



COUNTY OF SAN BENITO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

481 FOURTH STREET, HOLLISTER, CA 95023
PHONE: (831) 636-4000 FAX: (831) 636-4010

Dom Zanger
District No. 1

Kollin Kosmicki
District No. 2

Mindy Sotelo
District No. 3

Angela Curro
District No. 4

Bea Gonzales
District No. 5

September 12, 2023

Honorable J. Omar Rodríguez, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California, County of San Benito
450 Fourth Street Hollister, CA 95023

Re: Response to 2022/2023 San Benito County Civil Grand Jury Consolidated Final Report

Dear Judge Rodriguez,

The San Benito County Board of Supervisors is hereby submitting our response to San Benito County Civil Grand Jury Consolidated Final Report 2022-2023, issued, and received on July 14, 2023. The enclosed response fulfills Penal Code Section 933(c) that requires a response from the governing body within 90 days of the Grand Jury issuing a final report. Please see attachment with responses to the following sections:

1. San Benito County Jail, and
2. San Benito County Service Area.

The Board of Supervisors thanks the Grand Jury for their service to our community.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Mindy Sotelo

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Mindy Sotelo

Chair of the Board of Supervisors
San Benito County

I. SAN BENITO COUNTY JAIL

***Finding-1:** The Grand Jury finds the County Jail keeps the highest standards of order and cleanliness despite a significantly inadequate airflow system.*

RESPONSE to Finding-1: The County Board of Supervisors agrees.

***Recommendation-1:** Jail staff should be commended for maintaining high standards regarding inmate care and facility cleanliness.*

RESPONSE to Recommendation-1: The recommendation has been implemented. The Board of Supervisors approved the budget for the Sheriff-Coroner to implement a new formal employee recognition program approved through the budget process by the Board of Supervisors. The Board will continue to seek creative ways to show appreciation for our County employees. The Board of Supervisors is delighted with the leadership of Sheriff Taylor and the staff for upholding the highest standards in maintaining the Jail's cleanliness. We appreciate the team's hard work, commitment, and dedication and are committed to showing our staff that we appreciate their devotion.

Finding-2: The ongoing understaffed status of the Correctional Officers exposes San Benito County, jail inmates and staff to serious health, mental health, safety, legal and other potentially dangerous unintended consequences. For well over ten years, the Civil Grand Jury has reported the same concerns, with no noted improvements.

RESPONSE to Finding-2: The Board neither agrees nor disagrees with the consequences of understaffed correctional officers.

Recommendation-2: Recruitment activities specific to correctional staff should be prioritized. The Board of Supervisors should direct Human Resources to implement a realistic and aggressive hiring strategy to fully staff the jail.

RESPONSE to Recommendation-2: The recommendation has been implemented. The Board of Supervisors has prioritized the Sheriff's Correctional Office and supported the jail by adding 12.5 staff over the last ten years which increased the division budget to allow the hiring of correctional staff.

The table below illustrates the total budgeted personnel and estimated number of correctional officers hired.

The budgetary unit 1195 for the Sheriff-Corrections over the last ten years:

Total Budgeted and Estimated Actual Correctional Officers by Fiscal Year										
Fiscal Year	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Total budgeted Personnel	25	26	26	26	29	32	30.5	33.5	37.5	37.5
Total Correctional Staff	25	25	25	25	27	30	29	32	36	36
Actual Staffed Correctional	24	26	26	25	27	32	30	28	27	25
Total Estimated Correctional Officers Hired	1	2	0	0	5	5	1	5	4	0
Est. Number of CO / Fiscal Year										
Correctional Officer I	1	1			1	3	2	5	4	3
Correctional Officer II	11	12	12	13	14	16	17	19	19	16
Correctional Officer III	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Correctional Sergeant	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5

The Human Resources team has been responsive to the departmental need and supports recruiting jail staff. The team has implemented continuous recruitment for the correctional officer positions. The Human Resource team encourages meeting regularly with the Sheriff's office to discuss recruitment matters and has established a monthly standing meeting with the Sheriff's administrative team. The Grand Jury did not solicit any staffing data recruitment statistics, or history from the County's Human Resource team; and encourages the grand jury to seek information directly from the team for the most accurate recruitment information. Recruitment for correctional staff officers is advertised at continuous recruitment and will continue to be prioritized.

Finding-3: Long standing facilities deficiencies, specifically the swamp cooler and the smells from the sewage system may lead to health and safety issues for both staff and inmates.

RESPONSE to Finding-3: The Board of Supervisors agrees.

Reccomendation-3: Action should be taken straightaway to fund long known necessary repairs/replacement of swamp cooler, roof, and plumbing facilities.

RESPONSE to Recommendation-3: The recommendation will not be implemented at this time as a new A/C system has yet to be budgeted for the Capital Improvement Project. The County will consider all departmental requests at the next budget allocation.

II. SAN BENITO COUNTY SERVICE AREAS

Finding-1: Each CSA has projects that need to be completed and are long over-due.

RESPONSE to Finding-1: The Board of Supervisors agrees.

Reccomendation-1: The new CSA Coordinator needs to focus on the completion of overdue projects.

RESPONSE to Recommendation-1: The recommendation has not been implemented but will be in the future when the various CSA have the budget required to address the needed projects. Budget constraints for individual CSAs and the cost per project are the major hurdles that some of the projects are estimated to get started in early 2024.

Finding-2: In the county's approved budget, Schedule 12, \$543,546 is budgeted for CSA operations, which is more than three times the previous year's budget.

RESPONSE to Finding-2: The Board of Supervisors agrees.

Reccomendation-2: Provide documentation and rationale for CSA operations totaling \$543,546.

RESPONSE to Recommendation-2: Action has been implemented by adopting the recommended budget of County Service Area operations totaling \$543,546. The operating budget includes all administrative costs including staff salaries and benefits, CSA-related office supplies, tools, vehicle expenses, and maintenance costs. The budget has increased due to hiring new staff and the cost of operations. In fiscal year FY20/21, the adopted budget included positions of 1.75 Full-Time Employees (FTE) which increased by 3.75 FTE in FY21/22; and after careful evaluation of CSA needs, the FTE was reduced to 2.75 for the adopted budget in FY23/24.

(See Adopted County Budget Reports for County Service Areas FY 20/21 & FY 21/22 Schedule 15 has the revenue and expenditures)

Finding-3: The CSA Property Related Fee link in the RMA website is date March 9, 2010, which detailed many aspects for each CSA and is relevant to the homeowners in a CSA.

RESPONSE to Finding-3: The Board of Supervisors agrees.

Reccomendation-3: The CSA coordinator needs to update the CSA Property Related Fee link as soon as possible. This will provide homeowners in the individual CSA's access to information of budgeting and cost associated with each CSA.

RESPONSE to Recommendation-3: The recommendation has been implemented and an updated CSA Property Related Fee Report has been provided through a link in the updated CSA Website.

Finding-4: Complaints were not addressed in a timely manner.

RESPONSE to Finding-4: The Board of Supervisors agrees.

Reccomendation-4: Provide an avenue for resolving complaints.

RESPONSE to Recommendation-4: The recommendation has been implemented, an introduction letter was sent out to each parcel's registered owner in June/July as an outreach effort to provide an avenue to improve communication between the county and residents.

Finding-5: Collectively the CSA residents don't have a voice for CSA concerns and are not advised of scheduling of when service projects are to be performed.

RESPONSE to Finding-5: The Board of Supervisors disagrees in part as the CSAs don't have a voice as the CSA have various ways to communicate with the County.

Reccomendation-5: The CSA Coordinator should create a forum, either semi-annually or quarterly, to inform CSA homeowners when the service projects will be scheduled and completed, and post information to the County website so residents of CSAs can find information regarding their CSA without having to rely on staff.

RESPONSE to Recommendation-5: The recommendation has been implemented, and new pages under the CSA Website have been created and added for "Projects" and "Services" for all the CSAs and CFDs. Homeowners can look at service schedules and project lists for information related to their CSA or CFD. In addition, they can reach out to the county directly through a call or email.