



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
County Manager's Office



Date: September 15, 2016
Board Meeting Date: October 18, 2016
Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: John L. Maltbie, County Manager

Subject: Board of Supervisors' Response to the 2015-2016 Civil Grand Jury Report, "Juvenile Services Division's Youth Detention Facilities: Underutilized and Overpriced?"

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Board of Supervisors' response to the 2015-2016 Grand Jury Report, "Juvenile Services Division's Youth Detention Facilities: Underutilized and Overpriced?"

BACKGROUND:

On July 20, 2016, the 2015-2016 San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury issued a report titled "Juvenile Services Division's Youth Detention Facilities: Underutilized and Overpriced?" The Board of Supervisors is required to submit comments on the findings and recommendations pertaining to the matters over which it has some decision making authority within 90 days. The Board's response to the report is due to the Honorable Joseph C. Scott no later than October 18, 2016.

DISCUSSION:

The Grand Jury made five findings and three recommendations in its report. The Board responses follow each finding and the two recommendations that the Grand Jury requested that the Board respond to within 90 days.

FINDINGS

Finding 1:

Actual total cost to incarcerate one youth in FY 2014-2015 was \$340,974 per year, which equates to approximately \$934 per day.

Response:

Agree.

Finding 2:

The Grand Jury developed the total cost model from the financial records of five separate entities; a County summary of these total costs was not available.

Response:

Agree.

Finding 3:

San Mateo County's actual total costs to incarcerate juveniles are significantly higher than those reported by San Francisco and Los Angeles counties.

Response:

Neither agree nor disagree. Without knowing what was included in the cost calculations provided by other counties, the County may not have a like comparison. For instance, the County's total costs include debt service payments for the bonds that were issued to build the Youth Services Center and Camp Kemp. The County does not know if the calculations provided by other counties included debt service. Additionally, it is not known whether the other counties included the amortization of debt, building depreciation and other components included in the calculation of the County's total costs.

Finding 4:

Juvenile Services Division's three facilities have only been about 45% utilized since at least 2013.

Response:

Agree.

Finding 5:

There are no current cost-reduction plans identified or in development by the Probation Department.

Response:

Wholly disagree. The County Manager's Office (CMO) refinanced the bonds recently, resulting in lower debt service payments in the upcoming years. The CMO is also looking at the food services for the facilities that are currently provided by Correctional Health. The Probation Department will be evaluating ongoing service delivery to look for opportunities to reduce cost that does not jeopardize service quality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 2:

If, as a result of the Controller's analysis, it is determined that operating costs should be reduced and/or that the facilities should be better utilized, then the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors should direct the County Manager to establish financial and utilization goals for the Juvenile Services Division's three detention facilities by March 31, 2017.

Response:

The recommendation requires further analysis. The County will certainly consider utilization improvements and cost reduction strategies, however, the County's ability to repurpose the facility may be constrained by federal tax law and/or covenants in the financing documents. Furthermore, operation of the juvenile hall and Camp Kemp must adhere to all applicable State mandates and regulations regarding the housing and supervision of juveniles. Without knowing what the results of the Controller's analysis will be or when it will be completed, the County cannot ensure that it will meet the March 31, 2017 timeline or that it will or will not implement strategies that the analysis might recommend.

Recommendation 3:

If, as a result of the Controller's analysis, it is determined that operating costs should be reduced and/or that the facilities should be better utilized, then the Board of Supervisors should direct the County Manager and Chief Probation Officer to develop a plan to meet such cost-reduction goals and/or alternative-use goals by June 30, 2017, and to provide quarterly status reports of their progress to the Board at a public meeting.

Response:

The recommendation requires further analysis. See response to Recommendation 2.

Acceptance of the report contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of a Collaborative Community by ensuring that all Grand Jury findings and recommendations are thoroughly reviewed by the appropriate County departments and that, when appropriate, process improvements are made to improve the quality and efficiency of services provided to the public and other agencies.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with accepting this report.