



County of Santa Cruz

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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JOHN LEOPOLD
FIRST DISTRICT

ZACH FRIEND
SECOND DISTRICT

RYAN COONERTY
THIRD DISTRICT

GREG CAPUT
FOURTH DISTRICT

BRUCE MCPHERSON
FIFTH DISTRICT

June 29, 2016

The Honorable Judge John Gallagher
Santa Cruz Courthouse
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: RESPONSE TO THE 2015-16 GRAND JURY REPORT
"SANTA CRUZ COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY
BOARD REVISITED"

Dear Judge Gallagher:

The purpose of this letter is to formally transmit the response of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors to the 2015-2016 Grand Jury Report, titled "Santa Cruz County Mental Health Advisory Board Revisited."

Sincerely,

BRUCE MCPHERSON, Chair
Board of Supervisors

BM:fh
Attachment

cc: Clerk of the Board
Santa Cruz County Grand Jury



**The 2015-2016 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury
Requires that the
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
Respond to the Findings and Recommendations
Specified in the Report Titled

Santa Cruz County
Mental Health Advisory Board
Revisited

by July 18, 2016**

When the response is complete, please

1. Email the completed Response Packet as a file attachment to grandjury@scgrandjury.org, and
2. Print and send a hard copy of the completed Response Packet to

The Honorable Judge John Gallagher
Santa Cruz Courthouse
701 Ocean St.
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Instructions for Respondents

California law PC § 933.05 (included below) requires the respondent to a Grand Jury report to comment on each finding and recommendation within a report. Explanations for disagreements and timeframes for further implementation or analysis must be provided. Please follow the format below when preparing the responses.

Response Format

1. For the Findings included in this Response Packet, select one of the following responses and provide the required additional information:
 - a. **AGREE** with the Finding, or
 - b. **PARTIALLY DISAGREE** with the Finding and specify the portion of the Finding that is disputed and include an explanation of the reasons therefor, or
 - c. **DISAGREE** with the Finding and provide an explanation of the reasons therefor.
2. For the Recommendations included in this Response Packet, select one of the following actions and provide the required additional information:
 - a. **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED**, with a summary regarding the implemented action, or
 - b. **HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE**, with a timeframe or expected date for implementation, or
 - c. **REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS**, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for that analysis or study; this timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report, or
 - d. **WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.

Validation

Date of governing body response approval: 6/28/16

If you have questions about this response form, please contact the Grand Jury by calling 831-454-2099 or by sending an email to grandjury@scgrandjury.org.

Findings

F1. The Mental Health Advisory Board had not followed the recommendations of the 2013 - 2014 Grand Jury report and instead was less communicative and less effective.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The 2013-14 Grand Jury report on the Mental Health Advisory Board (MHAB) made findings and recommendations which have resulted in positive developments. In the recently released “Santa Cruz County Mental Health Advisory Board Revisited” report, the Grand Jury acknowledged recent changes and signs of improvement including:

- *“Board members discussed the need to establish structure and goals, assign roles, establish meeting dates, make recommendations to the BOS, and to develop a strategic plan for the coming year.*
- *The strategic plan will focus on recruiting potential new members and on collecting data to support their recommendations to the BOS.*
- *HSA offered the department’s full support for the MHAB, and will budget to cover the cost of a training and meeting facilitator, as well as a dedicated note taker to maintain proper agendas and minutes.”*

Pages 4 and 5 of the Grand Jury 2015-16 report, titled “Recent Changes,” further outlines positive actions taken by the Board of Supervisors.

F2. The Mental Health Advisory Board is not meeting the requirements of the Mental Health Services Act or achieving its own goals to advocate for persons with mental illness and to increase community awareness on issues related to mental health.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

With the new chair and additional MHAB members, and the establishment of a defined structure and goals, roles and responsibilities, as well as a strategic plan, the MHAB will further enhance its advocacy for persons with mental illness and increase community awareness on issues related to mental health.

The MHAB has reviewed and commented on all Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) budget and initiative proposals as presented by the HSA Behavioral Health Director and his staff.

F3. The Board of Supervisors is providing little or no direction, no specific goals and objectives, and no comprehensive training on how to be an effective advisory board.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The specific direction, goals and objectives of the Mental Health Advisory Board are provided by statute and located in County Code Sec. 2.104.050, "Powers and Duties." The goals and objectives of the Mental Health Advisory Board are also spelled out on the Board's website, as noted by the Grand Jury:

"The Santa Cruz County Mental Health Advisory Board provides advice to the governing body (Board of Supervisors) and the local mental health director. They provide oversight and monitoring of the local mental health system as well as advocate for persons with mental illness."

Training for County Boards, Commissions or Committees is provided at the staff level. The Board is provided with materials and information as needed to perform its advisory function effectively.

F4. Mental Health Advisory Board members attribute some of their deficiencies to the difficulty of filling vacant positions.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

F5. The Mental Health Advisory Board takes no responsibility for investigation or possible action on issues raised at their meetings, and there is no general process available for the public to raise concerns.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

With the establishment of defined structure, goals, roles and responsibilities for MHAB members as well as the development of a strategic plan, the MHAB will continue to embrace and ensure review of complaints/issues that are "system" issues and not individual or personality issues. Meeting minutes and agendas will reflect concerns and actions taken to resolve the concerns.

F6. Without any regular communication with the Board of Supervisors, except a written report once every two years, the Mental Health Advisory Board is not fulfilling its advisory responsibility.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The MHAB has met statutory requirements in submitting written reports to the Board of Supervisors. The MHAB has direct communications with the HSA Behavioral Health Director to collaborate on issues and issues and to make suggestions for new initiatives and/or improvement. The HSA Behavioral Health Director has included the MHAB's input on the County's Mental Health and Substance Abuse Strategic Plan and has brought forward the plan to the County Board of Supervisors.

F7. The Mental Health Advisory Board receives a great deal of information from local mental health agencies and professionals on available programs and services, but there is no mechanism to circulate and share the information with the community and to keep local mental health professionals up to date.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The new MHAB chair is working with MHAB Board and the HSA Behavioral Health Director to circulate and post relevant information regarding mental health programs and services to keep local mental health professionals up-to-date.

F8. The Grand Jury's involvement has resulted in an increased recognition that an effective Mental Health Advisory Board is important to the community and that more positive steps are needed for continuing improvement.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

Recommendations

R1. The appointed member of the Board of Supervisors should be an advocate for the Mental Health Advisory Board, meeting regularly with the Chair to establish goals, identify problem areas, suggest possible solutions, and should personally attend the monthly meetings. (F1-3, F6)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

Supervisor Caput has taken an active, leadership role with respect to the Mental Health Advisory Board. He has personally attended meetings and met with the Chair to establish goals and identify and rectify problem areas.

R2. The Board of Supervisors should make every effort to fill Mental Health Advisory Board vacancies immediately, provide training for new appointees, and provide annual professional training for all members on how to serve effectively on an advisory board. (F3, F4)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

Through Supervisor Caput, the Board has taken an active oversight role and is making every effort to make sure vacancies are filled promptly.

However – while a limited number of advisory bodies have participated in unfunded retreats -- the Board of Supervisors does not provide professional training to any of the 48 Boards, Commissions or Committees outlined in County Code as either wholly or partially comprised of County appointees. Members are nominated and chosen for their subject matter experience and expertise, and the Board relies on that experience and expertise to assure the MHAB and other bodies serve as effective advisors.

R3. The chair of the Mental Health Advisory Board should immediately notify the Board of Supervisors and the Clerk of the Board of vacancies.(F4)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE**

FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain scope and timeframe
(not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The MHAB will notify the Board of Supervisors by phone or email when vacancies arise.

R4. The Mental Health Advisory Board should advocate for their clients by following through with investigations of complaints, concerns, and questions, then reporting to the Health Services Agency and Board of Supervisors. (F5, F6)

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain scope and timeframe
(not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

As previously stated, the MHAB will continue to embrace and ensure review of complaints/issues that are “system” issues and not individual or personality issues. It is our understanding the MHAB has a follow-up process in place to assure that any community concerns were addressed.

R5. The Mental Health Advisory Board should hold an annual meeting to establish and evaluate strategic goals, prioritize those goals by focusing on problem areas, and establish committees to develop plans for problem resolution. (F8)

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain scope and timeframe
(not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

This decision is up to the membership of the MHAB, and County staff will support their decision. It is our understanding that the MHAB is planning a retreat sometime in the fall.

R6. Monthly meetings of the Mental Health Advisory Board should be conducted

according to County Code Chapter 2.104. In addition, they should be scheduled well in advance with times and locations made available to the public, conducted according to parliamentary procedure, physically arranged to invite public participation, and recorded in complete and accurate minutes that include discussion, decisions, actions, and public comments. (F5, F7, F8)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The MHAB is following parliamentary procedures and conducting meetings in accordance with the Brown Act. The meetings are open to the public, and accurate minutes are being recorded.

R7. The Mental Health Advisory Board, in cooperation with Health Services Agency staff support, should record presentations and publish summaries for the public, mental health professionals, and the Board of Supervisors.(F6, F7)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

We are unsure of what the Grand Jury means by “summaries.” If the Grand Jury is referring to meeting summaries, those are being recorded through the minutes. Meeting materials are also included in a public binder available at MHAB meetings. Further materials are within the discretion of the MHAB, and the Board would support any effort to produce them.

R8. The Mental Health Advisory Board should increase efforts to raise community awareness of mental health issues through public announcements, publications, speaking engagements, and other forms of community outreach. (F7)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain scope and timeframe

(not to exceed six months)

 WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

This is up to the membership of the MHAB, and the County will support any efforts to do so. It is our understanding the MHAB will be holding a series of town hall meetings along with other outreach efforts, including a possible mental health fair.