



**BUTTE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION  
FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT**

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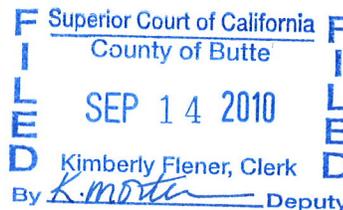
**MEMBERS OF THE BOARD**

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Gregory G. Iturria  
Chief Financial Officer

August 16, 2009

Honorable Steven J. Howell, Presiding Judge  
Butte County Superior Court  
One Court Street  
Oroville, CA 95965



**Re: Chief Financial Officer's Response to the 2009-2010 Grand Jury Final Report**

Honorable Judge Howell,

Penal Code Section 933 and 933.05 provides that the governing body of the public agency shall comment to the presiding judge of the superior court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the governing body. The Board of Supervisors, as the governing body of the County of Butte, will provide its response to the 2009-2010 Grand Jury Report by the statutory deadline. The Grand Jury, though, has asked that I provide a direct response to the Presiding Judge. While all legal requirements for a response to the Grand Jury Report have been met by the County of Butte with the Board of Supervisors response, in the spirit of cooperation, I am providing this direct response to the Grand Jury Report on Butte County Animal Control and Shelters as requested by the Grand Jury.

**BUTTE COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL AND SHELTERS**

***Grand Jury Findings***

*F1. In Butte County, 90% of calls for services are generated by 10% of the population, who are habitual offenders.*

**The respondent neither agrees nor disagrees with the finding.** The Chief Financial Officer is not involved in the operation of animal control services or shelters, and, therefore, has no basis to form an opinion on this finding.

*F2. Animal control has a much easier time identifying the owners of animals with implanted micro chips.*

**The respondent neither agrees nor disagrees with the finding.** The Chief Financial Officer is not involved in the operation of animal control services or shelters, and, therefore, has no basis to form an opinion on this finding.

*F3. Gridley Animal Haven does not have adequate separate accommodations for new intakes and quarantined animals. Currently they are in the same area with adoptable animals.*

**The respondent neither agrees nor disagrees with the finding.** The Chief Financial Officer is not involved in the operation of animal control services or shelters, and, therefore, has no basis to form an opinion on this finding.

*F4. Gridley Animal Haven does not have an alternate, reliable contact phone number posted when the officer is not available.*

**The respondent neither agrees nor disagrees with the finding.** The Chief Financial Officer is not involved in the operation of animal control services or shelters, and, therefore, has no basis to form an opinion on this finding.

*F5. Gridley Animal Haven is still in need of improvement to the facilities. Currently the animals remain in a cage where they eat, sleep, and defecate. They are only exposed to exercise when taken for a walk if someone is available or to a portable caged area in the asphalt parking lot. The caged area is small, the size of one parking space, and has no grass.*

**The respondent neither agrees nor disagrees with the finding.** The Chief Financial Officer is not involved in the operation of animal control services or shelters, and, therefore, has no basis to form an opinion on this finding.

*F6. The Butte County Animal Control is a division of the Department of Public Health.*

**The respondent agrees with the finding.**

*F7. The Town of Paradise needs a separate intake and quarantine area for the animals.*

**The respondent neither agrees nor disagrees with the finding.** The Chief Financial Officer is not involved in the operation of animal control services or shelters, and, therefore, has no basis to form an opinion on this finding.

*F8. The facility currently being utilized by the Butte Humane Society, which is owned by the City of Chico, is old, inadequate, outdated, and in poor repair.*

**The respondent neither agrees nor disagrees with the finding.** The Chief Financial Officer is not involved in the operation of animal control services or shelters, and, therefore, has no basis to form an opinion on this finding.

*F9. The City of Chico does not have a low-cost spay and neuter clinic.*

**The respondent neither agrees nor disagrees with the finding.** The Chief Financial Officer is not involved in the operation of animal control services or shelters, and, therefore, has no basis to form an opinion on this finding.

*F10. Most facilities have expressed a desire to be able to accept credit cards for payment of all imposed fees and fines.*

**The respondent disagrees with the finding.** The agencies operating animal control shelters in Butte County have not explored acceptance of credit cards for payments of fees and fines with the County. If any agency wishes to explore it, they need to work closely with the County Treasurer, County Auditor and Department of Public Health.

*F11. Butte County does not allow the Northwest SPCA to collect imposed fees and fines. Animal owners must make payment of county fees and fines directly to the Butte County Animal Control, thereby precluding owners from retrieving their pets whenever county offices are closed.*

**The respondent agrees with the finding.** Northwest SPCA currently does not have sufficient internal controls or tracking systems to provide appropriate accountability of public funds. Generally accepted accounting principles require strict adherence to cash-handling procedures and independent oversight when public funds are received and recorded.

### ***Grand Jury Recommendations***

*R1. Owners of animals who are habitual offenders should be subject to increased fees for repeat violation.*

**The respondent neither agrees nor disagrees with the recommendation.** The Chief Financial Officer is not involved in the operation of animal control services or shelters, and, therefore, has no basis to form an opinion on this recommendation.

*R2. Owners not wishing to have a microchip placed in their animal should be subject to additional fees.*

**The respondent neither agrees nor disagrees with the recommendation.** The Chief Financial Officer is not involved in the operation of animal control services or shelters, and, therefore, has no basis to form an opinion on this recommendation.

*R3. The City of Gridley should take immediate action to completely separate new intakes and quarantined animals.*

**The respondent is unable to comment on this recommendation since it is directed to the City of Gridley.**

*R4. The City of Gridley should post reliable contact numbers when an officer is not on site.*

**The respondent is unable to comment on this recommendation since it is directed to the City of Gridley.**

*R5. If the City of Gridley wishes to continue operating an animal shelter, it should research an available location for Gridley Animal Haven more conducive to animal care and availability of animals to the public for adoption.*

**The respondent is unable to comment on this recommendation since it is directed to the City of Gridley.**

*R6. The Butte County Board of Supervisors should consider placing Butte County Animal Control under the jurisdiction of the Sheriff's Department or Butte County Animal Control should be dispatched through the Sheriff's Department for increased officer safety.*

**The respondent is unable to comment on this recommendation since it is directed to the Board of Supervisors.**

*R7. The Town of Paradise should provide the Paradise Animal Shelter with an area for new intake animals as well as a separate, secure quarantine area.*

**The respondent is unable to comment on this recommendation since it is directed to the Town of Paradise.**

*R8. The City of Chico should acquire property and build a new animal shelter facility. The City is encouraged to consider using the Northwest SPCA as a model. We strongly feel this should be a priority project.*

**The respondent is unable to comment on this recommendation since it is directed to the City of Chico.**

*R9. The City of Chico should establish a much needed low-cost spay and neuter clinic. This clinic will lower the expenses being incurred by the city for so many unwanted animals.*

**The respondent is unable to comment on this recommendation since it is directed to the City of Chico.**

*R10. The Grand Jury recommends that all agencies not currently accepting payment of fees and fines by credit card should do so.*

**The respondent disagrees with this recommendation.** There is additional expense and labor required for an agency to accept payment of fees, fines and licenses by credit card and the benefit may not always outweigh the added cost. Each agency needs to explore the costs and benefits of credit card payment acceptance and consider its feasibility within the context of their unique situation.

*R11. Butte County should develop a mechanism to enable Northwest SPCA to collect county fees and fines.*

**The respondent partially agrees with this recommendation.** Butte County and Northwest SPCA could jointly explore what internal controls and tracking systems are needed to adequately secure and record County fees, fines and revenues. However, it is unclear whether or not Northwest SPCA can afford the additional expense to provide sufficient controls and accountability.

This concludes the response from the Chief Financial Officer.

Sincerely,



Gregory G. Iturria  
Chief Financial Officer