



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF  
DAVID O. LIVINGSTON  
SHERIFF - CORONER

May 27, 2020

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

VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Dear Ms. Granlund:

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

The Office of the Sheriff 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. Hopefully you have come to appreciate the high level of commitment and overall efficiency and quality of services provided by the Office of the Sheriff.

As for the findings:

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

**The Office of the Sheriff 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 Office of the Sheriff 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 Office of the Sheriff agrees with the finding.**

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

**The Office of the Sheriff 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 Office of the Sheriff 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 Office of the Sheriff 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 Office of the Sheriff 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 Office of the Sheriff agrees with the finding.**

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

**The Office of the Sheriff 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 Office of the Sheriff 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 Office of the Sheriff agrees with the finding.**

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

**The Office of the Sheriff agrees with the finding.**

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

**The Office of the Sheriff agrees with the finding.**

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

**The Office of the Sheriff 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 Office of the Sheriff has applied for COPS funding multiple times and has not received funding. The following are the dates of application:**

**March 9, 2020**  
**June 21, 2017**  
**June 22, 2016**  
**May 28, 2015**  
**June 23, 2014**

**Note that COPS funds \$125,000 per officer position (which is only half of a Deputy Sheriff's total compensated salary of approximately \$250,000 *per year*). The position must be filled for a period of no less than 48 months, which means the County would be required to match a remaining \$875,000 per position over the course of the four-year requirement.**

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 municipalities of Danville, Lafayette, and Orinda contract with the Office of the Sheriff for policing services. Specialized units such as traffic enforcement and school resource officer positions are generally staffed as necessitated by the needs of the city. Should a city identify relative funding sources and desire to increase positions, this ultimately would be a negotiated part of amending the contract between the respective city and the Office of the Sheriff.**

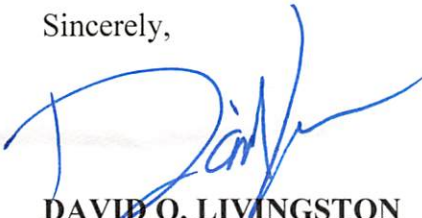
R5: The City/Town Councils of Antioch, Brentwood, Clayton, Concord, Danville, El Cerrito, Hercules, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Oakley, Orinda, Pinole, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Richmond, San Pablo, San Ramon, and Walnut Creek should consider identifying funds that would permit their police departments to over-hire officer positions as a strategy for keeping departments fully staffed, by June 30, 2021.

**The municipalities of Danville, Lafayette, and Orinda contract with the Office of the Sheriff for policing services. As mentioned in "R4," staffing is necessitated by the**

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**needs of the city. Should a city identify and acquire relative funding sources and desire to increase positions, this ultimately would be a negotiated part of amending the contract between the respective city and the Office of the Sheriff. Under current county regulations, the Office of the Sheriff is only permitted to staff actual budgeted position vacancies and cannot “over-hire” outside of approved staffing levels.**

Sincerely,



**DAVID O. LIVINGSTON**  
Sheriff-Coroner

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cc: Mr. David Twa, Contra Costa County Administrator