



Grand Jury Response from City of Watsonville

3 messages

Beatriz Flores <beatriz.flores@cityofwatsonville.org>

Fri, Aug 28, 2020 at 1:56 PM

To: grandjury@scgrandjury.org

Cc: Matt Huffaker <matt.huffaker@cityofwatsonville.org>, Tamara Vides <tamara.vides@cityofwatsonville.org>, Suzi Merriam <suzi.merriam@cityofwatsonville.org>, Rudy Lopez Sr <rudy.lopez.sr@cityofwatsonville.org>

Dear Mr. Gritton:

The Council of the City of Watsonville at its August 25, 2020, accepted and directed City staff to submit the responses to the following Grand Jury reports:

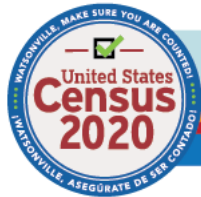
- 1) Risk Management
- 2) Homelessness
- 3) Fire & Safety Inspections
- 4) Tangled Website

Also included is the Staff Reports.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

bc: Council

Sincerely,



Beatriz Vázquez Flores, MMC

City Clerk - (831)768-3040 or (831)768-3042

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Business Hours: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday - Friday.

5 attachments



7.D. 2020 Grand Jury Tangled Web.pdf
504K



7.D. 2020 Grand Jury Fire Inspections.pdf
496K



7.D. 2020 Grand Jury Risk.pdf
560K



7.D. 2020 Grand Jury Homelessness.pdf
763K



Item 7.D. 2020 Grand Jury Staff Report.pdf
1262K

City of Watsonville
City Manager's Office

MEMORANDUM



DATE: August 21, 2020

TO: Matthew D. Huffaker, City Manager

FROM: Tamara Vides, Deputy City Manager
Raunel Zavala, Administrative Analyst

SUBJECT: Response Packet to the Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury's Investigation of Assessing Risk Management, Homelessness, Fire and Safety and the City's Website

AGENDA ITEM: August 25, 2020 City Council

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council by Motion, approve the response packets prepared for the 2019-2020 Santa Cruz County Grand Jury's Investigation on four specific topics: 1) **Managers of Risk or Victims of Risk - Rocked by the Shocks** 2) **Homelessness: Big Problem, Little Progress – It's Time to Think Outside the Box** 3) **Fire and Safety Inspections in Santa Cruz County, and** 4) **The Tangled Web - Oh, What a Mangled Web We Weave...**

DISCUSSION:

The Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury prepared four reports addressing issues in the Watsonville community and requested that the Council prepare responses to several findings and recommendations made in each of the reports. The County and all four cities within the County received these reports and were compelled to respond.

The Grand Jury looks for contact information, budget data, policies and procedures, etc. to conduct their investigation. They aim to capture the experience a member of the public would have when trying to access information, assess impact and value of city services and review transactions of the public entity. The reports contain findings by the 2019-2020 Grand Jury and offer recommendations for consideration and ongoing improvement of operations.

All four Grand Jury reports are attached; below is a summary of the areas of interest for each issue reviewed and some highlights of the recommendations made by the Grand Jury:

Managers of Risk or Victims of Risk - Rocked by the Shocks:

This report examines the current level of financial risk for Santa Cruz County (SCC) cities, the causes and likely impacts of that risk, and the risk management practices of our cities. The Grand Jury found that the cities of SCC do not practice formal, integrated risk management for the range of risks and impacts they regularly confront. They recommend the cities study ways

to implement more comprehensive practices with regard to risk identification, evaluation, mitigation, and communication.

Homelessness: Big Problem, Little Progress – *It's Time to Think Outside the Box:*

The Grand Jury prepared a report on homelessness in Santa Cruz County. The Grand Jury identified five main reasons the homeless problem persists. First, the community views homelessness as a problem that should be addressed by elected officials; second, the County lacks an effective governance structure with the authority to manage the complexity and size of the homeless problem; third, there are insufficient resources to support those affected by homelessness; fourth, there is an underutilization of existing resources in the County; and fifth, the County lacks comprehensive and effective data collection and analysis systems.

Solutions to these problems are complex. However, steps can be taken to enable Santa Cruz County to more effectively manage the homeless crisis, which has become even more of a challenge due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Grand Jury report illuminated local barriers to homelessness relief, and proposed solutions. They found that ending homelessness will provide significant benefits to the entire community far beyond the relief to the individuals receiving services.

Fire and Safety Inspections in Santa Cruz County:

The Grand Jury found that fire agencies in Santa Cruz County, are responsible for not only responding to emergencies but assisting in prevention. One aspect of prevention is ensuring compliance with fire and safety codes, especially in facilities housing the most vulnerable. Now with fire danger and respiratory illness at all-time highs, this responsibility is as important as it has ever been.

The Grand Jury found that California health and safety codes require fire and safety inspections be performed annually for schools and multifamily residences. Annual reports to the governing body are required. The Grand Jury found that many of the County's fire agencies do not fully comply with mandated inspection and reporting, and recommends that the status of these inspections, especially those involving public facilities, be communicated to the public and that gaps in compliance or the ability to inspect be addressed in the 2021 budgeting cycle.

The Tangled Web - Oh, What a Mangled Web We Weave...:

The Grand Jury found that website information is sometimes missing, out-of-date, and inaccurate; links may be broken. They found website content providers do not explain content. They concluded that the City lacks a process to review content accuracy and currency to assure timely correction and revision of content. The Grand Jury also noted that the City's goals for website redesign or quality improvement are not sufficiently "SMART" (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time Bound).

All Grand Jury findings and recommendations have been reviewed and answered by staff. It is recommended that the Council review and approve by motion the responses to these reports and file the City of Watsonville responses with the Grand Jury by each of their due dates.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact associated with filing responses to the Grand Jury report.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Council may choose not to approve the Response Packet, or to modify the responses.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) SC Grand Jury Reports and City Responses – Risk Management
- 2) SC Grand Jury Reports and City Responses – Homelessness
- 3) SC Grand Jury Reports and City Responses – Fire & Safety Inspections
- 4) SC Grand Jury Reports and City Responses – Website

cc: City Attorney



**The 2019–2020 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury
Requests that the
City Manager of Watsonville
Respond to the Findings and Recommendations
Specified in the Report Titled
The Tangled Web
Oh, What a Mangled Web We Weave...
by September 14, 2020**

When the response is complete, please

1. Email the completed Response Packet as a file attachment to grandjury@scgrandjury.org, and
2. Print and send a hard copy of the completed Response Packet to

The Honorable Judge John Gallagher
Santa Cruz Courthouse
701 Ocean St.
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Instructions for Respondents

California law PC §933.05 (included [below](#)) requires the respondent to a Grand Jury report to comment on each finding and recommendation within a report. Explanations for disagreements and timeframes for further implementation or analysis must be provided. Please follow the format below when preparing the responses.

Response Format

1. For the Findings included in this Response Packet, select one of the following responses and provide the required additional information:
 - a. **AGREE** with the Finding, or
 - b. **PARTIALLY DISAGREE** with the Finding and specify the portion of the Finding that is disputed and include an explanation of the reasons therefor, or
 - c. **DISAGREE** with the Finding and provide an explanation of the reasons therefor.
2. For the Recommendations included in this Response Packet, select one of the following actions and provide the required additional information:
 - a. **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED**, with a summary regarding the implemented action, or
 - b. **HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE**, with a timeframe or expected date for implementation, or
 - c. **REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS**, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for that analysis or study; this timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report, or
 - d. **WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.

If you have questions about this response form, please contact the Grand Jury by calling 831-454-2099 or by sending an email to grandjury@scgrandjury.org.

Findings

F1. County and City website information is sometimes missing, out-of-date, and inaccurate; links may be broken. Thus, many city and county departments aren't updating their websites often enough to keep citizens informed.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The City of Watsonville entered into a contract with CivicPlus Website on April, 25, 2016 with the goal to redesign and rebuild the City's Website. Every page of the Website was then reviewed for accuracy and relevant content. New graphic designs were developed, content was reviewed and redacted, new modules were built and clean data was imported from the previous Website. The contract stipulates that upon completion of site development the City staff will assume responsibility for website content maintenance and administration. In order to do so, the City established a decentralized management system of the website in which each City department is responsible for maintaining relevant content and information on the website. At the onset of the project, two to three department employees received extensive website management training from CivicPlus. The design and content migration process of the new website (current) took 11 months. The new website was launched live on May 3, 2017, and per CivicPlus contract all links and content were in good working order.

The content of each department's subpage is managed by these employees as part of their other regular duties. Over time, several of the trained employees have either left the City or have been reassigned to new jobs and much of the knowledge based developed during the transition has been lost due to job attrition. The City's contract with Civic Plus includes a website refresh every two years. During the refresh all links are reviewed, content is updated and old information is removed. The City is now due for a content refresh per the CivicPlus contract; however, given the COVID-19 pandemic, this process was delayed until early next year.

Content management at the Department level, using Department employees is a cost effective and efficient manner of maintaining the City's website. The City will continue to use this decentralized website management model and keep the refresh contract with CivicPlus.

Each of employees assigned to maintain and update the website do their best to display the most current information on each Departmental website. The website contains a report that shows broken links. This report is run every month and that information is given to those employees assigned to the maintenance of the website and updates are made when necessary or when they are flagged. Broken links or out-of-date data are hard to notice and can only be fixed if they are brought to their attention.

F2. County and City administrations lack a process to review content accuracy and currency and thereby assure timely correction and revision of content.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The City does have a process to review content and assures that the majority of content displayed is accurate. We try to ensure there is no unapproved content on the website by limiting the number of employees who have access to make such updates. Anytime inaccurate information is found or reported, it is updated as soon as possible. As explained on F1, the City has a process to periodically perform a major update and refresh of the content in which major issues not identified during monthly checks are addressed.

F3. County and City goals for website redesign or quality improvement are not sufficiently “SMART”: Specific + Measurable + Attainable + Relevant + Time-Bound.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

We believe that the City does have SMART goals in place for website redesign and quality improvement. Our current contract with CivicPlus, the company that designed our website, has a website redesign option set in place to take effect this year. We have already begun gathering ideas as to what we will be requesting with this redesign. The two years since the current website was built and went live, has given enough time and information to see what is working and what is not working.

By running a traffic report, we will be able to determine which pages need to be retired based on the number of visits; this will make our website simpler and more relevant. The main thing that will come with this redesign will be a simpler website, easier to maintain with the limited staffing we have available.

In order to ensure the website was relevant and offered the best customer service tool for our residents, at the time of building the City’s current website, each department tracked phone calls and requests from the public for two weeks to identify frequently asked questions and information requested. The goal was to identify what information was regularly being requested so we can make that information readily available on our website.

The City’s website committee, composed by employees of all City Departments, also identified goals for the website which were:

- Information should be easy to find, with as few clicks as possible
- Ability to manage content individually and keep current
- Ease of use for both staff and the community
- Interactive features
- Engage the community
- Build equity in the community
- Reduce workload of staff
- Improve perception of Watsonville
- Translatable into Spanish
- Must be mobile device friendly
- Easy to use and find information
- No clutter!
- Visually pleasing to the eye
- Provide the residents, business owners, and visitors with tools to expedite requests, answer questions and disseminate information

F5. County and City website content providers do not provide an explanation in content for incorrect or out-of-date information, even though they appear to know the reasons.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

When the City becomes aware of incorrect or out of date information on the website, it is corrected. We don't believe there is any piece of inaccurate information being displayed to the public which we are aware of and have not taken the steps to correct it.

New tools continue to be developed and with the refresh of our website we will have the ability to implement and retrain staff with the latest maintenance tools available.

Recommendations

R1. The County Administrative Officer and the City Managers should establish a formal process by December 31, 2020 for their departments to validate and verify the accuracy and currency of website information. (F1, F2, F5)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The process to validate and verify accuracy and currency of website information is in place. At this time, the City does not have the ability to assign someone the full-time duty of managing the whole city website in order to be updated more than once a month. As we begin work on the redesign, irrelevant content will be removed. The resulting simpler website will be easier to manage with the staff hours we have available to work on the maintenance and upkeep of the website.

R2. The County Administrative Officer and the City Managers should establish a protocol to be exercised quarterly, beginning January 2021, which requires department heads to confirm via documentation (initial a spreadsheet, for example) that they have verified the accuracy of their department's web information (F1, F2, F3)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The City website will be fully refreshed and streamlined in just a few months. The refresh was programmed for earlier this year, but it was delayed due to the pandemic.

With new technology available for our website, staff will continue to run monthly updates to capture content that needs to be updated or removed. Department Directors oversee the work of assigned employees who work on the website.

R3. The County Administrative Officer and the City Managers should establish 'SMART' goals for website quality assurance and manage these goals beginning in 2021. (F3, F4, F5)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

As explained above, a system is already in place. Based on the complexity of the website and the staff hours available to manage it, certain content and/or broken links may not be caught as quickly as we would like them to.

We are certain that with the website redesign, already in place for early 2021, this system that is already in place, will be more effective as a simpler website will allow for better use of staff time and simplify the maintenance of relevant information.

Penal Code §933.05

1. For Purposes of subdivision (b) of §933, as to each Grand Jury finding, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:
 - a. the respondent agrees with the finding,
 - b. 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.
2. For purpose of subdivision (b) of §933, as to each Grand Jury recommendation, the responding person shall report one of the following actions:
 - a. the recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action,
 - b. the recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation,
 - c. 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 director 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 the publication of the Grand Jury report, or
 - d. the recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.
3. However, if a finding or recommendation of the Grand Jury addresses budgetary or personnel matters of a County department headed by an elected officer, both the 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 decision-making authority. The response of the elected department head shall address all aspects of the findings or recommendations affecting his or her department.
4. A Grand Jury may request a subject person or entity to come before the Grand Jury for the purpose of reading and discussing the findings of the Grand Jury report that relates to that person or entity in order to verify the accuracy of the findings prior to their release.
5. During an investigation, the Grand Jury shall meet with the subject of that investigation regarding that investigation unless the court, either on its own determination or upon request of the foreperson of the Grand Jury, determines that such a meeting would be detrimental.
6. A Grand Jury shall provide to the affected agency a copy of the portion of the Grand Jury report relating to that person or entity two working days prior to its public release and after the approval of the presiding judge. **No officer, agency, department, or governing body of a public agency shall disclose any contents of the report prior to the public release of the final report.**