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June 26, 2012

To: The Honorable Paul L. Beeman
Presiding Judge

From: Supervisor Linda J. Seifert
Chair, Board of Supervisors

RE: Response to Grand Jury Report of April 30, 2012 – Inspection of Sheriff-Coroner's Office

The Honorable Judge Beeman,

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933(c) and 933.05, the Solano County Board of Supervisors responds to the findings and recommendations contained in the 2011/12 Grand Jury Report of June 23, 2011 concerning the Sheriff-Coroner's Office.

Finding 1

The exterior security of the Coroner's facility is inadequate.

Response to Finding 1

Sheriff: The Sheriff agrees with the finding of the Grand Jury.

Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors accepts this finding and agrees with the Sheriff's response.

Recommendation 1

The Sheriff-Coroner install a state-of-the-art alarm system so that the Sheriff's Office dispatch center is alerted of any intrusion.

Response to Recommendation 1

Sheriff: The Sheriff agrees with the recommendation of the Grand Jury. Funds will be identified to alarm the exterior access doors and route that alarm to the Dispatch Center.

Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Sheriff's response to Recommendation 1 and awaits the Sheriff's Office proposal. Preliminary estimates from the Department of General Services to install the security upgrades to add access controls, alarms and

Dispatch Center connectivity is approximately \$25,000, which includes security upgrades identified in Recommendation 2.

Finding 2

Interior security of the facility is lacking. The evidence room and the property room are secured by a manual door lock.

Response to Finding 2

Sheriff: The Sheriff agrees with the finding of the Grand Jury.

Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Sheriff's response. However, it should be noted that the evidence room is secured by a manual door lock within an area protected by an electronically protected exterior door.

Recommendation 2

The Sheriff-Coroner replace the manual door locks with a card key system, which would add additional security and accountability for access into sensitive areas.

Response to Recommendation 2

Sheriff: The Sheriff agrees with the recommendation of the Grand Jury. The funds necessary to replace the key operated dead bolts with card access readers will be included in the next budget request. If funds become available earlier, the security upgrade will be completed at that time.

Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Sheriff's response to Recommendation 2 and awaits the Sheriff's proposal for funding. Preliminary estimates from the Department of General Services to install the security upgrades to add access controls and alarms is approximately \$25,000, which includes security upgrades identified in Recommendation 1.

Finding 3

Storage of reports is inadequate.

Response to Finding 3

Sheriff: The Sheriff agrees with the finding of the Grand Jury.

Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors accepts this finding and agrees with the Sheriff's response to Finding 3.

Recommendation 3

The Sheriff-Coroner replace the plastic storage system with a system sufficient to protect documents from fire and flood.

Response to Recommendation 3

Sheriff: The Sheriff agrees with the recommendation of the Grand Jury. The Sheriff's Office has previous experience with creating electronic copies and storage of vital records utilizing a system

called Documentum and electronic storage media. An electronic copy of Coroner records can be produced cost effectively and stored off site in a secure location as a duplicate of the existing hard copy record. Utilizing the assistance of volunteers and pre-existing hardware and software, this task can be accomplished relatively quickly.

Board of Supervisors: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be in the future, on or before March 31, 2013. The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Sheriff's response to Recommendation 3. The strategy proposed by the Sheriff to move past reports into an electronic format for off-site storage is a more cost effective solution than installing a new capacity for on-site storage of paper documents in a fire-and-flood safe filing system. A preliminary estimate from the Department of General Services for on-site paper storage system is approximately \$45,000. The Board asks that the Sheriff ensure there is proper storage for current paper files.

Finding 4

The Coroner Procedural Manual was last updated March, 2004. The eight-year-old manual does not contain current operating procedures and job specifications.

Response to Finding 4

Sheriff: The Sheriff agrees with the finding of the Grand Jury.

Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding and the Sheriff's response. The Sheriff is encouraged to work with staff to begin updating manuals.

Recommendation 4

The Sheriff-Coroner review and update the manual annually.

Response to Recommendation 4

Sheriff: The Sheriff agrees with the recommendation of the Grand Jury. The Sheriff's Office will complete the update of the Coroner Procedural Manual and initiate a process to review the manual annually and complete necessary updates.

Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Sheriff's response to Recommendation 4 and encourages the Sheriff to begin the process of review.

Finding 5

Coroner's Office staff does not appear to have the correct information concerning obtaining funds on a timely basis for professional consultants.

Response to Finding 5

Sheriff: The Sheriff disagrees with the finding of the Grand Jury.

Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors disagrees with this finding and agrees with the Sheriff's response to Finding 5, and supports the detailed response/explanation provided in Recommendation 5.

Recommendation 5

The Sheriff-Coroner instruct staff on correct procedures for funding consultant services and include clear and precise instructions on funding additional professional consultant services in the Coroner's Procedural Manual.

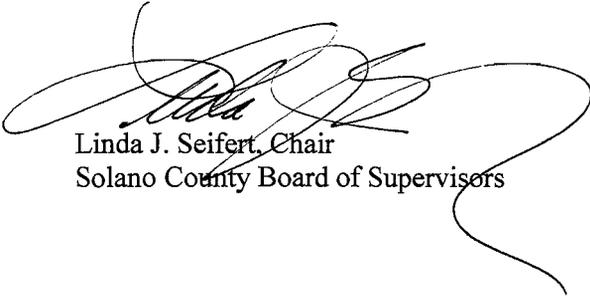
Response to Recommendation 5

Sheriff: The Sheriff disagrees with the recommendation of the Grand Jury pertaining to the necessity to instruct staff on the procedure for accessing funds for professional consulting. Coroner Staff have been adequately instructed on the correct procedure for accessing funds to hire professional consultation. Historically, all requests for professional consultation have been approved, indicating that staff members have been instructed and are fully aware of this procedure. A budget line item for professional consultation has been established and the fund shows no history of being depleted. Our system of checks and balances pertaining to the use of public funds requires some reasonable justification to access. Funds for professional consultation are made available by request to the Chief Deputy Coroner. Candidly, this process requires a five minute meeting with the Chief Deputy Coroner to gain approval. Apparently not every employee of the Coroner's Office appreciates having to ask for permission to spend public funds.

The Sheriff agrees with the recommendation of the Grand Jury to "include clear and precise instructions on funding additional professional consultant services in the Coroner Procedural Manual". If the Grand Jury finds some value in adding the procedure for accessing funds for professional consultation to the Coroner's Procedural Manual, we will do so.

Board of Supervisors: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Sheriff's response to Recommendation 5.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda J. Seifert, Chair
Solano County Board of Supervisors