Contra Costa County Response to Civil Grand Jury Report No. 2502, "County Boards, Commissions, Councils, and Committees: Improving Transparency for the Public"

FINDINGS

California Penal Code Section 933.05(a) requires a response to the designated findings of the Grand Jury.

F1. The current County triennial review process for County BCCs provides an effective way to measure and thereby manage their operation and oversight because it establishes a predictable, thorough examination.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F2. As of January 19, 2025, eight percent (nine of 111) of County BCCs have no website or other online presence making it difficult for the public to obtain information about the existence, purpose, membership and progress of these BCCs.

Response: The respondent disagrees with the finding. Of the one hundred and eleven (111) bodies listed in Appendix A, eight (8) are either subcommittees of a body that is already listed, duplicates, or inactive as they have been sunset through board action or were ad hoc (temporary) bodies that no longer meet. Thus, the total number of "County BCCs" should be 103. Of those, all either have their own webpage as part of the Boards and Commissions Database[1], are listed on the Standing Committees webpage[2], or have their own standalone website or webpage because they are an elected body, have no public member appointees, or are administered by an external agency.

F3. The 111 existing BCC websites are spread across multiple department web pages on the County's main website, making online BCC information difficult to find.

Response: The respondent partially disagrees with the finding. The majority of bodies (88 of 103 or 85 percent) are listed in one of two locations: the master Boards & Commissions database (see footnote 1), which includes links to subpages with information on each body, or the Standing Committees webpage (see footnote 2). The remainder (15 of 103 or 15 percent) are spread across multiple department web pages which can make them difficult to find.

F4. There is no master list of all County BCCs contained on the County main website.

Response: The respondent partially disagrees with the finding. There is a master list of all advisory bodies that are appointed by the Board of Supervisors, which is referred to as the Maddy Book. This can be accessed in both an interactive format that is regularly updated as changes occur, called the Boards & Commissions Database (see footnote 1), as well as in a PDF version that is updated at the end of every calendar year[3]. There is also a master

[1] https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/6408/Boards-and-Commissions-Database
[2] https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/8633/Board-of-Supervisors-Standing-Committees
[3] https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/3418/Appointed-Bodies-Committees-Commissions

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list of all bodies that members of the Board of Supervisors serve on[4]. These two master lists encompass the vast majority of "County BCCs" (98 of 103 or ninety-five percent). The remaining five (5) bodies are either elected, have no public members, or are administered by an external agency and are not currently included on a master list.

F5. As of January 19, 2025, 42 percent (47 of 111) of County BCCs do not have agendas posted in Legistar, the County's BCC data repository, which results in a lack of transparency to the public.

Response: The respondent disagrees with the finding. Not all of the bodies included on the list of "County BCCs" are administered by county staff and therefore cannot all be included directly on the Legistar website. In such cases where agendas are managed by an external agency, the agendas are accessible via a link located on the Legistar website[5] (see the External Meetings tab). Of the 103 "County BCCs", seventy-eight (78) were either posting agendas directly through Legistar or were linked from the Legistar website, and two (2) were inactive or recently sunset, meaning they had no agendas to post. Thus, twenty-two percent (23 of 103) did not have agendas posted in Legistar as of January 19, 2025. Since then, fourteen (14) additional bodies have been added, so as of June 11, 2025, only nine percent (9 of 103) do not have agendas yet posted in or linked from Legistar.

F6. As of January 19, 2025, 56 percent (62 of 111) of County BCCs do not have their meeting minutes posted in Legistar on the central County website, resulting in a lack of transparency to the public.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding, though notes that the total number of "County BCCs" should be 103, not 111.

F7. As of January 19, 2025, of the 49 County BCCs that post their minutes in Legistar, 27 (55 percent) incorporate them into the agenda packets rather than in the Minutes column of Legistar, making it difficult to locate meeting minutes.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding. As of June 11, 2025, forty-two percent (44 of 103) bodies are either posting their meeting minutes to the Minutes column of Legistar or are an external body and are linked from the Legistar website.

F8. Historic County agenda and minutes data are stored and accessed in two different applications, Legistar and AgendaCenter, which can make the information difficult to find.

Response: The respondent disagrees with the finding. Agendas and minutes are publicly accessible through the Legistar website. The site includes tabs linking to both the AgendaCenter[6] and to Laserfiche[7], an online document repository that houses historical agendas and minutes.

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[4] https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/71622/BOS-Committee-Assignments---By-Type-
[5] https://contra-costa.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx
[6] https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/agendacenter
[7] https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/6952/Clerk-of-the-Board-Document-Center

F9. Even though it is preferred to use only one system, Legistar, to access meeting agendas and minutes, those presently contained in AgendaCenter cannot easily be moved or copied to Legistar due to technological constraints too costly to overcome.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

California Penal Code Section 933.05(b) requires a response to the designated recommendations of the Grand Jury.

R1. The Board of Supervisors should consider requiring each County board, commission, and committee to create a basic internet presence by June 1, 2026, that includes, at minimum, links to their charter (if available), by-laws (if available), membership information, agendas, and minutes.

Response: The recommendation has already been implemented.

R2. The Board of Supervisors should consider directing the appropriate staff to create, by January 1, 2026, an online master list of all County BCCs where each listing contains a link to the associated BCC website and a link to the master list is made available on the home page of the main County website and on the home page of Legistar.

Response: The recommendation will be partially implemented. Staff will create and maintain a master list that combines the current advisory bodies listed in the Maddy Book, the bodies to which members of the Board of Supervisors are appointed, and the additional departmental bodies that don't fall into either category. This list will be housed on the Clerk of the Board website and will be complete by August 31, 2025.

R3. The Board of Supervisors should consider directing each County BCC to post all meeting agendas and minutes in the appropriate section of Legistar on the central County website by January 1, 2026.

Response: The recommendation will be implemented by August 31, 2025.