



July 20, 2020

Contra Costa County Grand Jury Report No. 2004  
Attn: Anne N. Granlund, Foreperson  
725 Court Street  
PO Box 431  
Martinez, CA 94553-0091

**RE: Grand Jury Report No. 2004, "Police Department Staffing"**

Dear Ms. Granlund:

On behalf of the Martinez City Council, this letter responds to Contra Costa County Grand Jury Report: "Police Department Staffing" (Report 2004). The City Council authorized this response at its meeting on July 29, 2020.

According to page 12 of the report, the City of Martinez is required to respond to Findings F1 to F14 as well as to Recommendations R2 to R5. Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 933.05, the City will respond to each finding and to each recommendation individually.

**CITY'S RESPONSES TO GRAND JURY FINDINGS 1-11 and 14**

**GRAND JURY FINDING #1**

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

*City Response:*

The City of Martinez agrees with this finding. Without adequate staffing the City of Martinez has difficulties in maintaining public safety services.

**GRAND JURY 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."

*City Response:*

The city of Martinez agrees with this finding based on our experience with staffing and unfilled positions. Based on vacancies in our police department we focus on the core function of providing a patrol response and have had difficulty in staffing additional



services such as traffic units, school resource officer, community outreach and other public services.

### **GRAND JURY 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."

#### *City Response:*

The City agrees with this finding. In order to have officers available to respond to calls as well as provide patrols in the City, adequate staffing is necessary. If staffing is low, existing positions are backfilled with officers working overtime to ensure that services to the community are maintained.

### **GRAND JURY FINDING #4**

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

#### *City Response:*

The City of Martinez agrees with this finding. Mandatory overtime involves forcing employees to work additional hours which can lead to officer stress and create retention challenges.

### **GRAND JURY FINDING #5**

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

#### *City Response:*

The City of Martinez agrees with this finding. Low staffing ratios and unfilled positions create a dynamic in which Priority 1 calls may take longer to address.

### **GRAND JURY FINDING #6**

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

#### *City Response:*

The City of Martinez agrees with this finding. The standards established by the Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) correctly require applicants to meet rigorous guidelines. However, even for those that meet the POST standards, many are not the right fit for public service if they lack empathy, cannot effectively communicate or effectively problem solve.



**GRAND JURY FINDING #7**

"Negative perceptions of policing and the availability of less dangerous job opportunities contribute to fewer applicants for law enforcement positions."

*City Response:*

The City of Martinez agrees with this finding. In the last few years, there has been a substantial decrease in the number of applications for police officer positions. Based on feedback, the decrease appears to be based in part to the negative perception of policing and less dangerous job opportunities that are available.

**GRAND JURY 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."

*City Response:*

The City of Martinez agrees with this finding. Each city is responsible for recruiting, testing, hiring, and evaluating their own applicants. This is due to the importance of organizational and community fit the City places on the hiring of a Police Officer.

**GRAND JURY FINDING #9**

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

*City Response:*

The City agrees with this finding. Given the complexity and responsibility of serving as a police officer, the process for hiring and training new officers requires a substantial amount of time and resources to complete.

**GRAND JURY FINDING #10**

"Each Contra Costa police agency (except for 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."

*City Response:*



The City disagrees with this finding. Although each City in California must abide by POST hiring standards, each jurisdiction is looking for slightly different skill sets based on the unique needs of their community.

**GRAND JURY FINDING #11**

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

*City Response:*

The City of Martinez agrees with this finding. The Sheriff's Office is able maneuver personnel from their larger operation or utilize a larger pool of officers to work to fill vacancies.

**GRAND JURY FINDING #12**

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

*City Response:*

The City of Martinez partially disagrees with this finding. The organization as a whole has placed a priority on work/life balance and it is not something unique to the recruits and young officers.

**GRAND JURY FINDING #13**

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

*City Response:*

The City of Martinez agrees with this finding. A Police Department is a 24/7 operation and employment as a police officer requires an individual to commit to working on weekends, holidays, and on days that may be important to them such as family birthdays or special events. These work demands do not exist to the same degree in many other professions. Police officers must also attend court hearings on their days off and are subject to being called in for emergencies with little advanced notices. These factors do impact the ability to recruit and retain officers.

**GRAND JURY FINDING #14**

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

*City Response:*



The City of Martinez agrees with this finding. In recent years, employee wellness has become important to ensure that officers have the long-term capacity and mindset to serve the community. Ensuring that officers have a positive attitude, good mental health, in light of many negative aspects of the profession (crime scenes and negative contacts), and the ability to maintain a positive approach to public service, employee assistance and wellness mechanisms are important for long term retention.

## **CITY'S RESPONSES TO GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS R2-R5**

### **GRAND JURY 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."

#### *City Response:*

This recommendation will not be implemented. The local police academy hosted by the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office provides the ability to train potential candidates, who receive a baseline of training, but local agencies must hire and train personnel that are the right fit for their communities.

### **GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATION #3**

"The Sheriff, and 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 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."

#### *City Response:*

This recommendation will not be implemented. COPS grants allow an agency to hire beyond their authorized strength, but once the grant expires, the agency must take on paying the salary and benefits of the additional personnel; unless the agency is able to increase the budget for this additional staffing, the personnel hired under the grant would have to be laid off.

### **GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATION #4**

"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 increase the number of



authorized sworn officers to fill understaffed units, such as traffic patrol and school resource officers, by June 30, 2021."

*City Response:*

This recommendation has been implemented. The City of Martinez crafted a sales tax measure, Measure X, in 2018 to support maintaining essential services particularly to provide understaffed units such as traffic patrol and other community resources. This Measure passed successfully and has been instrumental in our ability to hire additional personnel

**GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATION #5**

"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 that would permit their police departments to over-hire officer positions as a strategy for keeping departments fully staffed, by June 30, 2021."

*City Response:*

This recommendation will not be implemented. The City is not authorized to over-hire officer positions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert Schroder".

Robert Schroder  
Mayor, City of Martinez

cc: City Council  
Eric Figueroa, City Manager  
Jeffrey Walter, City Attorney