



CHICO CITY COUNCIL

411 Main Street (530) 896-7200
P.O. Box 3420 Fax: (530) 895-4825
Chico, CA 95927-3420 <http://www.ci.chico.ca.us>



August 25, 2020

Honorable Michael R Deems
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Court Administration
Superior Court of California, County of Butte
One Court Street
Oroville, CA 95965

Re: FY 2019-20 Butte County Grand Jury Report, City of Chico Responses

Dear Judge Deems,

The Chico City Council has reviewed the 2019-20 Grand Jury final report, and is providing this response, as attached, pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.

It is the Chico City Council and staff's desire to appropriately address the Butte County Grand Jury's findings and recommendations as related to its FY 2019-20 Annual Report. To reiterate, the City of Chico is committed to providing efficient and effective government services. The matters raised by the Butte County Grand Jury are consistent with the concerns of the Chico City Council and appreciated considering the challenges that the organization faces. If additional information and clarification are necessary, the City will be more than pleased to respond further.

The City Council wishes to thank the Butte County Grand Jury for its commitment to ensuring oversight of the City of Chico's government activities and evaluating and providing input on the way our government operates so it best serves the needs of our residents. It is our mission to accept the Grand Jury's report, reflect upon comments received and put into place improvements to ensure efficient and effective governance.

Yours truly,

Ann Schwab, Mayor

Councilmembers:

Alex Brown, Vice-Mayor
Scott Huber, Councilmember
Sean Morgan, Councilmember
Karl Ory, Councilmember
Kasey Reynolds, Councilmember
Randall Stone, Councilmember

CC: Mark Orme, City Manager
Chris Constantin, Assistant City Manager
Debbie Presson, City Clerk
Andrew Jared, City Attorney

City of Chico Response to 2019-20 Butte County Grand Jury Report

DISCUSSION

THE STATUS OF GOVERNMENT IN BUTTE COUNTY (starts on pg. 57 of Grand Jury Report)

FINDINGS

- F2 All agencies within Butte County will benefit by using the same radio communication system for seamless transmission during emergencies.**

Agreed. It is ideal to maintain one system across all agencies. However, there are several factors which result in agencies having different systems. In the case of Chico, the City upgraded its radio communication system in 2018 prior to Butte County's upgrade to its 700-Megahertz system. The City's upgrade was necessitated by major reliability issues. The City upgraded its dispatch consoles to allow for capability with Butte County dispatch facilitating communication. It may be beneficial in the future to engage in long-term planning to align both systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1 Chico Police Department radio system needs to be compatible with the Butte County 700-Megahertz radio communication system. Testing to be completed by January 1, 2021.**

Will Not Be Implemented. The City of Chico dispatch consoles were upgraded in 2018 to allow for communication with Butte County. Additionally, the City allocated significant resources to restore stability to an antiquated and unreliable radio system. As such, a conversion to the County's 700-Megahertz will require millions of dollars in upgrading, and it does not appear to be financially prudent to do so at this time.

BUTTE STRONG – CITIES OF BUTTE COUNTY (starts on pg. 79 of Grand Jury Report)

FINDINGS

- F1 The City of Chico's mandatory required contributions to CalPERS are putting an ever-increasing burden on the general fund, which impedes the city's ability to provide essential services.**

Agreed. Most cities in California are experiencing the same burden.

F2 The City of Chico is experiencing financial impacts and population growth from the Camp Fire.

Agreed. The City of Chico's population growth after the Camp Fire was the largest percentage increase experienced by any California City. The impacts of such growth stretched the City's ability to provide the service levels required, and the long-term cost associated with the population growth and increased impact on roadways will continue.

F3 The City of Chico roads need attention due to lack of maintenance.

Agreed. The City's ability to invest in roadway capital and maintenance is woefully below best practice. While the City has been successful in garnering grants for roadway capital, the ongoing revenue streams supporting roadway maintenance are below ideal levels. More attention is needed to support roadway maintenance.

F4 The City of Chico staff has performed well while dealing with a higher population since the Camp Fire and has not received a pay increase in ten years.

Partly Agree. Many of the City's units have not received Cost of Living Adjustments in over 10 years. However, the City has strategically increased certain public safety compensation levels to alleviate recruitment and retention issues.

F5 The Chico Police Department is understaffed.

Agreed. The public's demand for police staffing exceeds the current department staffing level. The City has made police staffing a priority and will continue to support this critical public priority.

F6 The Chico Police Department could experience a major change with the retirement of the current Chief this June.

Agreed. Retention of key leadership positions are hallmarks to facilitating strategic planning, consistency, and organizational development. The City of Chico is experiencing the same turnover of retirement eligible employees as other cities and is working to replace critical positions with qualified personnel.

F7 The City of Chico has been very fortunate to have received five years of service from the retiring Chief of Police.

Agreed. Leadership consistency is beneficial for any organization. The City has been fortunate to retain this critical position longer than the average tenure of police chiefs which is 2.5 to 3 years. However, we should note that the retirement eligibility and career paths of police officers rising to the rank of police chief

result in very short windows of leadership before one becomes fully retirement eligible. Thus, any police chief remaining longer than the average tenure is beneficial to the employing agency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1 The City of Chico needs to find additional revenue sources by March 1, 2021.

Will Not Be Implemented. From September 2019 through June 2020, the City of Chico evaluated and discussed placing a transaction and sales (use) tax measure on the November 2020 ballot. Such measure would have resulted in additional revenue receipts starting April 1, 2021. On June 23, 2020, the City Council considered the question of a half cent general transaction and sales (use) tax and a one cent special transaction and sales (use) tax. However, the City Council did not garner the five votes necessary to place the tax measure before the Chico voters. As such, it is not reasonable to find additional revenue sources substantial enough to address the City of Chico's identified needs by March 1, 2021.