
August 12, 2020

Anne N. Granlund, Foreperson
Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury
P.O. Box 431
Martinez, CA 94553-0091
ctadmin@contracosta.courts.ca.gov

Re: **Responses to Report No. 2004, entitled "Police Department Staffing"**

Foreperson Granlund:

Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 933.05, this letter responds to Contra Costa County Grand Jury Report No. 2004, "Police Department Staffing." This response was reviewed and authorized by the City Council at the August 11, 2020 City Council Meeting.

GRAND JURY FINDINGS

Finding #1: "Low officer staffing ratios and/or unfilled positions present challenges in maintaining police services."

Response: The City agrees with this finding.

Finding #2: "Low officer staffing ratios and/or unfilled officer positions have resulted in reducing or eliminating staffing of traffic units, school resource officers, community outreach, or other police services."

Response: The City of Oakley disagrees with this finding as it relates to the City of Oakley.

Finding #3: "Due to low officer staffing ratios and/or unfilled officer positions, officers are often required to put in mandatory overtime to cover critical services."

Response: The City of Oakley agrees with this finding.

Finding #4: “Mandatory overtime can lead to officer stress, which creates retention challenges.”

Response: The City of Oakley agrees with this finding.

Finding #5: “Low officer staffing ratios and/or unfilled officer positions may contribute to increased average response times for Priority 1 (emergency) calls.”

Response: The City of Oakley agrees with this finding.

Finding #6: “Recruiting officers is challenging due to fewer applicants who meet the required hiring standards and complete the rigorous testing process.”

Response: The City of Oakley agrees with this finding.

Finding #7: “Negative perceptions of policing and the availability of less dangerous job opportunities contribute to fewer applicants for law enforcement positions.”

Response: The City of Oakley agrees with this finding.

Finding #8: “Each Contra Costa police agency (except those that contract with the Sheriff’s Office) conducts its own recruiting program to attract potential applicants.”

Response: The City of Oakley agrees with this finding.

Finding #9: “The process of hiring and training new officers takes an extensive amount of time and resources to complete.”

Response: The City of Oakley agrees with this finding.

Finding #10: “Each Contra Costa police agency (except those that contract with the Sheriff’s Office) manages its own screening process for police officer positions, resulting in a replication of efforts across the County.”

Response: The City of Oakley agrees with this finding; however, we are not specifically aware of how each agency manages the process.

Finding #12: “Recruits and young officers have different expectations than in the past regarding work/life balance.”

Response: The City of Oakley neither agrees or disagrees with this finding due to its potential over-generalization.

Finding #13: “Recruits and young officers' expectations about work/life balance contribute to the challenges of officer recruiting and retention.”

Response: The City of Oakley agrees with this finding.

Finding No. 14: “Wellness and Employee Assistance Programs offered by Contra Costa police agencies aid retention of police officers.”

Response: The City of Oakley agrees with this finding.

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #2: “The City/Town Councils of Antioch, Brentwood, Clayton, Concord, El Cerrito, Hercules, Martinez, Moraga, Oakley, Pinole, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Richmond, San Pablo, San Ramon, and Walnut Creek should consider identifying funds to study the cost/benefit of a countywide screening process for police officer positions, to avoid replication of these steps while allowing each city police department to select and evaluate candidates, by June 30, 2021.”

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented.

Each community within the County is unique and, while some sub-regional effort might be possible and effective, a County-wide approach is not likely to meet the needs and expectations of each law enforcement agency.

Recommendation #3: “The Sheriff, and the City/Town Councils of Antioch, Brentwood, Clayton, Concord, Danville, El Cerrito, Hercules, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Oakley, Orinda, Pinole, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Richmond, San Pablo, San Ramon, and Walnut Creek should consider directing their police departments to apply annually, or when offered in 2021, to the Department of Justice COPS Hiring Program, which provides funding for hiring additional officers, by June 30, 2021.”

Response: The recommendation will be implemented by the City of Oakley.

Oakley has applied for COPS grants in the past and intends to apply in the future. With that said, we have been told that a focus on grant awards has been to high-crime areas and Oakley is not in that category.

Recommendation #4: “The City/Town Councils of Antioch, Brentwood, Clayton, Concord, Danville, El Cerrito, Hercules, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Oakley, Orinda, Pinole, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Richmond, San Pablo, San Ramon, and Walnut Creek should consider identifying funds to increase the number of authorized sworn officers to fill understaffed units, such as traffic patrol and school resource officers, by June 30, 2021.”

Response: The recommendation has and will be implemented. As a growth community, every year the City of Oakley reviews the opportunity of other funding opportunities to increase the number of sworn officers.

Recommendation No. 5: “The City/Town Councils of Antioch, Brentwood, Clayton, Concord, Danville, El Cerrito, Hercules, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Oakley, Orinda, Pinole, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Richmond, San Pablo, San Ramon, and Walnut Creek should consider identifying funds that would permit their police departments to over-hire officer positions as a strategy for keeping departments fully staffed, by June 30, 2021.

Response: The recommendation will be implemented in the near term. Oakley has a smaller department, but we know of some upcoming retirements and are evaluating now the opportunity to “over-hire” in anticipation of those vacancies.

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury’s recent Report No. 2004. If you have any questions or need any assistance, please contact me directly at (925) 625-7025 or at montgomery@ci.oakley.ca.us.

Sincerely,



Bryan H. Montgomery
City Manager