



COUNTY OF SAN BENITO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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August 26, 2025

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

RE: Response to 2024/25 San Benito Civil Grand Jury Consolidated Final Report

Dear Judge Rodriguez,

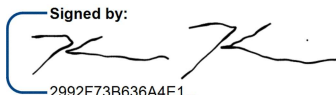
The San Benito County Board of Supervisors hereby submits its response to the Grand Jury Report dated June 9, 2025, which was received via email on June 12, 2025. This response complies with Penal Code Section 933(c), requiring a governing body's reply within 90 days of the Grand Jury's final report issuance.

Please find attached our detailed responses addressing the following nine (9) sections:

1. [San Benito County Water District Interpretation of 1977 Bond Measure for \\$19,900,000.00](#)
2. [San Benito County Corrections Division and The Curtis J. Hill Rehabilitation Center](#)
3. [San Benito County Sheriff's Office Stalled Communications System Upgrade](#)
4. [San Benito County relationship between the Youth Services Center and the Behavioral Health Department](#)
5. [San Benito County Code Enforcement](#)
6. [San Benito County Resource Management Agency](#)
7. [San Benito County Staffing, Recruitment, and Retention](#)
8. [San Benito County Health and Human Services H.O.M.E. Resource Center](#)
9. [City of Hollister – Hollister Animal Shelter](#)

The Board of Supervisors appreciates the Grand Jury's dedication and service to our community.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

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Kollin Kosmicki,
Chair of the Board of Supervisors
County of San Benito

I. SAN BENITO COUNTY WATER DISTRICT INTERPRETATION OF 1977 BOND MEASURE FOR \$19,900,000.00

F1 – The original text of the 1977 measure is open to many interpretations. The current practice of continuing to collect tax revenue is not reflected in the intention of the measure from 1977. This is an agreement that identifies terms and conditions for the construction of facilities and a payback plan. It's a loan from USBR to the SBCWD, and essentially, the voter-approved measure allows for the payback of the loan plus ongoing maintenance.

Response to Finding – 1 (F1): The County Board of Supervisors neither agrees nor disagrees. The County Board of Supervisors does not have governing authority over the San Benito County Water District.

R1 – The SBCWD should cease any further collection of tax revenue based on the 1977 Measure for the loan repayment. A new measure should be written and submitted to the county residents for a vote at the next upcoming election (June 2026).

Response to Recommendation – 1 (R1): The Board of Supervisors will not implement the recommendation. The SBCWD is governed by five Board of Directors elected by the San Benito County residents, who have oversight over the levied tax, and the County collects the revenue on their behalf. Furthermore, the Board of Supervisors does not control the SBCWD's question to the voters. California law establishes specific legal standards governing ballot measures' drafting and review process to ensure clarity, transparency, and public participation. The SBCWD is solely responsible for placing a measure on the ballot, and they would also bear any cost associated with bringing the measure forward if they choose to do so.

1. **Drafting Responsibility:** Per California Election Code Section 9103, the county counsel or legal advisor of the jurisdiction that initiated the measure is responsible for preparing the ballot title and summary, ensuring an accurate and impartial presentation.
2. **Approval by the Governing Board:** After drafting, the measure must be approved by the Board of Supervisors or the relevant governing board, which establishes the exact wording through a resolution that adheres to legal standards for clarity and nonpartisan language.
3. **Public Review and Input:** The drafted measure undergoes a public review period, during which community members can access it through official channels and submit comments or objections, promoting transparency and public engagement.
4. **Legal Recourse for Non-Compliance:** If there are concerns about compliance with the Election Code, the public can pursue a writ of mandate to compel adherence, potentially leading to judicial review and corrective action.

F2 – Stating “40-year repayment period” implies a sunset of part of the tax.

Response to Finding – 2 (F2): The County Board of Supervisors neither agrees nor disagrees. The County Board of Supervisors does not have governing authority over the San Benito County Water District.

R2 – Beginning with the 2025-2026 tax year, cancel the tax on the loan repayment. The repayment period of 40 years is over, and the loan has been paid off. According to the County Counsel, the only way to remove the tax collection is to take legal action to have it removed. If a person(s) or group would like to spend the time and funds in doing so, then they may be successful, but there is no guarantee of removal.

Response to Recommendation – 2 (R2): The County Board of Supervisors will not implement the recommendation. The County of San Benito is currently experiencing financial hardship and does not have the capacity or discretionary funding available to seek legal action. If a group or individual would like to initiate, they may. At the local level in California, the initiative process is the power of the electors to propose a new regulation by which they will govern. An initiative is placed on the ballot after its proponents (sponsors) have successfully met a series of deadlines. More information on the Initiative can be found with the County Clerk Recorder Elections office and at the following link: <https://www.sanbenitocounty-ca-cre.gov/elections/candidates-campaigns/measures-initiatives/initiative-petition-process>

F3 – Attorneys hired by SBCWD interpreted the language on the 1977 ballot as having no end date.

Response to Finding – 3 (F3): The County Board of Supervisors neither agrees nor disagrees with the SBCWD determination. The County Board of Supervisors does not have governing authority over the San Benito County Water District.

R3 – The SBCWD and the County should jointly hire an independent law firm for an unbiased interpretation of the 1977 ballot measure within the next six months.

Response to Recommendation – 3 (R3): The recommendation will not be implemented. The SBCWD is governed by its board of elected directors, which gives it a degree of autonomy. Additionally, given the County's current budget deficit and competing priorities, the Board needs to make fiscally responsible and challenging decisions. It is not feasible to jointly hire an independent law firm within the next six months to provide an unbiased interpretation of the 1977 ballot measure.

F4 – SBCWD claims tax revenue currently provides for Operations and Maintenance (O&M) costs.

Response to Finding – 4 (F4): The County Board of Supervisors neither agrees nor disagrees. The County Board of Supervisors does not have governing authority over the San Benito County Water District.

R4 – An audit of the budgets from SBCWD should be completed to review the average cost for O&M within the next 90 days.

Response to Recommendation – 4 (R4): The recommendation will not be implemented. The SBCWD is governed by its board of elected directors, which provides it with a degree of autonomy. Furthermore, the County understands that the District already completes publicly available certified annual audits.

F5 – SBCWD accounting methods do not capture and bill the customers for O&M expenses.

Response to Finding – 5 (F5): The County Board of Supervisors neither agrees nor disagrees. The county does not oversee or govern SBCWD operations.

R5 – In the next 30-45 days, SBCWD should change its accounting methods to specifically identify loan repayment versus O&M charges.

Response to Recommendation 5 (R5): The County Board of Supervisors will not implement the recommendation. SBCWD operates under the governance of its elected board of directors, so any operational changes would have to be implemented by SBCWD.

F6 – The original \$19,900,000 was paid off in 1995. The USBR said that if the loan was paid off early, there would be a discount down to \$19,200,000. The funds to pay off the loan were borrowed through the district with approval from the SBCWD Board of Directors, and the secondary loan was paid off around 2006-2007. Although enough money is collected each tax year to pay off these loans, SBCWD continues to make payments that are due to increase in 2026. The bond measure on the 1977 ballot did not authorize additional loans.

Response to Finding – 6 (F6): The County Board of Supervisors neither agrees nor disagrees. The County Board of Supervisors does not have governing authority over the San Benito County Water District.

R6 – The SBCWD should seek voter approval for additional loan encumbrances in the next election cycle of June 2026.

Response to Recommendation 6 (R6): The recommendation will not be implemented. SBCWD has indicated in its response to the grand jury that there are no unapproved loans or encumbrances. Additionally, the county does not govern SBCWD or its operations, nor control measure questions for the voters.

II. SAN BENITO COUNTY CORRECTIONS DIVISION AND THE CURTIS J. HILL REHABILITATION CENTER

F1 – The Corrections Division is understaffed, and its reliance on overtime is not sustainable. In its current unused state, the Curtis J. Hill Rehabilitation Center’s continued closure is a depreciating asset unable to serve inmates and the broader community.

Response to Finding – 1 (F1): The County Board of Supervisors partially agrees; the jail is understaffed and uses overtime to cover shifts; the rehabilitation is not used to its full capacity due to staffing constraints

R1 – The County of San Benito should make staffing its jail system and reopening the Curtis J. Hill Rehabilitation Center a top priority for the upcoming fiscal year. This requires increasing the Corrections Division staff size enough to maintain jail operations, ensure effective oversight, offer rehabilitative services, and safely open the center. This can be approached in a number of ways, but unavoidably necessitates greater support and dedicated resource allocation.

Response to Recommendation – 1 (R1): The recommendation requires further analysis. The Board of Supervisors has consistently prioritized the Sheriff’s Correctional Division by adding Correctional Officers over the years. This included reclassifying jail staff, which significantly increased Correctional Officers' pay, ranging from a 13% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), 10% for reclassification, and some staff received their additional salary step increases that ranged from a 23-28% increase per fiscal year to aid in recruitment and retention. Despite budget challenges, the Board approved vacancy budgeting for correctional positions during the fiscal year (FY) 2025/26 budget hearings, ensuring continuous recruitment of correctional staff. Budgetary Unit 1195 for Sheriff’s

COUNTY OF SAN BENITO SCHEDULE OF AUTHORIZED POSITIONS FISCAL YEAR 2025-26							
DIVISION KEY	POSITION	ADOPTED FY 24/25	AMENDED FY 24/25	UNFUNDED FY 24/25	REQUESTED FY 25/26	REQ UNFUND FY 25/26	RECOMMENDED FY 25/26
1195	Sheriff - Corrections						
	Administrative Services Specialist II	0.00	1.00		1.00		1.00
	Sheriff's Captain	1.00	1.00		1.00		1.00
	Correctional Officer I/II or III	29.00	29.00		29.00	4.00	25.00
	Correctional Sergeant	5.00	5.00		5.00		5.00
	Correctional Sergeant/Officer I/II or III	1.00	1.00		1.00		1.00
	Correctional Sergeant/Sheriff's Lieutenant -Correction	1.00	1.00		1.00		1.00
	Civil Clerk/Multi-Service Officer	0.00	0.00		1.00		1.00
	Sheriff's Technician	1.00	1.00		1.00		1.00
	Sheriff/Coroner	0.50	0.50		0.50		0.50
	Total Sheriff - Corrections	38.50	39.50		40.50	4.00	36.50

Figure 1- [\(1195\) Corrections \(Jail\) Division](#)

Corrections for FY 2025/26 includes 36.50 full-time personnel, of which twenty-nine (29) are correctional officers, including six (6) open positions and four (4) unfunded, but if all the current vacant positions get filled, the County Board Authorized the Sheriff's office to come back to the board to fund the unfunded positions. The County continues actively recruiting for the positions by creating posts, attending job fairs, and other

avenues. We have continuous recruitment for the Correction officers, where recruitment remains open.

The reopening of the Curtis J. Hill Rehabilitation Center is currently delayed due to staffing shortages. According to the State of California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) Title 15 Minimum Standards for Local Detention Facilities, each facility must employ sufficient personnel to ensure the proper implementation and operation of required programs and activities. The BSCC further recommended a minimum of forty (40) Correctional Officers on staff to meet these standards. To safely operate both the Main Jail and the Curtis J. Hill Center for Rehabilitation, it is crucial to address recruitment, retention, and staffing levels to meet operational needs while maintaining high standards of care and security for all individuals. Collaboration between the Sheriff's office and County Human Resources will continue to explore creative avenues for additional solutions to address these needs.

III. SAN BENITO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE STALLED COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM UPGRADE

F1 – The agreement authorizing the implementation of CRIS in San Benito County has stalled in SBC's legal counsel for over eight months.

Response to Finding – 1 (F1): The County Board of Supervisors partially agrees.

The delay in the Communication Systems Upgrade project is due to multiple factors and cannot be attributed to a single department. The Sheriff's Office is one of the primary users of the communication system and is well-positioned to identify communications needs. The Sheriff's involvement, along with that of other safety personnel, was essential to ensure the system met practical requirements and operational needs. However, significant staffing shortages, a lack of specialized knowledge in communication systems, and limited project management experience among the parties involved have made it challenging to address technical issues promptly, resulting in the delay in the upgrade.

R1 – SBC's legal counsel should expedite its review of the agreement and communicate concerns with stakeholders within the next 30 days. The SBC Board of Supervisors should ensure the timely review of all items sent to SBC's legal counsel.

Response to Recommendation – 1 (R1): This recommendation has not been implemented, but will be in the future. The County Administration Office will work with County Counsel to continue to ensure timely legal contract review. The County Counsel's Office is provided legal services through a contract with Prentice Long PC, and the firm is committed to prompt and thorough review of all county contracts. The County Board of Supervisors approved the CRIS contract and delegated authority to the County Administrative Officer to explore various avenues to pay for the contract's increased cost, as it is a countywide contract that will support public safety across the County.

IV. SAN BENITO COUNTY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE YOUTH SERVICES CENTER AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

F1 – Currently, there is no formalized relationship between the YSC and SBC BHD, resulting in unclear expectations of service delivery of supplementary mental health services for individuals in county custody.

Response to Finding 1 (F1): The County Board of Supervisors partially agrees. There is collaboration between the county divisions. There is currently no formal agreement between the Youth Service Center (YSC) and San Benito County Behavioral Health; however, both departments have been working together on preexisting informal agreements.

R1 – Develop a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SBC BHD and the YSC to guarantee non-medical supplementary mental health services and clearly define responsibilities and the scope of mental health services for juveniles in custody. This should be completed in the next three to four months. MOU compliance should be reviewed by stakeholders monthly and overseen by the County of San Benito every month to ensure timely, quality service delivery.

Response to Recommendation 1 (R1): The recommendation will not be implemented due to uncertainty in the need of additional mental health services. On May 6, 2025, following an extensive Request for Proposals process, the Board of Supervisors approved a contract with MEDIKO, Inc. for medical and mental health services at the County Jail facilities and Youth Service Center. The initial term of this contract is five years, starting on July 1, 2025, and ending on June 30, 2030, with the possibility of extensions. The MEDIKO, Inc. contract included a holistic scope that included both facilities' health, laboratory, dental, mental health, and pharmaceutical services. Currently, it is unclear what additional mental health services may be needed for youth in custody beyond the services provided by MEDIKO. The Probation Department will have at least six months with the new provider before formally determining the needs. Both departments are willing to collaborate and aim to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by December 30, 2025, if deemed necessary, to address any potential gaps in services

V. SAN BENITO COUNTY CODE ENFORCEMENT

F1 – The Code Enforcement division is understaffed and unable to complete the duties of the office in a timely fashion. Qualified applicants are difficult to recruit.

Response to Finding – 1 (F1): The County Board of Supervisors partially agrees. The Board agrees that code enforcement is understaffed and qualified applicants are difficult to recruit. The Board disagrees that staff cannot complete duties promptly, as the duration of code enforcement cases varies considerably, based on complexity, number of alleged violations, and specific circumstances. In addition, the County has an active contract with vendor 4 Leaf, which can support these services.

R1 – Within the next 60 days, the RMA needs to hire and/or re-evaluate the duties of support staff (clerical) to assist current County personnel in the completion of Code Enforcement duties. There are several aspects of the work that could be completed at a support services level that would allow the code enforcement officer to focus on the caseload.

Response to Recommendation – 1 (R1): This recommendation will not be implemented. While the Board acknowledges the concerns regarding code enforcement delays, it is essential to note that the County is currently facing a budget deficit and must make fiscally responsible decisions. Consequently, positions such as the Code Enforcement Officer and Staff Services Specialist have been temporarily paused under a county-wide hiring freeze. This has led to existing staff taking on additional responsibilities to maintain the division's operations.

Furthermore, the duration of code enforcement cases varies widely depending on the complexity and circumstances of each case. As such, it is not reasonable to expect a uniform timeline for resolution across all instances and reports. Despite these challenges, the Code Enforcement division remains committed to addressing each matter as thoroughly and efficiently as possible under these ongoing constraints.

F2 – The Code Enforcement division does not have a process to notify a reporting party of the outcome/closure of a case (when appropriate).

Response to Finding – 2 (F2): The County Board of Supervisors agrees.

R2 – The County recently updated its electronic filing/tracking system for the Code Enforcement division. The software should be utilized and, if necessary, upgraded to 'automate' notifications for reporting parties (when appropriate) in the next 90 days.

Response to Recommendation – 2 (R2): The recommendation will not be implemented within the 90 days the Grand Jury recommends. The Resource Management Agency (RMA) data management system, Accela, includes a public-facing portal designed to

provide access to publicly available information. This software feature will be activated following consultation with County Counsel to ensure compliance with all applicable legal and policy requirements. Additionally, RMA staff will need to coordinate with Accela representatives to ensure the software includes templates that can be used as an automatic response and to notify the parties of the status of their complaint.

F3 – There is a lack of understanding among staff regarding who is the enforcement authority on code enforcement issues and violations for multi-jurisdictional issues. Among the staff, there is no consensus between the County's responsibilities and the State's responsibilities.

Response to Finding – 3 (F3): The Board of Supervisors disagrees. County staff understand enforcement authority on code enforcement issues and multi-jurisdictional complaints. The County is responsible for enforcing a wide range of local ordinances, including but not limited to zoning regulations, building codes, and health and safety standards. At the same time, the state holds enforcement over state laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, environmental protection, public health, and specific aspects of land use and development governed by state statutes. Where enforcement authority overlaps, collaboration, clear communication, and coordination are crucial to ensure a successful response. Staff have managed to build key relationships with other agencies and their team. Staff are encouraged to seek legal counsel where there are questions or uncertainties regarding specific enforcement responsibilities or procedural authority. Code enforcement aims to ensure enforcement actions are carried out efficiently and by the appropriate jurisdictional authority.

R3 – The County must develop a flow chart identifying which agency is responsible for which activity. It must be clear among staff who are responsible for what enforcement activity. This should be completed within the next 30-45 days.

Response to Recommendation – 3 (R3): The recommendation will not be implemented. It is important to note that each incident is unique and may involve a range of local, state, and federal agencies with overlapping or complementary responsibilities that cannot be effectively represented in a single, standardized format. At the outset of any such incident, all relevant agencies with a vested interest are brought together to collaborate. During this coordination, involved agencies assess each agency's legal authority, available resources, and operational constraints. With an equitable and lasting solution as our end goal, the agency best positioned to lead the response becomes the lead agency for that specific case.

It is also essential to recognize that many of these incidents involve parallel investigations and corrective actions by multiple agencies operating at different levels of government. These efforts are typically coordinated to ensure clear roles, avoid duplication, and maximize effectiveness. To strengthen interagency coordination and

enhance staff clarity around roles and responsibilities, we support the recommendation for staff training in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). These frameworks provide valuable guidance on collaborative response protocols and help ensure a more unified and efficient approach to complex, multi-jurisdictional issues.

VI. SAN BENITO COUNTY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY

F1 – The RMA does not provide regular project status updates to the Board of Supervisors or the public regarding the status of projects.

Response to Finding – 1 (F1): The County Board of Supervisors partially disagrees. While there is no fixed schedule (quarterly, semi-annual, or annual) for such presentations, informational presentations have been provided to the now-dissolved County Facilities Committee. The RMA department provides the Board of Supervisors with a progress update on projects upon request. In addition, during budget hearings, the board formally approves the schedule of authorized capital improvement projects, where a brief status update is provided. Individuals are welcome to review past meetings via the public-facing [Peak Agenda Portal](#) (https://cosb.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=1) or attend meetings at their designated dates and times when such topics are agendized. Additionally, individuals may contact the respective agencies for updates.

R1—The RMA should provide a written report to the BOS quarterly regarding the status of capital projects or contract agreements valued more than \$250,000.

Response to Recommendation – 1 (R1): The recommendation requires further analysis. The County of San Benito had a transition in leadership; a new County Administrative Officer (CAO) was appointed in June of 2025. As the CAO adjusts to the new role, they will evaluate operational countywide needs and implement changes as required. Several factors must be evaluated, including resource allocation and appropriate reporting frequency. Due to fiscal Year 2025-2026 budgetary constraints, most county capital improvement projects have been paused and deferred. Diverting attention to report preparation may delay project execution, other duties, and daily tasks. This reallocation of resources could reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of ongoing projects and essential services. Therefore, it is crucial to carefully consider the potential trade-offs and ensure that new reporting requirements do not compromise the RMA's ability to fulfill its primary responsibilities.

VII. SAN BENITO COUNTY STAFFING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

F1 – Many positions' job descriptions are outdated.

Response to Finding – 1 (F1): The County Board of Supervisors partially agrees. There are selective job descriptions where the job description, nature of the work, and environment have not shifted; those job descriptions remain intact. By locating the job descriptions through the County's NeoGov portal, the established and revision dates for each job description can be located by clicking the description and using the print preview function. Human Resources is exploring other options with our software provider to make this information more readily visible.

R1 – Within 45-60 days, department heads should review and update job descriptions with HR and labor groups, ensuring all are dated with the most current revision date.

Response to Recommendation 1 (R1): The recommendation will not be implemented within 45-60 days. The timeline to update every job description within the County of San Benito is unrealistic. We agree that department heads should always review the job specifications before recruitment to determine whether any changes are recommended. Staff will continue to work with departments to actively meet their operational needs.

In the future, Department heads will be encouraged to collaborate with HR immediately to review and allow HR to provide analysis and examine against industry standards. Updating a job description is a comprehensive process that involves collaboration between the department and HR to assess job description changes and analyze the position and organizational needs of the department, consult with the union, and obtain final approval from the Board of Supervisors. This process should be completed before initiating any recruitment efforts.

It is important to note that this recommendation requires further analysis to ensure its feasibility. Additional discussions and evaluations will be necessary to understand the implications and develop a detailed implementation plan.

F2 – HR is often overwhelmed by recruitment volume, which can lead to hiring delays.

Response to Finding – 2 (F2): The County Board of Supervisors partially agrees. While recruitment volume can undoubtedly be a factor and vary occasionally, it's important to recognize that hiring delays may result from various causes. Attributing delays solely to HR being overwhelmed does not reflect the whole picture. Delays often occur when departments fail to coordinate with HR, do not promptly set up subject matter experts (SMEs) for interviews and review of qualified applicants, and do not schedule final interviews promptly. It should be noted that these issues delay the departments in

completing the hiring processes and are at the department's discretion. A collaborative approach across all parties is key to ensuring a smooth and timely process.

The centralization of human resource functions helps ensure that all recruitment activities are conducted per established county personnel rules and civil service guidelines, and the principles of a fair and competitive hiring process are applied. This structure promotes consistency, transparency, compliance, and fairness in all recruits, safeguarding the integrity of the County's employment practices. The County Personnel rules govern the recruitment process, which HR must follow, as adopted by the Board of Supervisors. Any changes in the process outside of the County Personnel Rules threaten the integrity of the recruitment process and open the County to unnecessary risk of a failed competitive process.

R2 – Within the next 30 days, HR should partner with departments to streamline application reviews by involving subject matter experts (SMEs) in initial screening and identifying transferable skills. HR should require formal training plans from SMEs on these hires.

Response to Recommendation – 2 (R2): The recommendation will not be implemented. The Board of Supervisors appreciates the Grand Jury's attention to improving recruitment practices and the intent to improve the efficiency of the hiring process; however, it does not appear that the County Personnel Rules were fully considered in formulating this recommendation. Reviewing the relevant provisions in the Rules may help clarify the framework within which Human Resources operates and the limitations on specific proposed changes. However, the County respectfully disagrees with the recommendation in its current form, as a 30-day implementation timeline is unrealistic.

Human Resources is responsible for upholding the County's competitive recruitment process's integrity, transparency, and fairness. Central to this obligation is ensuring that all candidates are assessed objectively and equitably based on the published minimum qualifications for each position. This safeguards a merit-based system and provides open access to employment opportunities for all qualified applicants.

Involving SMEs in the initial screening phase of recruitment raises concerns about potentially bypassing, misappropriating, or minimizing these qualification standards. This approach may inadvertently favor subjective assessments or imply that unqualified candidates could be advanced through the recruitment process inappropriately and without credibility, which is inconsistent with the principles of competitive hiring in the public sector.

The County Personnel Rules are central in guiding the County's hiring processes and ensuring fairness, consistency, and legal compliance. Any formal training plan for SME's is done when HR provides SME's specific tools, rating guidelines, and instructions

during that phase of recruitment screening. This ensures that the SME can review the applicant pool for the most qualified candidates selected and passed to the interview stage of the recruitment process based on the SME's review. While HR supports continued collaboration with departments and SMEs to improve recruitment outcomes, particularly in the later stages of the candidate hiring process, any changes to the process must maintain compliance with the County Personnel Rules, merit rules, legal requirements, and best practices established to ensure the integrity of the overall recruitment process.

The County remains committed to identifying improvements to streamline the hiring process, provided such efforts preserve the recruitment process's integrity, objectivity, and fairness.

F3 – Budget constraints often delay or cancel recruitments.

Response to Finding – 3 (F3): The County Board of Supervisors agrees.

R3 – HR and other County departments should continuously explore internships (paid or unpaid) to support staff, build talent pipelines, and mitigate budget-related hiring gaps.

Response to Recommendation – 3 (R3): The recommendation has already been implemented. The County agrees that internships are a valuable strategy to support departmental operations, develop future talent, and address workforce gaps, particularly during periods of fiscal constraint; however, other factors should be considered with internships. Intern investments can be time-consuming and costly regarding staff time with training and oversight. As internships can be a strategy to combat staffing shortfalls, departments need to balance their immediate needs with a way to promote long-term investment for future staffing. Interns may assist with a very minimal level of help. Still, departments also need to develop other means for succession planning to develop interns into permanent employees, as seen many times, interns have moved on to further their education or found other lucrative employment.

Human Resources, in collaboration with County departments, has actively worked to expand internship opportunities through partnerships with local high schools, community colleges, and universities. These efforts aim to attract students and early-career professionals to public service while providing meaningful work experiences that benefit both the interns and the departments they support. The success of a long-term investment using interns is based on the department's success with training, creating interest for future opportunities, and providing a pathway to move from an intern to a permanent long-term employee. The County remains committed to strengthening and formalizing these partnerships to ensure sustainable recruitment and succession planning.

VIII. SAN BENITO COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES H.O.M.E. RESOURCE CENTER

F1 – The seasonal reduction of open hours during the summer months by closing the shelter during the day leads to the loss of key staff members, reduced services, and setbacks for clients. Staff estimate that an additional \$400,000 annually is projected to maintain year-round, full-time operations for a 44-bed facility, including expanded case management, housing support, meals, and security. The HRC shelter is funded through grants received by the County, which require regular applications and extensive management and reporting.

Response to Finding – 1 (F1): The County Board of Supervisors partially agrees, as the county cannot confirm the accuracy of projected numbers.

R1 – The City of Hollister and San Benito County should increase funding for the shelter, ideally through additional grant sources, to meet the \$400,000 annual cost to operate on a year-round basis. This funding is necessary to provide stability and continuity in services for unhoused people in San Benito County. These grant sources should be identified and application processes started now to have the funding sources in place by fiscal year 2026-27.

Response to Recommendation – 1 (R1): The recommendation has been implemented for the current fiscal year. In partnership with Community Homeless Solutions (CHSolutions), the agency that oversees HRC, \$391,970 in state funding was secured from the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers (CHSP) and the Leadership Council. This funding will support year-round, full-time operations and the expansion of the physical shelter to add 12 beds in FY 2025-26. Funding for FY 2026-27 and beyond is still to be determined.

F2 – When the shelter is open full-time, it can accommodate clients who work nights and sleep during the day. Day sleepers do not have a quiet, isolated area for sleeping.

Response to Finding – 2 (F2): The Board of Supervisors agrees.

R2 – Within the next 45 days, modify an area of the shelter to accommodate individuals who need a quiet area for those clients who work during the night and need a safe place for sleeping during the day.

Response to Recommendation – 2 (R2): The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be in the future. State funding allocated to Community Homeless Solutions will support this effort. In collaboration with Community Homeless Solutions, county staff will determine the necessary modifications and aim to implement the recommendation within the next two months or shortly thereafter.

F3 – The staff at the Homeless Shelter currently provides meals with a monthly budget of \$1,400 to feed 44 clients three meals daily.

Response to Finding – 3 (F3): The County Board of Supervisors partially agrees. Meals are provided; however, the budget has been increased since the closure of the Grand Jury’s investigative report period.

R3 – The HRC staff should be recognized for their budgeting skills and resourcefulness. Private sector, non-government, and faith-based organizations should be contacted and encouraged to participate in community service opportunities, providing meals to the shelter.

Response to Recommendation 3 (R3): The recommendation had been implemented. The County Board of Supervisors recognizes the great work and partnerships that HRC staff do for our vulnerable population. The shelter manager has built key relationships supporting our community, demonstrated by the funding allocated from the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers (CHSP) and the Leadership Council.

F4 – Behavioral Health Services lacks adequate outreach to potential clients at the homeless shelter, including those currently receiving limited support.

Response to Finding 4 (F4): The County Board of Supervisors partially agrees. The housing navigators who work under the Behavioral Health Bridges to Housing (BHBH) grant are familiar with and have regular contact with the individuals staying at the HOME Resource Center. SBCBH can better reach potential clients by conducting regular and scheduled outreach and engagement at the HOME Resource Center.

R4 – Behavioral Health staff should conduct regularly scheduled outreach at the homeless shelter to provide services upon the HRC's return to a full-time schedule in November.

Response to Recommendation 4 (R4): The recommendation has yet to be implemented, but will be in the fall of 2025. SBCBH housing navigators will conduct regular outreach and engagement at the HOME Resource Center twice per month. The schedule of outreach and engagement will be coordinated with HOME Resource Center staff. This outreach and engagement will be conducted between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., when the HOME Resource Center is on its 24-hour open schedule. This will begin no later than October 1, 2025.

F5 – Records of client complaints and maintenance (vehicle and building) are not organized in a standard fashion.

Response to Finding – 5 (F5): The Board of Supervisors neither agrees nor disagrees. While the Board does not handle day-to-day operations, Community Homeless Solutions has indicated that records are organized and maintained, though not in the standard fashion.

R5 – All complaints and maintenance records should be assigned a unique alphanumeric ID and recorded in a permanent log. The log must accurately match each received complaint to ensure proper tracking, auditing, and review.

Response to Recommendation 5 (R5): CHSolutions has implemented this recommendation. All complaints, incident reports, and grievances are now organized with unique alphanumeric identifiers and stored in a cloud-based system. Additionally, information and maintenance records for all company-owned vehicles are kept in an Excel database designed for this purpose.

IX. CITY OF HOLLISTER – HOLLISTER ANIMAL SHELTER

F1 – The contract between the COH and the County is now a month-to-month arrangement and may not reflect the financial requirements and logistical operations of the HAS.

Response to Finding – 1 (F1): The County Board of Supervisors partially agrees. The contract between the County and COH is a month-to-month arrangement; however, under that same arrangement, COH is obligated to provide quarterly status reports that include a recap of the services provided to the County, including expenditures made, revenues collected, and a summary of overall program goals and objectives. The COH is further obligated under the agreement to track the number and locations of calls for animal control services by jurisdiction and the time spent responding to each call, which should be provided to the County but have not.

R1 – Within the next six months, conduct an audit of the animal services, financial impact, and logistical needs between San Benito County and the COH. Following completion of that audit, enter into a new contract or MOU within six months that would provide long-term stability, planning abilities, ensure that the services provided are being compensated fairly, and that is in alignment with the needs of both agencies.

Response to Recommendation – 1 (R1): The Board of Supervisors will not implement the recommendation, as it is not feasible for the County to audit animal services, financial impacts, and logistics within the next six months. The City of Hollister has the information and would require a contractor to support the recommendation. While the County has received informational presentations from the City of Hollister Police Animal Care and Services division, it does not oversee its operations. The County of San Benito solely contracts for animal control services. The County Board of Supervisors is committed to looking at all county and City shared services.

F2 – The HAS lacks proper shade for the outdoor dog exercise area, which can make it unusable during peak days and times due to excessive heat.

Response to Finding – 2 (F2): The County Board of Supervisors neither agrees nor disagrees, given that the County contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control Services and has no oversight over its operations.

R2 – In the next 60 days, HAS should invest in the installation of shade structures, such as canopies, pergolas, or shade sails, over the outdoor dog exercise and play area at the HAS. Providing adequate shade will help protect the animals from excessive heat and sun exposure, promote animal welfare, optimize the adopter/adopter experience, and align the facility with best practices in humane shelter design.

Response to Recommendation 2 (R2): The recommendation will not be implemented by the Board of Supervisors, as the County contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control services and has no oversight over its operations, facilities, or other

aspects of that nature. Furthermore, under the agreement set, the County is not responsible for any cost associated with, but not limited to, fixed assets and/or equipment.

F3 – The HAS does not have an on-site, dedicated Veterinarian or Vet Tech. This limits its ability to provide timely medical care, routine health monitoring, and preventive treatment for the animals in their care.

Response to Finding 3 (F3): The County Board of Supervisors neither agrees nor disagrees, given that the County contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control Services and has no oversight over its contracted services, personnel, or operations. The County does not monitor day-to-day operations. However, under the agreement, the County has retained a County Veterinarian, San Benito Veterinary Center, Inc. to assist with animals or cases originating in the County's unincorporated areas.

The Veterinary contract requires the contractor to host an annual rabies vaccination clinic with the County Public Health Office, prepare animal specimens for lab study, examine dogs that have bitten humans for rabies, consult with Animal Control on rabies and transmissible diseases, conduct emergency investigations of livestock and pets for rabies and transmissible diseases, and provide medical updates on animal-to-human transmissible diseases to medical doctors and various San Benito County Departments upon request. The Contract is available on the County's indexed [Document Archive portal](https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/Welcome.aspx?repo=r-2fbf0c32) (<https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/Welcome.aspx?repo=r-2fbf0c32>) available via the county's homepage.

R3 – Over the next fiscal year, HAS should secure an on-site Veterinarian and Veterinary Technician to serve the needs of both the County and the COH. Having a dedicated Vet Tech on staff would improve the quality of animal care, support timely medical assessments, and enhance overall shelter operations and animal welfare.

Response to Recommendation – 3 (R3): The Board of Supervisors will not implement the recommendation as the County contracts with the City of Hollister for Animal Control services and has no oversight over its contracted services, personnel, or operations.