

July 21, 2022

Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury
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Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury:

Please find below the City of Arcata requested response to the Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury's report CUSTODY, CORRECTIONS and OTHER COUNTY FACILITIES. The requested responses from the Arcata Police Chief are below.

FINDINGS

F3. There are four independent Dispatch Centers serving Humboldt County, located in Arcata, Eureka, Fortuna and at the Sheriff's Office. (R3)

Police Chief Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors take the lead to prepare a plan that combines the four Dispatch Centers into one Centralized Dispatch Center by March 31, 2023, and prepare a request for proposals for the construction of a new Dispatch Center by June 30, 2023. (F3)

Police Chief Response: The recommendation requires further analysis using Sheriff Honsal's 2019 study of the feasibility of a Consolidated Dispatch Center prepared by Mission Critical Partners as a potential starting point. Consolidated Dispatch has been talked about for decades in this region. No one denies the theory behind the concept. However, the practical application of such a system has many challenges. Humboldt County is a rural area whose topography is challenging for one centralized system to provide clear radio reception throughout the entire County. In addition, having four separate systems provides critical redundancy in times of system failure that one system would not provide.

The construction and start-up costs of a consolidated system are prohibitive especially when you consider that the four systems currently in use are already built and functional. Each jurisdiction would receive zero return on their investment of their current system

and would be responsible for identifying new funding streams to support the construction of a single system which in the 2019 study was projected to be between \$15,000,000.00 and \$23,000,000.00. Identifying user agency and system use priorities requires significant planning. For example, would Fortuna Fire, currently dispatched by Fortuna PD, join the consolidated group? Also, in cases of staffing shortages or critical incidents/urgent radio traffic, which agencies would have priority over the others? On that note, levels of customer service vary by community as does the “localized” knowledge Dispatchers have of their own communities that enhances Officer/Deputy Safety by knowing problem people/locations and hidden hazards. All of that would be lost with generalized Dispatchers assigned to areas they have no knowledge of with perhaps a level of customer service delivery that does not match the community they are assigned to.

For these reasons consolidating four separate Dispatch Centers into one Centralized Dispatch Center requires significant contributions of personnel and money on the part of all impacted agencies to coordinate a systematic plan to study and construct a Centralized Dispatch System. As such, the timelines for planning and RFP as identified in the report are not practical.

(a) For purposes of [subdivision \(b\) of Section 933](#), as to each grand jury finding, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:

(1) The respondent agrees with the finding.

(2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefor.

(b) For purposes of [subdivision \(b\) of Section 933](#), as to each grand jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:

(1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.

(2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.

(3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.

(4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.

(c) However, if a finding or recommendation of the grand jury addresses budgetary or personnel matters of a county agency or department headed by an elected officer, both the agency or department head and the board of supervisors shall respond if requested by the grand jury, but the response of the board of supervisors shall address only those budgetary or personnel matters over which it has some decisionmaking authority. The response of the elected agency or department head shall address all aspects of the findings or recommendations affecting his or her agency or department.