



July 11, 2023

The Honorable Judge J.S. Hermanson
Superior Court of California
County of Amador
500 Argonaut Lane
Jackson, Ca 95642

RE: 2022/2023 Grand Jury Response

Dear Judge Hermanson,

The following is the official response to the above listed report in the requested format.

Responding Agency: Amador County Sheriff's Office

Response by: Sheriff Gary W. Redman

GRAND JURY FINDINGS:

Finding #1 –

The County mission statement and goals are not listed on the County website or advertised around Amador County.

Response to Finding #1 –

The Sheriff has no response. The County website is not maintained by the Sheriff's Office.

Finding #2 –

The Jail has a maximum capacity of 76 inmates; at the time of our visit there were 93 inmates.

Response to Finding #2 –

The Sheriff agrees with this finding. The County is out for construction bids for the Jail Expansion Project which will add needed housing and programing space. The Sheriff's Office uses available resources to minimize the incarcerated persons population.

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Finding #3 –

The Jail has 23 correctional officer positions, but only 14 were filled at the time of our visit, leaving nine vacancies.

Response to Finding #3

The Sheriff agrees with this finding. It is difficult recruiting in a smaller job market. The Sheriff's Office has implemented various tactics to boost recruitment including a \$7500 hiring bonus. We have filled positions but currently have 6 vacancies.

Findings #4 –

When the Jail was built in 1984, it had a 20 year lifespan before reaching maximum capacity of 76.

Response to Finding #4 –

The Sheriff agrees with this finding. The Jail Expansion Project is out for constructions bids and we are hopeful that the project will begin later this year.

Findings #5 -

In 2002, the Jail population exceeded the 76 inmate capacity, and the average daily population has exceeded this capacity for the 20 years since then.

Response to Findings #5 –

The Sheriff agrees with this finding. The Sheriff's Office use available resources to reduce the population of the Jail. The existing Jail has been outgrown and the Jail Expansion Project is moving forward.

Findings #6 –

In 2007, three years after it was estimated the Jail would need more cells, AB 900 was introduced. This was Amador County's first attempt to secure funding for an expansion project.

Response to Findings #6 –

Factual and Sheriff has no further response.

Findings #7 -

Due to CEQA lawsuits, there was an eight-year delay of the expansion project from SB 863. The County has since saved the funds necessary to make up the \$7-8 million dollar difference in funding that resulted from the delays.

Response to Findings #7 –

The Sheriff Partially agrees with the findings. There were no savings to apply to the difference. The monies came from a collaboration of funds from the Sheriff and County.

Findings #8 –

The Grand Jury has been making suggestions to expand the Jail for over 20 years. In recent years, the Grand Jury recommended the County consider planning for a new Jail facility when the expansion meets capacity. These recommendations were met with discouraging responses about the future from the Sheriff's Office, with its focus being on the current expansion.

Response to Findings #8 –

The Sheriff partially agrees with the findings. While the Sheriff's Office would like a new facility, it is not currently fiscally responsible to do so. The Jail Expansion Project is mostly funded through a State Grant. While the delays have resulted in increased funding needs from the County, it is still a much lower cost than a new build.

Findings #9 –

The Jail has already had days when capacity exceeded 116 (which is the capacity with the expansion) even with some inmates released early, while others who committed low-level crimes were not booked at all.

Response to Findings #9 –

The Sheriff agrees with the findings. The Jail has had to use early releases, citations, and own recognizance releases to minimize the impacts of overcrowding.

Findings #10 –

After the current Jail expansion plan from SB 863, there will be no more room for future expansion on this location.

Response to Findings #10 –

The Sheriff agrees with the findings. The County will have to consider a new construction build when the facility at 700 Court Street becomes obsolete.

Findings #11 –

Staff refused to say anything bad about their jobs, even when prompted. We observed during the tour that staff seem to like their jobs but are approaching burn out due to understaffing and expanded job duties such as janitorial tasks. It was noted in several prior Grand Jury reports that staff had a morale boost during the time of the AB 900 talk and the SB 863 expansion. However, as time passed with no expansion construction, staff vacancies have increased.

Response to Findings #11 –

The Sheriff agrees with the findings. Staff at the Jail do an amazing job for the County and often go unrecognized. While the delays in the Jail Expansion Project have been felt amongst staff, there is a new resurgence of energy knowing the project is moving forward.

Findings #12 –

The roof is over 20 years old and in need of replacement. There is a plan to get the roof fixed before the expansion project begins.

Response to Findings #12 –

The Sheriff agrees with the findings. The contract has been awarded and construction is set to begin soon on replacing the roof.

Findings #13 –

The staff have been very knowledgeable and accommodating during the tour and with all of our follow-up questions.

Response to Findings #13 –

The Sheriff and his staff would like to thank the Grand Jury for their service to our community and the professionalism they displayed during the inspection process.

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation #1 –

Complete the roof replacement as soon as possible.

Response to Recommendation #1 –

The Sheriff agrees with this recommendation and implementation of the project is in process.

Recommendation #2 –

Get the expansion project out to bid and in construction as soon as the State finishes processing the expansion approval.

Response to recommendation #2 –

The Sheriff agrees with this recommendation. The County is in an open bidding process for contractors. This process is expected to have a decision by August of 2023 and construction to begin later in the fall of 2023.

Recommendation #3 –

“Outstanding people have one thing in common: An absolute sense of mission” (Zig Ziglar). Create and make the County aware of goals for the future of the County. Update the County website with the mission statement and goals. Use these goals to guide plans for the future.

Response to recommendation #3 –

The Sheriff does not control the County website and mission statement. This would be deferred to the Board for any changes.

Recommendation #4 –

Implement a funding replacement plan for future projects in the County. When the Jail expansion is complete, a Nexus study should be done to determine when the next expansion/upgrade will be needed. Start securing funding by searching for grants and investments, as well as setting aside savings for future expansion projects.

Response to recommendation #4 –

The Sheriff agrees with this recommendation.

Recommendation #5 –

“Employees are a company’s greatest asset – they’re your competitive advantage. You want to attract and retain the best; provide them with encouragement, stimulus, and make them feel that they are an integral part of the company’s mission” (Anne M. Mulcahy). The salary of the Jail staff should be reviewed with a goal to regain the “competitive advantage” with neighboring counties.

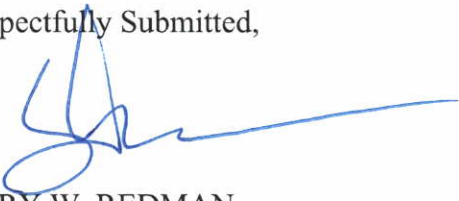
However, if this is not currently feasible, the County should focus on making staff “feel that they are an integral part” of the County. It was reported multiple times that the staff had a higher morale when there was a discussion of a new facility being built. Living in a rural community, citizens compromise the pay of a big city for the caring and compassion they are provided. Jail

staff members should feel like there is a future in staying in the County even if there is not a financial incentive

Response to recommendation #5 -

The Sheriff agrees with the recommendation. Employees are our greatest asset. The Sheriff will continue to strive to make employees adequately compensated, create a positive friendly work environment, and encourage employees to learn and grow in their positions.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Redman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

GARY W. REDMAN
Sheriff-Coroner

CC: Jeff Brown, Chairman, Amador County Board of Supervisors
Chuck Iley, Amador County CAO