



City Council

Mike Anderson, Mayor
Susan Candell, Vice Mayor
Steven Bliss, Council Member
Cameron Burks, Council Member
Teresa Gerringer, Council Member

September 14, 2020

Honorable Anita Santos
Judge of the Superior Court
Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury
725 Court Street
P.O. Box 431
Martinez, CA 94553-0091

Re: Contra Costa County Grand Jury Report No. 2004, "Police Department Staffing"

Dear Judge Santos:

Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 933.05, this letter responds to Contra Costa County Grand Jury Report No. 2204, "Police Department Staffing." This response was reviewed and authorized by the Lafayette City Council at a duly noticed City Council meeting on September 14, 2020.

Grand Jury Findings

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

Response: Lafayette agrees with Finding #1.

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: Lafayette agrees with Finding #2.

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: Lafayette agrees with Finding #3.

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

Response: Lafayette agrees with Finding #4.

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

Response: Lafayette agrees with Finding #5.

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

Response: Lafayette agrees with Finding #6.

Finding #7: Negative perceptions of policing and the availability of less dangerous job opportunities contribute to fewer applicants.

Response: Lafayette agrees with Finding #7.

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

Response: Lafayette agrees with Finding #9.

Finding #11: Contra Costa cities that contract with the Sheriff for police services are generally able to fill vacancies faster than non-contract cities.

Response: Lafayette agrees with Finding #11.

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

Response: Lafayette agrees with Finding #12.

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

Response: Lafayette agrees with Finding #13.

Finding #14: Wellness and Employee Assistance Programs offered by Contra Costa police agencies aid retention of police officers.

Response: Lafayette agrees with Finding #14

Grand Jury Recommendations

Recommendation #3: The City/Town Councils of Antioch, Brentwood, Clayton, Concord, 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 not be implemented because it is not warranted. The City of Lafayette contracts police services with Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department and therefore does not directly hire. The City is provided sworn personnel as requested, without delay. In addition, this relationship precludes the City from applying for Department of Justice COPS Hiring Program funding as the City cannot apply on behalf of the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department.

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 the understaffed units, such as traffic patrol.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The City of Lafayette contracts police services with Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department and therefore does not directly hire. The City is provided sworn personnel as requested, without delay.

Recommendation #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 the department fully staffed, by June 30, 2021.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The City of Lafayette contracts police services with Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department and therefore does not directly hire. The City is provided sworn personnel as requested, without delay.

The City appreciates the time and effort spent by Her Honor and the Grand Jury in consideration of these matters.

Sincerely,

Mayor Mike Anderson