



**COUNTY OF LAKE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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October 18, 2018

The Honorable Andrew S. Blum
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
255 North Forbes Street
Lakeport, CA 95453

RE: Response to the 2017/2018 Grand Jury Final Report

Dear Judge Blum:

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933, the Board of Supervisors submits this response to the FY 2017/2018 Civil Grand Jury Final Report.

Our Board's response is presented in the same sequence as the recommendations appear in the Final Report. We have provided a response to all items for which the report indicated a response was required by the Board of Supervisors.

Responses from appointed and elected department heads are likewise attached, in so much as they were provided to the Board.

OVERALL COMMENTS ON REPORT

The Lake County Board of Supervisors is aware of the considerable time commitment required to faithfully execute the duties of a member of the Civil Grand Jury. We commend the Civil Grand Jury for their efforts toward this year's report. However, our Board is disappointed by a seeming trend toward sensational report titles. "Chaos After the Fires" and, particularly, "Go Jump in the Lake" are frankly not titles befitting the subject matter they represent.

Further, those and other reports demonstrate a lack of consideration for the challenges of mitigating and managing disasters in the face of the County of Lake's unprecedented budgetary constraints and severe understaffing, and fail to appropriately recognize successes won in spite of these obstacles. Our Board finds that the efforts of County staff to creatively respond to the many demands placed upon their time and attention, in disaster and in the course of their normal duties, are to be commended, and not maligned.

With all of this said, we greatly appreciate the opportunity to reasonably respond.

RESPONSE TO CIVIL GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

“POOR STUDENT ATTENDANCE COSTS LAKE COUNTY SCHOOLS”

The 2017/2018 Grand Jury report requires and invites the Lake County Board of Supervisors to respond to its recommendations for this report. However, local public schools are not within the purview of the Board, and, given this fact, the Board has no response to this report, other than to reaffirm its commitment to improving the local economic base as the Grand Jury discusses in F8.

“LAKE COUNTY SENIOR CENTERS”

The 2017/2018 Grand Jury report indicates the Lake County Board of Supervisors is required to respond to recommendations made in this report. However, each of the senior centers in Lake County are privately operated, and not under the purview of the Lake County Board of Supervisors. Moreover, since the senior centers are private and are not operated behalf of any city, county and/or special district government, review of the senior centers is not within the function of the Grand Jury, as described on page 9 of the report.

Nonetheless, the Lake County Public Works Director has responded to R4, in which the Grand Jury states that the County should repair sidewalks in front of one of the senior centers. Said response clarifies that the sidewalks are not within the public right-of-way, but goes on to note another area which is County responsibility and will be repaired.

“WHERE’S MY BUILDING PERMIT”

R1. In an emergency, Lake County should call on all of its available resources. This should include the activation of the currently functioning MOUs.

DISAGREE, will not be implemented.

Explanation: There is no Memorandum of Understanding in place for mutual aid surrounding plan approvals and inspections. Such an agreement was considered following the Valley Fire, and the Community Development Director at the time ultimately determined to meet his department’s needs by hiring Extra Help staff. However, there is a history of Lake County’s jurisdictions assisting one another in times of emergency. The County of Lake provided considerable assistance to the City of Clearlake in the wake of 2017’s Sulphur Fire, and the County of Lake and City of Lakeport collaborated extensively in response to the Ranch and River Fires.

R4. The Community Development Department should establish a fund specifically allocated for emergencies.

DISAGREE, will not be implemented.

Explanation: Our Board concurs with the Community Development Director that such a fund would offer no significant benefit.

“MANDATED PRISON INSPECTIONS”

The Sheriff’s response is attached.

“THE WARDS OF LAKE COUNTY”

R1. Decisions regarding wards should not be prioritized by monetary concerns alone.

AGREE, has been implemented.

R2. The accurate location and status of wards shall be shared by the Lake County Probation Department with the Lake County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission.

AGREE, has been implemented.

R3. The Lake County Probation Department should consult with all stakeholders and agencies when drafting any new contracts or contract extensions regarding juvenile detentions.

AGREE, has been implemented.

R5. Future contracts should include specific goals and responsibilities for health care, mental health care, and education for the Lake County wards.

DISAGREE, will not be implemented.

Explanation: Our Board concurs with the Chief Probation Officer's response. General and Mental Health care and education are provided in accordance with State mandates, and specific goals are appropriately tailored to the needs of the individual ward, and subject to frequent change. Amending contracts in response to dynamic individual needs is impractical.

“THE TOUCHABLE SOUL OF LAKE COUNTY”

R1. The Library System in the County should investigate/recommend a method for establishing a bookmobile service. The BOS should support options to facilitate this service.

DISAGREE, will not be implemented.

Explanation: Our Board concurs with the Librarian's response that a bookmobile is not a cost-effective means by which to provide library services to underserved students.

R2. If the voters approve an increase to the County sales tax, a portion of this funding should be earmarked for libraries.

DISAGREE, will not be implemented. Not applicable at this time.

Explanation: As the Grand Jury and public are aware, voters did not approve an increase to the County sales tax.

R6. Increased publicity of Museum events should be funded and enacted.

AGREE, in concept, with recommendation. Will be implemented to the extent feasible.

Explanation: As the Public Services Director's response notes, Lake County's museums, and the events they host, get excellent reviews from visitors. Our Board finds County support for our museums generally reflects available resources.

“CHAOS AFTER THE FIRES”

Our Board concurs, in total, with the County Administrative Officer's detailed response, attached in full, which addresses all Findings and Recommendations. We have no further comment, except to commend the Administrative team for their dedication to serving Valley Fire survivors.

“GO JUMP IN THE LAKE”

R1. Regarding Unified Command, the BOS and the Lake County Sheriff should immediately reconsider where to assign overall authority and responsibility for implementation of the OEP. Considerations should be based on what management configuration could most effectively implement all aspects of the Plan. The BOS should not assign authority and responsibility to the Sheriff's Office simply because it provides the EOC and is responsible for emergency notifications and evacuations.

DISAGREE, will not be implemented.

Explanation: Our Board concurs with the Sheriff's sense that authority and responsibility is shared by multiple entities and organizations.

R2. The Sheriff, with current responsibility, should direct the OES to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each of the responsible governmental organizations named in the EOP. These MOUs should establish the areas of responsibility and authority and the specific actions each organization is to take in the advent of a wildfire emergency.

DISAGREE, will not be implemented.

Explanation: Our Board concurs with the Sheriff's perspective that functions, responsibilities and authority specific to actions in emergency response are already outlined in the NIMS and SEMS processes.

R3. The Sheriff, with current responsibility, should require the OES to develop a plan and negotiate an MOU with each of the incorporated cities as to how the EOC will be manned and managed in an emergency, especially in one crossing jurisdictional boundaries. This plan should include how to establish authority within the EOC initially and how to alter authority as the incident unfolds.

DISAGREE, will not be implemented.

Explanation: See R2.

R6. The Sheriff, with current responsibility, must develop and implement plans and programs for warning residents and non-governmental organizations of an anticipated or ongoing emergency. The Sheriff must consider that more technical and electrically dependent emergency alert systems may not work in an actual wildfire emergency. Emergency planners should develop and implement more traditional methods of warning, such as sirens with battery backup and block captain systems, tailored to conditions in specific neighborhoods.

AGREE, in part, has been implemented to the degree feasible.

Explanation: As the Sheriff describes, existing siren systems are employed, when available. Budgetary constraints preclude development of a county-wide siren system at this time.

R8. The Sheriff, with current responsibility, should investigate the issue of effective evacuation from neighborhoods, particularly where egress is limited, such as Anderson Springs and Spring Valley, for example. The Sheriff should develop a program to inform residents and community groups of evacuation protocols and routes. The Sheriff should consider the development of a book of maps showing evacuation routes from neighborhoods, using as models the map book produced by CalFire (Lake County First Responders Map Book) and the evacuation route map created by the Hidden Valley Lake Association and provided to its residents.

DISAGREE, will not be implemented.

Explanation: Our Board concurs with the Sheriff's characterization that each wildfire event is different, and commends the Sheriff's Office for their ingenuity in responsibly evacuating County residents in times of disaster.

“MAKING CONNECTIONS”

R1. The County should establish a specific individual to facilitate 'making connections.' This should not be limited to volunteering strictly to support County governmental needs. They should have the responsibility of seeking out areas of organizational or capability needs, and then matching them to the willing and offered citizens or organizations that can assist in those needs. This function should include active outreach specific to these goals across the county in: area councils, citizen groups, NGOs, service organizations. Included should be any internal governance requests/needs for voluntary support identified via existing departmental reporting structures throughout the County.

DISAGREE, will not be implemented.

Explanation: As stated in the County Administrative Officer's response, Human Resources serves as a connection point through which volunteers can apply. Providing a central connection point for all community needs is not within the immediate authority of the Board of Supervisors.

R4. The County should review main county website (under administration/forums/forum videos/ Lakeport Forum timestamp 1:24:00 to 1:25:00) and develop/enhance the grant writing effort and utilize volunteer help where it has been offered. An offer made during the Community Visioning Forums by an individual (ostensibly) experienced in this field to perform the service on a “no cost basis” to the county. This offer was not pursued or investigated. In the time since the forums, a paid County grant writer has been installed instead.

DISAGREE, will not be implemented.

Explanation: Our Board has been informed that the County has had a follow-up communication with the individual who offered to volunteer at the Lakeport forum.

Also see R1. Human Resources is the County's connection point for volunteers.

This concludes the Board of Supervisors' response to the 2017-2018 Civil Grand Jury Report.

Sincerely,

LAKE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Jim Steele
Chair of the Board

cc: 2017-2018 Civil Grand Jury Foreperson
2018-2019 Civil Grand Jury Foreperson