

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: CUSTODY, CORRECTIONS AND OTHER COUNTY FACILITIES

Report Date: June 17, 2022

Response by: Board of Supervisors

FINDINGS

Sheriff's Office: **F2, F3**

Sheriff's Work Alternative Program: **F4**

Office of Emergency Services: **F6, F7, F8, F9**

County Animal Shelter: **F10, F11**

Boatyard: **F13, F14**

Evidence Room: **F15**

Public Administrator: **F17**

Humboldt County Correctional Facility: **F18, F19, F20, F21**

Sempervirens: **F24, F25**

General Facilities: **F27, F28, F30**

The Board of Supervisors agrees with Findings 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 24, 25, 27, 28 and 30, partially agrees with Findings 6, 7, and 9, and disagrees with Finding 20.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sheriff's Office: **R2, R3**

Sheriff's Work Alternative Program: **R4**

Office of Emergency Services: **R5, R6, R7**

County Animal Shelter: **R8, R9**

Boatyard: **R11, R12**

Evidence Room: **R13**

Public Administrator: **R15**

Humboldt County Correctional Facility: **R16**

Sempervirens: **R19, R20**

General Facilities: **R22, R23, R25**

Recommendations 3, 7, and 25 are in the process of being implemented.

Recommendations 22 and 23 will be implemented.

Recommendation 20 requires further analysis.

Recommendations 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16 and 19 will not be implemented.

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Elishia Hayes,
Humboldt County Administrative Officer

Number of pages attached: 10



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

County Administrative Office
Information Technology Division

839 4th Street, Eureka, CA 95501

Telephone (707) 445-7556

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FROM: ELISHIA HAYES, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO 2021-22 GRAND JURY REPORT "CUSTODY, CORRECTIONS AND OTHER COUNTY FACILITIES"
DATE: NOVEMBER 29, 2022

In the Grand Jury Report, "CUSTODY, CORRECTIONS AND OTHER COUNTY FACILITIES," the Grand Jury has requested that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors respond to the following findings and recommendations:

Sheriff's Office: **F2, F3, R2, R3**
Sheriff's Work Alternative Program: **F4, R4**
Office of Emergency Services: **F6, F7, F8, F9, R5, R6, R7**
County Animal Shelter: **F10, F11, R8, R9**
Boatyard: **F13, F14, R11, R12**
Evidence Room: **F15, R13**
Public Administrator: **F17, R15**
Humboldt County Correctional Facility: **F18, F19, F20, F21, R16**
Sempervirens: **F24, F25, R19, R20**
General Facilities: **F27, F28, F30, R22, R23, R25**

I am proposing the following response as detailed below.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE FINDINGS

Finding 2: The Sheriff's Office Armor room lacks electronic locks and a steel door.

Response: Agree

Finding 3: There are four independent Dispatch Centers serving Humboldt County, located in Arcata, Eureka, Fortuna and at the Sheriff's Office.

Response: Agree

SHERIFF'S OFFICE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 2: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors approve funding for the electronic locks and steel door security upgrades to the Sheriff's Office Armor room by October 31, 2022.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

While this recommendation has merit, the request for funding electronic lock upgrades for the Sheriff's Office Armor Room should come during the budget process to ensure the county can identify sufficient revenues for the expense.

Recommendation 3: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors take the lead to prepare a plan that combines the four Dispatch Centers into one Centralized Dispatch Center by March 31, 2023, and prepare a request for proposals for the construction of a new Dispatch Center by June 30, 2023.

Response: This recommendation is in the process of being implemented.

Combining dispatchers from different agencies into one facility to provide dispatch services has ramifications beyond providing the service and requires review with labor groups. This action could also require changes in compensation for staff. Combining the 4 dispatch centers also requires cooperation from all city jurisdictions. At this time, the cities have not expressed an interest in consolidating dispatch services with the county. The county last year issued a Request for Proposals for cooperative dispatch services and awarded a contract to Cal Fire for those services. The Sheriff's Office has added additional dispatchers and upgraded its equipment in recent years. Additional equipment, staff and training may be needed in order to have the Sheriff's Office provide those services. The county continues to work towards a solution that provides excellent and efficient dispatching service to the community.

SHERIFF'S WORK ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM FINDINGS

Finding 4: SWAP Farm barn has no doors to protect vehicles and hay from weather.

Response: Agree

SHERIFF'S WORK ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 4: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff's Office and Board of Supervisors prepare a Request for Proposals for the purchase and installation of doors for the SWAP Farm barn by October 31, 2022. Funding to be approved by December 31, 2022.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

While this recommendation has merit, the request for funding to purchase and install doors at the SWAP Farm barn should come during the budget process to ensure the county can identify sufficient revenues for the expense.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES FINDINGS

Finding 6: The OES currently uses WIFI for internet communication and needs to be upgraded to fiber optic service.

Response: Partially agree

The WIFI available to OES was installed approximately 5 years ago. This WIFI is running off fiber, and there are multiple access points in the basement for coverage. Four OES workstations are hardwired for internet service. When other agencies report to OES, they often are required to use WIFI for internet service. Higher speed internet service with more capacity would benefit operations in OES. County IT can work with OES to identify specific coverage issues. If additional access points are required, funding will need to be identified for equipment and cabling.

Finding 7: The current office of the OES lacks sufficient space to effectively prepare for and monitor a natural or other disaster within our County.

Response: Partially agree.

While a large or prolonged natural disaster or other emergency would certainly require more space for response, the current space is sufficient to carry out day-to-day tasks related to OES.

Finding 8: The current OES facility does not meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and retrofitting would be difficult to achieve in the current facility.

Response: Agree

Finding 9: The current OES facility does not have a sufficient or reliable backup generator with fuel supply storage to provide the needed power in the event of a prolonged power outage.

Response: Partially agree.

In 2019 when the county experienced the Public Safety Power Shutoffs, the OES facility was able to maintain power with the current generator. For prolonged power outages, the county would need additional fuel to maintain power at the facility.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 5: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors approve funding for fiber optic internet service in the OES for this critical communication upgrade by October 31, 2022.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

This recommendation has merit; however, additional funding must be identified prior to approving this expense.

Recommendation 6: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors commit budget funding for the planning, purchase of property, materials and equipment, and the construction of a new OES facility that can house all pertinent agencies during a major disaster and/or emergency by December 31, 2022.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

This recommendation has merit; however, additional funding must be identified prior to approving this expense. The county intends to submit this as a Congressionally Directed Spending Request in the upcoming federal budget and will continue to work to identify revenue sources for this function.

Recommendation 7: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors approve funding for a reliable generator with sufficient fuel storage to assure continuation of OES functions and mandates during a prolonged emergency situation by November 30, 2022.

Response: This recommendation is in the process of being implemented.

The Board in FY 2019-20 allocated \$1.6 million General Fund and more than \$370,000 from the Governor for a generator upgrade project to supply power to OES and other critical functions within the Courthouse.

COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER FINDINGS

Finding 10: The Shelter security cameras are 18 years old and do not provide clear images.

Response: Agree

Finding 11: The Shelter lacks sufficient kennels to house dogs.

Response: Agree

COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 8: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors approve funding to replace the security cameras at the Shelter with high-definition video equipment by October 31, 2022.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

This recommendation has merit; however, additional funding must be identified prior to approving this expense.

Recommendation 9: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Sheriff's Office and Board of Supervisors prepare a Request for Proposals and approve funding for the design, purchase, and construction of additional kennels in the current Shelter yard area. Request for Proposals to be submitted by October 31, 2022. Funds to be approved by December 31, 2022.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

This recommendation has merit, however, additional funding must be identified prior to approving this expense.

SHERIFF'S BOATYARD FINDINGS

Finding 13: The facilities at the Boatyard do not meet the needs of the HCSO and HCSR. Areas that need improvement include office space, video surveillance, security systems, parking lot, gates, and fencing.

Response: Agree

Finding 14: The Boatyard should be fully weather protected for proper shielding of evidence and equipment from inclement weather.

Response: Agree

SHERIFF'S BOATYARD RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 11: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff's Office and Board of Supervisors prepare a Request for Proposals and funding approval for remodeling and upgrades at the Boatyard including office space, security system, video surveillance system, parking lot, fencing and gates. Proposals to be Requested by October 31, 2022. Funding to be approved by January 31, 2023.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented unless additional funding is identified.

This recommendation has merit; however, additional funding must be identified prior to approving this expense. Additionally, the Sheriff's Boatyard is a leased facility. If additional funding is identified, significant investment in a leased facility may be difficult to justify without the commitment from the landlord for a reduction in rent or other concessions.

Recommendation 12: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff’s Office and Board of Supervisors prepare a Request for Proposals and approve funding for the purchase and construction of a structure at the Boatyard to house vehicles and equipment. Request for Proposals to be submitted by March 30, 2023. Funding to be approved by June 30, 2023.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented unless additional funding is identified.

This recommendation has merit; however, additional funding must be identified prior to approving this expense.

EVIDENCE ROOMS FINDINGS

Finding 15: Tapes and video recordings, particularly magnetic recordings, are currently stored in cardboard boxes at the evidence storage facility at the Boatyard.

Response: Agree

EVIDENCE ROOMS RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 13: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve funding for purchase of storage containers designed for all high-density data storage media at the Boatyard by November 30, 2022.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented unless additional funding is identified.

This recommendation has merit; however, additional funding must be identified prior to approving this expense.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR FINDINGS

Finding 17: Currently the Chief Deputy Coroner also has the responsibilities of the functioning Public Administrator, a complex role that is very difficult to perform adequately while focused on a death investigation.

Response: Agree

PUBLIC ADMISTRATOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 15: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve funding to hire a civilian analyst to the Public Administrator’s office to manage the Public Administrator duties by December 31, 2022.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

This recommendation has merit; however, additional funding must be identified prior to approving this expense.

HUMBOLDT COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY FINDINGS

Finding 18: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury finds a high percentage of inmates at the Humboldt County Correctional Facility have mental health issues and many are violent. This creates a potentially unsafe environment for officers and other inmates.

Response: Agree

Finding 19: Officers receive and implement de-escalation training with incarcerated mental health patients. However, these officers are not mental health professionals and lack behavioral health training and certification in counseling.

Response: Agree

Finding 20: The County's acute care psychiatric hospital, Sempervirens, does not provide enough space or services to reduce the strain on the Humboldt County Correctional Facility and ensure mental health patients receive appropriate placement and care.

Response: Disagree

Additional space and psychiatric services are needed in Humboldt. However, without Sempervirens, the correctional facility and other facilities would be more heavily impacted than their current situations.

Finding 21: Neither incarceration at the correctional facility nor a short stay at Sempervirens will address the County's challenge of meeting the mental health needs of inmates.

Response: Agree

On average, 50% of the occupied beds on Sempervirens are occupied by individuals on LPS (mental health) Conservatorship who are ready to discharge to a stepdown, subacute program. Having locally available subacute programs to place these individuals would allow for more access to acute beds for those who require this high level of care. The Department of Health & Human Services-Behavioral Health (DHHS-BH) Division has contracted with Willow Glen to provide an adult crisis residential program that might be utilized for this subacute population in the coming months. Additionally, DHHS-BH has contracted with Sorrel Leaf Healing Center to provide a children's crisis residential program that might be utilized for our childhood subacute population in the coming months. DHHS-BH is also working on contracting with other subacute residential programs in the north state that may also provide some relief. Filling these gaps in the county's crisis continuum

of care continues to be a focus for DHHS-BH in order to appropriately utilize the resources the county has available to those in need.

DHHS-BH continues to prioritize behavioral health services within the Humboldt County Correctional Facility (HCCF). The number of DHHS-BH services provided is contingent on the funding allocated to this program through the CPP Committee and the ability to recruit and hire licensed staff.

HUMBOLDT COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 16: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors request that the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services, the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, local hospitals and community health centers meet jointly to develop a comprehensive action plan with a three-fold focus, to be in place by January 31, 2023, as detailed below (F18, F19, F20, F21)

1. Address the increased flow of fentanyl, high potency methamphetamine and other dangerous illicit drugs into our County,
2. Provide appropriate services for users experiencing serious physical and mental health issues, including brain damage resulting in violent behavior, and
3. Examine the stigma associated with seeking appropriate behavioral health and treatment services.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

Creating a comprehensive and actionable plan to address the areas mentioned above requires significant coordination with multiple agencies around the county, many of whom are not under the direction of the Board of Supervisors. However, DHHS is actively working with the Sheriff's Office and other community partners to prevent or lower the use, and address the impacts of, fentanyl and other drugs in the community, and providing services to those experiencing behavioral health issues.

While the negative impacts of fentanyl and methamphetamines persist in our communities, DHHS-BH continues to support medication assisted treatment (MAT) services throughout the county by appropriately assessing and diagnosing individuals with substance use disorders and working to get them access to desired care. DHHS-BH was instrumental in applying for and obtaining grant dollars to support MAT in the HCCF. This program continues to offer MAT to inmates in the HCCF with an opioid use disorder and distributes Naloxone at discharge to help combat the high rate of accidental drug poisoning after incarceration.

Additionally, DHHS's Public Health, Healthy Communities Division has staff on the Rx Safe Humboldt Coalition. Rx Safe Humboldt provides a unique space for drug prevention and drug treatment entities to collaborate. The coalition's mission is to develop community standards and supporting structures for: Diagnosis and treatment for chronic pain while providing patients with the best care possible; diagnosis and treatment for acute pain recognizing the risks of prescribing pain medications; and strategies for minimizing misuse and diversion of prescription pain medications. Recently, the coalition has turned to fentanyl as one of the primary substances to address.

SEMPERVIRENS PSYCHIATRIC HEALTH FACILITY FINDINGS

Finding 24: Humboldt County is in the process of completing a Facilities Master Plan to guide construction of new County Facilities.

Response: Agree

Finding 25: Our community deserves access to an updated and state of the art facility that treats mental health conditions.

Response: Agree

DHHS-BH continues to search for available funding that would support the construction of a new or refurbished location for Sempervirens. Until then, DHHS-BH continues to pay for upgrades to the ever-aging facility at 720 Wood St., to ensure patients have a safe environment in which to receive medically necessary treatment.

SEMPERVIRENS PSYCHIATRIC HEALTH FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 19: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors complete and approve the Countywide Facilities Master Plan, effective by December 31, 2022.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

The county continues to finalize the Facilities Master Plan and anticipates it will be adopted by the Board during calendar year 2023.

Recommendation 20: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors move forward immediately with the recommendation of the 2019-2020 Civil Grand Jury to replace Sempervirens Psychiatric Facility with a larger, modern facility designed to accommodate both adults and juveniles.

Response: This recommendation requires more analysis.

DHHS-BH continues to search for available funding that would support the construction of a new or refurbished location for Sempervirens. Until then, DHHS-BH continues to pay for upgrades to the ever-aging facility at 720 Wood St., to ensure patients have a safe environment in which to receive medically necessary treatment.

GENERAL FACILITY FINDINGS

Finding 27: Many county facilities have various volunteer groups and individual volunteers that support the efforts of the County staff.

Response: Agree

Finding 28: Volunteer recruitment may be increased through additional County promotional efforts.

Response: Agree

Finding 30: Many of the County facilities lack preventive maintenance which will eventually result in emergency repair at additional cost. The Grand Jury noted peeling paint, ceiling leaks, deteriorating stairways and damaged ceiling tiles at several facilities. Also noted in selected facilities throughout the inspections were partially demolished areas in need of repair, inoperable lighting in rooms and janitorial services that were not scheduled on a regular basis.

Response: Agree

GENERAL FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 22: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors issue an official Proclamation of Support and Appreciation for these volunteers.

Response: This recommendation will be implemented.

Recommendation 23: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors promote volunteer recruitment on existing County websites, County printed advertisements and at Board of Supervisor meetings.

Response: This recommendation will be implemented.

Recommendation 25: The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors provide sufficient funding to allow preventive maintenance to be in place with the next fiscal year budget.

Response: This recommendation is in the process of being implemented.

The Board of Supervisors has adopted a Deferred Maintenance Policy requiring 2% of the total deferred maintenance cost be contributed towards this purpose each fiscal year. Additional funding, staff and professional services are required to provide sufficient funding for preventative maintenance.