



COUNTY OF SAN BENITO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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

Betsy Dirks
District No. 1

Kollin Kosmicki
District No. 2

Peter Hernandez
District No. 3

Bob Tiffany
District No. 4

Bea Gonzales District
No. 5

November 22, 2023

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

Re: Response to 2021/2022 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 the Grand Jury Report dated June 29, 2022, issued, and received by email on September 9, 2022. 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, eleven sections:

1. San Benito County Sheriff's Department,
2. San Benito County Probation Department,
3. San Benito County Behavioral Health Department,
4. San Benito County Human Resource Department,
5. San Benito County Information Technology,
6. San Benito County Ad Hoc Water Report,
7. San Benito County Juvenile Hall,
8. Hollister Animal Shelter,
9. Dispatch Communications,
10. San Benito County Budget, and
11. San Benito County Jail.

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

Sincerely,

Peter Hernandez
Chair of the Board of Supervisors
San Benito County

I. SAN BENITO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Finding-1: Visibility is a key factor in controlling criminal activity.

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

Recommendation-1: The Civil Grand Jury recommends the establishment of a swing shift to best support high visibility patrol tactics and to deter criminal activity.

RESPONSE to Recommendation-1: This recommendation will not be implemented at this time it is not reasonable in light of budgetary considerations. The Sheriff's office does not have sufficient staffing to support a swing shift at this time. However, the Board of Supervisors supports the Sheriff's decisions in operational and logistical tactics that he may choose to implement within the approved budget. We empower and support his efforts to deter criminal activity in San Benito County.

F-2: The increase in criminal activity emboldens gang members.

RESPONSE to F-2: The County Board of Supervisors agrees.

R-2: The Civil Grand Jury recommends Creating a Violent Crimes Task Force to investigate illegal activity, disrupt gang activity and reduce the volume of illegal drugs and weapons brought into the community.

RESPONSE to R-2: This recommendation will not be implemented at this time it is not reasonable in light of budgetary and staffing considerations. However, the Board supports the Sheriff's departmental operational actions to respond and reduce the volume of illegal activity in San Benito County within the allocated budget. The Board supports the Department and additional staff was approved during this year's budget process.

F-3: The Civil Grand Jury recognizes that there is great competition for recruitment of Deputy Sheriffs and support personnel.

RESPONSE to F-3: The County Board of Supervisors agrees.

R-3 The Civil Grand Jury recommends the support for "homegrown approach" for future recruits through the Sheriff Explorer Program, Reserve program, and the implementation of a citizen academy to further enhance community awareness and relationships.

RESPONSE to R-3: This recommendation will not be implemented at this time it is not reasonable in light of budgetary and staffing considerations. The Board of Supervisors is committed to serving the residents of San Benito County; through

the FY 22-23 budget cycle, the Board approved a total of three new deputy positions funded through the general fund. Recruitment for deputy sheriffs has been a challenge throughout the entire State, particularly in our County, which is situated near counties like Santa Clara County, Monterey County, and Santa Cruz County.

II. SAN BENITO COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

F-1: The Juvenile Probation Department has 4 vacancies.

RESPONSE to F-1: The Board partially agrees that vacancies in the Juvenile Probation department exist, but partially disagrees given that the number of vacancies fluctuates.

R-1: Four vacancies need to be filled to help prevent delinquent youth from becoming chronic offenders.

RESPONSE to R-1: The recommendation will be implemented. The Board of Supervisors remains committed to helping recruit and retain qualified County employees. County staff is working diligently to fill vacant positions as quickly as possible. Departments list vacancies on the County website as soon as openings exist and applicants are provided ample time to apply and provide the required documentation. Shortly after that, written or physical agility testing is completed, if applicable, and interviews are scheduled for the top-scoring candidates. To date, the department has two vacancies left to fill with ongoing recruitment efforts in place.

Additionally, enhancements to the onboarding process have been implemented for new staff by developing a training checklist and schedule to ensure a smooth transition for newly hired employees. The Probation department has also focused on current cross-training staff to cover mandated reports and court and Juvenile Probation assignments.

F-2: In a juvenile justice field that is ever evolving, it is more important to measure outcomes to decipher if the programs and services offered are making a positive impact.

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

R-2: The case management system should be funded and updated to meet the needs of management level staff.

RESPONSE to R-2: The recommendation is already being implemented as the San Benito County Probation Department is migrating to a new case management system through Journal Technologies Incorporated (JTI). This recommendation will be fully implemented by approximately by the end of the

year 2023. The case management system, "eProbation" will integrate with the San Benito County Superior Court's case management system, "eCourts," and has been funded through the support of SB 129 grant funding. A Project Plan has been implemented along with a timeline for the project in September 2022 a kickoff planning event was held. To provide a seamless transition, the department has begun developing workflow processes and mapping its current case management system, Corrections Software Solutions.

F-3: The San Benito County Gang Task Force was successful program in curbing youth gang violence before it gets out of hand.

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

R-3: The Gang Task Force should be funded and reinstated with the involvement of the Probation Department as soon as possible.

RESPONSE to R-3: The recommendation has been implemented (under a different name) as the Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) board supports and funds the implementation of a Special Intelligence Unit (SIU). This unit collaborates with the San Benito County Sheriff's Office, San Benito County District Attorney's Office, and the Hollister Police Department. The team consists of one Deputy Probation Officer, one Sheriff's Deputy, one Deputy District Attorney, and one Police Officer to provide gang education, gang suppression, and gather gang intelligence for the community of San Benito. This unit is in the early stages of development, emphasizing gang intelligence gathering and collaboration with fellow agencies. The probation department has a dedicated Probation Officer who has implemented monthly meetings to discuss trends observed in the community, address concerns related to violent or gang-related behavior, and plan operations around intervention and suppression.

F-4: The building that houses the Probation department is wholly insufficient to the needs of the staff and their clients.

RESPONSE to F-4: The Board disagrees that the Probation department building is "wholly insufficient." The building is sufficient at this time for departmental operations. The Board acknowledges that the needs of the department will grow with time and remains open to the possibility of providing additional office and storage space if it is deemed necessary in the future.

R-4: A new home for the department should be prioritized to the growing population in need of Probation services.

RESPONSE to R-4: The recommendation will not be implemented at this time. The Board of Supervisors utilizes the County's limited resources in accordance with the County's Strategic Plan and the evolving needs of the community. A new

facility has yet to be planned or identified at this time. We commend the San Benito County Probation Department for using the available facilities and storage space. The County periodically considers its Capital Project needs based on departmental needs.

III. SAN BENITO COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Finding F-1: *Clinical staff do not make their own client treatment appointments due to the existing BH policy as mandated by the management.*

RESPONSE to Finding F-1: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the statement that clinical staff members do not make their treatment appointments due to the existing Behavioral Health policy. Clinical staff can notify clerical staff when they would like to see a client again and the clerical staff will then assist the client in finding an appointment on the provider's schedule that works for the client, which is not unlike the procedure followed by comparable medical professionals.

Recommendation R-1: *The Civil Grand Jury recommends full implementation of the modern (Anasazi Software) appointment EHR (Electronic Health Record) system as recommended by the Medi-Cal Specialty Quality review final report for FY 2021-2022.*

RESPONSE to R-1: The department has already implemented the recommended action. The Anasazi Software Scheduler application has been implemented and fully functional since 2006 with continuous application and maintenance updates throughout the years.

F-2: *County Behavioral Health has received multiple deficiencies requiring BH placement by Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to be put on a Corrective Action Plan (CAP).*

RESPONSE to F-2: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the statement made in Finding F-2. Behavioral Health does have some deficiencies, as do all counties in the state. Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) represent an opportunity to collaborate between the state, interested stakeholders, and the department to improve services. Corrective Action Plans are appropriately processed and resolved with state collaboration and guidance. The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) monitors every county's behavioral health agency extensively and annually for compliance with programming and state contracting. State/County collaborative CAPs are shared at community-attended meetings. They do not impact services or department operations given that counties

across the state receive CAPs for these reviews to collaborate with DHCS on improvement and compliance accountability.

R-2: *Implement a quality assurance (QA) program, measuring compliance against necessary local, State and federal standards.*

RESPONSE to R-2: The recommendation has already been implemented. A Quality Improvement Program has been in place since 1990 and has continuously been evaluated to maintain compliance with changing local, state, and federal standards. This program has recently expanded from a capacity of one (1) staff member to two (2) in 2018 and to four (4) members in 2019

Finding F-3: *Further consultations revealed (sic) that many current management positions are held by personnel that are acting outside of their roles due to lack of written policies, procedures, and codes of conduct. (No written BH personnel policies was verified).*

RESPONSE to F-3: The Board of Supervisors disagrees with the statement that the current management is acting outside their role. County personnel rules apply to all County Employees, including Behavioral Health employees. These rules are harmonious with the appropriate County job descriptions and minimum qualifications for qualified personnel for all positions in the department.

Recommendation R-3: *The Civil Grand Jury recommends that BH work with the new Human Resources Manager to evaluate the current management system and to develop corrective action plans to maximize proficiency of these managers.*

RESPONSE to R-3: The recommendation will not be implemented as Behavioral Health follows the DHCS scope of practice guidelines for personnel performing direct client care and respective supervisor/management positions, as is outlined in the department's state contract with DHCS. Behavioral Health will follow County-wide policies to evaluate the proficiency of the management team and ensure high-quality and cost-effective services.

Finding F-4: *There exists lengthy waiting periods to get an appointment scheduled for routine and in particular urgent services.*

RESPONSE to F-4: The Board of Supervisors disagrees. The current wait period to schedule an appointment is seven (7) days for routine appointments and zero (0) days for urgent services; the Department of Health Care Services' standard is ten (10) days for typical appointments. Recent changes to our access process have reduced the scheduling for initial appointments to 1 day based on October 2022 data.

Recommendation R-4: *The Civil Grand Jury recommends that Behavioral Health fully implements the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and the required metric software for tracking lengths of time from the initial request to the initial commencement of services.*

RESPONSE to R-4: The recommendations have already been implemented into action. SBCBH already has the DHCS required metric to track timeliness for appointments and services since 2019/2020, as is outlined in DHCS Behavioral Health Information Notice (BHIN) #19-020, BHIN #20-012, and BHIN #20-062. SBCBH reports its timeliness standards to DHCS regularly and is found to be in compliance with state regulations for routine and urgent services.

IV. SAN BENITO COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

F-1: *San Benito County experiences a rate of nearly double than local counties as well as those of similar budget size and population.*

RESPONSE to F-1: The Board of Supervisors disagrees with the Civil Grand Jury's finding and is unsure what "a rate of nearly double" is referring to. Assuming the Civil Grand Jury is referring to vacancy rate, the respondent continues to disagree due to the inability to verify which "local counties and similar budget size and population are". The report is insufficiently specific for the Human Resources Department to respond in detail.

R-1: *Exit interviews should become a part of the equation for determining why people are leaving Employment within the county to better determine where improvements can be made.*

RESPONSE to R-1: This recommendation will not be implemented. Mandating an exit interview process is not feasible in light of current staffing capacity.

F-2: *Employees complain about unfair relationships policies that allow favoritism of relatives and friends.*

RESPONSE to F-2: The Board of Supervisors disagrees with the Civil Grand Jury's finding. All complaints of favoritism that have been received by the County to date have been determined to be unfounded.

R-2: *Relationship policies are due for an update of enforceable policy.*

RESPONSE to R-2: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The County has personnel rules which were updated in November 2020 and contain provisions addressing immediate family.

F-3: Guidelines for advancement and training within county departments do not currently exist.

RESPONSE to F-3: The Board disagrees with the Civil Grand Jury's findings as the County of San Benito Personnel Policies and Procedures Handbook provides guidance regarding promotion in Section 6.2.3. Promotional opportunities are open to County employees with permanent status.

R-3: Employment advancement opportunities and training should be developed and supported throughout the county.

RESPONSE to R-3: This recommendation has been implemented. Employment advancement opportunities for employees are often available when vacancies exist, and employees are highly encouraged to participate in the competitive recruitment process.

F-4: For the needs a county the size of San Benito, the Human Resources Department is understaffed.

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

R-4: The new Human Resources Director should strategize expansion that could be supported by the Supervisors to work at maximum level.

RESPONSE to R-4: The recommendation will not be implemented at this time due to budgetary considerations. All staffing needs will be considered during the next fiscal budget process.

V. SAN BENITO COUNTY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

F-1: The County Internet Technology department is significantly understaffed.

RESPONSE to F-1: The Board agrees; however, future staffing needs for the Information Technology department and other departments will be considered during the next fiscal year budget process.

R-1: San Benito County must aggressively recruit and take steps to retain qualified personnel for the IT Department.

RESPONSE TO R-1: The County has already implemented the action by conducting a compensation study and having HR present at job fairs. In addition, the County has been more active on social media sharing vacant positions.

F-2: County IT does not regularly and routinely utilize the ticketing system to track work orders.

RESPONSE TO F-2: The Board disagrees. All county departments are required to submit an IT ticket for any technological issue.

R-2: All personnel should utilize the ticketing system to place and track work requests. and orders.

RESPONSE TO R-2: The recommendation has already been implemented. County staff utilizes the ticketing system when making an IT request. Teams reach out to IT directly in emergencies. Employees can also enter tickets on behalf of others.

VI. SAN BENITO COUNTY AD HOC WATER REPORT

F1: The 13-year closure of the San Justo Reservoir for recreational purposes has frustrated numerous County agencies and supervisors.

RESPONSE to F1: The Board agrees with the finding.

R1: The San Benito County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the County Board of Supervisors should aggressively pursue Federal and State grant money to guarantee payment back to the Bureau of Reclamation needed to rid the reservoir of the invasive zebra mussel infestation. As SBC Congressional representation changes in Washington DC, the Board of Supervisors needs to determine the best course of action required to ensure an effective communication channel.

Response to R1: The recommendation has been implemented as the Board aggressively seeks options to eradicate the zebra mussel from San Justo. The County does not own the San Justo Reservoir; therefore, the Board's oversight of what occurs is limited. The Bureau of Reclamation owns the Reservoir, San Benito Water District operates the water, and when it was opened, the County of San Benito was responsible for managing the recreational activity. In December of 1985, the County of San Benito entered a management agreement with the United States of America for the development, administration, operations, and maintenance of recreation at San Justo Reservoir for a term of 50 years, therefore expiring in 2035. In 2035 our agreement to maintain recreation will expire. Since 2008, San Justo Reservoir has been under quarantine, and closure of public access was implemented to prevent the potential spread of the invasive exotic zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*). We are the only region in California with this excessive species and the risk and impact it can have on the State's water system are significant. The County has looked and continues to investigate any available grants and has always sought effective communications with our congressional representatives.

F2: Gang activity and homeless encampments are within the County/City areas along the San Benito River and vigilant law enforcement needs to increase.

RESPONSE to F2: The Board of Supervisors agrees.

R 2: It is the Civil Grand Jury's recommendation that the County and City increase their funding to the Hollister Police Department and SBC Sheriff's Department to supply the resources required to address this damaging behavior.

RESPONSE to R2: The recommendation will not be implemented at this time. All staffing needs will be considered during the next budget approval process. The Board is committed to working with the Sheriff's department to provide timely and high-quality services to the public. The Board has no oversight over the Hollister Police Department and declines to comment on how the City allocates funds.

F3: The Civil Grand Jury finds that both the City of Hollister Wastewater Treatment Plant (HWWTP) and Sunnyslope Wastewater Treatment Plant (SWWTP) are NOT running at the design of their full capacity levels, thus neither is cost effective.

RESPONSE to F3: The Board neither disagrees nor agrees. The County of San Benito does not have oversight of the City of Hollister Wastewater Treatment Plant (HWWTP), or Sunnyslope Wastewater Treatment Plant (SWWTP), and therefore does not have adequate information to respond to this finding.

R3: The Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors accelerate a review of the current contract between the City of Hollister/VEOLIA and the Sunnyslope Water District to determine the cost effectiveness of having separate entities duplicating operations at the two facilities.

RESPONSE to R3: The recommendation will not be implemented as the Board of Supervisors has no oversight of the City of Hollister Wastewater Treatment Plant or Sunnyslope Water treatment plant.

F4: The SWWTP is operated by County/City/District employees, while the HWWTP is being operated by an independent, 3rd party company (VEOLIA water west operating services) and both operate under different permits from State Regulatory Agencies.

RESPONSE to F4: The Board of Supervisors disagrees because County employees do not operate the Sunnyslope Wastewater Treatment Plant.

R4: The Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors accelerate a review of the current contract between the City of Hollister/VEOLIA and the Sunnyslope Water District to decide the cost effectiveness of having separate entities duplicating operations at the two facilities.

RESPONSE to R4: The recommendation will not be implemented as the Board of Supervisors has no oversight of the City of Hollister Wastewater Treatment Plant or Sunnyslope Water treatment plant.

VII. SAN BENITO COUNTY JUVENILE HALL

F-1: The broken water heater has taken significant time to be repaired or replaced.

RESPONSE to F-1: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Civil Grand Jury's finding.

R-1: The water heater needs to be repaired or replaced as soon as possible by the county maintenance staff.

RESPONSE to R-1: The recommendation has been implemented. The replacement water heater was installed in November 2022.

F-2: The long chains and difficult locks is time consuming for staff to open gates.

RESPONSE to F-2: The Board of Supervisors agrees with Civil Grand Jury's finding.

R-2: The Grand Jury recommends that the locks/chains be replaced immediately with simpler handle locks.

RESPONSE to R-2: The Board of Supervisors has already implemented the recommendation. Two chains on recreation entry gates at the San Benito County Juvenile Hall have been removed and replaced with two master locks providing efficiency and safety for the facility.

F-3: The dry dirt pulls the moisture out of the ground in the garden area.

RESPONSE to F-3: The Board of Supervisors agrees with Civil Grand Jury's finding.

R-3: The Grand Jury recommends the ground be covered with mulch to protect the tender young plants from drying out.

RESPONSE to R-3: The recommendation will not be implemented at this time. The Board will consider any departmental requests during the next budget allocation.

F-4: The ground is not watered efficiently.

RESPONSE to F-4: The Board of Supervisors agrees with Civil Grand Jury's finding.

R-4: The youth can learn to construct a simple drip-irrigation system.

RESPONSE to R-4: This recommendation has already been implemented as the County installed a drip system on June 29, 2022. As a result of this upgrade, detained youth have gained knowledge in water conservation and the installation of a basic drip irrigation system.

F-5: The Staff of the Juvenile Hall should be commended for their good noticeable attitude and positive energy towards youth and other law enforcement agencies in the community.

RESPONSE to F-5: The Board of Supervisors agrees with Civil Grand Jury's finding and values the positive energy that the staff brings towards serving the youth of our community.

R-5: The Grand Jury recommends that various staff from other SBC law and justice departments be encouraged to gather informally to share ideas and information about youth in the community.

RESPONSE to F-5: The recommendation has been implemented. The department is collaborating with community members, allied agencies, and law enforcement leaders to share resources, discuss ideas, and stay updated on current trends for youth in the community. Some of these meetings occur through Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission, Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC), Child and Family Team meetings, School Law Partnership meetings, and youth reentry meetings, to name a few.

VIII. HOLLISTER ANIMAL SHELTER

F-1: The Animal Shelter has historically been, and it remains critically understaffed, underfunded, and underutilized in 2021-2022.

RESPONSE to F-1: The Board neither agrees nor disagrees, the County contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control services and has no oversight over personnel.

R-1: The Grand Jury recommends that the City and County fully fund and staff the Animal Shelter with the addition of two part time kennel attendants to support the current staff.

RESPONSE to R-1: The recommendation will not be implemented as the County of San Benito contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control services and has no oversight over personnel or operations.

F-2: Volunteer resources are severely lacking. Earlier Grand Jury recommendations and recent complaints by the community reinforce these concerns.

RESPONSE to F-2: The Board neither agrees nor disagrees given that the County contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control services and has no oversight over operations.

R-2: The Grand Jury recommends that the City and County together recruit a volunteer manager to develop a robust volunteer program supporting the animal shelter, with a minimum of 20 active volunteers in service.

RESPONSE to R-2: The recommendation will not be implemented as the County of San Benito contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control services and has no oversight over the operation, personnel, or who the City hires.

F-3: As reflected by the crime reports made available by the Police Department, Animal Control Officers lack necessary experience, training, and mentoring to conduct complex criminal investigations.

RESPONSE to F-3: The Board neither agrees nor disagrees given that the County contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control services and has no oversight over operations.

R-3: The Grand Jury recommends that all ACO's attend the 80-hour Animal Law Enforcement Training Academy hosted by Marin County SPCA or San Diego SPCA within two years of being employed with the Hollister Animal Shelter as an Animal Control Officer. Develop and engage a mentorship program with the similar Salinas/Monterey County Animal Control and with the District Attorney's office for investigations.

RESPONSE to R-3: The recommendation will not be implemented as the County of San Benito contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control services and has no oversight over the operation.

F-4: There is no licensed veterinarian on site and the licensing for euthanasia drugs is through an off-site vet.

RESPONSE to F-4: The Board neither agrees nor disagrees given that the County contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control services and has no oversight over operations.

R-4: The Grand Jury recommends the development and staffing of a surgery suite to accommodate emergency care, intake evaluations and vaccinations, spay/neuter services, and euthanasia on site.

RESPONSE to R-4: The recommendation will not be implemented as the County of San Benito contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control services and has no oversight over the operation.

F-5: The animal intake area, or "impound" room, is quite small and poorly located.

RESPONSE to F-5: The Board neither agrees nor disagrees given that the County contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control services and has no oversight over operations.

R-5: The Grand Jury recommends a redesign of the intake area to be a safe and comfortable area for the initial evaluation and necessary medical treatment for all animals coming into the shelter, and to relocate euthanasia procedures to a quiet, calm, and private area that is safe, clean and comfortable. Allow members of the public, as well as staff, a respectful area where they might grieve the passing of an animal.

RESPONSE to R-5: The recommendation will not be implemented as the County of San Benito contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control services and has no facility oversight.

F-6: Staff lack necessary and desirable training in assessing animals for adoptability (behavioral assessments).

RESPONSE to F-6: The Board neither agrees nor disagrees given that the County contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control services and has no oversight over operations.

R-6: The Grand Jury recommends the HAS use available online and in-person training to improve staff skills, particularly relating to behavioral and adoptable animal assessments, to utilize a written rubric to support each animal assessment, and to maintain reports in each animal's shelter file until that animal's entire record is purged.

RESPONSE to R-6: The recommendation will not be implemented as the County of San Benito contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control services and has no oversight over the operation, personnel, or who the City's training practices.

F-7: HAS fails to utilize resources for community engagement, to include the reunification of lost pets, by website and outreach through social media.

RESPONSE to F-7: The Board neither agrees nor disagrees given that the County contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control services and has no oversight over operations.

R-7: The Grand Jury recommends the Hollister Animal Shelter better engage with the community with regular use of social media, and an updated and accurate website, particularly to assist in the reunification of lost pets. The Grand Jury recommends the regular use of the adoptions trailer, routine visits to dog parks, pet stores and community events to build strong relationships with the community.

RESPONSE to R-7: The recommendation will not be implemented as the County of San Benito contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control services and has no oversight over the operation.

IX. DISPATCH – COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

F-1: Law Enforcement and Emergency Service agencies are receiving very poor reception and transmission quality due to outdated and incompatible equipment creating a hazard the officers for both departments and all those who rely upon their services.

RESPONSE to F-1: The Board of Supervisors partially disagrees with the characterization of the equipment as a "hazard." Some of the issues with reception quality potentially stem from the remote location of the southern portion of the County, which is separate from the equipment itself. The Board partially agrees that some Law Enforcement and Emergency Service personnel have reported county-wide issues with reception and transmission quality. County employees have stated that these issues might impact their safety. Notably, some of the dispatch equipment has been upgraded recently. The County strives to provide a safe environment for our law enforcement and emergency services personnel. The Board will consider all allocations to capital improvement projects, including infrastructure improvements during the next fiscal budget process.

R-1: The Civil Grand Jury recommends exploring necessary investments to the San Benito County 9-1-1 communication system to reliably service all jurisdictions within the County. Penal Code §929 requires that reports of the Civil Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Civil Grand Jury.

RESPONSE to R-1: The recommendation will not be implemented. The Board will consider any departmental requests during the next budget allocation process.

X. SAN BENITO COUNTY BUDGET

F-1: Salary increases have been paid from one-time funds from Federal or State Government.

RESPONSE to F-1: The Board disagrees. As a matter of budgetary policy, the County does not use one-time funds from the Federal or State Government for salary increases. The County has used federal or State funding for one-time bonuses.

R-1: Salary increases should be based upon tax base revenue that is constant and available each year, such as real estate tax revenue and sales tax revenues.

RESPONSE to R-1: The recommendation has been implemented. Salary increases come from the overall growth in county property and sales tax revenue for general fund employees. However, if the County cannot enhance the current tax base, this will hinder the County's ability to recruit and retain qualified employees with competitive salaries. The County of San Benito has little influence over property tax base rate. Proposition 13 was passed by California Voters on June 6, 1978, which set a constitutional property tax rate limitation that the County may not change. With regard to sales tax rates, pursuant to the revenue and taxation code, any increases would require a district sales tax be approved through a successful election by qualified voters.

F-2: Future budget projections should be based upon real time spending historical actual spending by departments or the total county basis so when anyone looks at the budgets proposed is it is easy to see what the % of increase or % of decrease is as shown within a proposed budget.

RESPONSE to F-2: The Board agrees. Budget projections should evaluate and present historical data to the extent allowed by the guidelines provided in the California Budget Act. The County works to ensure that information on the County budget is transparent and accessible.

R-2: Real-time values increase transparency in best practices in budgeting to identify excess spending within the county spending practices. Budgets need to be based upon a historical actual spending by departments or the total county basis of what has been budgeted last year or the average over a 3-year period is not represented in real-time spending by utilizing the fluff-budget paradigm.

RESPONSE to R-2: The County will not implement this recommendation. The County strives to follow the best practices as published by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). The budget is developed based on projected expenses for the upcoming fiscal year. Prior year expenditures are one factor that is considered. Additionally, the County has migrated to the OpenGov

budgeting system which allows for significant financial transparency for members of the public.

F-3 Delays in reports are impacted by staffing shortages throughout the County as reported within interviews of managers and employees.

RESPONSE to F-3: The Board of Supervisors agrees. San Benito County lies in a highly competitive regional environment that makes recruitment and retention of qualified employees very difficult.

R-3: The administration should hire temporary help to keep data flowing consistently.

RESPONSE to R-3: The recommendation will not be implemented at this time. The County has historically struggled with attracting and retaining qualified employees. The County does hire workers on a temporary basis. The challenges of hiring temporary employees include the difficulty of making the time required for on-boarding and training by sparse County staff. In the short term, the County experiences low productivity and less services being provided because the training staff time is being diverted to providing training. In addition, temporary employees are limited to working no more than a thousand hours during a fiscal year. This means that after a temporary employee is fully trained is about the time that they must be let go from county service. In spite of this, County Administration is hiring additional employees. However, we face similar challenges to neighboring jurisdictions in attracting and retaining qualified employees.

XI. SAN BENITO COUNTY JAIL

F-1: All Grand Juries have found the County Jail has kept the highest standards of order and cleanliness.

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

R-1: Jail staff should be commended for keeping a high bar.

RESPONSE to R-1: The recommendation will be implemented. The Board has just approved an appreciation event for 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 hard work, commitment, and dedication of the team and are committed to showing our staff that we appreciate their devotion.

F-2: A new roof is needed to support a new cooling system.

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

R-2: Replacement of the roof should be a priority.

RESPONSE to R-2: The recommendation will not be implemented at this time as the roof replacement has yet to be budgeted as a Capital Improvement Project.

F-3: The swamp cooler is inefficient in keeping the inside air temperature comfortable for all who work and are housed at the Jail.

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

R-3: A new A/C system should be a priority for the building upgrade project as soon as possible.

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

F-4: There is a noticeably offensive odor in a hallway area of the jail.

RESPONSE to F-4: The Board of Supervisors agrees that there is a noticeable odor in the old jail.

R-4: The Public Works Department should complete the repairs as soon as possible.

RESPONSE to R-4: The recommendation has not been implemented but will be in the future. The Board of Supervisors has approved a Jail Pipe Replacement Capital Improvement Project in the FY 22-23 schedule.

F-5: The understaffed Jail must fill operational demands with mandatory overtime.

RESPONSE to F-5: The Board of Supervisors agrees.

R-5: The Jail budget should be analyzed with staffing increases considered to balance the cost of overtime costs and loss of personnel due to job burnout. This may be a safety issue.

RESPONSE to R-5: This recommendation will not be implemented. Overtime work is due to unfilled vacancies. Each year during the budget process, the Board evaluates all County needs and allocates funding accordingly.