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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF MONO

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Scheereen Dedman, Clerk of the Board

October 5, 2021

Honorable Judge Mark Magit
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
100 Thompsons Way
P.O. Box 1037
Mammoth Lakes, California 93546

Re: Response to request for input on the Mono County Grand Jury 2020-2021 Final Report

Dear Judge Magit:

The Grand Jury has asked for Board of Supervisors' input on several items contained in its 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 reports, including the County's solid waste program, operations at the Bridgeport jail, and emergency preparedness. While outside of the normal response process set forth in Penal Code section 933, the Board is happy to provide the below information in the hopes that it provides the information the Grand Jury requires.

CONTINUITY COMMITTEE – SOLID WASTE REPORT

The 2018-2019 Grand Jury issued a final report regarding solid waste in Mono County, to which the County responded. The 2019-2020 Grand Jury reviewed the status of the County and Town of Mammoth Lakes' efforts with respect to the recommendations and concluded that there were no items requiring further investigation. However, the 2019-2020 Continuity Committee did make one recommendation to the County regarding continual progress to ensure future solid waste needs are addressed. The 2020-2021 Continuity Committee reviewed the County's 2020 response to that recommendation, as follows:

R2: The 2019-2020 Grand Jury recommends that Mono County continue to move forward with planning for the Benton Crossing Landfill closure. We also recommend they continue to collaborate with other regional entities as they develop the infrastructure and expertise needed for Mono County to successfully move to a future transition without Benton Crossing Landfill.

Summary of Reply and 2020-2021 Civil Grand Jury Analysis: The Board of Supervisors is taking appropriate steps for replacement of infrastructure and systems to follow the closure of Benton Crossing Landfill.

2021 Board Response to Continuity Committee R2 and Analysis:

The Board continues to take appropriate steps to finalize the closure of Benton Crossing Landfill and to transition to other solid waste solutions. The County is performing proactive earthwork at Benton Crossing Landfill in anticipation of final closure of the site. The County continues to engage with the Town of Mammoth Lakes on longer-term regional waste solutions and infrastructure. The Board approved the distribution of a comprehensive RFP in February 2021, to provide the infrastructure and services necessary to serve the residents of unincorporated Mono County. County staff is currently engaged in negotiations with proposing entities, with a final Board recommendation expected before the end of 2021.

CONTINUITY COMMITTEE — EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FINAL REPORT

The 2019-2020 Grand Jury began to conduct an investigation of the Mono County and Town of Mammoth Lakes emergency preparedness but discontinued the investigation in March of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2020-2021 Grand Jury stated that this cycle was also not appropriate for a full investigation but wanted to follow up on initial recommendations made by the 2019-2020 Grand Jury prior to discontinuation of the investigation:

R1: The 2019-2020 Grand Jury recommends that Mono County and the ToML continue to support Mono County's participation in the FirstNet communication system and/or any appropriate improvements to the system as resources allow. The Grand Jury further recommends that these improvements be made within the scope of a unified plan for the entire County.

Summary of Reply and 2020-2021 Civil Grand Jury Analysis: Mono County Information Technology Department is driving the effort to improve the communications system in Mono County with all stakeholders involved. Substantive improvements will take several years to complete and likely not to be fully operational until 2025.

2021 Board Response to Continuity Committee R1 and Analysis:

The Mono County IT Department continues to spearhead efforts to improve the communications systems in Mono County with public and private stakeholders. Regular meetings continue to be held and significant incremental technical improvements were completed by the end of 2020. Substantive improvements to the system are still anticipated not to be fully operational until 2025. Mono County continues to work with the Town of Mammoth Lakes through the Radio Governance Group to address short-term issues with radio while investing in long-term solutions for the upgrade and replacement of the system.

R2: The 2019-2020 Grand Jury recommends that Mono County and the ToML continue to support wildfire mitigation efforts in the areas surrounding Mammoth Lakes and in the County as a whole.

Summary of Reply and 2020-2021 Civil Grand Jury Analysis: [No response.]

2021 Board Response to Continuity Committee R2 and Analysis:

The Board recognizes the critical role that wildfire mitigation efforts play in the protection and well-being of County residents, and the unprecedented threat that wildland fire poses to our communities. To that end, the Board is actively supporting and participating in wildfire mitigation and prevention efforts. For example, the County is a partner in the Eastern Sierra Climate & Communities Resilience Project, a landscape-level effort to reduce fuel loads and restore forest health on 50,000 acres of Inyo National Forest land surrounding the Town of Mammoth Lakes, and in the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance (more information can be found at <https://www.eswildfirealliance.org/>). The County has also applied for a grant from the California Fire Safe Council for a wildfire coordinator position to build wildfire prevention capacity throughout the County. The Board will continue to seek opportunities to collaborate with the forest service and other federal land management agencies, state governmental entities, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, private companies, and non-profit partners to fund and undertake wildfire mitigation efforts on an ongoing basis.

CONTINUITY COMMITTEE – MONO COUNTY JAIL FINAL REPORT

The 2018-2019 Grand Jury issued a final report regarding the operation of the Mono County Jail. The 2019-2020 Grand Jury was unable to conduct a visit to the Mono County Jail as a result of COVID-19, but reported on the steps taken to keep prisoners and staff safe. The 2019-2020 issued the following, to which the County responded. The 2020-2021 Grand Jury inquired about the status of the construction of a new jail, as well.

R1: The 2019-2020 Grand Jury finds that Mono County continues to maintain a well-run jail facility and has responded to the Coronavirus pandemic in an appropriate manner.

Summary of Reply and 2020-2021 Civil Grand Jury Analysis: Sheriff agrees to the finding and appreciates the positive remark.

2021 Sheriff & Board Response to Continuity Committee R2 and Analysis:

The Sheriff appreciates the input from the Grand Jury. The Sheriff's Office continues to implement public health measures recommended by both the Mono County Department of Public Health and the California Department of Public Health for the protection of staff and inmates. The Sheriff's Office will continue to undertake protective measures so long as the COVID-19 pandemic persists and poses a risk to staff and inmates.

The Board wishes to provide an update regarding the construction of the new Mono County Jail. The County entered into a contract with Lionakis in February 2021 to serve as the Architect/Engineer on the project. The next milestone is to formally 'establish' the project with the state. In coordination with County Departments, Lionakis has developed schematic designs and preliminary cost estimates that will become part of the project establishment package. The cost estimates were higher than anticipated so staff is looking at various cost-saving alternatives prior to requesting the Board's Financial Resolution that is also a required part of the establishment package. In June 2021, a request for proposals for construction management services on the jail project was distributed, and the County expects to issue a contract for those services in the coming months, following resolution of the financial details.

Finally, the 2020-2021 Continuity Committee also issued an analysis regarding the 2018-2019 Mono County Office of Education Report. As the Mono County Office of Education is its own entity, the Board will not respond on their behalf.

In conclusion, the Board recognizes the critical role the Grand Jury provides to the community and the County by ensuring the legal and financial adequacy of government services. The Grand Jury provides a sense of openness, transparency and accountability that are crucial to our democracy, and the County appreciates the work performed and the guidance offered. The County thanks the members of the Grand Jury for their public service and encourages the Court to continue to ensure broad representation from all communities of Mono County.

Sincerely,


Jennifer Kreitz (07/09/2021 07:06 PDT)

Jennifer Kreitz, Chair
Mono County Board of Supervisors