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August 17, 2016

Michael Simmons, Foreperson
Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury
725 Court Street
P.O. Box 431
Martinez, CA 94553-0091
Email: epant@contracosta.courts.ca.gov
Via U.S. Mail and Email

RE: Grand Jury Report No. 1605, "Caring for the Victims"

Dear Mr. Simmons:

On behalf of the City of El Cerrito, this letter serves as a response to Grand Jury Report No. 1605, "Caring for the Victims," by the Contra Costa Grand Jury.

In accordance with your request and Section 933.05 of the California Government Code, the City is responding as required to Findings F6, F7, F9, F11, F12, F13, and F14 and Recommendations R2, R9, and R11 as outlined in the Grand Jury Report.

FINDINGS

F6: "Many social workers in CFS, law enforcement, officers in Juvenile Hall and victim advocates in the DA's Office are not implementing the CSEC Protocol because they have not yet seen it."

Response: The City of El Cerrito partially disagrees with Finding #6. The City cannot address the practices of other entities, including whether or not other parties "are not implementing the CSEC Protocol because they have not yet seen it." Specifically, the City of El Cerrito Police Department is aware of the CSEC Protocol document.

F7: "CFS, the leader of the Oversight Committee, has not followed up with its interagency partners that have signed off on the Protocol, but have not submitted their own CSEC department plan/protocols to the Oversight Committee."

Response: The City of El Cerrito partially disagrees with Finding #7. The City cannot address the practices of other entities, including the Contra Costa County Division of Children and Family Services (CFS). The City of El Cerrito is not a signatory on a CSEC Protocol.

F9: "Suspected CSEC victims are being arrested and booked into Juvenile Hall for their own safety pursuant to various statutes under the Welfare & Institutions Code, relating to infractions and crimes committed by youth, while the County assesses the appropriate health and social services to provide."



Response: The City of El Cerrito partially disagrees with Finding #9. The City cannot address the practices of other entities, including whether all suspected CSEC victims are being arrested and booked into Juvenile Hall for their own safety. In El Cerrito, suspected CSEC victims are not automatically arrested and booked into Juvenile Hall. The El Cerrito Police Department takes an approach to CSEC that is victim-centered and trauma-informed.

F11: "No single database covering all CSEC-related arrests, referrals and pending cases exist in the County."

Response: The City of El Cerrito agrees with Finding #11. The City is not aware of the existence of a single database.

F12: "Due to the lack of a single database in the County covering all CSEC-related arrests, referrals and pending cases, the County does not know the number of victims of CSEC and where they are located."

Response: The City of El Cerrito partially disagrees with Finding #12. While the City acknowledges that it is unaware of the existence of a single database in the County that covers all CSEC-related arrests, referrals and pending cases, the City cannot address whether or not the County knows the number of victims of CSEC or where they are located.

F13: "County personnel and law enforcement dealing with victims of CSEC are well-meaning, compassionate and dedicated people trying to make the best of a very difficult situation."

Response: The City of El Cerrito partially disagrees with Finding #13. The City cannot address the practices of other entities, but does tend to agree that County personnel and law enforcement dealing with victims of CSEC are well-meaning, compassionate and dedicated people trying to make the very best of a very difficult situation.

F14: "Most County personnel and law enforcement dealing with victims of CSEC lack in-depth CSEC training, necessary facilities for temporarily accommodating the victims and a clear-cut plan of action, which lays out how to rescue, protect and serve the victims of CSEC in a manner that is caring and trauma-informed."

Response: The City of El Cerrito partially disagrees with Finding #14. The City cannot address the practices of other entities, including how other agencies deal with victims of CSEC. The El Cerrito Police Department does work toward protecting and serving the victims of CSEC in a manner that is caring and trauma-informed. Additional in-depth training, facilities for temporary accommodations and a clear-cut plan of action at a countywide level could help improve conditions for the victims of CSEC.



RECOMMENDATIONS

R2: "The Board of Supervisors, City Councils and Sheriff's Department should consider recommending that all CSEC interagency partners, as listed in the CSEC Protocol, in Contra Costa County adopt their own CSEC protocols and submit them to CFS for approval."

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The City of El Cerrito believes that public safety agencies should not adopt their own CSEC protocols and submit them to the Contra Costa County Division of Children and Family Services (CFS) for approval. Rather, CFS should work with all countywide public safety agencies to adopt a uniform CSEC protocol that would be consistent across the county. In addition, El Cerrito is not listed as an interagency partner.

R9: "The Board of Supervisors, City Councils, and Sheriff's Department should consider recommending that all first responders (usually law enforcement) refer suspected victims of CSEC to specialized and dedicated CSEC personnel, to be established within CFS."

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. While the recommendation may be an appropriate solution, the CSEC protocol should be determined at the county, not city, level. Once a process has been identified, either within or outside of the CSEC protocol, the City of El Cerrito will follow appropriate protocols for referring suspected victims of CSEC to other personnel.

R11: "City Councils and Sheriff's Department should direct law enforcement to avail themselves of CSEC training programs formulated by CFS."

Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. The El Cerrito Police Department will avail themselves of training when they become aware of training opportunities formulated by CFS that meet agency needs. The El Cerrito Police Department currently attends CSEC training programs formulated by other organizations.

Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions or require additional information concerning the above responses. You can reach me directly at (510) 215-4302 or by email at kpinkos@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Karen E. Pinkos".

Karen E. Pinkos
Assistant City Manager
City of El Cerrito

cc: El Cerrito City Council
Scott Hanin, City Manager