

Review of Responses and Implementation of Recommendations to Previous Grand Jury Reports

The Grand Jury reviewed reports and agency responses from past County Grand Jury Final Reports. Some recommendations from 1999-2000 reports are referenced in this year's reports on similar subjects, for example Temporary Athletic Coaches, Juvenile Hall, and the County Jail. The following is a brief overview of other agency implementation of recommendations from previous Grand Jury Final Reports. Also included is a spreadsheet showing the County's implementation schedule for recommendations to the 1999-2000 Final Report.

“Department of Social Services and Foster Parents,” 1997-98

The 1997-98 Grand Jury Recommendations about Department of Social Services (Social Services) procedures and Board of Supervisors responses (in Italics) were:

- ❑ “Family and Childrens Services (FCS) should develop a County policy and procedures manual for social workers including information such as: . . . “
“Identified sections would be written, finalized and staff trained on them by July 1, 1999.”
- ❑ “The Division will develop and distribute an up-to-date foster parent handbook.”
“will be done by March 31, 1999.”
- ❑ FCS “implement the use of a health and education record for foster children”
“The health and education passport component of CWS/CMS will be fully implemented for all foster care cases by March 31, 1999.”

Findings

- 1. A review of current “Policy and Procedures Letters” and “Child Welfare Services Information Bulletins” show that Social Services wrote letters and bulletins regarding policies the Grand Jury identified as lacking.**

Response (Social Services): The Department agrees with this finding.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding.

- 2. In Social Service notebooks, finding procedures for specific topics is cumbersome. Social Services has placed letters and bulletins chronologically in notebooks with section tabs for years 1995-2000 and “Currently under revision” in the back. Each notebook has a key-word index, but Social Services staff indicated that a subject-based policy and procedures manual would be an asset to social workers.**

Response (Social Services): The Department agrees with this finding.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding.

- 3. On November 7, 2000, the Grand Jury asked for copies of the Foster Parent Handbook and Health and Education Passport by December 1, 2000.**
 - a. Social Services furnished a copy of the Foster Parent Handbook developed in Spring 1999, updated for November 29, 2000. Each page has date of revision noted.**
 - b. Social Services furnished a copy of Health & Education Passport notebook with instructions dated November 2, 2000. Social Services reports the notebooks are in use. There is no corroborating evidence to support this.**

Recommendation

The Social Services accept staff recommendation and expand the “Key Word Index” into a user friendly, subject-based policy and procedures manual. (Finding 2)

Response (Social Services): The Department agrees with this recommendation and will have a more user-friendly “Key Word Index” in place by January 1, 2002.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the recommendation and supports the response presented by the Department of Social Services.

Response Required

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

Response Requested

Mendocino County Department of Social Services

“Department of Animal Control,” 1998-99

In response to the 1998-99 Department of Animal Control Final Report, the Board of Supervisors said that a Policy and Procedures manual would be completed. The Animal Control Director responded to a recommendation for amnesty that he would have to refer the matter to the Board of Supervisors. In 1999-2000, the recommendations were still not implemented. The 2000-2001 Grand Jury requested information on both items.

Findings

- 1. The Department of Animal Control has now completed a Policy and Procedure Manual.**
- 2. March 13, 2001, the Board of Supervisors approved a one-month amnesty period for dog owners to license unlicensed dogs. During June 2001 any dog owner could license all animals without fee and upon licensing all previous citations and fines were forgiven.**

Comment

Mandatory dog licensing with required rabies vaccination helps to prevent the spread of rabies among pets and humans. The Grand Jury commends the Animal Control Director for pursuing an amnesty period and hopes that the County publicized the amnesty with information stating why, how, and where to obtain dog licenses.

Response Required

None

“Transient Occupancy Tax,” 1998-99

The Treasurer-Tax Collector stated: “The 1999-2000 Grand Jury Report, as a hold over from the 1998-99 report, recommended that the Board of Supervisors review with the Treasurer the current procedures for identifying facilities required to pay the TOT, for collecting taxes from the identified facilities and for enforcing compliance.

At the time of the issuance of the Grand Jury report the procedures for enforcement of the TOT Ordinance were unwritten procedures which had evolved over time within the office and were primarily handled by one particular staff member at any given time, but were also known by all other members of the office due to cross training procedures in existence within the office.

In compliance with the Grand Jury recommendation the following written procedures were compiled using the many years of experience dealing with TOT collections by staff within the Treasurer-Tax Collectors Office. I am sure that these procedures will change with time and as new sources of advertising the availability of short term rental facilities evolve.” (To the Board of Supervisors for the March 13, 2001 Board Meeting)

Findings

1. **On March 13, 2001, the Board of Supervisors approved the TOT Collection Procedures including “Identifying New TOT Collection Agents” and “Collection of Quarterly TOT.”**

Response (Treasurer/Tax-Collector): I agree with finding 1 of the Grand Jury Report.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding.

2. **The Treasurer-Tax Collector gave no indication where these procedures would be kept.**

Response (Treasurer/Tax-Collector): I agree with finding 2 of the Grand Jury Report.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding.

Recommendation

The Treasurer-Tax Collector put the procedures in a policy and procedure manual.

Response (Treasurer/Tax-Collector): The procedures approved by the Board of Supervisors on March 13, 2001 were placed in an office policy and procedures folder in March of 2001.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this recommendation the response made by the Department.

Response Required

Mendocino County Treasure-Tax Collector
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

“Building and Planning, Industrial and Commercial,” 1997-98

The Response Review implementation spreadsheet in the 1998-99 Final Report stated that the Department of Planning and Building (Planning and Building) would recommend to the Board of Supervisors graduated penalty fees for businesses that fail to get mandated permits. The County currently imposes only the double permit fees provided for in the Uniform Building Code.

Findings

1. **In the 1998-99 Final Report implementation schedule Planning and Building indicated the estimated date of implementation would be July 1999.**

Response (Planning and Building): The Department agrees with this finding.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding.

2. **On June 28, 1999 County Counsel stated that the County could adopt an ordinance with graduated penalty fees up to ten times the ordinary permit fee, as is the case in Sonoma County.**

Response (Planning and Building): The Department agrees with this finding.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding.

3. **Nothing appeared publicly about the issue. The Grand Jury contacted the Director to determine the status of implementation.**

Response (Planning and Building): The Department agrees with this finding.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding.

4. **In a letter dated February 22, 2001, the Department of Planning and Building stated that the Planning and Building “will schedule this issue for discussion and direction by the Board of Supervisors with 90 days.” As of May 23, 2001, (the end of the 90 days) the issue had been scheduled for the June 6, 2001 Board of Supervisors meeting.**

Response (Planning and Building): The Department agrees with this finding with a minor clarification. The item was officially scheduled for, and heard by, the Board of Supervisors on June 12, 2001.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding with the date of correction noted by the Department.

5. **Large businesses consider the current penalties no more than cost of doing business.**

Response (Planning and Building): Without additional information, we can neither agree nor disagree. While the Department previously agreed with this statement the Department no longer sees wholesale avoidance of the permit process. We believe this to be due to changes in the business and permit processing “climate”.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the departmental response. The Board believes the development of the streamlined permitting process has been a contributing factor in positive change towards business perception of a “user friendly” department and process.

Recommendation

The Board of Supervisors and the Department of Building and Planning work together to establish penalty fees that will discourage businesses from doing construction work and conducting business without required permits.

Response (Planning and Building): The Department agrees with the recommendation. To that end the Department and the Board of Supervisors discussed the issue of increased penalty fees for construction without required permits on June 12, 2001. The Board by a vote 3-2 directed Planning and Building Service to prepare and process an ordinance that would increase construction violation fees utilizing a sliding scale as proposed by staff. At this time, we anticipate the Ordinance being scheduled for a Board hearing in September of 2001.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this recommendation and the comments made by the Department.

Response Required

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

Response Requested

Mendocino County Department of Planning and Building

“Westport Water District,” 1999-2000

The 1999-2000 Grand Jury recommended that the District Attorney contact the Fair Political Practices Commission because the Grand Jury found that a Westport Water District Board member had not disclosed all of his interests in real property on his Statement of Economic Interests, Form 700. The District Attorney forwarded the information and received the following information in reply.

The Fair Political Practices Commission contacted the Board member who immediately filed an amended statement.

The County Clerk Recorder imposed the penalty fees required.

“ Grading Ordinance,” 1998-99, 1999-2000

The two previous Grand Juries recommended that the County develop a grading ordinance.

Finding

As of May 2001, a Board of Supervisors appointed committee has convened. No grading ordinance has been developed, although there is much talk about it.

Response (Planning and Building): The Department agrees with this finding. As of this date (August 15, 2001), the Grading Committee has held 11 meetings and several subsections of a draft grading ordinance have been completed. Progress continues to be made by the Committee towards completing a draft grading ordinance which would supplement or replace the current grading regulations (Chapter 70 of the Uniform Building Code).

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the Department of Planning and Building Services response.

Recommendation

The Board of Supervisors develop and pass a grading ordinance

Response (Planning and Building): The Department agrees with the recommendation. To that end the Board of Supervisors has established a Grading Committee to draft grading regulations appropriate for Mendocino County. A draft grading ordinance supported by the Grading Committee and Planning Commission has the greatest likelihood of adoption, and more importantly implementation. The County budget includes funding for preparing, processing and implementing grading regulations.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the Departmental response.

Response Required

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

Title IX at Mendocino-Lake Community College (College)

The 1997-98 Grand Jury found, “In the 26 years since passage of Title IX, College attempts to improve gender equity in athletic programs have been woefully inadequate.” Recommendations were to create athletic programs with gender

equity such as swimming, soccer, and tennis, as well as make a more sincere commitment to gender equity in athletics than the results so far would indicate. The College stated they would continue to try to comply.

Findings

- 1. Title IX (1972 amendment to the Civil Rights Act) and the Commission on Athletics both state that there should be gender equity in athletics.**

Response (Mendocino –Lake Community College Board of Trustees): No response received by deadline.

- 2. Assembly Bill 2675 requires each California community college district to implement parity by the year 2000.**

Response (Mendocino –Lake Community College Board of Trustees): No response received by deadline.

- 3. For the 2000-01 academic year, the College reported there were 32 female athletes and 122 male athletes. Only 21% of athletes were female.**

Response (Mendocino –Lake Community College Board of Trustees): No response received by deadline.

- 4. “Anticipated Future Progress, 2001-2005,” subsection of an April 4, 2001 memo to the College Vice-President for Instruction from the Dean of Instruction outlines a list of objectives with a large caveat. If the objectives are implemented, the female percentage would increase to 31-35% by 2002-2003.**

Response (Mendocino –Lake Community College Board of Trustees): No response received by deadline.

Recommendation

The Mendocino-Lake Community College Board of Trustees direct the Administration to follow the law and implement programs to ensure gender equity.

Response (Mendocino –Lake Community College Board of Trustees): No response received by deadline.

Response Required

Mendocino-Lake Community College Board of Trustees