

CITY OF WILLITS

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POLICE DEPARTMENT - 125 E. Commercial St., (707) 459-6122 • Fax (707) 459-0405
Willits, CA 95490

May 10, 2007

RECEIVED

MAY 17 2007

MENDOCINO COUNTY GRAND JURY
POST OFFICE BOX 629
UKIAH, CA 95482

Mendocino County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 629
Ukiah, CA 95482

RE: Response to Grand Jury Report

Dear Chair of Grand Jury and Grand Jury Members:

Enclosed please find the Response to the Grand Jury Report of 2007 on behalf of the City of Willits, the City Manager and the Police Chief. The matter was considered and approved by the Willits City Council at its regular meeting on May 9, 2007.

Yours truly,

Ross Walker
City Manager

Enclosures

cc: Willits City Council
Police Chief Gerry Gonzalez

2007 Mendocino Grand Jury Report

City of Willits Consolidated Responses

RE: Report Titled CITY OF WILLITS POLICE DEPARTMENT & HOLDING CELLS
Dated: March 22, 2007

Response by: Mayor Tami Jorgensen (Willits City Council)
Police Chief Gerardo Gonzalez (Willits Police Department)

Findings

I (we) agree with the findings numbered:
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11,

I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings numbered:

Recommendations

Recommendations numbered: _____
have been implemented.

Recommendations numbered: 1, _____
have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(attach a time frame for implementation)

Recommendations numbered: 4, 2, 3 _____
require further analysis.

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

Date: 5/9/07 Signed: Tami Jorgensen
Mayor Tami Jorgensen, Willits City Council

Date: 5/9/07 Signed: _____
Willits Police Chief Gerardo Gonzalez

Total number of pages attached: 3

Consolidated City of Willits Response to 2007 Grand Jury Report

Title: CITY OF WILLITS POLICE DEPARTMENT & HOLDING CELLS

Summary

The Grand Jury conducted its annual mandated visit to the Willits Police Department (WPD) to inspect its operations, holding cells, evidence room, and the facility in general.

Findings

1. The staff consists of the Chief of Police, three sergeants, nine officers, five Dispatchers (of which three are part time), and a community Service Officer who also serves as an Evidence Clerk. One officer's position is unfilled, and two officers are seeking employment elsewhere.

Agree

2. The building occupied by the WPD is owned by Mendocino County. A portion is leased by the City of Willits for the WPD.

Agree

3. Rainwater leaks into the WPD's office making it necessary to cover records and electronic equipment with plastic tarps. This condition has persisted since the building was constructed in 1988.

Agree

4. The annual budget for the police department is inconsistent.

Agree

5. The County General Services Agency, under agreement with the WPD, provides computer technical support. These services have improved over prior years.

Agree

6. The WPD computer system is integrated into the County Sheriffs system; not all information in the Sheriffs system is accessible to WPD.

Agree

7. Higher pay in neighboring counties is one of many issues making recruitment and retention of officers difficult.

Agree

8. The WPD's security gate is malfunctioning. It has caused damage to vehicles by unexpectedly closing.

Agree

9. There is no countywide prisoner transport system.

Agree

10. Most calls for service are complaints about transients who are homeless and may be under the influence of a substance, a misdemeanor offense.

Agree

11. Misdemeanor arrests are kept to a minimum due to the need to supervise or transport arrestees to the County jail. Citations may be issued instead.

*Agree. However, in cases involving violence or where the offense is of a nature that would endanger the public, arrestees can be transported to **county jail** in adherence with the penal code section 853.6.*

Recommendations

The Grand Jury recommends that:

1. Vacant staff position be filled. (Finding 1)

*Response: This recommendation is still in the progress of being implemented. **Attrition** appears to be ongoing condition plaguing the **Willits** Police Department as it does in many small police agencies in California. From the time the Grand Jury last visited the **Willits** Police Department the **Willits** Police Department has lost additional personnel and based on current estimates will loose additional **Officers** to other agencies. The search for acceptable qualified Police Officer candidates is an ongoing process. Most recently the steps taken to fill vacant or planned vacancies include Police Academy recruitment visits, Web based application download process and an employee referral program. The **Willits** Police Department continues to accept applications from qualified individuals to fill current vacancies.*

2. The cause of the rainwater leakage be determined and corrected. (Finding 2, 3).

*Response: This Recommendation requires further analysis. As stated the **Willits** Police Department (City of **Willits**) occupies its portion of the **Willits** Justice Center in the capacity of a renter of the premises. Thus while the City /Police Department continues to report instances where rainwater leakage is found, we continue to await a solution from the County of Mendocino. County staff and County approved contractors continue to **attempt** to solve this problem and the City of **Willits** Police Department stand ready to cooperate in their efforts to find a solution to this ongoing problem*

3. The security gate needs to be repaired or replaced. (Finding 8)

*Response: This recommendation requires further analysis. The rear security gate and the corresponding mechanism are the responsibility of the county of Mendocino to maintain. While the **Willits** Police Department had the ability to open and close the gate manually, the entire system and the automated portion of the device are maintained by the County of Mendocino. When a malfunction occurs, it is reported immediately to the Mendocino County General Services Maintenance Department. The county then dispatches a contractor to repair, adjust, or maintain the gate mechanism. As this is the responsibility of the County to maintain this device, the City of **Willits/ Willits** Police Department continues to monitor and report any and all problems with the gate mechanism to the County of Mendocino.*

4. A countywide prisoner transport system be implemented. (Finding 9-11)

*Response: Recommendation #4 requires further analysis as the **Willits** Police **Department/City** of **Willits** are only one part of a countywide network of law enforcement agencies currently grappling with prisoner transport issues. While on its face this would seem like an easy solution to all involved, the budgetary and coordination issues involved in undertaking this solution are beyond the reach of the City of **Willits/ Willits** Police Department to currently implement without further dialogue with the neighboring agencies and the County of Mendocino. **All** police agencies in the county are currently dealing with Law Enforcement Officer attrition. Thus, the question of who would pay and how much would only exacerbate the current budgetary **shortfalls** that each of the agencies now face. Further countywide dialogue is needed before a feasibility study could even be undertaken to implement this recommendation.*

THOMAS D. ALLMAN
Sheriff-Coroner



Undersheriff Gary Hudson

Captain Kevin Broin
Field Services
Captain Tim Pearce
Corrections

County of Mendocino Office Of The Sheriff-Coroner

April 25, 2007

Honorable Cindee Mayfield, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California
County of Mendocino
County Courthouse
Ukiah CA 95482

RE: Response to Report of the 2006-2007 Grand Jury

Dear Judge Mayfield:

Attached and enclosed please find my responses to the Grand Jury's report entitled:

CITY OF WILLITS POLICE DEPARTMENT & HOLDING CELLS

The Grand Jury requires me to respond to Finding 8, and Recommendation 4. My responses are as follows:

Findings

I agree with Finding number 8. Several Sheriff's Office vehicles have been damaged by this gate, including two in the past two weeks. In one incident, the passenger side mirror was torn off. In the other, the side of the vehicle was dented.

Recommendations

Recommendation 4 will not be implemented because it is not reasonable at the current time. It appears that the Grand Jury is referring to the County Jail's transportation unit. Expanding this unit to provide countywide, 24/7 transportation of arrestees would require at least five additional, full-time Corrections Deputies. While I would support such a change, it is up to the Board of Supervisors to allocate and fund the additional positions.

RESPONSE PROCEDURE TO GRAND JURY REPORTS

The governance of responses to Grand Jury Final Report is contained in Penal Code § 933 and § 933.05. Responses must be submitted within 60 or 90 days. Elected officials must respond within sixty (60) days. Governing bodies (for example: the Board of Supervisors) must respond within ninety (90) days. Please submit all responses in writing and digital format to the Presiding Judge, the Grand jury Foreperson and the CEO's office.

Report Title: CITY OF WILLITS POLICE DEPARTMENT AND HOLDING CELLS

Report Date: March 22,2007

Response by: THOMAS D. ALLMAN, Sheriff-Coroner

Findings

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered:
8.
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings numbered:
(attach a statement specifying any portions of the Findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefore)

Recommendations

- 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 time frame for implementation)
- Recommendations numbered:
require further analysis. (attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer **and/or** director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed; including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This time frame shall not exceed six (6) months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury Report)
- Recommendations numbered: 4.
will not be implemented because they are not warranted **and/or** are not reasonable. (attach an explanation)

Dated: April 25, 2007

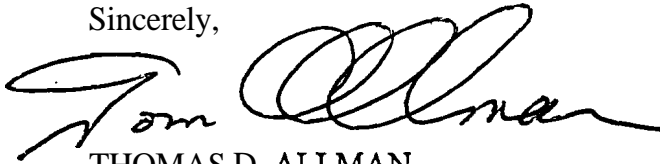
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Allman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" written in a smaller, more compact script than the last name "Allman".

THOMAS, D. ALLMAN
Sheriff-Coroner

Cc: Glen Pavlovic, Grand Jury Foreman
Kendall Smith, Chair - Board of Supervisors
Albert Beltrami, County CEO
Jeanine Nadel, County Counsel

Should you or the Grand Jury have questions about any of my responses, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Undersheriff, Gary Hudson, at the address and phone number listed below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Allman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" written in a smaller, more compact script than the last name "Allman".

THOMAS D. ALLMAN
Sheriff-Coroner

Cc: Glenn Pavlovic, Grand Jury Foreman
Kendall Smith, Chair - Board of Supervisors
Albert P. Beltrami, County CEO
Jeanine Nadel, County Counsel