



SONOMA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

MARK ESSICK
Sheriff-Coroner

JAMES NAUGLE
Assistant Sheriff
Law Enforcement Division

EDDIE ENGRAM
Assistant Sheriff
Detention Division

HEIDI KEITH
Chief of Financial and
Administrative Services

September 16, 2020

Honorable Brad DeMeo, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California
County of Sonoma
600 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

RE: Required Responses to the 2019-2020 Grand Jury Final Report

Dear Judge DeMeo:

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.5, attached is the Sheriff's Office's response to the Grand Jury Final Report on "The Resurrection of a Coroner's Office."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Essick".

MARK ESSICK
Sheriff-Coroner

ME/hk

cc: Dr. Ronald Chestnut, Foreperson, Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury 2019-2020
Board of Supervisors
Sheryl Bratton, County Administrator
Deva Proto, County Clerk-Recorder-Assessor

Attachment: Response

Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Sonoma County Sheriff-Coroner's Office

Report Date: July 27, 2020

Response by: Mark Essick Title: Sheriff-Coroner

Agency/Department Name: Sonoma County Sheriff-Coroner's Office

FINDINGS: F3

I (we) agree with the findings numbered: F3

I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: _____

(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed with an explanation of the reasons.)

RECOMMENDATIONS: R1

Recommendations numbered: _____ have been implemented.

(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)

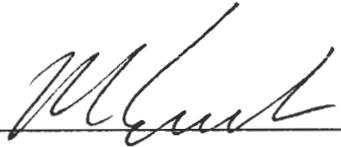
Recommendations numbered: R1 _____ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)

Recommendations numbered: _____ require(s) further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.)

Recommendations numbered: _____ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.

(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 9/16/2020 Signed: 

Number of pages attached: 2
(Refer to Civil Grand Jury Response Requirements)

SONOMA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE RESPONSE TO THE 2019-2020 GRAND JURY REPORT

Sonoma County Sheriff's-Coroner's Office: The Resurrection of a Coroner's Office

The Sheriff's Office would like to take this opportunity to thank the Grand Jury for recognizing the work we have undertaken in recent years to improve the operation of the Coroner's Office. We sincerely appreciate the commendations listed in the Grand Jury Report.

FINDINGS

F3. The future sale of the Chanate property makes it necessary to relocate the Connor's Office.

RESPONSE: The respondent agrees with the finding.

The Sheriff's Office welcomes the Grand Jury's acknowledgment of this impending issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Board of Supervisors, working in conjunction with the Sheriff's Office and the Coroner's Office Lieutenant, identify a new location for the Coroner's Office and Morgue facility by December 1, 2020

RESPONSE: The recommendation has not yet been implement, but will be implemented in the future.

The Sheriff's Office is aware of, and concerned with, the looming need to relocate the Coroner's Office and morgue. At the time the Chanate Road property was first being contemplated for sale, the Sheriff's Office contacted the County's General Services Department with our concerns. We started with General Services as they are tasked with the responsibility for all County owned facilities. Conversations between the Sheriff's Office and General Services regarding the Morgue began in 2017.

In the *Sheriff's Office Capital Project Request for the 2019-2024 General Government Capital Project Plan* submitted to General Services on October 31, 2018, Sheriff's staff included the need for the relocation of the County Morgue Facility. We requested the County consider, in any County capital project planning, the results of the future Chanate property sale and the need to relocate the Sheriff's Coroner's Offices, including the Morgue. We requested that the relocation be considered when updating the Comprehensive County Facilities Plan and in the development

of a new County Governmental Center. This was followed up by the submittal of a General Services Project Request Form in December 2018.

The Sheriff ranked the Morgue Replacement project as its number one priority in the *Sheriff's Office Capital Project Request for the 2020-2025 General Government Capital Project Plan* submitted to General Services on December 3, 2019. In this submittal, Sheriff's staff indicated it was imperative that planning for a new facility begin in FY 20-21 to ensure a new facility is available prior to eviction from a new owner of the Chanate property.

The Sheriff and his staff have been working towards the goal of identifying a new location for the Morgue. With this type of capital project, the Sheriff's Office is completely dependent on County General Services, the County Administrators Office, and the Board of Supervisors for both project planning and prioritization and for funding. Despite our best efforts in the role we play with project planning, we do not believe this will be accomplished by December 1, 2020. We will continue to work diligently to communicate the vital and constitutionally required function of the Coroner's Office to our partners at the County. We look forward to working with them to accomplish this recommendation.