



August 4, 2020

Anne N. Granlund, Foreperson
2019-2020 Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury
725 Court Street, PO BOX 431
Martinez, CA 94553-0091

Dear Ms. Granlund,

RE: Response to Contra Costa County Grand Jury Report No. 2004

The City of Orinda appreciates the Grand Jury's inquiry as detailed in "Report No. 2004." Please refer to the responses below as they pertain to subsequent findings and recommendations the Grand Jury has made in the report.

As for the findings:

F1: Low officer staffing ratios and/or unfilled officer positions present challenges in maintaining police services.

The City of Orinda agrees with the finding.

F2: 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.

The City of Orinda agrees with the finding.

F3: Due to low officer staffing ratios and/or unfilled officer positions, officers are often required to put in mandatory overtime to cover critical services.

The City of Orinda agrees with the finding.

F4: Mandatory overtime can lead to officer stress, which creates retention challenges.

The City of Orinda agrees with the finding.

F5: Low officer staffing ratios and/or unfilled officer positions may contribute to increased average response times for Priority 1 (emergency) calls.

The City of Orinda agrees with the finding.

F6: Recruiting officers is challenging due to fewer applicants who meet the required hiring standards and complete the rigorous testing process.

The City of Orinda agrees with the finding.

F7: Negative perceptions of policing and the availability of less dangerous job

opportunities contribute to fewer applicants for law enforcement positions.

The City of Orinda agrees with the finding.

- F8: Each Contra Costa police agency (except those that contract with the Sheriff's Office) conducts its own recruiting program to attract potential applicants.

The City of Orinda agrees with the finding.

- F9: The process of hiring and training new officers takes an extensive amount of time and resources to complete.

The City of Orinda agrees with the finding.

- F10: 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.

The City of Orinda agrees with the finding.

- F11: Contra Costa cities that contract with the Sheriff for police services are generally able to fill vacancies faster than non-contract cities.

The City of Orinda agrees with the finding.

- F12: Recruits and young officers have different expectations than in the past regarding work/life balance.

The City of Orinda agrees with the finding.

- F13: Recruits and young officers' expectations about work/life balance contribute to the challenges of officer recruiting and retention.

The City of Orinda agrees with the finding.

- F14: Wellness and Employee Assistance Programs offered by Contra Costa police agencies aid retention of police officers.

The City of Orinda agrees with the finding.

As for the recommendations:

- R3: 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.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.

The City of Orinda could request the Sheriff's Office to apply for COPs funds on its behalf. However, that would require over \$100,000 in match from the City and a commitment to retain the position. The City of Orinda does not have the resources to do so.

Orinda has extremely limited resources and has operated very conservatively since its incorporation in 1985. The City's share of the property tax dollar is 7 cents, one of the lowest in the County. Its sales tax revenues are also one of the lowest on a per capita basis. As a result, the City has operated without a defined benefit retirement plan unlike most cities in the County. The City has no significant unfunded long term retirement obligations. In the Police Department, the City has maintained minimum staffing levels. It does not have a school resource officer or a dedicated traffic officer. The City cannot afford to apply for grants for which it does not have the matching funds.

- R4: 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.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.

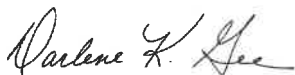
Because of its contract with the Sheriff's Office, the City is able to maintain a constant level of staffing. There is no need to identify additional funds.

- R5: 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.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.

Because of its contract with the Sheriff's Office, the City is able to maintain a constant level of staffing. There is no need to permit over-hiring.

Sincerely,



Darlene K. Gee, Mayor
City of Orinda