



County Administrator's Office

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Superior Court of California
County of Tuolumne

By: Dana Feeley Clerk

August 18, 2020

Judge of Superior Court
Honorable Kate Powell Segerstrom
Tuolumne County Superior Court
60 North Washington Street
Sonora, CA 95370

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report – **Tuolumne County Employment Practices**

Dear Judge Powell-Segerstrom:

The following is offered in response to the 2019-2020 Grand Jury Report as it pertains to the **Tuolumne County Employment Practices-Rules, Regs and Recruiting**.

Grand Jury Findings

- F1.** Despite public perception, conflict of interest rules was not violated during recruitment and appointment of the Public Defender.
Response: Agree
- F2.** Despite public perception, adequate precautions were in place in the form of an ethical wall to remove County Counsel from all involvement in the appointment of the Public Defender.
Response: Agree
- F3.** The Tuolumne County Personnel Rules and Regulations were last updated in 1997, leaving them woefully in need of an update to current human resource practices.
Response: Agree
- F4.** Tuolumne County does not have a key employee succession plan in place, which stifles upward mobility and professional growth for certain mid-level positions.

We support the Board of Supervisors in achieving their goals through service and collaboration with County Departments and the Community.

Response: Partially Disagree

- F5.** Conflict of Interest Agreements were entered into with the County and County Counsel and the County and the Public Defender to establish and maintain conflict of interest protocols.

Response: Agree

- F6.** Salaries for Tuolumne County Public Defender and other similar department heads are fair and equitable as determined by an independent study.

Response: Agree

Grand Jury Recommendations

- R1.-2.** To avoid public misperceptions, the Grand Jury recommends County Administration improve methods of communication and transparency during high-level and potentially controversial personnel activities, by explaining its goals through various methods such as print, voice, and social media. The FPPC should be consulted whenever possible so that opinions and advice on conflicts of interest that are of public interest are neutral, cost effective, and open and accessible to the public.

Response: Although most personnel activities are confidential, where there may be areas of issues with public perception, the County can detail how these issues will be handled in the Board memo. All Board appointed positions are approved by the Board during a public Board meeting. The County does consult with the FPPC, but this process is no less than 30 days and most often several months. Therefore, the County may also opt to use outside legal counsel if a the FPPC cannot respond in a reasonable amount of time.

- R3.** The Grand Jury recommends 1997 Personnel Rules and Regulations are updated, approved, and posted to the County website by December 31, 2020. (F3)

Response: The updated personnel rules have been drafted and are currently under review with the CAO and County Counsel. Upon the completion of this process, the department heads will then be given the ability to comment prior to sending the updated rules to all bargaining units. Once the meet and confer process is completed with the bargaining units, the updated Personnel Rules and Regulations will be presented to the Board for adoption. This entire process should be completed by March 2021.

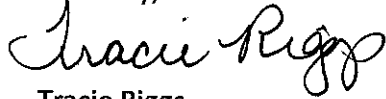
- R4.** The Grand Jury recommends County Administration and Human Resources develop a Key Employee Succession plan by June 30, 2021.

Response: While the County does not have a formal key employee succession plan, regular conversations are held with department heads to discuss staff members

that may promote to higher level positions to give them ample training opportunities.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above findings and recommendations. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Tracie Riggs
County Administrative Officer



Ann Fremd
Human Resource Director