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VENTURA COUNTY
GRAND JURY

City of Santa Paula



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August 19, 2015

The Honorable Donald D. Coleman
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Ventura
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

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OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDING JUDGE

*DK
8/27/15*

Dear Judge Coleman:

On June 1, 2015, the Ventura County Grand Jury issued its report entitled "Detention Facilities and Related Law Enforcement Issues." The Report discusses the results of inspections of each detention facility in Ventura County where persons are placed into custody. The Report further identified areas in need of improvement, such as increasing police staffing to be more consistent with the City's needs. At the conclusion of the Report, the Grand Jury requested a response from the City to Findings FI-04 and FI-07, and Recommendations R-02, R-07 and R-08. We provide the following responses to these Findings and Recommendations in accordance with Penal Code §933.05.

Finding:

FI-04 *The Santa Paula Police Department is significantly understaffed in sworn officers and operating with an inadequate and deteriorating physical facility. This limits its ability to respond to detainee and city needs.*

The City agrees with Finding FI-04. The City understands that it is operating below staffing levels to adequately meet the needs of the community and has been actively conducting recruiting efforts to fill the positions left vacant by personnel turnovers and past retirements. In an attempt to rectify this condition, the City has been, and will continue to, actively recruit in order to increase the number of law enforcement officers.

Built in 1962, the current police department building was utilized as the City's courthouse until the opening of the Ventura County Government Center. In 1982, the police department building was remodeled and reopened as the current City's Police headquarters and has been utilized in that capacity ever since. While the facility has been improved and repaired over the years, continuous occupation of the facility 24/7 has resulted in advanced wear and tear. The City agrees with this finding and is exploring several means of funding in order to facilitate improvements to the current police department facility.

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FI-07 *Proposition 47's consequences, both intended and unintended, are only beginning to be evaluated. Early indications are that it may be successful in reducing the State prisoner population, but the effects on local law enforcement agencies and communities are yet to be understood.*

The City agrees that Proposition 47 may be successful in ultimately reducing the State's prison populations. Currently, the Santa Paula Police Department is monitoring and evaluating Proposition 47's effect on local enforcement and crime trends.

Recommendations:

R-02 *The Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff's Office, Probation, and city councils closely track and evaluate the impact of Proposition 47 on local law enforcement agencies and communities and report findings to the Board of Supervisors.*

In accordance with this recommendation, the City approved a Proposition 47 implementation plan two days after the proposition's passage in November 2014. The impacts, effects and results that Proposition 47 will have on the City are currently unknown. The City anticipates implementing data collection procedures in order to accurately report Proposition 47's impacts upon law enforcement and the community to the Board of Supervisors.

R-07 *The Grand Jury recommends that the Santa Paula City Council support an increase in police staffing consistent with the city's needs.*

The City of Santa Paula recognizes that its Police Department is understaffed below its allotted sworn personnel staffing of 30. Currently, there are 28 sworn officer positions filled. Four grant-funded positions remain open as noted above, and recruitment is ongoing. In accordance with this recommendation, the City is currently actively recruiting for officers with either entry level experience, or officers who have completed academy training or have been previously trained.

R-08 *The Grand Jury recommends that the Santa Paula City Council authorize the repair/upgrade of the inadequate and deteriorating facilities of the Santa Paula Police Department.*

The City agrees with this recommendation and has begun to identify and prioritize the necessary improvements and repairs to its police facilities. The City is also aggressively seeking sources of revenue in order to fund the necessary improvements and repairs.

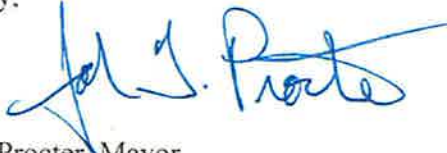
The Honorable Donald D. Coleman

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We thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Report. Should you have any further questions or desire any further information, please contact me or City Manager Jaime Fontes.

Sincerely,



John T. Procter, Mayor

cc: Santa Paula City Council
Jaime M. Fontes, City Manager
Elizabeth Paniagua, Assistant to the City Manager
Steven McLean, Chief of Police
Robert Stewart, Ventura County Grand Jury Foreperson