additional officers, the jail is still understaffed. At 80.3% availability, 10 are not likely to reduce all Detention Division overtime hours by more than 16-17%, or fixed-post overtime hours by more than 19-20%.**

RESPONSE: The Board of Supervisors agrees in part with this finding.

While it is true that the Board authorized the hiring of 10 additional correctional officers, further analysis will be required in order to come to the conclusion that the jail is still understaffed. The Board will review availability percentages and reduction in overtime hours as a result of staffing increases and consider recommendations at the time this information becomes available.

**F25. In a nation-wide study of correctional officer stress, the National Institute of Justice reports that "stress is widespread and, in many cases, severe-and possibly increasing-among correctional officers."**

- **Primary causes are "rotating work shifts, lack of opportunity for career advancement, frustration with supervisors' leadership styles and demands, understaffing, and mandatory overtime."**
- **Lowering stress will "reduce excessive sick leave as a means of coping with stress on the job,...the need to pay overtime to cover for officers on sick leave or who quit because of work-related stress, reduce the time officers need off after a critical incident before returning to work, reduce fees paid into the retirement fund because of fewer stress-related early**