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May 19, 2017

Ventura County
Grand Jury

Sent Via E-Mail

J. Matthew Carroll
Assistant County Executive Officer

Catherine Rodriguez
County Chief Financial Officer

Shawn Atin
Assistant County Executive Officer/
Human Resources Director
Labor Relations

Honorable Patricia M. Murphy
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Superior Court of California, Ventura County
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Subject: Board of Supervisors' Response to 2016-17 Grand Jury Final Report on Campaign Contributions Transparency

Honorable Judge Murphy:

In accordance with State requirements, responses from the Ventura County Board of Supervisors to the 2016-2017 Final Grand Jury report referenced above is hereby submitted.

By way of this e-mail, copies of the response to the subject report (Exhibit #1), the Minute Order and the May 16, 2017 board letter were provided to the Ventura County Clerk, to Superior Court Jury Services and to the Foreperson of the 2016-17 Ventura County Grand Jury. As has been the usual practice in past years, Jury Services will provide copies of the responses to the State Archives.

Should you have any questions, please call me at 654-2864 or Kathleen Van Norman at 654-2566.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Matthew Carroll
Assistant County Executive Officer

Attachments:
Board of Supervisors' Response to 2016-17 Grand Jury Final Report on:
Campaign Contributions Transparency (Exhibit #1)
Minute Order
Board Letter dated May 16, 2017

Copies:

County Executive Officer, Michael Powers
County Clerk, Mark A. Lunn
Foreperson, Pamela Ann Riss, 2016-17 Ventura County Grand Jury
Superior Court Jury Services, Nan Richardson, Manager

EXHIBIT 1

FY 2016-2017 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

RESPONSES TO FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Number (& Date)	Report Title	Respondents (With FI, C and R #)
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REPORT NO. 01 December 1, 2016

Title: **Campaign Contributions Transparency**

Required Respondent: **Board of Supervisors**
(C-01, and C-04 plus R-01)

Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title Campaign Contributions Transparency

Report Date: December 1, 2016

Response by: Robert Bravo Title: County Executive Office

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: _____
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: C-01 and C-04

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R01 have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ require further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 5-16-17 Signed: _____

Chair, Board of Supervisors



Number of pages attached 3

ATTEST: MICHAEL POWERS
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura, State of California

By: Lon James
Deputy Clerk of the Board

GRAND JURY REPORT RESPONSE
Campaign Contributions Transparency

The County welcomes the Grand Jury's continued participation in and oversight of the elections process. We share the common goal of ensuring an open, transparent and fair election process for all voters and office candidates of Ventura County. The Board of Supervisors would, however, recommend the Grand Jury consider having the County Clerk and Recorder respond to this Grand Jury Report. The Clerk and Recorder, an independently elected official, per the County's Campaign Finance Reform Ordinance (Div. 1, Ch. 2, Art. 6 of Ventura County Ordinance Code), is responsible for receiving the mandated electronic filings for the County and therefore is also responsible for selecting, operating and maintaining the County's Campaign Financial Contributions reporting system. Although the Board of Supervisors is providing this response as required, the County Clerk and Recorder is the more appropriate party to respond to this Grand Jury report. The Board's response is not on his behalf.

Grand Jury Conclusions

C-01. The County's website only provides access to transactions from electronically filed documents. However, the website is overly complicated, not intuitive, and may require the assistance of county staff in its navigation. Access to records of non-electronically filed monetary contributions requires a visit to the Registrar of Voters Office. (FA-01)

RESPONSE:

We partially disagree with this conclusion.

It is correct that 1) a portion of campaign finance reports are available online through the Registrar of Voters E-Filing System while other campaign finance reports are currently available only in paper format at the Registrar of Voters Office, and 2) navigation and labeling on both the County and Clerk and Recorder websites, combined with the large number of different office filings, search, and data download options associated the contribution reporting web site make it more complicated compared to smaller local city sites, but not necessarily "overly" complex.

The Ventura County Campaign Finance Reform Ordinance mandates e-filing (electronic filing) only for County of Ventura candidates and independent expenditure committees. Candidates running for other offices (such as school districts or special districts) may file electronically by utilizing the Clerk and Recorder's E-Filing System, and many do; however, the County's Campaign Finance Reform Ordinance does not mandate that the campaign finance reports for these other offices be filed electronically. Approximately 300 office holders and candidates are required to file campaign finance reports on an annual, quarterly, or more frequent basis depending on their contributions and expenditures. Most of these campaign finance reports are filed with the Registrar of Voters in a paper format and are not displayed in the Clerk and Recorder's on-line system.

We partially disagree that the Clerk and Recorder's E-Filing System website is overly complicated. We agree that navigation to the site from the main County website, previous to the County adding a link on it's main website as recommended by the Grand jury, was not as straightforward as possible. An inquirer would have to know the County organizational structure and individual agency roles in order to know to go the County Clerk and Recorder's website to find the campaign finance reports. Additionally, once on the Clerk and Recorder's website, the labeling of the link

GRAND JURY REPORT RESPONSE

Campaign Contributions Transparency

to the campaign finance reporting site can be more intuitive to the layperson, as opposed to the current "Campaign Finance e-file system".

With regard to the complexity of the system, compared to local cities where, when available, a requestor need only navigate and search a small number (typically 5) of city council office filings, we agree the County Clerk and Recorder's system is more complex. This is due to the large number of filing offices and the multiple options available for searching these large number of filings. For example, the Clerk and Recorder's site allows an individual to:

- Download an Excel spreadsheet of the filings.
- Search By Name
- Search by Filer ID
- Search by Filing Date
- Search by Independent Expenditure
- Browse all filings by election date, office and candidate name

The availability of these multiple search options, while both beneficial and desirable to certain requestors and common for large County campaign finance reporting sites, (the County's system is the same system utilized by more than 20 large California counties), can make simple searches by inexperienced or infrequent inquirers complex and difficult.

As noted in the response to recommendation R-01 below, the County Executive Office has had a link added to the County's main website to make navigation to the campaign contribution finance reporting site more straightforward. Additionally, while options may be somewhat limited given a vendor software package is utilized that is also used by a large number of counties and cities throughout the state, it would certainly be beneficial for the County Clerk and Recorder's office to explore options with the software vendor for simplifying access to the information.

C-04. If the format of online information was consistent, the citizens of the County would be able to easily compare records of monetary contributions made to candidates for public office. The City of Simi Valley has the most user friendly format regarding monetary contributions online. (FA-09)

RESPONSE:

We partially disagree with the conclusion. We agree there are opportunities to simplify and improve the navigation and overall experience of the County Clerk and Recorder's campaign finance reporting site. However, once located, the report formats themselves at both our local cities and the County are already very similar in that both are essential on-line versions of state forms. Additionally, while navigational improvements and search simplification would be beneficial, duplicating the navigation and single display options of local cities, with their limited number of offices may not be practical or desirable. As previously noted, the Ventura County Campaign Finance Reform Ordinance mandates e-filing of campaign contribution reports for a relatively large number of County of Ventura offices, candidates and independent expenditure committees, in addition to allowing for the electronic filing of other offices on a discretionary basis.



BOARD MINUTES
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF VENTURA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

SUPERVISORS STEVE BENNETT, LINDA PARKS,
KELLY LONG, PETER C. FOY AND JOHN C. ZARAGOZA
May 16, 2017 at 8:30 a.m.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE - Approval of a Response to 2016-17 Ventura County
Grand Jury Report Entitled: Campaign Contributions Transparency for Submittal to the
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in Accordance with State Statute.

- (X) All Board members are present.
- (X) The following person is heard: Matt Carroll.
- (X) Upon motion of Supervisor Long, seconded by Supervisor Bennett, and duly carried, the Board hereby approves recommendations as stated in the Board letter.

I hereby certify that the annexed instrument is a true and correct copy of the document which is on file in this office.

Dated: 5/19/17 MICHAEL POWERS
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura, State of California

By: Lon James
Deputy Clerk of the Board

By: Brian Palmer
Brian Palmer
Chief Deputy Clerk of the Board



J. Matthew Carroll
Assistant County Executive Officer

Catherine Rodriguez
County Chief Financial Officer

Shawn Atin
Assistant County Executive Officer/
Human Resources Director
Labor Relations

May 16, 2017

County of Ventura
Board of Supervisors
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

SUBJECT: Approval of Response to 2016-2017 Ventura County Grand Jury Report: "Campaign Contributions Transparency" for Submittal to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in Accordance with State Statute.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that your Board approve the response to the subject Grand Jury report "Campaign Contributions Transparency (Exhibit 1) pertaining to county government under your authority for submittal to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in accordance with State statute.

DISCUSSION:

Penal Code §933.05 requires that your Board comment on the Findings and Recommendations of the Grand Jury pertaining to County government under your authority. The 2016-17 Ventura County Grand Jury issued a report on December 1, 2016 entitled, Campaign Contributions Transparency. The Grand Jury required a response from the Board of Supervisors, which was prepared on your behalf by the County Executive Office for your approval.

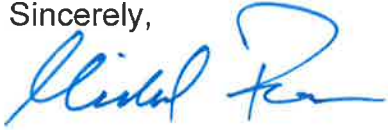
The response pertaining to County government under your control will serve as your Board's response to the subject 2016-2017 Grand Jury Report to be filed as indicated in the recommended action along with any additional comments your Board may wish to make.

If your Board elects to amend the response prepared on your behalf to the subject report before you for approval, then CEO staff, at your direction, will make such changes or additions prior to submitting the response to the Presiding Judge.

Board of Supervisors
May 16, 2017
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This letter was reviewed by County Executive Office, Auditor-Controller's Office and County Counsel. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Matt Carroll at 654-2864 or Kathleen Van Norman at 654-2566.

Sincerely,



Michael Powers
County Executive Officer

Exhibit 1 – “Campaign Contributions Transparency” (for approval)