



August 11, 2020

The Honorable Barry Baskin
Presiding Judge of the Contra Costa Superior Court
Wakefield-Taylor Court Building, Department 1
725 Court Street
Martinez, CA 94553

Re: **Contra Costa County Grand Jury Report: "Police Department Staffing"
(Report 2004)**

Dear Judge Baskin:

On behalf of the Antioch City Council, this letter responds to Contra Costa County Grand Jury Report: "Police Department Staffing." The City Council authorized this response at its meeting on August 11, 2020. Pursuant to California Penal Code § 933.05, the City will respond to the applicable findings and recommendations.

Findings

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

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."

The City agrees with this finding.

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."

The City agrees with this finding.

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

The City 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."

The City 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."

The City 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."

The City 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."

The City agrees with this finding.

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

The City 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."

The City agrees with this finding.

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

The City agrees with this finding.

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

The City agrees with this finding.

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

The City agrees with this finding.

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.”

The recommendation will not be implemented:

Each law enforcement agency has unique selection criteria and community expectations. A standardized approach to applicant screening would marginalize the individual needs of communities within our diverse county. The City of Antioch cannot speak to the needs of other agencies.

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.”

This recommendation has already been implemented:

The Antioch Police Department applied for and was awarded the Department of Justice 2020 COPS Hiring Program (CHP) Grant on June 25, 2020. This was a matching funds grant for (6) six additional sworn positions to be utilized as School Resource Officers. At the July 28, 2020 City Council Meeting, the Antioch City Council accepted this grant contingent upon entering into a cost sharing agreement with the Antioch Unified School District (AUSD). At the time of this response, an agreement has not yet been reached with AUSD.

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.”

This recommendation has already been implemented:

Two (2) recent sales tax measures, intended to support increased Police Department staffing, have been brought before the voters of the City of Antioch (Measure C in 2013 and Measure W in 2018). Both sales tax measures passed, and the Antioch Police Department reached full staffing for sworn officers on May 18, 2020.

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 departments fully staffed, by June 30, 2021."

This recommendation has already been implemented.

The City of Antioch currently allows for the over-hiring of (6) six officer positions above authorized staffing levels. The City of Antioch cannot speak to the needs of other agencies.

We trust the Grand Jury will find these responses helpful to its endeavor.

Sincerely yours,



Sean Wright
Mayor, City of Antioch

Anne N. Granlund, Contra Costa County Grand Jury Foreperson, 725 Court Street, Martinez, CA 94553
Ron Bernal, City Manager
Thomas Lloyd Smith, City Attorney

