

San Joaquin County Grand Jury



STOCKTON POLICE DEPARTMENT 2008/2009 San Joaquin County Grand Jury

OBSERVATIONS

The 2008/2009 San Joaquin County Grand Jury toured the Stockton Police Department Main Facility and the Stewart-Eberhardt Building (SEB) on September 17, 2008. The Main Facility has been in operation for many years and appears to be in reasonable condition. The Grand Jury was impressed with the Evidence/Identification Section and the Property Room during its tour of the SEB; also with the Street Camera Monitoring that was managed by retired officers prior to the termination of this service due to limited funds.

At the time of the Grand Jury tour, the Department had 441 authorized positions of which 13 were vacant. On May 1, 2009, the City Manager, with approval from City Council, sent layoff notices to about 55 police officers in an effort to reduce the city's overall budget deficit.

The position of the Stockton Police Chief is currently vacant and the Assistant Chief of Police serves as the Interim Chief of Police. Three Stockton Police Chiefs have retired in a period of two and one-half years. The most recent Police Chief served only eight months before retiring in October 2008. It is imperative that the City Manager place a high priority on the recruitment of a new Police Chief. Failure to do so ignores the very real opportunity to appeal to the most valuable of all candidates who want to make a difference by serving this community well and improving the quality of life for all citizens.

The 911/Dispatch Center is a vital part of the communications link between the citizens, the police department and the officers in the field. As this is a 24-hour, seven day a week operation, having an adequately trained staff is essential to this unit. Managers stated they were experiencing staff shortages. A recent emergency evacuation of the Dispatch Center occurred with no interruption of service. The physical location of the call center in the basement of the police building makes it vulnerable to potential environmental damage and /or equipment failures. Maintaining an up-to-date emergency contingency plan is essential for this Center.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Grand Jury understands the City of Stockton's projected budget deficit. However, when funds become available, a high priority should be given to the restoration of police officer positions.
2. Develop a committee of elected officials and community leaders to participate with the City Manager and facilitate the recruitment and retention of a new Police Chief.
3. Develop a comprehensive plan for relocating the 911/Dispatch Center to a more suitable site.
4. Review existing emergency contingency plans for the 911/Dispatch Center and revise them as necessary.
5. Re-institute the Street Camera Monitoring, previously manned by retired officers, by utilizing the Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS).

RESPONSE REQUIRED

Pursuant to Section 933.05 of the California Penal Code:

The Stockton City Council shall report to the Presiding Judge of the San Joaquin County Superior Court, in writing and within 90 days of publication of this report, with a response as follows:

As to each finding in the report a response indicating one of the following:

- a. The respondent agrees with the finding.
- b. The respondent disagrees with the finding, with an explanation of the reasons therefore.

As to each recommendation, a response indicating one of the following:

- a. The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary of the action taken.
- b. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be with a time frame for implementation.
- c. The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation of the scope of analysis and a time frame not to exceed six (6) months.
- d. The recommendation will not be implemented, with an explanation therefore.