

# Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

District 1 ... ROSEMARIE SMALLCOMBE  
District 2 ..... MERLIN JONES  
District 3 ..... MARSHALL LONG  
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February 18, 2020

The Honorable Dana Walton  
Presiding Judge  
Mariposa County Superior Court  
5088 Bullion Street  
Post Office Box 28  
Mariposa, CA 95338

## **Re: Response to the Mariposa County 2019-2020 Grand Jury Interim Report**

Dear Judge Walton:

The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors thanks the Grand Jury for expeditiously addressing the issues contained in the interim reports dated December 26, 2019, and February 3, 2020. This letter is a response to the findings and recommendations contained in those reports. It should be understood that the Board generally acknowledges and agrees with all findings in the reports unless stated otherwise.

### **Deferred Complaint Regarding a Mariposa County Supervisor**

1. The Board agrees with the findings outlined in this item.
2. It is our understanding that the 2017-2018 Grand Jury considered this item for a partial year and the 2018-2019 Grand Jury considered it for a full year. We are grateful to the 2019-2020 Grand Jury for bringing this item to a conclusion with this interim report.
3. Improving public information and transparency is a priority of the current Board of Supervisors. The County has already taken steps in this direction including adding public information staff in the Health and Human Services Department and updating the county website. Staff has been directed to add additional capacity in the coming months and be more proactive in communications with the community.

Additional information specifically related to the agenda process and advisory committee appointments is being added to the County website. The Board and staff will continue to share this information with the public in person and through a variety of media.

4. While Board members are required to take a minimum of two hours of ethics training biennially, additional training and support is available and provided as needed or desired. Several supervisors have also attended courses through the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) Institute. CSAC Institute courses often focus on leadership skills, ethics, communication, emotional intelligence, and so on. Several supervisors are actively participating in these courses with one current board member achieving a credentialed status.

### **Mariposa County Sheriff's Office**

1. The Board agrees that the Mariposa County Sheriff's Office performs a vital function for our community with a broad and sometimes dangerous range of services.
2. The current Board of Supervisors has provided unprecedented support to the Sheriff's Office. In the last six years, the Board has allocated a net increase of nearly \$2.7 million to the Sheriff's Office, an increase of 34%.
3. Despite a steady resident population and decreasing overall crime in Mariposa County, the Board recognizes the dynamic challenges in public safety, particularly in an area with more than four million annual visitors, and continues to address these in partnership with our local sheriff. Part of this partnership includes adding six new positions in the Sheriff's Office in the last three years.
4. The Board agrees that attracting and retaining quality staff is essential to the success of the County. Over the last decade, all positions within the Sheriff's Office have increased to a range that is competitive with comparable counties and neighboring jurisdictions including the much larger Madera and Merced Counties to whom we have lost staff in the past.
5. It is concerning to read echoes of an argument being made by one of our labor groups in a Grand Jury report that was published before this information was presented to the Board. While the Grand Jury may recommend policy, such as competitive salaries for safety employees, specifying the position the Board should take in an ongoing labor negotiation could be inappropriate interference with that process. We hope that was not intentional in this case. As a proposal is still on the table, the Board will have no further comment on salaries in the Sheriff's Office at this time.
6. While the Board has many priorities to consider in allocating budgets, it reaffirms its commitment to public safety. 57% of the General Fund for Fiscal Year 2019-20 was allocated to public safety programs including the Mariposa County Sheriff's Office. Continued support for the safety of our community is essential to our success.

### **Mariposa County (Adult) Detention Facility**

1. The Board agrees that staffing at this facility is adequate and that facility improvements are needed.
2. The Board of Supervisors and the County Administrative Officer work with departments to establish budgets that meet the public need and balance the many priorities across the county. Medical services and staffing levels at the adult detention facility are considered in this process and will be evaluated again in the upcoming budget development process.

3. The Board supported a recent effort by the Mariposa County Sheriff's Department to obtain grant funds to improve and expand the adult detention facility. That effort was unfortunately not successful, but the Board stands ready to support future efforts to secure external funding.
4. Capital improvement needs are managed through the County Public Works Department. The needs of the adult detention facility are included in this list and will be addressed as the County is able, with or without external funding.

### **Mariposa County Juvenile Holding Facility**

1. The Board agrees with the findings of the Grand Jury with regard to the juvenile hall facility.
2. The Board supports the Grand Jury's intention to add this facility to the list for inspection.
3. The Board notes that the juvenile hall facility is scheduled to be painted in February 2020. New flooring will be installed shortly thereafter.
4. While the Board agrees that staffing this facility is difficult, it continues to support Probation Chief Pete Judy's efforts and commends him for his thoughtful and innovative approach.

### **Cybersecurity Advisory from San Mateo County Grand Jury**

1. The Board agrees with the findings of the Grand Jury on the security of the Mariposa County elections office and voting system. Mr. Keith Williams and his staff have our congratulations, gratitude and continued support for their proactive approach.
2. The elections office is currently seeking appropriate storage space for elections equipment. The Board is supportive of this effort.

### **John C. Fremont Healthcare District**

1. The Board of Supervisors agrees that the John C. Fremont Hospital is a vital asset for Mariposa County and that it is imperative to have a viable healthcare provider like John C. Fremont Hospital in operation in our county.
2. As an independent district, the Board of Supervisors has no directional authority over the affairs of the John C. Fremont Healthcare District. Because this is the case, the Board of Supervisors has no further comment on this report at this time.

This concludes the responses of the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors to the FY 2019-2020 Grand Jury Interim Reports. We are grateful to the Grand Jury for the opportunity to address and improve the aspects of County government operations discussed.

Sincerely,



Kevin Cann, Chair  
Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

Reviewed:   
Honorable F. Dana Walton, Per PC933