



SUTTER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
BRANDON BARNES  
SHERIFF – CORONER

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July 11, 2024

Superior Court of California, County of Sutter  
Attn: The Honorable Susan Green - Presiding Judge  
1175 Civic Center Blvd.  
Yuba City, CA. 95993

**FILED**

SEP 25 2024

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF SUTTER  
CLERK OF THE COURT  
By *John A. Russell* Deputy

Please accept this response on behalf of the Sutter County Sheriff's Office regarding the findings of the Grand Jury for FY 23/24. It has been my honor to get to know the Grand Jury members and to provide an overview of the operations of the sheriff's office. I want to express my appreciation of the Grand Jury and the role they play in helping to bring deficiencies to our attention. I have reviewed the proposed report and offer the following responses to both the "Findings" and the "Recommendations" as suggested by the Grand Jury.

**SUTTER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

**FINDINGS:**

F1: Difficulty in hiring and retaining staff due to noncompetitive compensation, source from Management Partners. Increase cost caused by forced inmate retention, as well as increased housing cost due to retention of IST inmates.

F1 Response: The sheriff's office acknowledges that recruitment can be challenging at times, although we have seen an increase in the number of applicants, specifically for corrections and dispatch positions. A fair number of applicants have been disqualified due to not passing the testing process or not having a personal background suitable for public service.

Costs associated with the care and custody of incarcerated persons has increased, primarily due to pressures put on counties by the state, as prisons continue to close and medical and mental health services are being pushed to local levels without reasonable compensation for state responsibilities.

**RECEIVED**

JUL 17 2024

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF SUTTER



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**F2: Potential contraband drop-off location at Southwest exterior door of the jail.**

F2 Response: The sheriff's office agrees this is an area of concern and brought this issue to the attention of the Grand Jury. Steps are being taken to correct the issue and we continue to look for ways to reduce contraband coming into the facility.

**F3: Structural damage within the facility has led to pooling of water into the corridor areas posing a risk of slip and fall incidents as well as further structural deterioration.**

F3 Response: Additional clarification may be needed to address the specific "structural damage" issue noted in the report. The sheriff's office is aware of occasional weather-related pooling during times of excessive rain. There are some leaks in the jail roof that need to be addressed.

**F4: Ineffective cooling system causing potential health risk (e.g. heat related medical issues). We have since received information at a recent Board of Supervisors' meeting that the existing cooling system is being put out for bid to be replaced.**

F4 Response: The sheriff's office agrees with this finding, and we have been working with development services, general services, and the county administrator's office for solutions to this issue.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**R1: Review budget and pay structures to allow competitive pay with similar size Northern California counties by September 30, 2024.**

R1 Response: This would be a function of county human resources and not the sheriff's office. The county completed a compensation survey in April of this year, which included salary and benefits. The total compensation for the Deputy Sheriff's Association (DSA) was 9.1% below market. The DSA is currently in negotiations with the county regarding this issue.

**R2: Build perimeter fencing adjacent to the Southwest exterior door location by December 31, 2024.**

R2 Response: The sheriff's office is exploring options to secure the exterior door from contraband. One solution was to place a lockbox over the door, but this was removed as a potential solution by fire code. The sheriff's office is exploring a fencing solution and will be working to secure quotes in the coming months, with hopes of having a contract in place shortly thereafter.

**R3: Repair structural damage to the interior walls of the jail by December 31, 2024.**

R3 Response: The sheriff's office is not aware of any structural damage to the interior walls. More clarification from the Grand Jury may be needed on this recommendation.



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There is occasionally water pooling during heavy rain because of leaks in the roof. This is usually resolved with buckets and keeping floors mopped and dry. The roof of the jail does need repair but locating the source of the leak sometimes becomes problematic. General Services has a maintenance employee assigned to the jail and that person works on issues as they come up but also works proactively to identify items for routine maintenance and replacement.

R4: Replace outdated cooling system at the jail. A contract should be in place by September 30, 2024.

R4 Response: The Board of Supervisors authorized a contract with a consultant, Kitchell CEM, in March of 2024 to evaluate the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems (MEP). Kitchell CEM is scheduled for a site visit this month and should complete their report and recommendations by January 2025.

The Sheriff's Office continues to be dedicated to meeting, or exceeding, industry standards for public safety operations and corrections. We appreciate the recommendations of the Grand Jury and further thank you for accepting these responses on behalf of the Sheriff's Office.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "B. Barnes", is written over a horizontal line.

Brandon Barnes  
Sheriff-Coroner