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TULARE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT 2015-2016

R3. Teleconferences and/or webinars should be utilized whenever available.

REQUIRED RESPONSES:

1. Farmersville Unified School District
2. Tulare County Office of Education

Disclaimer

Grand Jury reports are based on documentary evidence and the testimony of sworn or admonished witnesses, not on conjecture or opinion. However, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing such evidence except upon specific approval of the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, or another judge appointed by the Presiding Judge (Penal Code Section 911, 924.1 (a) and 929). Similarly, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing the identity of witnesses except upon an order of the court for narrowly defined purposes (Penal Code Section 924.2 and 929).

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SYNOPSIS

Complaint 15/16 #11& 15/16 #12

The Tulare County Grand Jury received two complaints on August 7, 2015, alleging a Brown Act violation by a local school district board of trustees. Specifically, the complaints alleged the board conducted an illegal secret ballot. The Grand Jury interviewed the complainants, thereby securing additional information. During the Grand Jury investigation, the subject school district publicly announced plans to rescind their action. The district held a publicly announced meeting at which previously questioned votes were rescinded and a new public vote was taken. The complaints were officially closed September 19, 2015.

Complaint 15/16 #18

The Tulare County Grand Jury received a citizen's complaint on September 14, 2015, alleging a Brown Act violation by a school district board. As part of the investigation, members of the Grand Jury went to board meetings and found no agendas posted. Inquiries were made regarding the location and time of the meetings. At this point the Grand Jury determined the Brown Act appears to have been violated. After further investigation and interviews, it was found the complainant's issue had been resolved. The complaint was officially closed January 8, 2016.

Complaint 15-16 #27

The Tulare County Grand Jury received a complaint on December 29, 2015, authored by a complainant who alleged work practices by non US citizens, abuse of county government funds, and Veterans Board of Directors did not include enough veterans on the board of a Veterans Memorial District. The complaint further alleged that government funds were not being used properly and the manager was not a veteran. The Grand Jury conducted interviews, attended a meeting, and reviewed documentation. During the investigation no violations were found. The complaint was officially closed February 19, 2016.

Complaint 15/16 #31

The Tulare County Grand Jury received a citizen's complaint on February 26, 2016, alleging a Brown Act violation by a school district sub-committee board. As part of the investigation, the Grand Jury found online agendas posted only. Inquiries were made regarding the location and time of the meetings. At this point the Grand Jury determined the Brown Act appears to have been violated. After further interviews, it was found the complainant's issue had been resolved. The complaint was officially closed March 18, 2016.

Complaint 15/16 #37

The Tulare County Grand Jury received a citizen's complaint on April 21, 2016, alleging a Brown Act violation by a school district board. The Grand Jury interviewed the complainant and a board member and determined there was no Brown Act violation. The complaint was officially closed May 13, 2016.

HOMELESS, HOPELESS AND HELPED LESS

BACKGROUND:

The Tulare County Grand Jury initiated an investigation into the services available to the homeless in Tulare County. The goal of the Grand Jury was to determine what services are available to those individuals meeting specific criteria (i.e., dependent families with children, those suffering from chemical dependency, mental illness and single individuals).

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION:

The Tulare County Grand Jury set out to determine what resources are offered to the homeless; and if the resources are readily available.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION:

The Tulare County Grand Jury visited and interviewed employees of five different Tulare County Health and Human Services, Cal-Works offices. Information was requested and received regarding the guidelines to meet specific criteria to establish levels of services available to the homeless.

The Grand Jury interviewed numerous witnesses and attended a Tulare County Mental Health Services Board Meeting.

Members of the Grand Jury reviewed the application process for the services available to the needy and homeless.

FACTS:

1. There are programs available to immediately house homeless families with children for up to sixteen days.
2. Assistance may be available to move homeless families with children into permanent housing.
3. There are temporary beds and shelters for the mentally ill who are homeless.
4. There are resources available for chemically dependent individuals.
5. There are programs available to provide permanent housing for the mentally ill who are homeless.
6. When employment has been verified, assistance may be available for a family to relocate.
7. A single homeless person may qualify to receive food and medical assistance.

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8. There are no programs available to provide housing of any kind to a childless, mentally competent and non-chemically dependent individual.
9. Most of the applications are lengthy and somewhat complicated, but county employees assist with completing the forms, if necessary.

FINDINGS:

- F1. The Tulare County Grand Jury found Cal-Works employees to be helpful and knowledgeable about the resources that are available to homeless individuals in Tulare County.
- F2. Individuals who are not mentally ill or chemically dependent, and without children, are not eligible for any available housing programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. Tulare County needs to establish programs to assist all homeless citizens including those who are childless, mentally competent and non-chemically dependent.

REQUIRED RESPONSES:

1. Tulare County Board of Supervisors
2. Tulare County Chief Administrative Officer
3. Tulare County Health and Human Services

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