
2025/2026
LASSEN COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

FINAL CONSOLIDATED REPORT



May 29th, 2026

Hall of Justice
2610 Riverside Dr
Susanville, CA 96130

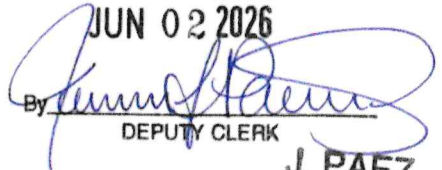
LASSEN SUPERIOR COURT

Mark Nareau
Presiding
Superior Court Judge



2610 Riverside Drive
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8205 Ext. 113

FILED
Clerk of the Superior Court
County of Lassen

JUN 02 2026
By 
DEPUTY CLERK
J. PAEZ

June 2, 2026

Clerk of the Court
Lassen County Superior Court
2610 Riverside Drive
Susanville, CA 96130

To the Clerk of the Court:

As Presiding Judge of the Lassen County Superior Court, I hereby instruct the Clerk to accept for filing the 2025-2026 Lassen County Grand Jury Final Report as presented to me the 2nd day of June 2026.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Nareau".

Mark Nareau
Presiding Judge
Lassen County Superior Court

LASSEN COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

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County of Lassen, State of California
Civil Grand Jury

Foreperson:	Greg Sella
Foreperson Pro Tempore:	Leighton Ratkey
Secretary:	Matthew Denney
Financial Officer:	Sharon Howard
Sergeant at Arms:	Steven Anderson

June 30, 2026

The Honorable Mark R. Nareau
Presiding Judge, Superior Court, County of Lassen
2610 Riverside Drive Susanville, California 96130

Re: Report of the Lassen County Civil Grand Jury

Dear Judge Nareau:

On behalf of the 2025-26 Grand Jury, I am writing to express our sincere gratitude for your continued support, guidance, and leadership throughout our term.

Your legal expertise and the open lines of communication you maintained with our panel were invaluable to our investigations and inquiries.

We are deeply appreciative of the resources and assistance provided by the Court staff, which allowed us to conduct our duties effectively and thoroughly.

Serving as the Foreperson of this Grand Jury along with having the privilege to work with such an incredible and talented group of fellow Grand Jurors has been an absolute pleasure. Thank you for your commitment to upholding justice and for providing the environment necessary for this panel to successfully serve our community.

On behalf of the members of the 2025-2026 Lassen County Grand Jury I respectfully submit this final report to you for publication and distribution to all appropriate agencies and individuals.

Sincerely:



Greg Sella

Foreperson, Lassen County Civil Grand Jury

AN OVERVIEW OF THE GRAND JURY

The primary role of the grand jury is for a group of ordinary citizens to investigate local government agencies and ensure that they are performing properly and ethically. The grand jury:

Is an independent body of 19 people, appointed by the court.

Can work as full body committee or by using individual committees.

Operates with a court-appointed foreperson that facilitates the activities of the jury and acts as its spokesperson.

Grand jurors serve voluntarily for one year.

The California Grand Jury Association describes the duties of the grand jury as:

In California, the grand jury system consists of 58 separate grand juries—one in each county—that are convened on an annual basis by the Superior Court to carry out three functions:

Investigating and reporting on the operations of local government (which is known as the "watchdog" function a civil, rather than criminal function),

Issuing criminal indictments to require defendants to go to trial on felony charges, and

Investigating allegations of a public official's corrupt or willful misconduct in office, and when warranted, filing an "accusation" against that official to remove him or her from office. The accusation process is considered to be "quasi-criminal" in nature.

With regard to its watchdog authority, the grand jury is well suited to the effective investigation of local governments because it is an independent body, operationally separate from the entities and officials it investigates. It conducts its investigations under the auspices of the Superior Court and has broad access to public officials, employees, records and information.

As a truly independent body, each grand jury is free to choose which local governmental entities or public officials to investigate. With very limited exceptions, no one outside the grand jury can direct it to conduct an investigation. Ideas for investigations generally come by way of three avenues:

Citizen complaints

Matters raised by the members of the grand jury

Referrals from the preceding grand jury

At the end of the grand jury's term, a final report is prepared with recommendations and sent to elected officials, governing bodies, and other individuals for response within ninety days. Copies of the full report are distributed to public officials, libraries, and the news media.

Qualifications for Grand Jury Service

Penal Code section 893 states that a person is qualified to be a civil grand juror if he or she:
Is a citizen of the United States,
Is at least 18 years old,
Has been a resident of the county for at least one year immediately prior to selection,
Possesses ordinary intelligence, sound judgment, and good character, and
Possesses a sufficient knowledge of the English language to communicate both orally and in writing.

Visit Grand Jury | Superior Court of California | County of Lassen or Civil Grand Juries - Civil Grand Jurors' Association for more information.

HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT WITH THE GRAND JURY

You may submit a complaint to the grand jury by completing the County of Lassen Grand Jury Complaint Form. Complaint form can be found at:

<https://www.lassen.courts.ca.gov/system/files/grand-jury/grand-jury-complaint-form.pdf>

You are encouraged to attach additional information or documents that contribute to your concern.

After filling out the form, print the document, sign it attesting to the information, and mail to the address noted on the form. You may also turn in the form to the court. If brought to the court for delivery to the grand jury, the form must be in a sealed envelope.

All complaints submitted to the grand jury are treated confidentially.

Visit Grand Jury | Superior Court of California | County of Lassen for more information.

DIAMOND MOUNTAIN GOLF COURSE INQUIRY

INQUIRY SUMMARY

The Lassen County Civil Grand Jury conducted an inquiry into the Diamond Mountain Golf Club's finances. While there were no indications of issues with the golf course, lessons learned from a successful venture would be applicable to other ventures like the Honey Lake Valley Community Pool.

BACKGROUND

The Diamond Mountain Golf Club, while a City of Susanville entity, is largely financially self-sufficient. The number of rounds played each year, and the number of annual memberships has continued to rise even as the population has decreased. Minor increases in costs for 2025 (\$28.00 to \$30.00 for 18 holes on a weekday as an example) will ensure the courses fiscal health. Tournaments and other functions held at the golf course, while not contributing to the course funding, do contribute to the local community through charities and local businesses. While the numbers are difficult to refine, it is a positive contribution.

METHODOLOGY

The committee examined the Income Statement, Revenues with Comparison to budget for the 12 months ending June 30, 2025, provided by the city. The committee chair conducted an interview with the golf course manager and city financial representative.

DISCUSSION

The foundation for the golf course consists of several fortuitous but potentially impermanent pillars.

- Pillar one: The director is a passionate golfer, retired from one occupation and negotiated a 10-month yearly contract. As such, the number of hours devoted to the course is more than the contractual requirement. Finding a replacement may be more expensive and less effective than the current employee.
- Pillar two: The supply of volunteers and part time employees, especially with their high levels of experience and motivation may be difficult to maintain from a shrinking population base.
- Pillar three: Aging infrastructure, primarily the main irrigation lines, will be very expensive to repair if damaged by an event or degraded by time. Profits are sufficient for equipment and facility maintenance and needed upgrades but insufficient for major repairs or renovations.

FINDINGS

- F1. The rising number of rounds played, and the increasing number of annual memberships attest to the successful balance of affordability, availability and course quality.
- F2. The continued profitability of the Diamond Mountain Golf Club attests to the efficient management of funds, personnel and property.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. Document the currently successful process, as much as practical, into a Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) so the eventual replacement will have a suitable reference.
- R2. Attempt to retain enough in the Golf Course Enterprise Fund to address potential infrastructure failures.
- R3. Continue the effort to ensure adherence to the "honor system" of paying a reduced rate to play either after hours or when the weather is suitable, but the course is not open for the season.

The current staff and supporting personnel are well qualified and motivated to balance stakeholder interests and maintain the standards of the Diamond Mountain Golf Club. The committee and Grand Jury wish to thank them for their prompt, personable and professional support in this inquiry and to wish them success with this challenge.

PUBLIC DEFENDER INQUIRY

INQUIRY SUMMARY

Lassen County's response to the unavailability of a Public Defender, contracting a local legal firm, has been an expensive experiment that has overwhelmed the District Attorney's office and is due for an examination. The 2025-26 Lassen County Grand Jury began an inquiry into this subject.

BACKGROUND

In 2021 Lassen County lost its salaried Public Defender and replaced that position with contracted regional attorneys as local attorneys were not available. The District Attorney (DA) posted an open letter in 2025 describing the extreme workload in the DA's office and the challenges to hiring personnel to meet the workload requirements. During an interview in the previous Grand Jury, the DA mentioned that part of that workload was from Lassen County not having a Public Defender's office and that function was now contracted out to a regional law firm. This contract provided a financial incentive for public defender lawyers to take every case to trial instead of plea bargaining.

METHODOLOGY

The committee selected 5 rural counties in California with similar populations from the California Demographics by Cubit website. Figure (1) below lists the selected counties and their approximate populations. The world population website, among others, list varying degrees of population decrease in Lassen County.

The next step was to request the number of jury trials for each of those counties for 2019 to 2024 from the Public Access to Judicial Administrative Records (PAJAR) section of the Judicial Council of California. 2024 jury trial numbers were not available yet from them. 2024 numbers for Lassen County were provided by the Lassen County Superior Court. The jury trials are shown in Figure (2).

County	Pop	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Siskiyou	42K	20	6	4	18	8	56
Amador	42K	9	2	4	6	9	30
Lassen	28K	6	3	2	9	13	33
Glenn	28K	0	0	1	0	4	5
Del Norte	27K	11	6	8	6	5	36
Total		46	17	19	39	39	160

Figure (2)

Del Norte and Lassen counties both have a prison (Pelican Bay, High Desert State Prison) and neither have a Public Defender (Lassen has not since 2021). This does not make the counties identical but for the examination of trends, it should suffice. The number of jury trials recorded by PAJAR is substantially smaller than the number recorded by the Lassen County District Attorney's office but are used only to illustrate the variation between counties and the surge in Lassen County after the loss of the Public Defender.

DISCUSSION

There are two aspects of the current situation. The first is to tackle the "supply issue" by augmenting the District Attorney's office to handle the increased caseload. This has been completed to good effect.

The second course of action is to focus on the "demand side" at the Public Defender's office.

During a web page survey of the 5 selected counties, the committee observed that Del Norte County did not have a salaried Public Defender. During a call to discuss the nature of the Lassen County Civil Grand Jury Inquiry, the District Attorney explained their process.

- Del Norte County has a yearly contract negotiation with local lawyers for one flat yearly rate for a felony and another flat yearly rate for a misdemeanor Public Defender.
- Del Norte County has not experienced a rise in number of jury trials since the inception of this policy. (see Figure (2))

- This policy is not possible in Lassen County due to the dearth of local attorneys, hence the exorbitant contract with a Chico law firm.

Since contracting local lawyers is not a viable option, an alternative would be to identify the potential costs savings from ending the Chico contract using those funds to hire a public defender if those savings are a sufficient inducement.

- A potential pitfall to this option is that jury trials drop to their previous low level and the county ends up paying above market salary and benefits to an under employed Public Defender.

FINDINGS

F3. The number of cases going to trial increased at a rate that is inconsistent with other similar counties such as Del Norte and a shrinking population.

F4. Public defense costs to the county are increasing while the population is decreasing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee has no recommendations since the primary personnel responsible for dealing with this situation, District Attorney Melyssah Rios and Samantha McMullen, the Deputy County Administrative Officer are very well qualified and motivated to balance stakeholder interests and implement a suitable solution. The committee and Grand Jury wish to thank them for their prompt, personable and professional support in this inquiry and to wish them success with this challenge.

TOUR REPORT OF LASSEN COUNTY DETENTION FACILITIES

California Penal Code (919(b) states "The Civil Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county." The following is a summary of those inquiries:

TOUR OF THE HIGH DESERT STATE PRISON (HDSP):

On February 10th, members of the Grand Jury conducted the annual inspection of state prison operations, conditions and management. The inspection began with a presentation by the acting warden and an opportunity to meet the primary staff. The staff were professional and personable, and all questions were answered fully and candidly. The recent excellent results of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) Office of the Inspector General (IG) inspection, no findings, was a testament to the capable staff. The only concern expressed by the warden concerned a planned 25% reduction in the statewide maintenance budget. The warden addressed the primary concern of the Grand Jury members by reassuring them of the positive prospects of the HDSP's continued and expanding presence in Lassen County. The Grand Jury then toured the entire facility before an informal lunch and closing comments.

TOUR OF THE LASSEN COUNTY ADULT DETENTION FACILITY (LCADF):

On November 5th, members of the Grand Jury conducted the annual inspection of county jail operations, conditions and management. The inspection began with an introduction by the Sheriff and an opportunity to meet the jail staff. The staff were professional and personable, and all questions were answered fully and candidly. The recent excellent results of the CDCR IG inspection, no findings, was a testament to the capable staff. The only concern expressed by the jail captain was the challenges in hiring personnel due to a combination of low wages and high healthcare costs. High healthcare costs were partially due to the limited pool size and bargaining power and it is unclear why they cannot join a statewide pool. This level of staffing restricts their ability to respond to personnel issues such as medical emergencies, without bringing on primary staff to fill temporarily vacant positions. The Grand Jury then toured the entire facility before closing comments.

LASSEN COUNTY HISTORICAL COURT HOUSE MODERNIZATION PROJECT INQUIRY

INQUIRY SUMMARY:

The Lassen County Grand Jury conducted an inquiry regarding the Lassen County Historical Court House modernization project. This is not an audit regarding the finances nor is it a detailed project analysis. The findings are the opinions of this Grand Jury based on the information and documents reviewed.

BACKGROUND:

For over a decade, Lassen County has been actively pursuing the modernization of its historical courthouse. Conceptual meetings were conducted, the funding was acquired, architects and engineers were selected. During the 2024-2025 Grand Jury year, some members were given a tour of the Court House. At that time it appeared the project was nearing completion, which would allow the various County Departments to return to the newly renovated building.

During current investigations of other County Departments, it was brought to our attention the building was still not occupied. Therefore, we decided to investigate the status of the project. Our goal was to understand if Lassen County has appropriate guidelines or procedures, often referred to as a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), to give staff direction when tasked with projects like this.

METHODOLOGY:

The committee examined construction documents as well as other County documents associated with the Court House Modernization. We spoke with individuals that had information regarding the Court House Modernization, which will be referred to as "The project" in this report.

DISCUSSION :

Research revealed the following:

D1. The project was divided into phases, 0 through 4. We believe this was done to aid in management of the project. It appears Phase 0 was conducted by Lassen County public works and other county employees, primarily creating temporary work space during the project. This did not use a significant amount of funding or employee time.

D2. During our review, we discovered that Phase 1, the demolition portion of the project, went well. Plans and specifications were created, bids were requested and awarded, and

the project was completed in the agreed to amount to time with limited changes or expenses.

D3. During our review, we discovered that Phase 2, the Seismic Retrofit also went well. Again, plans and specifications were created, bids requested and awarded, and this phase was also completed in the agreed to amount of time with limited changes or expenses.

D4. During our review, we discovered that Phase 3, the final construction phase, which included installation of fixtures, mechanicals, paints, coatings, cabinets, floors, and all other specified materials did not go well. Again, plans and specifications were created, bids were requested and awarded. However, prior to the completion of the project, the contractor filed suit for breach of contract against the County, which has delayed the use of the building. This has cost Lassen County a significant amount of money maintaining the historical court house and housing the displaced employees including the loss of production for staff as the County has been working through the litigation process.

FINDINGS :

F1. We understand that during projects like this most, if not all, guidance comes from the architects and engineers. Since projects of this nature often occur years apart for a County the size of Lassen with limited staff, it is practical to rely on outside professionals for guidance regarding projects that are under the purview of the Department of the State Architect, (DSA). Construction projects involving DSA codes and rules are much more involved.

F2. Because the same architect was responsible for all three phases of this project, and the County Staff remained consistent through out all 3 phases, it is our opinion that the Lassen County Historical Court House projects were well-planned and well-executed by the County.

F3. After a review of documents, it is our opinion that the general contractor responsible for phase 3 did not and has not met his contractual obligation. Reviewing the punch list, we see that the general contractor did not provide proper site supervision. Further more, it is our opinion that the lawsuit filed by the contractor against Lassen County is just a tactic to postpone the County's ability to use the Contractor's Required Performance Bond to complete the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS :

R1. Upon completion of this Modernization Project, we recommend Lassen County review any existing SOPs and develop a comprehensive SOP for the planning and oversight of any future construction projects. We are very pleased that our County has used, and hopefully with continue to take advantage of, specialized consultants like architects and engineers

to ensure compliance and provide guidance with the ever-changing regulations, codes, rules, and laws.

R2. As a part of the future comprehensive SOP, it may be advantageous to develop a pre-qualification guideline for hiring contractors. This could benefit other County departments, including public works, for any future project where a private contractor is needed, preventing a similar situation in the future.

Spalding Community Services District Investigation

SUMMARY

What is a Special District? Why is it “special?” In plain language, a special district is a separate local government that delivers a limited number of public services to a geographically limited area. Special districts have four distinguishing characteristics.

Special districts:

- Are a form of government.
- Have governing boards. Spalding Community Services District has 5 elected board members
- Provide services and facilities:
 - Fire Protection: Delivered primarily through volunteer residential personnel.
 - Emergency Medical Services: Provided by trained community volunteers, who provide comfort and first aid only. Every emergency service call is also routed to CalFire, who provides EMT and transport services.
 - Sewer and Wastewater Collection and Treatment: Operated in compliance with applicable State and Federal regulatory requirements.
 - Recreational Facilities: Facilities consist of a community recreation center and boat ramp.
- Have defined boundaries.

Inadequate revenue bases and competing demands for existing taxes make it hard for counties and cities to provide all the services that their constituents want. When residents or landowners want new services or higher levels of existing services, they can form a district to pay for them. Fire districts, irrigation districts, cemetery districts, and mosquito abatement districts exist today because taxpayers were willing to pay for public services they wanted.

Special districts localize the costs and benefits of public services. Special districts let residents get the services they want at prices they’re willing to pay. So, what’s so special about special districts? Focused services. Special districts are a type of local government that delivers specific, focused, public services within defined boundaries.

There are 29 Special Districts in Lassen County. The Lassen County Civil Grand Jury, (LCCGJ), conducted an inquiry into the Spalding Community Services District, initially prompted by several resident concerns.

GLOSSARY

LAFCO	Local Agency Formation Commission
CPRR	California Public Records Request
SCSD	Spalding Community Services District
LCCGJ	Lassen County Civil Grand Jury

BACKGROUND

The Eagle Lake Community Service District was formed by Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and in 1985 was renamed Spalding Community Services District (SCSD) in 1992. The SCSD is comprised of two noncontiguous areas, one being where the wastewater evaporation ponds are located, and one area immediately adjacent to Eagle Lake, both areas encompass approximately 360 acres.

The community of Spalding is comprised of approximately 150 year round fulltime residents, part-time summer residents and visitors add approximately 1,000 more residents to the immediate area.

In 2007 residential members of the Spalding Community Services District voted to create a municipal bond to finance the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the wastewater collection and treatment facility. The district applied for and was granted a municipal bond by the US Department of Agriculture for \$9,427,703. The bond was refinanced in 2017 and is currently held by fiscal agent US Bank National Association, and administered/serviced by WilDan Financial Services.

It is the responsibility of each legal parcel owner inside the Spalding Community Services District to repay the bond in the amount of \$548.00 yearly through a separate designation on the Lassen County Property Tax bill. The Bond Administrator tracks delinquencies and issues foreclosure notices when appropriate. The Grand Jury was originally contacted by a concerned resident of the Spalding Community concerning their bond payments. Several Spalding property owners informed the Lassen County Grand Jury that they had received written notifications from the Bond Administrator regarding nonpayment of their bond obligation and the possibilities of foreclosure on the delinquent bond assessment.

METHODOLOGY

The Lassen County Grand Civil Jury conducted an on-site visit to Spalding Community Services District in Sept 2025. During the visit a board member and staff were interviewed and documentation was requested. These documents were bank statements, expenditures and income for Fiscal Year 2024 / 2025.

An interview was conducted with a resident of the Spalding Community.

Further interviews were conducted with the Acting General Manager, board members and staff of Spalding Community Services District. During these interviews questions and clarifications regarding submitted documentation of bank statements, expenditures, the fiscal bond agreement, the bond refinance and bond payment procedures were discussed.

The Lassen County Grand Jury also reviewed the LAFCO Municipal Service Review Report, (April 8, 2024), the 2024 CPA audit, the District Policy Procedure manual, and the February 2025 Regional Water Quality Control Board report.

DISCUSSION

D1: The latest CPA audit noted several deficiencies.

- *Internal controls in detecting material errors in the District's financial statements.* These deficiencies were caused by a lack of knowledge in GAAP, (Generally Accepted Accounting Practices).
- *Sewer quarterly account receivables.* The office staff and bookkeeping service continue to address the inaccuracies and update billing information.
- *No procedures in place to collect delinquent receivables.* The District has pursued recourse by way of attaching certificates, (liens), to properties with delinquent quarterly balances. They also are enforcing due dates and late fees.
- *Misappropriation of funds.* Although some expenses were misallocated, the expenses themselves were not found to be fraudulent or invalid but only allocated to the wrong accounts. These errors necessitated transferring the expense allocations to the correct accounts.
- *Minimal segregation of duties.* The district has struggled with a severe lack of trained and consistent staffing. These staffing shortages have resulted in fewer staff having to perform overlapping duties. The staffing, training and updated procedures have alleviated much of this overlap.

D2: The latest LAFCO Municipal Service Review

- *Website Transparency.* This deficiency was largely because of staff being untrained as to the Brown Act requirements regarding timely notification of meetings, posting financial information, updating rosters, certification status, annual budgets and financial statements. These issues have been addressed, and the website transparency is much improved.
- *Public Records Requests.* See below, this issue is addressed under Resident Complaints.
- *Ethics Training.* All staff and volunteers are now current on ethics training requirements.
- *Fire Department and volunteers, certifications.* Currently all fire department staff and volunteers have the appropriate certifications.
- *Financial misappropriation, transferring funds from one account to another.* This deficiency was also addressed in the CPA audit, see above, and staff training and software upgrades have alleviated this problem. Again, no fraudulent or invalid expenditures were noted.

D3: The latest State Water Board Audit (Regional Report)

- Violations included many reporting or failure to report issues. Of note were 2 spills not reported, failure to upload required reports, and having no schedule for tracking preventive measures and operational maintenance.

D4: Resident Complaints

As noted in the LAFCO MSR, “*voluminous*” complaints continue to plague the District’s small staff with Public Records Requests, (CPRRs). Most complaints revolve around Brown Act violations, Cure and Correct demands, and transparency. These complaints are usually accompanied by CPRRs.

As an example, the board on February 12th, 2026, addressed 10 emails received in the previous month. Those 10 emails, from the same member, included the requests categorized by type and totaled below.

Type	Count
Substantive records / information requests	184
Procedural / format / CPRA compliance requests	52

Type	Count
Grand total — all individual requests	236

(The 17 page description of requests can be viewed on the Districts website under Board Meetings. <https://www.spaldingcsd.org/board-meetings#docaccess-6fc55e3411d07b0cf774d0d86fd9f8cf6fae6bca12e7bdd6e117bedb63c35d2d>)

The District has also been served with 2 lawsuits in the past year. One was vacated, and one, Case #CV0076783 vs the District and Fire Department is scheduled for a status review hearing on July 16, 2026.

These CPRRs are legal, anyone can request public records. The District's staff and volunteers do their best to respond to these requests. The General Manager, who has only been on the job for 3 months, has developed a system to track CPRR, Cure and Corects, and general complaints and concerns. Each request is acknowledged within 10 days, as required by statute. The requests are then handled based on date of receipt. The volume of documents requested in just one month is daunting. Some require more time to complete and require outside input from legal professionals and government agencies.

As a result, the District had to hire an office assistant and significantly increase its use of legal services. Over the past 16 months, the District has incurred bills totaling \$124,407.63. (This does not reflect the current outstanding balance)

FINDINGS

F1: Financial reporting shows general alignment with expectations, though transparency could be enhanced with clearer categorization and scheduling of disclosures.

F2: Opportunities exist to strengthen communication with constituents and incorporate structured feedback mechanisms.

F3: The accounts receivable ledger (pertaining to the quarterly sewer maintenance only) were found to be inaccurate in the last CPA audit and have since been reconciled.

F4: Resident complaints regarding ADA, Brown Act violations and Public Records Requests have increased resulting in delayed resolution of resident complaints.

F5: Delayed resolution of resident complaints has resulted in the increased need to utilize professional services, specifically, legal advice.

F6: The Jury finds that during the span of our investigation, (9 months), the District has made substantial headway in resolving issues noted in the audits and reports mentioned under Discussion. The Board, office staff, Fire Department staff, and many volunteers should be commended for their hard work, dedication and determination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1: It is the Grand Jury's opinion that an inordinate amount of time and resources are spent responding to resident complaints, many of which appear to be frivolous, and irrelevant. The Jury recommends that the District continue its diligent efforts to track, respond and resolve these complaints and post the progress and outcomes on its website to increase transparency and resident confidence.

Relates to F2, F4, F5

R2: It is recommended that the District complete the purchase, installation and training of new computer hardware and workstations. Technical enhancements will greatly improve staff productivity, reduce the need for some overlapping of duties, and improve challenges in communication with residents.

Relates to F1, F2, F3, F4, F5

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Lassen County Board of Supervisors

INVITED RESPONSES

Spalding Board of Directors

LASSEN COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER INQUIRY

INQUIRY SUMMARY:

The Civil Grand Jury commenced an inquiry of the Animal Shelter at a citizen's request received late in the session.

BACKGROUND:

Lassen County Public Works is responsible for the Animal Shelter. Public Works leadership turmoil due to retirement and death complicated the inquiry.

METHODOLOGY:

On January 29th members of the grand jury conducted an inspection of the Lassen County Animal Shelter, including conditions of the building and of the shelter animals. The members also held discussions with the manager and staff on duty at the time.

DISCUSSION:

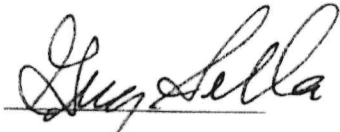
The staff were professional and answered all questions fully and candidly. The only concerns expressed by management and staff were maintenance issues of the building and grounds. One issue was lack of heat in the kennel area. Another issue identified in the complaint was an administrative impediment to volunteer dog walkers. On follow up inquiries it was found the heaters had been replaced and were functioning properly but insurance for volunteer dog walkers remained an issue.

Due to the lack of time to conduct a thorough examination, there are no Findings or Recommendations.

GRAND JURY APPROVAL

California Penal Code **§933**(a) states: "Each grand jury shall submit to the presiding judge of the superior court a final report of its findings and recommendations that pertain to county government matters during the fiscal or calendar year..."

In conformance with the above Penal Code requirement, the 2025 - 2026 Lassen County Grand Jury approves and respectfully submits this report to the Honorable Mark R. Nareau, Presiding Judge, Superior Court of California, County of Lassen.



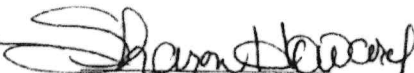
Greg Sella, Foreperson



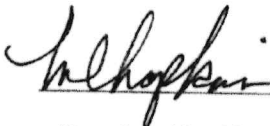
Leighton Ratkey



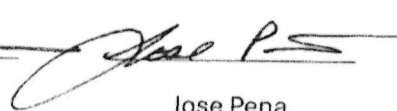
Matthew Denney



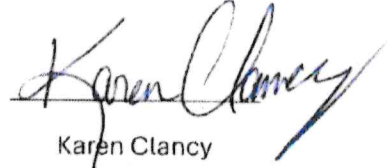
Sharon Howard



Mary Lou Hopkins



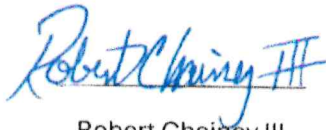
Jose Pena



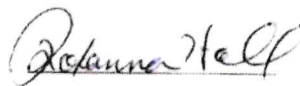
Karen Clancy



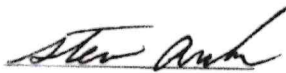
Lucas Shannon



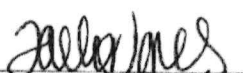
Robert Chainey III



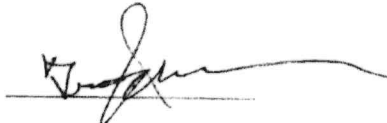
Roxanna Hall



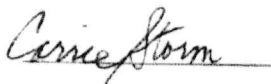
Steven Anderson



Taelor Jones



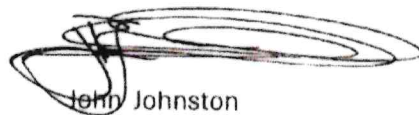
Terry Johnson



Carrie Storm



Edward Morris



John Johnston

