



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 9/12/2023

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): County Administrator's Office

Staff Name and Phone Number: Kay Lowtrip, 707-565-2431

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Response to the 2022-23 Civil Grand Jury Report

Recommended Action:

Approve the Board of Supervisors response to the 2022-23 Civil Grand Jury Report recommendations, and direct staff to formally transmit Sonoma County's complete set of responses to the 2022-23 Civil Grand Jury Report findings and recommendations.

Executive Summary:

Each year the Civil Grand Jury completes a Final Report on its investigations of potential issues in local government agencies. The 2022-23 Grand Jury Final Report was presented to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on June 18, 2023. The Final Report included various findings and recommendations that require response from the Board of Supervisors within 90 days, or no later than September 16, 2023. Once approved, the full set of responses to the 2022-23 Civil Grand Jury Report will be transmitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court.

Discussion:

Under California Law, Civil Grand Jury's exercise oversight of local government agencies, including counties, cities, and special districts. They do so by investigating issues that are either brought to their attention through citizen complaints or are selected by the Grand Jury members and issuing reports on their findings and recommendations.

The 2022-23 Grand Jury Final Report was presented to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on June 18, 2023. The Final Report included various findings and recommendations that require response from the Board of Supervisors within 90 days, or no later than September 16, 2023. Once approved, the full set of responses to the 2022-23 Civil Grand Jury Report will be transmitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court.

The Grand Jury has requested responses from the County of Sonoma to the following reports:

Report: Warming Centers

Required County Responses:

- Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
- Department of Public Infrastructure
- Department of Health Services

- Department of Emergency Management

Department responses are submitted directly to Honorable Judge Averill by and courtesy, copies will be provided to Supervisorial Districts. These responses, which come from the departments and do not require Board approval, were due within 60 days of the full consolidated report being published. The department responses are attached.

Proposed Board Response Summary

FINDINGS

- We agree with F9.

At the time of the complaint and through the winter of 2022-2023, the County did not have a plan or strategy to overcome shelter resistance which resulted in many unhoused people remaining exposed to the elements during weather emergencies.

The decision to access shelter services is a personal choice.

- We wholly or partially disagree with all other findings, which generally represent that the County failed to respond during the winters of 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

The County have and will continue to employ efforts to protect the unhoused during cold weather emergencies. This is achieved with messaging, in coordination and in partnership with appropriate stakeholder groups. The recent Extreme Temperature Response Annex, besides including a plan to complete pre-planning efforts, is a codification of efforts and practices implemented throughout various winter events.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6 have been implemented through the 6/12/2023 Extreme Temperature Response Annex.
- Recommendations R7 and R8 require further analysis:

R7. By September 30, 2023, the Board of Supervisors will direct the responsible department (as defined in the policy recommended in R1) to identify County facilities, including unused or underutilized facilities, that will be available to be used as warming centers for unhoused people in extreme cold weather.

This recommendation requires further analysis. The new County Government Center, and establishment of satellite service delivery sites is underway. The timeline may or may not include consolidation or disposal of county owned facilities, but this is not yet known.

R8. By September 30, 2023, the Board of Supervisors, in accordance with its adopted policy, will provide

sufficient funding to support opening and maintaining warming centers during episodes of extreme cold weather emergencies.

This recommendation requires further analysis. The Extreme Temperature Response Annex includes exploring partnership with other local jurisdictions, and community-based organizations, which may or may not require additional funding. Further, most declared disasters are mainly funded by state and/or federal agencies.

- R5 will not be implemented.

R5. Beginning April 1, 2024, and every year thereafter on or about April 1, the Board of Supervisors will direct the County Administrative Officer (CAO) to present an after-action report to the Board regarding the effectiveness of County staff in supporting warming centers during episodes of severe cold over the previous winter.

The Emergency Services department disaster protocols already include an after-action report which are completed when the activities of supporting the event ends.

Once approved, the full set of responses to the 2022-23 Grand Jury Report will be transmitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court.

The full reports are available online at

<https://sonoma.courts.ca.gov/general-information/grand-jury/grand-jury-reports-responses>

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Prior Board Actions:

The Board responds annually to the Civil Grand Jury Report.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

None

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

1. 22-23 GJ Response-Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
2. 22-23 GJ Response - Department of Public Infrastructure
3. 22-23 GJ Response - Department of Health Services
4. 22-23 GJ Response - Department of Emergency Management

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None