

Broadband Access

Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Broadband Access in Sonoma County

Report Date: September 14, 2021

Response by: Lynda Hopkins Title: Chairperson

Agency/Department Name: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

FINDINGS: F1, F6, F7, F8, F9, F10, F11, F12, F13, F14, F15

I (we) agree with the findings numbered: **F8, F9, F12, F13, F14, F15**

I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: **F1, F6, F7, F10, F11**

(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed with an explanation of the reasons.)

RECOMMENDATIONS: R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R8, R9, R10

Recommendations numbered: **R1, R2, R6** have been implemented.

(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)

Recommendations numbered: **R4, R5** have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)

Recommendations numbered: **R1, R3, R8, R9 R10** require further analysis.

(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.)

Recommendation numbered: _____ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.

(Attach an explanation.)

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Number of pages attached: 4

(See attached Civil Grand Jury Response Requirements)

Required Response to Findings

F1. Broadband access is a necessity; it has become a “Utility”, like electricity, roads, or water, but broadband has not yet been formally recognized as such.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees partially with this finding. The Board of Supervisors agrees that access to high-speed internet is necessary for vibrant communities, as it facilitates telehealth, education, economic opportunities and more. With regards to recognizing broadband is as essential as a utility, the State Legislature has just passed a bill to help address this important need. On July 20, 2021 the Legislature passed and the Governor signed into law SB 156 to establish the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy at the Department of Technology to oversee the acquisition and management of a statewide open-access middle mile broadband network. It also requires the Public Utilities Commission to identify and prioritize statewide open-access middle mile locations. The County is reviewing its role in this new legislation and will continue to work with state and regional partners to significantly improve broadband services for our community.

F6. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors has neither taken proactive action to improve broadband access nor exhibited a sense of urgency regarding this problem.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees wholly with this finding. On June 8, 2021, the Board of Supervisors approved the Broadband Action Plan and allocated \$315,000 to fund the initial phase of the Action Plan.

F7. The Sonoma County Administration and Board of Supervisors have delayed adopting a plan to address the problems of broadband affordability, availability, or low-quality access in Sonoma County.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees partially with this finding. The Broadband Action Plan was delayed from May to June for administrative reasons, but was brought before the Board as soon as feasible.

F10. Access Broadband Sonoma has been given the task of implementing broadband expansion in Sonoma County but it lacks the funding, staffing level, or authority to accomplish this goal.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees partially with this finding. Access Sonoma Broadband (ASB) is an informal advisory group to the Director of the Economic Development Board (EDB). The EDB has been given the authority to expand ASB into the official governing body responsible for broadband development, should an appropriate structure be identified. On June 8, 2021, the Board of Supervisors allocated \$315,000 to the initial exploratory steps needed to create such a body, which includes a comprehensive business plan for start-up costs, ongoing staffing, and development of infrastructure.

F11. While inability to access adequate broadband is recognized as a significant problem, reliable quantitative data on unserved and underserved residents are lacking.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees partially with this finding. Current broadband availability data, which is self-reported by service providers, is often inaccurate and can result in over-claimed service availability. In response, the Economic Development Board recently announced the Access Sonoma Broadband Speed Test Initiative, which allows community members to test their current home internet speeds to provide granular data that will help determine the quality of access countywide, particularly in areas where services are lacking or non-existent.

Required Response to Recommendations

R1. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors consider recognizing and designating broadband as a “Utility” that needs prioritization by October 31, 2021.

This is a two part recommendation:

- 1) The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors consider recognizing and designating broadband as a “Utility”
- 2) Broadband [is] a “Utility” that needs prioritization

Part one of this recommendation requires further analysis. The Economic Development Board is currently in the Request for Proposals process for a contractor to perform an assessment of a governance structure that would best support broadband infrastructure development and maintenance. This assessment will also include an analysis of options to consider regarding the County’s role in implementing SB 156 in coordination with the State and other regional partners. SB 156 created a new State agency, the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy. This new State agency will oversee the acquisition and management of a statewide open-access middle mile broadband network. SB 156 also requires the Public Utilities Commission to identify and prioritize statewide open-access middle mile locations in coordination with the State’s new Office of Broadband.

Part two of this recommendation has been implemented. On March 2, 2021, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approved a Five-Year Strategic Plan that identifies priorities for the next five years. The Strategic Plan includes specific objectives related to broadband deployment and access.

R2. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors adopt and support a plan to address a lack of broadband access in the County by November 30, 2021.

This recommendation has been implemented. On June 8, 2021, the Board of Supervisors approved the Broadband Action Plan and allocated \$315,000 to fund the initial phase of the Action Plan.

R3. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors provide staff and funding to allow the Economic Development Board and Access Sonoma Broadband to develop accurate data on broadband service for the County by December 31, 2021.

This recommendation requires further analysis. The Economic Development Board recently announced the Access Sonoma Broadband Speed Test Initiative, which allows community members to test their current home internet speeds to provide granular data that will help determine the quality of access countywide, particularly in areas where services are lacking or non-existent. Once the speed test is complete the Economic Development Board will analyze the data to ensure it’s sufficient, and may request funding from the Board if additional study is needed.

R4. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and Economic Development Board assemble an interdepartmental group to coordinate and oversee efforts in Broadband expansion by November 30, 2021.

This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Access Sonoma Broadband, as an informal advisory body to the Director of the Economic Development Board, recently completed a Broadband Action Plan, which was subsequently presented to the Board of Supervisors on June 8, 2021. The plan calls for the creation of a governing structure yet to be determined, though inclusive of County/City departments and other regional stakeholders, to facilitate

broadband expansion projects through the public development and ownership of infrastructure. The Action Plan was approved by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, which also allocated \$315,000 for the initial stages of this work (consulting service, legal services, and grant management). Staff anticipates completing the initial phase of work and recommending a governance structure to the Board of Supervisors in late 2021.

R5. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and the Economic Development Board consider the establishment of a broadband Joint Powers Agreement that includes Sonoma County, Mendocino County, and possibly other neighboring counties by November 30, 2021.

This recommendation has been implemented. In 2016, the County of Sonoma entered into a Joint Powers Agreement with Marin County, Napa County and Mendocino County to coordinate efforts to improve broadband access for rural communities. The Joint Powers Agreement is called the North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC). Over the past five years, the four counties have worked together through this JPA to identify broadband deployment opportunities, locate broadband funding sources, complete broadband strategic plans and help broadband service providers take advantage of funding to address broadband opportunities. The NBNCBC has also worked effectively to recommend the member counties authorize coordination with local, state and federal officials to review and support regulations and policies to further expand broadband deployment to rural areas.

R6. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors give a high priority to addressing personnel levels sufficient to accomplish the goals of a broadband specific plan.

This recommendation has been implemented. The County has given high priority accomplishing the Broadband Action Plan and has allocated \$315,000 for the initial stages of this work (consulting service, legal services, and grant management). The County does not have a broadband specific plan.

R8. In the annual budget process the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and the Office of Administration include evaluation of the costs of laying cable or empty conduit in upcoming infrastructure projects by December 31, 2021.

This recommendation requires further analysis. The County's fiscal year is from July 1 – June 30. On June 18, 2021 the Board of Supervisors adopted the 2021-22 budget. The next opportunity to allocate funding during the annual budget process will take place in June, 2022. The County Administrator's Office will work with departments to determine if funding is available for "laying cable or empty conduit in upcoming infrastructure projects" and will make appropriate recommendations to the Board of Supervisors through the normal budget hearing process.

R9. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, the Economic Development Board, and Access Sonoma Broadband include in the implementation of any broadband plan a clear requirement for the download and upload speeds of 100/20 proposed in State of California Executive Order N-73-20 to be the minimal acceptable level of service by September 30, 2021.

This recommendation requires further analysis. Though download/upload speeds of 100/20 have been recommended by the state as well as identified by NBNCBC as a target, it is unlikely that formal adoption of any particular speed recommendation will be made locally before a governing structure and business plan are identified and created.

R10. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors assure that any plan for broadband expansion should utilize fiber optic cable transmission or its equivalent whenever it is possible by November 30, 2021.

This recommendation requires further analysis. Though fiber optic cable or its equivalent is a widely used benchmark, it is unlikely that the County will adopt formal transmission standards before a governing structure and business plan are identified and created.

COVID-19 Mitigation at the County Jail
Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: COVID-19 Mitigation at the County Jail

Report Date: September 14, 2021

Response by: Lynda Hopkins Title: Chairperson

Agency/Department Name: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

FINDINGS: F10, F11

I (we) agree with the findings numbered: _____

I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: **F10, F11** _____

(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed with an explanation of the reasons.)

RECOMMENDATIONS: R4

Recommendations numbered: _____ have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)

Recommendations numbered: _____ have not yet been implemented,
but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)

Recommendations numbered: **R4** _____ require(s) further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.)

Recommendations numbered: _____ will not be implemented because
they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Required Response to Findings

F10. Discharge planners could play an indispensable role in preventing the spread of COVID-19 between the jail and the community.

The Board of Supervisors partially disagree with this finding.

While discharge planners play a very important role in connecting inmates with the community and resources, it is inconclusive on how crucial their role would be in preventing the spread of COVID-19 between the jail and the community and we are unaware of data supporting a direct link between the two.

F11. Adding at least four new discharge planners at the Main Adult Detention Facility would contribute to lowering the recidivism rate and therefore play a key role in maintaining a lower incarcerated population

The Board of Supervisors partially disagree with this finding.

While discharge planners play an important role in contributing to the successful transition of inmates into the community, additional data and information is necessary to determine whether discharge planners would be directly associated with a lower inmate population.

Required Response to Recommendations

R4. The Sheriff's Office and the Board of Supervisors work together to develop a plan by December 31, 2021 to increase the contracted Wellpath resources to fund four additional Wellpath discharge planners for mental health and medical assignment to the Main Adult Detention Facility. (F10, F11).

This recommendation requires further analysis.

The Board of Supervisors recognize the substantial role discharge planners play for our inmates with on-going mental health and medical needs. The FY 21-22 Adopted Budget does not include available resources to cover any additional medical or mental health staff. The Board of Supervisors, County Administrator will work with the Sheriff's Office to monitor the case load of the existing discharge planners, and continue to evaluate the need for additional discharge planners. If warranted, requests for additional discharge planners will be made through the existing budget process.

Emergency Alerts and Communication
Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Emergency Alerts and Communications

Report Date: September 14, 2021

Response by: Lynda Hopkins Title: Chairperson

Agency/Department Name: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

FINDINGS: F4, F5, F7, F8, F12, F13, F14, F18, F19, F20, F24, F25

I (we) agree with the findings numbered: F4, F5, F7, F8, F12, F13, F14, F18, F19, F20, F24, F25

I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: F4, F5, F7, F8, F12, F13, F14, F18, F19, F20, F24, F25

(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed with an explanation of the reasons.)

RECOMMENDATIONS: R2, R8, R14, R18, R20

Recommendations numbered: _____ have been implemented.

(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)

Recommendations numbered: _____ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)

Recommendations numbered: _____ require(s) further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.)

Recommendations numbered: _____ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.

(Attach an explanation.)

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Number of pages attached: _____

(See attached Civil Grand Jury Response Requirements)

Board of Supervisors' Response to Emergency Alerts and Communication

Required Response to Findings

F8. Due to the topography within Sonoma County, the re-institution of audible alarms such as air-raid sirens could dependably reach residents in remote areas and work as a reliable tried-and-true alarm system.

The Board of Supervisors partially disagree partially with this finding.

In 2018 the Board of Supervisors directed the Department of Emergency Management to explore the potential for development of a network of outdoor audible warning sirens. The Department assessed best practices, siren technologies, systems limitations, vendor products, deployment strategies, initial/ongoing program costs as well as participating in field tests in Sonoma County.

The Department of Emergency Management determined that the effectiveness of outdoor sirens may be compromised by terrain, vegetation, urban development, and ability to be heard inside buildings.¹ Additionally modern building construction – including dual and triple-paned windows makes hearing this sirens very difficult – this has been seen in recent community evacuation drills in which vehicle-mounted Hi-Lo sirens were used. Staff will continue to assess the long-term potential for use of outdoor sirens in very specific hazard areas (ex. tsunami inundation zones).

F12. The County communication network is at risk of communication tower/repeater equipment loss through delayed maintenance and failure to update obsolescent equipment, or disaster loss affecting the Sheriff's Department, city, police, fire agencies, and Redwood Empire Dispatch Communications.

The Board of Supervisors disagree partially with this finding

Sonoma County's Telecommunications radio-communications system is maintained by the Sheriff's Office Telecommunications Bureau (T-Comm). We understand that T-Comm has not delayed maintenance and therefore do not agree that the system is at risk due to aged equipment.

F13. There is no backup system for the County communication towers/repeaters or for commercial cellular towers should they fail to function.

The Board of Supervisors disagree partially with this finding.

The County communications towers are maintained by Sheriff's Office and include a robust series of backups in the event of primary power loss. All county communications towers maintained by the Sheriff's office have backup generators with enough fuel to provide power to the tower for at least 10 days in addition to battery backup systems.

In regard to commercial cellular towers, the County, through a joint effort with other local governments, was successful in 2020 in petitioning the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to require that telecommunications providers provide state and local emergency responders with information directly about the areas that have lost, or may lose, service due to the impacted infrastructure and requiring that outage maps be posted on public-facing websites. CPUC Decision 21-02-029² requires 72-hours backup power for wireless providers in Tier 2 and Tier 3 High Fire Threat Districts – except for those

¹ https://www.midstatecomm.com/PDF/FEMA_guide.pdf

² <https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M366/K625/366625041.PDF>

facilities which the providers identify in their resiliency plans that don't need backup or are impossible to provide backup.

Per the CPUC map of areas that do not have sufficient backup, there are relatively few in Sonoma County that are at risk from power failure. Vulnerable areas are in dark blue on the CPUC map here: <https://capuc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=4ffc5f03a0e14f22a28e4f14aca20327> However, without real-time system status reporting, there is no ability to determine if this is really what will occur during a major event.

Per CPUC Rulings 18-03-011³, 18-03-011⁴, and Decision 21-02-029⁵, the County of Sonoma has received emergency plans from wireless (U.S Cellular, Verizon, AT&T, TMobile) and wireline communications providers (Comcast, AT&T). The wireless broadband providers have made some progress in developing backup power for key sites but the overall status of this effort is not known.

F14. The County communication towers/repeaters and cellular provider towers are not maintained and protected (including defensible space) sufficiently to ensure alerts and warnings can go out in the event of a disaster.

The Board of Supervisors disagree partially with this finding.

Sonoma County's Telecommunications radio-communications system is maintained and protected by the Sheriff's Office to ensure alerts and warnings go out during disaster.

The County of Sonoma cannot respond to maintenance levels of the commercial cellular provider's infrastructure, equipment or systems.

F18. The Board of Supervisors has not fulfilled its commitment to update the 2014 Emergency Operations Plan by 2018-2019. This commitment was made in response to a Recommendation by the 2017-2018 Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury.

The Board of Supervisors disagree partially with this finding.

While the overall plan has not been completely updated, this finding does not take into account the broad range of emergency planning products developed that directly augment the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). These products include annexes to the EOP such as Alert & Warning, Evacuation, Pandemic, Extreme Heat, and Public Safety Power Shutoffs (which has been revised twice).

Also, as noted in the Grand Jury report, the County has experienced an extraordinary number and variety of emergency incidents and events in the last several years. These events have forced staff to spend their time and efforts addressing immediate response and recovery missions - which has come at the expense of resources that would have gone into developing a new EOP. As the last 8 months has not required significant emergency response efforts, staff have been able to make good progress on the new EOP which will be the first in California to incorporate a new state requirement to integrate cultural competency and equity considerations.

³ <https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Efile/G000/M328/K685/328685793.PDF>

⁴ <https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M343/K633/343633733.PDF>

⁵ <https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M366/K625/366625041.PDF>

F20. Recommendations documented in After Action Reports following a disaster have not been incorporated into the current Emergency Operations Plans for Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management, the Sheriff's Office, Cities, and fire agencies.

The Board of Supervisors disagree with this finding.

Since 2017, the County has developed several after action reports for wildfire, flood and power shut off incidents. Recommendations and actions from these AARs are a key element of ongoing improvements and program development. The AAR addressing the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in the 2017 Fires has directly led to changes in organization and procedure. A key recommendation was to develop a new EOC facility which has now been incorporated into the County's Strategic Plan and Capital Improvement Plan.

Of course, not all the improvements can be immediately implemented – especially as the historic number and scope of recent incidents has necessarily prioritized response efforts over preparedness. That said, significant progress in implementing many AAR recommendations has been made in the last three years. AARs provide critical input as new plans are developed, new training offered, and new equipment purchased.

By way of example, recommendations made in the Alert & Warning AARs developed following the 2018 and 2019 warning exercises, the 2019 Kincade Fire and PSPS events, and the 2020 LNU and Glass Wildfires have been incorporated into the new Alert & Warning Annex and the larger warning program.

The County's new Emergency Operations Plan which is expected to be approved by the Board of Supervisors by the end of 2021 will further incorporate many other recommendations made in AARs as do the Annexes for Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) and Evacuation which have already been approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Required Response to Recommendations

R18. By December 31, 2021, the Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution that all major County disaster plans having to do with Emergencies and Emergency Preparedness be considered "Living Documents" to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. (F18, F19, F20)

Recommendation R18 has not been implemented and may not be implemented.

It is impractical to update all emergency plans on an annual basis. The County currently maintains the Emergency Operations Plan and five current hazard- or function-specific annexes to the EOP. An additional five annexes are under development/consideration. The County also maintains a comprehensive Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) with 51 annexes for County departments and facilities. It is the intent of the Department of Emergency Management - in coordination with the Sonoma County Disaster Council - to review emergency plans every three years or as warranted.

This recommendation addresses County disaster plans. It is important to note that cities comprise 2/3 of the County's population and each city maintains its own set of emergency operations plans and procedures.

R20. By December 31, 2021, the Board of Supervisors increase the capacity of the Department of Emergency Management's Community Preparedness function in order to effectively engage the

greater community in disaster preparedness with groups such as Fire Safe Sonoma, neighborhood groups such as Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies, and Community Emergency Response Teams to foster resilience. (F24, F25)

Recommendation R20 has not been implemented and requires further analysis.

The capacity of the Department of Emergency Management's Community Preparedness function has been increased over the last several years. The County's overall capacity to perform essential functions and services is reviewed annually and updated through the County's budget process. Community Preparedness is a Board of Supervisors priority and we anticipate this discussion will take place during budget hearings.

County Jail Inmate Telephone and Commissary
Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: County Jail Inmate Telephone and Commissary

Report Date: September 14, 2021

Response by: Lynda Hopkins Title: Chairperson

Agency/Department Name: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

FINDINGS: F1, F3, F5, F7

I (we) agree with the findings numbered: F5

I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: F1, F3, F7

(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed with an explanation of the reasons.)

RECOMMENDATIONS: R1, R3

Recommendations numbered: R3 have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)

Recommendations numbered: _____ have not yet been implemented,
but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)

Recommendations numbered: R1 require(s) further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.)

Recommendations numbered: _____ will not be implemented because
they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Number of pages attached: 2
(See attached Civil Grand Jury Response Requirements)

Board of Supervisors' Required Response to County Jail Inmate Telephone and Commissary

Required Response to Findings

F1. Sonoma County Sheriff's Office commission-based contract with Global Tel Link unreasonably inflates the cost of telephone communication for incarcerated people and their families in the community.

The Board of Supervisors disagree with this finding.

The Sheriff's Office Detention Division has received inmate phone services from Legacy Inmate Communications since 2017, and as of August 2021, the company is in the process of transitioning to Global Tel Link.

The rates charged for Sonoma County inmate phone services (\$0.21/minute for debit/prepaid and \$0.25/minute for collect calls) meet the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) current inmate calling service rates, and those initially proposed by California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) staff in April 2021 for interim rate relief for inmate phone services.

According to the CPUC Proposed Decision regarding Interim Rate Caps (July 2021) pre-paid, call per minute rates charged to Sonoma County inmates are well below the county jail state average of \$0.31/minute.

It should be noted that on August 19, 2021, the CPUC acted to impose a per-minute cap of seven cents (\$0.07) for intrastate debit, prepaid calls, and collect calls for all incarcerated person calling services operating within California. This change will take effect in October 2021 and the Sheriff's Office will work to ensure compliance with updated regulations according to available guidance, including updating the contract with Global Tel Link to incorporate the lower per-minute rate cap.

F3. A renegotiated agreement with Global Tel Link, without the excessive mark-up added for commissions, would lower the cost of telephone calls for the incarcerated population.

The Board of Supervisors disagree with this finding.

As explained in the response to F1, the rates charged for Sonoma County inmate phone services meet the current FCC inmate calling rate standards and are below the county jail state average of \$0.31/minute. The Sheriff's Office will work to ensure compliance with updated regulations according to available guidance, including updating the contract with Global Tel Link to incorporate the lower per-minute rate cap.

F7. The high mark-up on the commissary and phone card sales continued while visitation and inmate supportive programs, which are funding by the Inmate Welfare Trust revenues, were cancelled.

The Board of Supervisors partially disagree with this finding.

As explained in the response to F1, the rates charged for Sonoma County inmate phone services meet the current FCC inmate calling rate standards and are below the county jail state average of \$0.31/minute. The Sheriff's Office will work to ensure compliance with updated regulations according to available guidance, including updating the contract with Global Tel Link to incorporate the lower per-minute rate cap.

Public visiting was canceled in March 2020 in response to an unprecedented public health crisis. In an effort to make more calls available during this time, 90-minute phone cards were offered to all inmates for no charge. The contract vendor eventually provided ten minutes of free calls per day to each inmate.

Only programs that increased the risk of COVID-19 transmissions unnecessarily were canceled. Other programs continued funded by the Trust. The trust also funds two Inmate Program staff positions used throughout the pandemic to focus on providing and enhancing remote learning access, maintaining high school and JC classes, in addition to facilitating other inmate activities.

Required Response to Recommendations

R3. As required by PC § 4025(e), the Sheriff's Office provide an annual report to the Board Of Supervisors detailing line item revenue and expenses within the Inmate Welfare Trust , beginning with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, with the initial report due by November 30, 2021. (F5, F7)

This recommendation has been implemented.

The Sheriff's Office has provided an annual report to the Board of Supervisors detailing line item revenue and expense within the Inmate Welfare Trust since FY 03-04, as required by Penal Code Section 4025 (e). The next Inmate Welfare Trust annual report will be submitted by November 30, 2021.

R1. The Sheriff's Office work with the Board of Supervisors to replace the current commission-based audio and video contract with Global Tel Link, using a model based on the San Francisco County Sheriff's Department, by December 31, 2021. (F1, F3)

This recommendation requires further analysis.

During the term of the Global Tel Link agreement, the Board of Supervisors, County Administrator and the Sheriff's Office will monitor the contractor's progress towards the expectations set out in the agreement and the goals intended by this service.

Additionally, County staff will research San Francisco County's commission-free model to evaluate feasibility, and analyze both the fiscal impact and potential operational impact of changing the program structure. Given the complexity of the change and potential need to identify additional discretionary funding sources, it is not feasible to implement this recommendation by December 31, 2021. Upon completion of this analysis, the Sheriff's office will work with the County Administrator to determine if the program and contract structure should be changed, and bring forward a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors as needed.