

**CALAVERAS COUNTY GRAND JURY
REPORT 2019-2020**



Calaveras County Grand Jury

2019-2020 FINAL REPORT

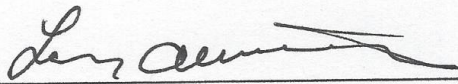
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DEC 21 2020

K. CAMPER Clerk of the Court
Superior Court of California
County of Calaveras

By K. Camper Deputy


The 2019-2020 Calaveras County Grand Jury approved the Final Report

S/: 

Larry Abernathy, Foreperson

Date: Dec. 21, 2020

I accept this Grand Jury report for the year 2019-2020 for filing and certify that it complies with Part II, Title IV of the California Penal Code.

S/: 

The Honorable Timothy S. Healy

Presiding Judge of the Superior Court

Date: 12-21-2020

CALAVERAS COUNTY GRAND JURY

Box 1414
SAN ANDREAS, CALIFORNIA 95249

December 21, 2020

The Honorable Timothy S. Healy
Calaveras County Superior Court
400 Government Center Drive
San Andreas, CA 95249-9794

Dear Judge Healy,

In conformance with California Penal Code §933 (a), the 2019-2020 Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury respectfully submits its final report to you, the Honorable Timothy S. Healy, Presiding Judge, Superior Court of California, Calaveras County.

The 2019-2020 Grand Jury overcame many challenges during its term, as outlined in the first three items below:

The Plenary:

It took the first few months to stabilize the Plenary, as we lost several of the original seated jurors due to the time commitment, family issues, and illnesses. The Grand Jury consists of 19 jurists in order to ensure a 12-member quorum (super majority). The 2019-2020 Grand Jury finished with 17 members (4 men and 13 women, diverse in age, life experiences, and expertise).

County Counsel:

Our second major challenge was the turnover of our legal advisors from the County Counsel Office. To obtain legal reviews of our reports, we had the help of five attorneys from the Calaveras County Counsel, one attorney from the Tuolumne County Counsel, in addition to the Calaveras County District Attorney.

COVID-19:

However, our greatest challenge was the COVID-19 pandemic that hit us in March of 2020. This restricted our ability to meet in person and we became the first Grand Jury in Calaveras County to use virtual meetings. Additionally, it slowed our ability to get final legal reviews and approvals to release our reports. As a result, you extended our term to December 31, 2020, so that we could complete the final report.

Final Report:

In our final report you will find seven Civil Government and Special District investigations were completed by the 2019-2020 Grand Jury. The following reports were completed by mandated inspection, citizen complaint investigations, or through inquiry investigation.

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Report</u>	<u>Released to the Public</u>
Grand Jury	"The Grand Jury Report Card"	October 7, 2020
Office of Emergency Services	"Disaster Preparedness"	October 7, 2020
Sheriff	"Calaveras Detention Centers"	October 14, 2020
Animal Services Office	"Animal Services"	October 15, 2020
Veteran Services Office	"Veteran Services"	October 21, 2020
Assessor's Office	"Assessor's Office"	December 16, 2020
CCFRPD	"Central Calaveras Fire..."	December 31, 2020

Appreciation:

To complete the reports, Grand Jurors took facility tours, observed operational activities, conducted interviews, and heard testimony of present and past elected officials, many department heads, and staff employees. The Grand Jury and I would like to thank each of the individuals that shared their time and testimony.

The Grand Jury and I would like to extend our appreciation throughout our term to the following: former Calaveras County Counsel Megan Stedtfeld, former Calaveras County Deputy Counsel Gregory Wayland, Calaveras County Counsel Sarah Edwards, Calaveras County Deputy Counsel Julie Moss-Lewis and Ben Davies, Tuolumne County Counsel Sarah Carrillo, Calaveras County District Attorney Barbara Yook, Calaveras Superior Court Judicial Support Assistant Doreen Balletti (retired) and Louise Boschke, the California Grand Jurors' Association, and the Mother Lode Chapter of the California Grand Jurors' Association.

I want to thank all the dedicated and hard-working Grand Jury members for their service. You can feel proud of what was accomplished, and it was an honor working with each of you.

Lastly, I want to personally thank you, Judge Healy, for the advice and counsel that you provided me throughout the past 18 months – what an experience!

Sincerely,



Larry Abernathy
Foreperson of 2019-2020 Grand Jury

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GRAND JURY INFORMATION

THE WHAT, WHO, AND WHY OF GRAND JURIES

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” – Margaret Mead

We all know that California is a special place. One of our unique qualities is our County Grand Jury system. Called a “civil” Grand Jury, it operates as an arm of the Superior Court of the county and provides an opportunity for self-governance.

In California, the Grand Jury system consists of 58 separate grand juries – one in each county – that is convened on an annual basis by the Superior Court to carry out a number of functions. One of these functions is investigating and reporting on the operations of local government - the “watchdog” function, a civil, rather than criminal investigation. The issuance of criminal indictments or allegations of a public official’s willful misconduct in office may follow from such investigations.

Every year, in each of California’s 58 counties, a group of ordinary citizens takes an oath to serve as an arbiter of local government. This body of equals is primarily concerned with matters of governmental effectiveness and efficiency. In addition to examining county and city government, the Civil Grand Jury reviews school districts, joint powers agencies, special districts, housing authorities, and other governing agencies to ensure that the best interests of the citizenry are served.

Grand Jurors are citizens of all ages and different walks of life bringing their unique personalities and abilities to the panel. All Grand Jurors are volunteers. They are gleaned from Voter Registration files as well as Department of Motor Vehicles records. Some are citizens who have submitted applications to serve their communities as Grand Jurors.

With regard to its watchdog authority, the Grand Jury is well suited to the effective investigation of local governments because it is an independent agency, operationally separate from the entities and officials it investigates. Civil Grand Jurors are officers of the Superior Court in the county in which they serve. They are members of the Judicial branch of government, as opposed to the Legislative or Executive branches.

The Grand Jury’s fact-finding efforts result in written reports which contain specific recommendations aimed at identifying problems as well as improving government operations and enhancing responsiveness to the citizens of the county.

THE GRAND JURY IN CALIFORNIA

Grand Juries have existed in the State of California since the adoption of California’s original Constitution in 1849-1850. The Constitution, Article 1, Section 23, requires that a Grand Jury “be drawn and summoned at least once a year in each county.” The Grand Jury system in California is unusual in that Federal and County Grand Juries in most states are concerned solely with criminal indictments and have no civil responsibilities.

The number of Grand Jurors impaneled each year is determined by the population of the county in which they reside. Counties with fewer than 20,000 citizens impanel 11 jurors; counties with 4 million or more citizens impanel juries of 23 individuals. Calaveras County fields 19 jurors for the duration of their one year of volunteer service.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GRAND JURY

The major function of the Calaveras County Grand Jury is to examine County and City government and special districts to ensure said entities are carrying out their duties to the citizens of the County. The Grand Jury is mandated to investigate the condition of jails and detention centers. Other than this annual requirement, the Grand Jury may pursue investigations as a truly independent body. Each Grand Jury is free to choose which local governmental entities or public officials to investigate. Ideas for investigations generally come by way of three avenues: citizen complaints, matters raised by members of the Grand Jury, and referrals from the preceding Grand Jury.

During its investigations, the Grand Jury acts as a finder of fact. In addition to determining if the official or entity under investigation is adhering to the laws that govern the operations of that entity, the jury analyzes whether the entity is operating in a businesslike manner and providing public services effectively and economically.

A final report is created after many hours of fact-finding investigations conducted by the Grand Jury. This report can disclose inefficiency, unfairness, wrongdoings, and violations of public law and regulations in local governments. The report can also recognize positive aspects of local governance and provide information to the public. The Grand Jury makes recommendations for change, requests responses, and follows up to ensure more efficient and lawful operation of government.

It is through its report that the Grand Jury wields its power. This report is influential because it may attract the attention of the media, and subsequently, the voting constituencies of the investigated officials and agencies.

WHY THE CITIZENS OF CALAVERAS COUNTY SHOULD CARE

Grand juries work. They can do what no other group or individual can do ó thoroughly, systematically, and without bias, delve into the actions and policies of local governmental entities and officials to evaluate their effectiveness in providing services to the people they are supposed to serve.

Calaveras County needs what their Grand Jury provides: an objective, non-partisan analysis of what works, and what does not work, in local government.

FINAL REPORT

The Final Report of the 2018-2019 Calaveras County Grand Jury includes the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury and is released to the presiding Calaveras County Superior Court Judge by July 1 of each year. It is made available to the 2019-2020 Grand Jury, the media, the public, and government officials. It will also be available on the Calaveras County Grand Jury website: <http://grandjury.calaverasgov.us/>.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INTERVIEWS

Reports issued by the Calaveras County Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. California Penal Code §929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

A Grand Jury report will never reveal how the Grand Jury, or any Grand Juror, voted.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLAIMER

A Grand Juror will recuse themselves if there is a conflict of interest (real or perceived) related to an investigation and that recusal shall be stated in the written report.

HOW TO CONTACT THE GRAND JURY

Those who wish to contact the Grand Jury may do so by writing to:

Calaveras County Grand Jury
P. O. Box 1414
San Andreas, CA 95249

A Citizen Complaint Form may be requested by calling (209) 754-5860. The form is also available at all County libraries and for download on the Grand Jury website at: <http://grandjury.calaverasgov.us/>. Completed forms may be mailed to the above Post Office Box or emailed to ccgrandjuryfore@gmail.com.

PRESS RELEASE

To Calaveras County Citizens,

A new Calaveras County Grand Jury is impaneled each year that consists of 19 citizens. Civil Grand Jurors are officers of the court and function as an independent body under the guidance of the Superior Court Judge.

The Civil Grand Jury is required by California Penal Code §919(b) to investigate public prisons and jails annually. Apart from the investigation mandated by law, only the Grand Jury decides what other County agencies or services it will investigate. Areas of inquiry may include all aspects of County government; the operation, records and accounts of County offices; allegations of corrupt and/or willful misconduct of public officials; and activities of all schools and special assessment districts within Calaveras County. Investigations may also be initiated in response to letters from citizens, newspaper articles and/or personal knowledge.

The Calaveras County Grand Jury works to ensure that the best interests of all citizens of the County are being served by their government bodies.

If you have a complaint or comment, please let the Grand Jury know. Grand Jury contact information is as follows:

MAILING ADDRESS:

Calaveras County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 1414
San Andreas, CA 95249

PHONE: (209) 754-5860

E-MAIL: ccgrandjuryfore@gmail.com

WEBSITE: <http://grandjury.calaverasgov.us/>

Respectfully,

2019-2020 Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

MEMBERS OF THE 2019-2020 CALAVERAS COUNTY GRAND JURY

Larry Abernathy, Foreperson

Brenda McHenry, Foreperson Pro Tem

Firman Brown, Sergeant-at-Arms

Chloe Shufeldt, Recorder

Diane Lloyd, Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary

Christine Gill, IT Officer

Lynne Bird

Thomas Buss

Juanita Drexel

Kecia Henton

Susan Hibbs

Sheila Krpan

Fay Messer

Pamela Rascoe

Marlene Settle

Susan Warren

Rex Whisnand



Calaveras County Grand Jury CITIZEN COMPLAINT FORM - CONFIDENTIAL

P.O. Box 1414 - San Andreas, CA 95249

(209) 754-5860 / Email: ccgrandjuryfore@gmail.com

The Calaveras County Grand Jury is a civil investigative body that deals with complaints falling within its jurisdiction. The Grand Jury may examine all aspects of county and city government, public schools, special districts, jails and detention centers.

Person filing the complaint:

Note: Your contact information is required to submit a citizen complaint and will be held in the strictest confidence.

Name	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
City/Town/Village	<input type="text"/>
Deputy Phone #	<input type="text"/>
Your Email Address	<input type="text"/>

Describe your complaint:

Identify the person(s) and/or the county or city government, public school, special district, jail or detention center that is the subject of the complaint. The complaint should clearly state specific and verifiable facts. Include all names, dates, places, etc.

Note: All information will be held in the strictest confidence.

The complaint is against	<input type="text"/>
Complaint details	<input type="text"/>

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

THE GRAND JURY REPORT CARD

RESPONSES TO THE 2018-2019 GRAND JURY REPORT

October 7, 2020



SUMMARY

The power of the Grand Jury lies in its ability to publish fact-based reports that inform and educate citizens as well as local government officials. Although the Grand Jury has no authority to enforce the recommendations included in such reports, it can determine whether local government agencies and officials have provided reasonable responses. These responses must follow a format and timeline clearly defined by law (California Penal Code §933.05). The independent work and voice of Grand Juries are strengthened when local government entities and officials are held accountable and responsible to the will of their constituents.

The 2019-2020 Calaveras County Grand Jury has reviewed the responses to the 2018-2019 Calaveras County Grand Jury Final Report for compliance with the law. This report presents the analysis of that review.

The 2019-2020 Calaveras County Grand Jury deemed most responses compliant regarding mandated response times; however, several respondents failed to comply with the relevant provisions of the Penal Code and/or were lacking detail by which the agency's subsequent actions could be gauged.

The 2019-2020 Calaveras County Grand Jury appreciates the time and attention that all responders devoted to the work of the 2018-2019 Calaveras County Grand Jury. Although invited responders were not required by law to respond, several did, and the Calaveras County Grand Jury thanks them for their willingness to provide additional feedback.

The 2018-2019 Final Report contained nine reports as follows:

- Animal Control Services
- Audit and Finance
- Calaveras County General Plan
- Code Compliance
- Community College Districts
- Continuity ó Responses to 2017-2018 Calaveras County Grand Jury
- Educational Support/Services for Homeless Students in Calaveras County
- Jails/Law and Justice
- Jenny Lind Veterans Memorial District

The Continuity Report was the only report for which no responses were requested. Various County department heads and agencies were requested to reply and offer comment regarding the findings and recommendations presented in the published reports.

GLOSSARY

ACS	Animal Control Services
BOS	Calaveras County Board of Supervisors
CCGJ	Calaveras County Grand Jury

METHODOLOGY

The 2019-2020 CCGJ reviewed all responses submitted by elected officials and public agencies to the reports published by the 2018-2019 CCGJ. The results of the review were entered into a comprehensive matrix for analyzing and tracking the responses. California Penal Code §933.05 (Appendix A) mandates

the manner in which local governing bodies and elected officials must respond to findings and recommendations that fall under their jurisdictions. Using the matrix, the responses were evaluated for compliance with the governing sections of the Penal Code.

BACKGROUND

It is the role of Civil Grand Juries in California to examine and investigate county government functions. The goal of a Civil Grand Jury is to discover ways to improve systems and methods of operations in local government. The CCGJ exists to promote honest, effective government, supporting positive change in the best interests of all residents. The CCGJ is empowered by the Penal Code with broad investigative powers to provide oversight to county and city governments, as well as special districts within Calaveras County. Investigations may result in a published report which contains facts and findings that lead to recommendations for improvement. Elected officials and governing bodies are required to respond to the recommendations in a specific format detailed in the Penal Code, all others are invited and not required. The 2019-2020 CCGJ discovered that the 2018-2019 CCGJ inadvertently included language suggesting that certain entities were required to respond to various reports, as opposed to being invited.

DISCUSSION

Tracking responses to previous Grand Jury reports is an internal function of the sitting Grand Jury. The value of a Grand Jury investigation is reduced when findings and recommendations are not appropriately addressed by the affected agencies. These circumstances leave a report unresolved.

Of the 117 responses to the 2018-2019 Grand Jury Report, 18 (roughly 15%) were considered non-compliant due to a lack of stated timeframes for either implementation or analysis.

Evidence of the effectiveness of the Grand Jury is demonstrated when agencies respond and take positive action. An agency may respond that it intends to implement a recommended course of action at a later date. Often, a respondent determines that further study is required before a complete response can be formulated.

Several examples of Grand Jury influence include the following. At their September 17, 2019, meeting the BOS agreed to take action pursuant to a number of Grand Jury findings and recommendations regarding Animal Control Services. On February 18, 2020, the BOS selected a location for the Animal Control Services facility. These actions appear to be, at least in part, the culmination of 20 years of Grand Jury findings and recommendations.

In response to the recommendations in the 2018-2019 Grand Jury Audit/Finance Report, the BOS addressed the need to update the County Purchasing Ordinance at a BOS meeting in February 2020, although further study and discussion was tabled until April. As of May 6, 2020, the study has not been rescheduled as an agenda item.

In the same Audit/Finance Report, a county-wide grant writing policy was recommended by the Grand Jury. The BOS calendared approval of a new grant policy on March 10, 2020, and it was subsequently approved for implementation two weeks later.

Tracking and review of open reports is challenging, as reports are frequently published at or near the end of the Grand Jury's one-year term of service. Follow up by the succeeding Grand Jury is necessary to ensure the continuity of the initial investigation. Reporting publicly on the completion or

noncompletion of previously committed action(s) is one of the key tasks of the CCGJ in its role as a public watchdog.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND RESPONDENTS

Pursuant to Penal Code §933 and §933.05, the Grand Jury requires responses within 60 days from elected county official(s), and within 90 days from governing bodies. In order to be included and published in the next Grand Jury report, invited responses must be received within 90 days.

After reviewing reference documents, the Grand Jury findings and recommendations are as follows:

F1. The 2018-2019 CCGJ inadvertently included language suggesting that certain entities were required to respond to various reports, as opposed to being invited to respond.

R1. None.

F2. The most frequent reason for a non-compliant response was the lack of stated timeframe for the completion of further analysis or implementation.

R2. The Grand Jury recommends that Governing boards and elected officials who have been asked to respond to Grand Jury reports carefully review California Penal Code §933.05 to ensure that timeframes are provided when recommendations require further analysis or will be implemented at a future date.

Responses: None.

F3. Multiple actions taken by the BOS in the 2020 fiscal year were prompted to some degree by Calaveras County Grand Jury Report findings and recommendations.

R3. None.

REFERENCE SOURCES

- California Penal Code §933.05
- California Grand Jurors Association website, www.cgja.org

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code §929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

APPENDIX A – California Penal Code §933.05

APPENDIX B – 2018-2019 Response Compliance Analysis and Matrices

SUMMARY

Inspired by the 2018-2019 Marin County Grand Jury report, entitled "Wildfire Preparedness & A New Approach" and the fact that Calaveras County is within a high-risk, fire-prone region subject to Public Safety Power Shutoffs, the Calaveras County Grand Jury chose to review the current emergency preparedness plans and potential disaster readiness of lead agencies within the County.

While the Calaveras County Office of Emergency Services maintains a current Emergency Operations Plan and is generally well prepared to coordinate agency efforts to respond to an emergency, individual preparedness by members of the public is crucial to ensure the best outcome for all in the event of a disaster.

GLOSSARY

BOS	Calaveras County Board of Supervisors
CCGJ	Calaveras County Grand Jury
CCPW	Calaveras County Public Works
CCSO	Calaveras County Sheriff's Office
CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
GIS	Calaveras County Geographic Information Systems
OES	Calaveras County Office of Emergency Services
PEA	Public Evacuation Application (website)
VOAD	Central Sierra Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

METHODOLOGY

Calaveras County Grand Jury (CCGJ) conducted interviews, researched historical data, reviewed Marin and Napa Grand Jury Final Reports, and visited the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for the Calaveras County Office of Emergency Services (OES).

The CCGJ interviewed the following:

- OES personnel
- Calaveras County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) officers
- Calaveras Emergency Response Teams (CERT) official/volunteers
- American Red Cross representatives
- Calaveras County Public Works (CCPW) personnel
- Central Sierra Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) official

The CCGJ reviewed the following:

- CCPW report titled "2019 Capital Improvement Program Update"
- County-wide mapping and grid system
- My Calaveras County mobile telephone application
- Presentations made to the BOS regarding disaster recovery
- Calaveras County Emergency Operations Plan
- Facebook pages for various County departments
- Relevant news articles

BACKGROUND

In 2015, Calaveras County experienced the Butte Fire, one of the Top 20 Most Destructive Wildfires in California. Two people died, 877 structures were destroyed, 44 damaged, and 70,868 acres burned. The fire involved the support and cooperation of at least 14 agencies including CAL FIRE, local County Sheriff's Offices (Amador and Calaveras), California Office of Emergency Services, Pacific Gas & Electric Company, Caltrans, Bureau of Land Management, and California State Parks. In the years since the fire, Calaveras residents and government have had the opportunity to plan for future wildfires and how responses might be improved.

While fire is the disaster that usually comes to mind in this region, the County must prepare for major disasters in general. It is the responsibility of the OES to prepare and educate the public about what to do during an emergency event. The CCGJ explored the existing process for emergency response and how it is used in real time.

A local emergency may be declared by the Director of OES when a rapidly changing situation exceeds the resources of local jurisdictions and requires the action and coordination of many agencies to restore public safety. Once an emergency is declared, OES opens the Emergency Operations Center to establish a unified authority over the situation. This is a centralized location where representatives from all relevant agencies meet to plan a response. The guiding document for this response is the Emergency Operations Plan, a comprehensive, department specific set of guiding actions that detail the responsibilities of all involved parties. OES also works closely with the California Office of Emergency Services.

Considerations for the next emergency involve: the factors contributing to the likelihood of a disaster, the ability of County agencies to communicate with the public, the integrity of County infrastructure, and the effectiveness and efficiency with which various agencies can respond collaboratively. Additionally, there are several steps members of the public must take to ensure they are informed and prepared.

DISCUSSION

As a result of the Butte Fire, local agencies, responders, and volunteers obtained first-hand knowledge of the challenges involved in managing a major event. Additionally, subsequent planned power outages intended to mitigate weather-related fire hazards due to damaged energy transmission equipment resulted in days- or weeks-long power outages for residents in the County. Using the Calaveras Alert notification system, OES provided information to the public regarding planned outage locations and anticipated durations. Temporary community power stations were identified to assist the public in powering electronic devices.

In the event of an emergency, Calaveras County has a designated location for an EOC within the CCSO administrative building. In the event there is prolonged loss of electricity, the EOC is capable of operating independent of the power grid without the need for generator refueling for up to one week. The EOC is where all of the agencies and departments come together to develop a plan of action. Depending upon the situation, the EOC is managed by a different lead agency. For example, the location of a fire might determine which fire protection service would take the lead.

At the time of this writing, Calaveras County is experiencing a public health emergency (COVID-19 pandemic) and the OES is coordinating the local response. This ongoing global pandemic has shut down

most non-essential businesses and services in California. Residents are advised to shelter in their homes and limit exposure to infection by limiting interaction with other people and maintaining a social distance of at least 6 feet with all people who are not members of their household. Public safety guidance is mandated at the state level, with counties and cities keeping residents informed about State-level orders as well as local services and information.

In response to growing public health concerns about the severity of the disease outbreak, the Office of Emergency Services activated an EOC on March 12, 2020. Information from the OES has been shared on various media outlets including the OES website, Facebook, and local news publications.

The "Calaveras County Emergency Operation Plan Base Plan" was adopted by the BOS in September 2019. This plan "addresses the planned response to extraordinary emergencies associated with natural or human caused disasters, technological incidents, and National Special Security Emergencies (NSSE) in or affecting the County of Calaveras." It serves as a comprehensive guide for departments and agencies working within the County. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the United States Department of Homeland Security recommend that County Emergency Operation Plans be updated every three years, or sooner if an incident highlights a gap in the current plan.

Several elements that relate to a large-scale evacuation are of particular relevance in Calaveras County. These include limited evacuation routes, difficult terrain, and high fuel loads surrounding roadways and populated areas. These challenges must be considered as residents craft their own emergency plans. The OES website is a comprehensive resource for individuals to develop local disaster preparedness at the household level.

OES is currently operating without a formal office-level policy and procedure manual although one is in the process of being developed. A manual is key to maintaining continuity when personnel changes occur within the department.

In Calaveras County, there are three main ways members of the public can ensure they are as well informed and prepared for an emergency as possible:

1. PROPERTY ADDRESSES

One of the biggest challenges for emergency responders is identifying the location where an incident is occurring. Although California Fire Code §505.1 states that addresses be posted at the road as well as on the building, many properties in Calaveras are not identified in these ways, limiting the ability of first responders to provide rapid assistance. While violating State Fire Code is illegal, enforcement is impractical. Ultimately, it is up to property owners to ensure an address is clearly and accurately posted for their own safety.

2. CALAVERAS ALERT

Individuals may opt-in to Calaveras Alert, an emergency notification program. Alerts are sent by telephone, cell phone, text message, email, and social media when there is a threat to the health or safety of Calaveras County residents. This program is limited to those who opt-in by registering their contact information. Using figures provided by the U. S. Census Bureau and Calaveras County OES, the CCGJ determined that roughly 35% of the population is currently registered with this program. County residents may sign up at <http://oes.calaverasgov.us/notifications>.

It is the responsibility of the public to ensure the contact information on file is up-to-date and accurate. However, there is no regular alert testing to guarantee the accuracy of the contact information on file. Scheduled tests would help the public maintain awareness and connectivity with the program. Members of the public who anticipate a message can follow up with registration if an alert is not received.

3. PUBLIC EVACUATION APPLICATION

OES, in collaboration with CAL FIRE and the CCSO, created the Public Evacuation Application (PEA) which is designed to alert the public in real time when emergencies occur, where they occur, and what evacuation-based action is recommended to the affected public. The County is divided into 60 grid pages, then further divided into smaller two-mile by two-mile evacuation zones. Calaveras Alert is linked to the grid system and notifies registered contacts located within the affected zone(s). Every property in the County exists within a single zone. The application can be found at <https://oes.calaverasgov.us>. OES encourages everyone to know their zone number, as well as the safest evacuation routes out of their area in the event of an emergency.

The California County Information Services Directors Association awarded Calaveras County Geographic Information System (GIS) the 2019 Innovation Award for the development of PEA. Other counties have since adopted and incorporated PEA into their county emergency strategies.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND RESPONDENTS

Pursuant to Penal Code §933 and §933.05, the Grand Jury requires responses within 60 days from elected county official(s), and within 90 days from governing bodies. In order to be included and published in the next Grand Jury report, invited responses must be received within 90 days.

After conducting interviews, touring facilities, and reviewing reference documents, the Grand Jury findings and recommendations are as follows:

- F1.** When buildings and properties are not marked with an address at the road, it can be challenging for emergency services to locate an incident.
- R1.** The CCGJ recommends that beginning June 2021, the BOS make annual proclamations at their first meeting in June declaring Address Identification Month and urge County residents to ensure their properties are identified in adherence to California Fire Code §505.1.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Board of Supervisors
- F2.** The ability of OES to send emergency notifications to the public is limited by an opt-in system requiring that members of the public request to receive information.
- R2.** The CCGJ recommends that the OES increase public outreach and education about the importance of signing up for notification programs and ensure that citizen contact information is current.

Invited Responses

- Director of Office of Emergency Services

F3. Without a system to test the viability/suitability of contact numbers enrolled with Calaveras Alert, members of the public may not feel entirely confident they are enrolled, or that their best contact methods will be used.

R3. The CCGJ recommends that beginning September 1, 2020, the OES send out test messages on a monthly basis to ensure members of the public are confident their best contact information is registered with the system.

Invited Responses

- Director of Office of Emergency Services

F4. While an extensive interdepartmental Emergency Operations Plan does exist, the OES does not operate with an office-level Policy and Procedure Manual to guide employee conduct and maintain consistent practices in the event of personnel change.

R4. The CCGJ recommends the OES complete a Policy and Procedure Manual by December 31, 2020.

Invited Responses

- Director of Office of Emergency Services

COMMENDATIONS

C1. The CCGJ commends Calaveras County GIS for developing an innovative and award-winning emergency evacuation application that has served as a model to other counties and jurisdictions.

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code §929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

REFERENCE SOURCES

- Morlan, Dakota, "Is the Mother Lode ready for coronavirus?", *Calaveras Enterprise*, http://www.calaverasenterprise.com/news/article_334754e8-6583-11ea-8eda-eb2492590904.html, posted March 13, 2020.
- Office of Emergency Services Website <https://oes.calaverasgov.us>
- Office of Emergency Services Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/CalaverasOES/>
- https://www.fire.ca.gov/media/5511/top20_destruction.pdf
- Code Compliance forms, <https://codecompliance.calaverasgov.us/Forms>

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

Calaveras County Detention Centers

October 14, 2020



SUMMARY

The Calaveras County Grand Jury is required by law to inquire into the condition and management of the detention centers within the County on an annual basis per California Penal Code §916(b). Calaveras County has two adult detention centers, the Calaveras County Jail and Vallecito Conservation Camp.

The Calaveras County Jail was built six years ago and is well maintained. On multiple visits, the Grand Jury noted the facility appeared clean, safe, and secure. The jail is managed by a dedicated, professional staff.

Vallecito Adult Conservation Camp CC#1 is a correctional facility located in Calaveras County with a capacity for 110 inmates. The Calaveras County Grand Jury inspection of the Camp found it to be clean, organized, with well-maintained grounds.

The Calaveras County Grand Jury found that the inmates at both facilities are treated with respect and dignity. Physical and mental health care are a priority.

The Calaveras County Grand Jury asked both the Vallecito Conservation Camp CC#1 and the Calaveras County Jail if they have COVID-19 protocols in place, and both do.

GLOSSARY

BOS	Calaveras County Board of Supervisors
BSCC	Board of State and Community Corrections
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CCGJ	Calaveras County Grand Jury
CCJ	Calaveras County Jail
CCSO	Calaveras County Sheriff's Office
CDCR	California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation
SCC	Sierra Conservation Camp
VCC	Vallecito Conservation Camp CC#1

METHODOLOGY

The Calaveras County Grand Jury (CCGJ) toured the Calaveras County Jail (CCJ) and the Vallecito Conservation Camp CC#1 (VCC). During both tours, the CCGJ posed a variety of questions to staff regarding the operation of the facilities. Additionally, the CCGJ interviewed CCJ personnel and inmates, and VCC personnel.

BACKGROUND

The Jail is a medium-security 240 bed detention center that opened in 2014. The CCJ is operated by the Calaveras County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) and holds inmates awaiting trial, sentencing, and those serving a jail sentence. The County jail is the central booking and intake location for all law enforcement agencies operating in Calaveras County.

On December 11, 2019, the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) conducted their bi-annual inspection of the Calaveras County Jail. Pursuant to Penal Code §6031, this inspection was performed to determine compliance with the Minimum of Standards for Local Detention Facilities outlined in Title 15 (Adult Institutions, Programs and Parole Regulations) and Title 24 (Building Energy

Efficiency Standards), California Code of Regulations (CCR). The inspection found the jail to be clean and extremely well maintained, with no issues of non-compliance with the Code of Regulations.

Vallecito Conservation Camp CC#1 (VCC) was constructed and opened in 1958. VCC is under the administrative supervision of Sierra Conservation Camp (SCC), a prison in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) system. It is a minimum-security detention center and Fire Camp located in a rural area surrounded by woodlands and hills. CDCR personnel are responsible for the supervision, care, and discipline of inmates. CDCR works jointly with CAL FIRE, which maintains the camp and supervises the work of the inmate fire crews.

The primary mission of the Camp is to provide inmate firefighting crews for fire suppression and flood control activities in Calaveras County and throughout the State of California. CAL FIRE conducts additional projects for inmates. Inmate fire crews also provide a workforce for community service projects in the local area.

The CAL FIRE in-camp project is firehose pressure testing and repair. CDCR has multiple in-camp projects such as the care of a large vegetable garden, a hospitality program through Columbia College, a woodworking/hobby/art shop and landscape maintenance. They also offer GED, Alcoholics Anonymous, and Narcotics Anonymous programs, community college courses, and bible studies.

CDCR and CAL FIRE are in charge of ensuring the safe custody of inmate work crews on all community service projects and fires. Both organizations share the responsibility of training and supervising the inmate crews necessary to support this operation.

DISCUSSION

The CCGJ found that the County jail continues to be run professionally and efficiently. Additionally, the bi-annual report from BSCC confirmed the CCGJ observations, as did interviews with jail staff and inmates.

VCC inmates can, without much difficulty, make contact with outsiders who provide drugs and other contraband. Surveillance cameras would allow greater observation capabilities and improved security. Following accepted practice, one correctional officer monitors the camp from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Surveillance cameras would better enable the officer on duty to monitor the entire camp. On the following page is an aerial view of VCC.



Prior Grand Jury reports have recommended that the damaged seating in VCC common rooms be replaced. Contraband was being concealed in torn upholstery. The 2019-2020 CCGJ observed that common rooms had been remodeled and new furniture put into place.

The CCGJ asked both the CCJ and VCC if COVID-19 protocols were put in place to address the safety of inmates, staff, and the public. It was determined that the CCJ is following the directives of Calaveras County Public Health, the CDCR and the County Sheriff. The VCC is following the directions of the Governor's office and CDCR.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, and RESPONDENTS

Pursuant to Penal Code §933 and §933.05, the Grand Jury requires responses within 60 days from elected county official(s), and within 90 days from governing bodies. In order to be included and published in the next Grand Jury report, invited responses must be received within 90 days.

After conducting interviews, touring facilities, and reviewing reference documents, the Grand Jury findings and recommendations are as follows:

F1. The overall condition of the Calaveras County jail was found to be clean, organized, excellently maintained, and well run by dedicated officers and staff.

R1. None.

Required Responses: None.

F2. The overall condition of the Vallecito Conservation Camp was found to be clean and well maintained, offering many programs and inmate participation in several projects.

R2. None.

Required Responses: None.

F3. Correctional officers at Vallecito Conservation Camp are unable to observe the boundaries of the Camp to prevent incoming drugs and inmate misconduct because it does not have surveillance cameras.

R3. The CCGJ recommends that surveillance cameras be installed by December 31, 2020.

Invited Responses:

- Director of the California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation
- Warden of Sierra Conservation Camp
- Vallecito Conservation Camp Commander

COMMENDATIONS

C1. The CCGJ commends the CCJ officers and staff for their compassion and commitment to their jobs as well as to the inmates.

- C2.** The CCGJ commends the VCC officers for dedication to their jobs and for providing the inmates with community-involved programs.

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code §929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

REFERENCE SOURCES

- Calaveras County Sheriff's Office Website (<https://sheriff.calaverasgov.us/>)
- Board of State and Community Corrections (www.bscc.ca.gov)
- Inmate Aid (<https://www.inmateaid.com/>)
- California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (<https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/>)

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

ANIMAL SERVICES

October 15, 2020



SUMMARY

The Grand Jury decision to investigate the Animal Services Department was in accordance with California Penal Code §925 which states in part " investigations may be conducted on some selective basis each year."

It was determined that the Animal Services shelter continues to be inadequate, understaffed, unsanitary, underfunded, overcrowded, unappealing, in dire need of repair, and lacking in adequate outdoor facilities.

A new shelter needs to be built within the next two years on County owned acreage as recommended by the Board of Supervisors.

Until a new facility is in place, the existing shelter needs to undergo a total rebranding. An updated marketing strategy will be more inviting to County residents, volunteers and staff.

GLOSSARY

AS	Calaveras County Animal Services
AEMA	Administrator of Environmental Management Agency
BOS	Calaveras County Board of Supervisors
CAO	Calaveras County Administrative Officer
CCGJ	Calaveras County Grand Jury
FOCAS	Friends of Calaveras Animal Shelter
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding

METHODOLOGY

Meetings were held to plan an investigation, conduct interviews, and formulate an informative report.

Tours of the following places were completed:

- 1) Calaveras Animal Services Shelter
- 2) The Front Street Animal Shelter in Sacramento
- 3) Calaveras Humane Society facility

The CCGJ interviewed the following:

- Animal Services Personnel
- Calaveras County Officials
- FOCAS Board Member
- Front Street Animal Shelter Representative
- Human Resources Personnel

BACKGROUND

For over 20 years, the CCGJ has reported that the Calaveras County Animal Services shelter has outlived its effectiveness and requires a complete replacement. During that time little has been accomplished until recently.

After reviewing past CCGJ reports from 1999 to 2019, it was found that each year's recommendations were virtually the same and each report concluded that the shelter needed to be replaced.

As a result of the 2018-2019 CCGJ report, the BOS agreed that the shelter needs to be addressed. On September 10, 2019, the BOS told the CAO to do a study and report back to them in six months with a plan of action. At the BOS February 18, 2020 meeting, the CAO presented a recommendation to build a new facility on the available County-owned 6.9 acres west of the County courthouse. The BOS instructed the CAO to carry forward with a formal study. The BOS did not designate a time frame for the completion of the study.

DISCUSSION

The animal shelter continues to be a low priority for County leaders. There are currently 34 cat kennels. This is insufficient during the three kitten seasons per year and emergencies. There is inadequate ventilation in the feral cat section resulting in an extremely unpleasant odor which was evident during the CCGJ tour. Drainage is not up to code. The drain to the outside is an approximately three to five-inch hole in the cinder block (Figure 1). This inadequate drainage results in the water flowing back from the outside into the feral cat area during heavy rains (Figure 2). There is no proper drainage for the cleaning of urine and excrement from the dog kennels. Although the kennels are cleaned daily with anti-bacterial agents, due to the cracks in the concrete, bacteria cannot be completely eliminated (Figure 3). When hosing down the kennels the water flows through the dog enclosures into a drain at each end of the kennels (Figure 4). This has the potential to spread disease to the dogs.



Fig. 1 - Floor drain in dog kennel area

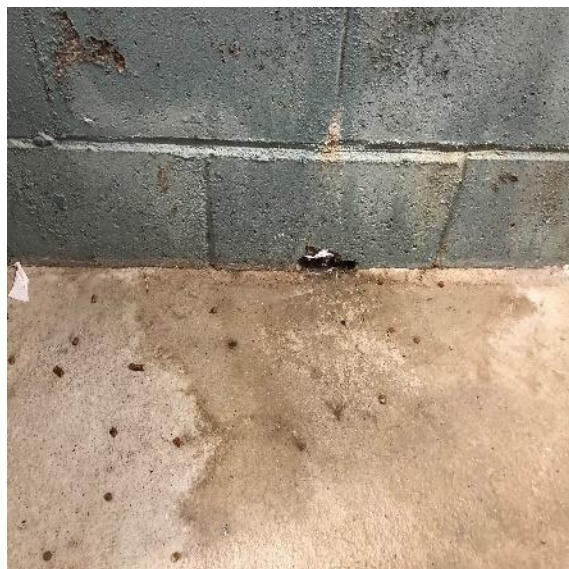


Fig. 2 - Drain hole in feral cat area



Fig. 3 - Crack in floor/wall - dog kennel area



Fig. 4 - Hole and crack in dog kennel floor

The outdoor play/socialization area for dogs is insufficient. It is too small and void of exercise opportunities. The large animal area consists of moveable panels and has no shelter/barn for livestock.

The shelter is very uninviting to the public. There is no curb appeal, no landscaping and paint is peeling off the exterior of the buildings. Buildings are small, workspaces are cluttered, and storage space is inadequate (Figure 5).



Fig. 5 - Work area

A robust marketing strategy can create a new identity, a better image and greater public awareness and community involvement.

AS management can do more to rejuvenate the current facility by reaching out to local community organizations for assistance such as: more volunteers, fundraisers, donations, social media improvements, painting and landscaping.

At the Front Street Animal Shelter in Sacramento, tour officials explained how their non-profits have established Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the organizations that support them. Their experience is that creating MOUs and contracts with non-profit organizations facilitates transparency and establishes guidelines for allocating funds and services. Such formal agreements also stabilize the budget for the shelter.

Front Street Animal Shelter was about to shut down until it was rebranded by changing its name, involving the local community, beautifying the facility itself, reaching out through social and traditional media, and having fundraising events. It is now a thriving shelter and is well received and supported by the community. During the CCGJ tour, many families were looking to adopt.

The Calaveras County Environmental Management Agency surveyed a large number of animal shelters and found that a majority of them have instituted foster programs. These programs are a staple of progressive animal sheltering. They are a way for animals to escape the stress of shelter life while getting great socialization and exposure for adoption. There is a national trend of having more animals in foster care as well as vetting potential foster parents. County Ordinance, Title 6 - ANIMAL Chapter 6.08.060 Adoption and Foster and Placement Agreement addresses the County requirements for a foster program.

In October 2018, Calaveras County Environmental Management Agency drafted a foster program, but it has not been implemented. If the foster program had been in effect, it is likely animals would have been placed with foster families, emptying the shelter and enabling AS to focus on its duties. Fostering is an effective tool, especially during times of societal stress, as evidenced by media coverage of increased interest in fostering opportunities during the Coronavirus pandemic.

County Ordinance, "Title 6 - ANIMALS, Chapter 6.14.020, requiring dog owners to license their dogs, is not sufficiently enforced. Citizens may not be aware of this ordinance. Rabies shots, as required by the County licensing ordinance, protect dog owners and reduce the health risk of rabies within the community. AS does not promote the benefits of licensing to the community. According to AS management, dog licensing is an underutilized source of revenue for the County.

Friends of Calaveras Animal Shelter (FOCAS), a non-profit 501(c)(3) established in 2014, was created to support Calaveras County Animal Services. It is an animal welfare organization dedicated to enhancing a humane animal services program for the people and animals of Calaveras County by offering the following services:

- Free rabies vaccinations and micro-chipping clinics
- Medical support
- Adoption support
- Spay/neuter programs
- Direct shelter transfers

- Shelter enhancements
- Community education

FOCAS will be an even more vital force in their partnership with AS moving forward with a new shelter. With a new public awareness, their membership could grow, thus providing the fundraising and volunteer recruitment to support the furnishing of a new shelter with kennels, cat condos, equipment, furniture, and other resources.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND RESPONDENTS

Pursuant to Penal Code §933 and §933.05, the Grand Jury requires responses within 60 days from elected county official(s), and within 90 days from governing bodies. In order to be included and published in the next Grand Jury report, invited responses must be received within 90 days.

After conducting interviews, touring facilities, and reviewing reference documents, the Grand Jury findings and recommendations are as follows:

F1. For over 20 years, the Calaveras County Grand Jury has found the animal shelter to be outdated and inadequate for staff, animals and the public.

R1. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that the County build a new shelter by December 31, 2022.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Responses

- Calaveras County Administrative Officer

F2. Although the BOS agreed to build a new shelter on the existing 6.93 acres and instructed the CAO to propose a building plan, no timeline or target date was specified for the completion of the plan.

R2. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that the BOS provide a target date of no later than March 31, 2021 to the CAO for the plan completion.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Responses

- Calaveras County Administrative Officer

F3. Drainage design within the dog kennels does not permit them to be adequately sanitized, which increases the risk of disease within the canine unit.

R3. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that the Administrator of the Environmental Management Agency develop a temporary solution to this drainage issue by March 31, 2021.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Responses

- Calaveras County Administrative Officer
- Administrator of the Environmental Management Agency
- Animal Services Manager

F4. The hole in the cinder block wall used for drainage in the feral cat unit is inadequate and subject to backflow during heavy rains resulting in an increased risk of disease for cats and employees.

R4. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that AS construct a proper drainage system for the feral cat area by March 31, 2021.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Responses

- Calaveras County Administrative Officer
- Administrator of the Environmental Management Agency
- Animal Services Manager

F5. There are insufficient accommodations in the feral/intake room to properly house the number of animals brought to the shelter throughout the year.

R5. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the AEMA request and the BOS provide funding for additional accommodations by March 31, 2021.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Responses

- Calaveras County Administrative Officer
- Administrator of the Environmental Management Agency
- Animal Services Manager

F6. Limited public engagement with the AS shelter diminishes community awareness of the challenges facing AS staff and the animals in their care.

R6(a). The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that by March 31, 2021, the AEMA form a planning committee consisting of government and community members to work on a new image, improve range of services, and create a social media and marketing strategy designed to engage the public.

R6(b). The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that by March 31, 2021, AEMA and AS Management meet with Front Street Animal Shelter staff to learn how they transformed their facility.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Responses

- Administrator of the Environmental Management Agency
- Animal Services Manager

F7. There is no clearly labeled direct link on the AS webpage to the FOCAS donation page which would facilitate public donations for AS.

R7. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that AS add a direct link on the AS homepage to the FOCAS donation page, as well as add enticing verbiage, by January 1, 2021.

Required Responses

- None

Invited Responses

- Administrator of the Environmental Management Agency
- Animal Services Manager
- FOCAS

F8. There is minimal AS partnership with non-profits other than FOCAS.

R8. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that AS partner more robustly with the non-profit sector by March 31, 2021.

Required Responses

- None

Invited Responses

- Administrator of the Environmental Management Agency

- Animal Services Manager

F9. AS developed a foster program in October 2018. The program has not been implemented due to a lack of consensus among County agencies regarding County exposure to liability.

R9. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends a foster program be implemented by January 1, 2021.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Responses

- Administrator of the Environmental Management Agency
- Calaveras County Administrative Officer
- Calaveras County Counsel
- Calaveras County Human Resources

F10. Lack of enforcement of the dog license ordinance in Calaveras County reduces the ability of the County to ensure that dog owners maintain current rabies vaccinations for their animals creating a public safety risk, as well as reduces revenues to the County.

R10. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that AS develop a media campaign by February 1, 2021, to educate the public about the County Ordinance regarding dog licensing.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Responses

- Calaveras County Administrative Officer
- Administrator of the Environmental Management Agency
- Animal Services Manager

COMMENDATIONS

C1. The Calaveras County Grand Jury commends the BOS for taking action on the development of a plan to replace the AS shelter.

C2. The Calaveras County Grand Jury commends AS employees for dedication to their jobs and the animals in their care.

C3. The Calaveras County Grand Jury commends the committed volunteers who have provided invaluable services to the shelter for many years.

- C4. The Calaveras County Grand Jury commends current management for making strides in improving the quality of the shelter.

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code §929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

REFERENCE SOURCES

- FOCAS (www.focasweb.com)
- County Ordinance, Title 6 ó ANIMALS, Chapter 6.1.020 (www.animal.calaverasgov.us)
- County Ordinance, Title 6 ó ANIMALS, Chapter 6.14.020 (www.animal.calaverasgov.us)
- BOS agenda for the meeting on Tuesday, February 18, 2020 (www.calaverasgov.us)
- ASPCA (ASPCApro.org/asv)
- Calaveras Enterprise, Dakota Morgan, “Love During Lockdown”, March 26, 2020 (www.calaverasenterprise.com)
- ABC7News.com, Eric Thomas, “Animal Shelters in Need of Temporary Homes for Pets During COVID-19 Pandemic”, San Francisco, March 19, 2020
- New York Times, Sandra E. Garcia, “Stuck at Home, Americans Turn to Foster Pets for Companionship”, March 19, 2020 (www.nytimes.com)
- Fox 40 News, Kristi Gross, “Animal Shelters Feeling Strain of COVID-19 Impact” (www.fox40.com)
- 1999-2000 CCGJ Final Report
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- 2006-2007 CCGJ Final Report
- 2007-2008 CCGJ Final Report
- 2008-2009 CCGJ Final Report
- 2009-2010 CCGJ Final Report
- 2010-2011 CCGJ Final Report
- 2011-2012 CCGJ Final Report
- 2014-2015 CCGJ Final Report
- 2015-2016 CCGJ Final Report
- 2017-2018 CCGJ Final Report
- 2018-2019 CCGJ Final Report

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

VETERANS SERVICES

October 21, 2020



Photo by: <https://wallacebursonassociation.weebly.com/>

SUMMARY

The 2019-2020 Calaveras County Grand Jury investigated the resources available at the Veterans Services Office in Valley Springs pursuant to Penal Code §925. The investigation revealed that Calaveras County veterans do receive competent services including assistance in filling out applications, referrals to appropriate resources, help with solving problems with the Department of Veterans Affairs, and follow-ups to make sure the veteran receives the proper services. The investigation also revealed the need for an outreach office in Angels Camp.

GLOSSARY

BOS	Calaveras County Board of Supervisors
CCGJ	Calaveras County Grand Jury
HHS	Calaveras County Health & Human Services
VA	United States Department of Veterans Affairs
VSO	Calaveras County Veterans Services Office

METHODOLOGY

The CCGJ interviewed a staff member of the VSO to ascertain the function of that office. Veterans were interviewed to gather information as to the quality given and satisfaction with the services received. Statistics were also gathered which showed the number of veterans in the county and the number and percentage of veterans served by the VSO. A site visit to the Angels Camp Veterans Memorial District Office was also made, and a staff member was interviewed.

BACKGROUND

The VSO is a County office established by the BOS to assist veterans, their dependents and survivors, and the general public in obtaining services from federal, state, and local agencies administering programs for veterans, including death benefits.

The VSO was established in the mid 1940's and operated as a division of HHS, at the HHS offices in San Andreas. In 2018 it became a separate County department, and a veteran services officer was hired to administer the program. In December 2018, the VSO moved to the Jenny Lind Veterans Memorial Hall in Valley Springs.

DISCUSSION

VSO staff is available weekdays to make sure veterans receive necessary services. Veterans can make an appointment, or walk-in visits are also an option. Currently, there are 1.5 trained outreach staff who will go to the home if a veteran is unable to go to the office.

The intake/registration process at the VSO is as follows:

- Staff determines the services needed via an interview, which can take anywhere from ten minutes to several hours.
- Once the needed services are identified, the staff ensures all paperwork is correctly submitted to the appropriate agency.

- If the veteran needs in-home care, staff will assist with applying for services such as MediCal and the In-Home Support Services (IHSS) program. Staff will also seek temporary housing for local homeless veterans through the VA office in Palo Alto.
- The VSO does not provide transportation to its office or to any of the services needed by the veteran. Instead, they partner with Common Ground Senior Services, a local non-profit, which provides transportation throughout Calaveras County. If a veteran does not have access to email, staff will communicate either by mail or by telephone. According to the Angels Camp Memorial District staff, a field office could be made available for VSO services in order to serve the Highway 4 corridor.

If a veteran does not qualify for the services needed through the VA, staff will provide information about appropriate resources and offer assistance if necessary. The VSO does not provide legal advice.

An official at the VSO stated that they serve between 1,500 - 2,000 veterans. According to the 2018 census there are a total of 4,511 veterans in the County (4,308 are male and 203 are female.) There are over 1.5 million veterans in California and 18.8 million veterans in the United States.

The VSO budget for the 2019-2020 fiscal year is approximately \$215,000. Eighty percent of the funding comes from the Calaveras County general fund. The remaining funds are provided by grants from the State of California. The VSO does not receive any federal funding. Until the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the VSO budget had been included in the HHS budget. Beginning in fiscal year 2020-2021, the VSO budget will be a separate line item. This will be the first opportunity for the VSO's Executive Services Officer to present a requested budget to the BOS which includes sufficient funding for three full-time employees. Additionally, an in-person presentation detailing the function and value of the VSO could be made to the BOS.

The VSO is staffed with one full-time Executive Services Officer, one part-time outreach employee, and one part-time clerical employee. The volume of veteran need in Calaveras County is greater than the current staffing levels can fulfill. This results in a delayed response to messages left with the office, and limited access to services for veterans living in areas such as the Highway 4 corridor and the northern region of the County. The VSO is also currently operating without a policy and procedure manual.

As of June 1, 2020, the VSO staff has two part time clerical positions which are funded by federal funds through Motherlode Job Training. These positions are due to end September 30, 2020. Having these two positions has improved the efficiency of the VSO.

As of July 1, 2020, the VSO has a ¾-time Outreach Coordinator funded by the Mental Health Services Act. This position will exist as long as funding is available. This staff person will enable the VSO to go out into the community and see clients who are unable to come to the office.

Below is a chart showing the percent of how many veterans in Calaveras County were served from 2015 to 2019.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total # of Veterans in Calaveras County	4,760	4,322	4,350	3,950	4,063
# of Veterans Served	238	389	261	158	772
% of Veterans Served in Calaveras County	5	9	6	4	19

The following are the reasons why the figures have fluctuated:

- In March 2015, the agency started to keep track of the statistics in the above table.
- In July 2016, there was a dedicated staff member to interview veterans.
- In 2017, there was one shared interview room between HHS and VSO, limiting interview availability. Additionally, the dedicated staff member retired.
- In 2018 from January through May there was no outreach person to visit veterans, therefore, services were limited to office visits only. This position was filled in June 2018.
- In December 2018 the VSO moved to a new location in Valley Springs. The office has two interview rooms and is staffed with an outreach employee and a part-time clerical employee.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND RESPONDENTS

Pursuant to Penal Code §933 and §933.05, the Grand Jury requires responses within 60 days from elected county official(s) and within 90 days from governing bodies. In order to be included and published in the next Grand Jury report, invited responses must be received within 90 days.

After conducting interviews, touring a facility, and reviewing reference documents, the Grand Jury findings and recommendations are as follows:

F1. As of Aug 2019, the VSO staffing levels limited veteran access to available services. As of June 1, 2020, two part time clerical positions were added which enables the office to run efficiently. These federally funded jobs will end on September 30, 2020. As of July 1, 2020, an Outreach Coordinator was hired.

R1. The CCGJ recommends the VSO to seek permanent County funding for the clerical positions.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Responses

- Executive Services Officer of the VSO

F2. Without a written policy and procedure manual there is a lack of clearly defined operating processes in the event of personnel changes.

- R2.** The CCGJ recommends that the VSO establish a written policy and procedures manual by June 30, 2021.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Responses

- Executive Services Officer of the VSO

- F3.** Information pertaining to the services of the VSO is limited when veterans cannot access the internet or live in remote regions of the County.

- R3.** The CCGJ recommends the VSO continue to send information regarding veteran services and events to the County library branches, community centers, churches, and merchants, for posting in a public space.

Required Responses

- None

Invited Responses

- Executive Services Officer of the VSO

- F4.** It can be challenging for veterans living outside the Valley Springs/western Calaveras area to visit the VSO.

- R4.** The CCGJ recommends that the VSO consider partnering with other Veterans Memorial Districts, including Angels Camp and libraries to provide outreach services with regular office hours, in those areas.

Required Responses

- None

Invited Responses

- Executive Services Officer of the VSO

REFERENCE SOURCES

- U.S. Census 2018 5-year survey
- Statista Research Department, April 29, 2019([statista.com/topics/1279/veterans](https://www.statista.com/topics/1279/veterans))
- Statistics from Veterans Services Office 2020

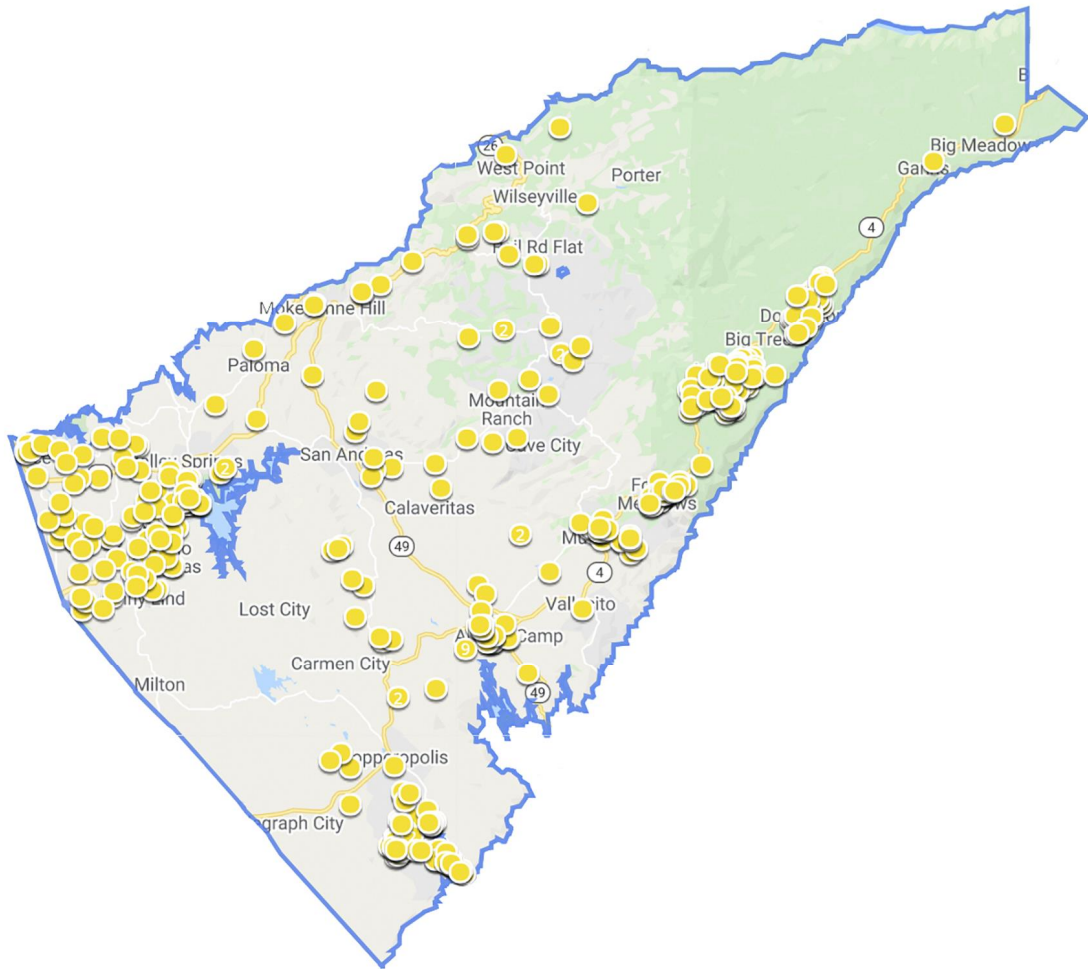
DISCLAIMER This report was issued by the Calaveras County Grand Jury with the exception of one Juror who recused themselves. This Grand Juror was excluded from all parts of the investigation, including interviews, deliberations, and the writing and approval of this report.

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code §929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

Assessor's Office

December 16, 2020



Sample of Properties Recently Sold - Per Zillow in November 2020

SUMMARY

Numerous citizens have expressed concern regarding the Calaveras County Assessor's Office being significantly behind in property reassessments. The backlog results in delayed property reassessments, which in turn causes the need for multiple supplemental bills, leading to taxpayer confusion. There was also concern over office management, specifically employee retention, and how it affects productivity and the work environment.

The Calaveras County Grand Jury last investigated the Calaveras County Assessor's Office in 2016-2017. For many years the Calaveras County Assessor's Office has been unable to close an approximate three-year gap on residential property reassessments and approximately a four-year gap on commercial property reassessments. This problem was exacerbated by the Butte Fire in 2015. The backlog remains due to several factors. Additionally, recommendations of the 2016-2017 Calaveras County Grand Jury were never acted upon.

Many citizens in Calaveras County are upset with the Calaveras County Assessor's Office because late reassessments are creating unexpected tax bills. Different processes are available to assessors in order to address their workload. The potential delayed or lost revenue due to multiyear backlogs is an important consideration.

The Calaveras County Assessor's Office has found it difficult to recruit and retain qualified employees. Additionally, the Calaveras County Assessor's Office staff is under constant pressure to address the backlog which has no end in sight.

GLOSSARY

AO	Calaveras County Assessor's Office
BOE	California State Board of Equalization
BOS	Calaveras County Board of Supervisors
CAO	Calaveras County Administrative Office
CCGJ	Calaveras County Grand Jury
FIFO	First In, First Out (a workflow method)
FY	Fiscal Year (July 1 to June 30)
FBYV	Factored Base Year Value

METHODOLOGY

The Calaveras County Grand Jury (CCGJ) conducted numerous interviews, researched wage & benefit data, reviewed previous CCGJ reports and conducted internet research of relevant agency sites.

The CCGJ interviewed the following:

- Current and former Calaveras County Assessor's Office (AO) personnel
- Calaveras County Administrative Office (CAO) personnel
- Calaveras County Auditor/Controller Office personnel
- Calaveras County Treasurer/Tax Collector Office personnel
- California State Board of Equalization (BOE) personnel
- BOE Taxpayers Rights Advocate personnel

- Assessors from other California counties
- Real Estate Broker

BACKGROUND

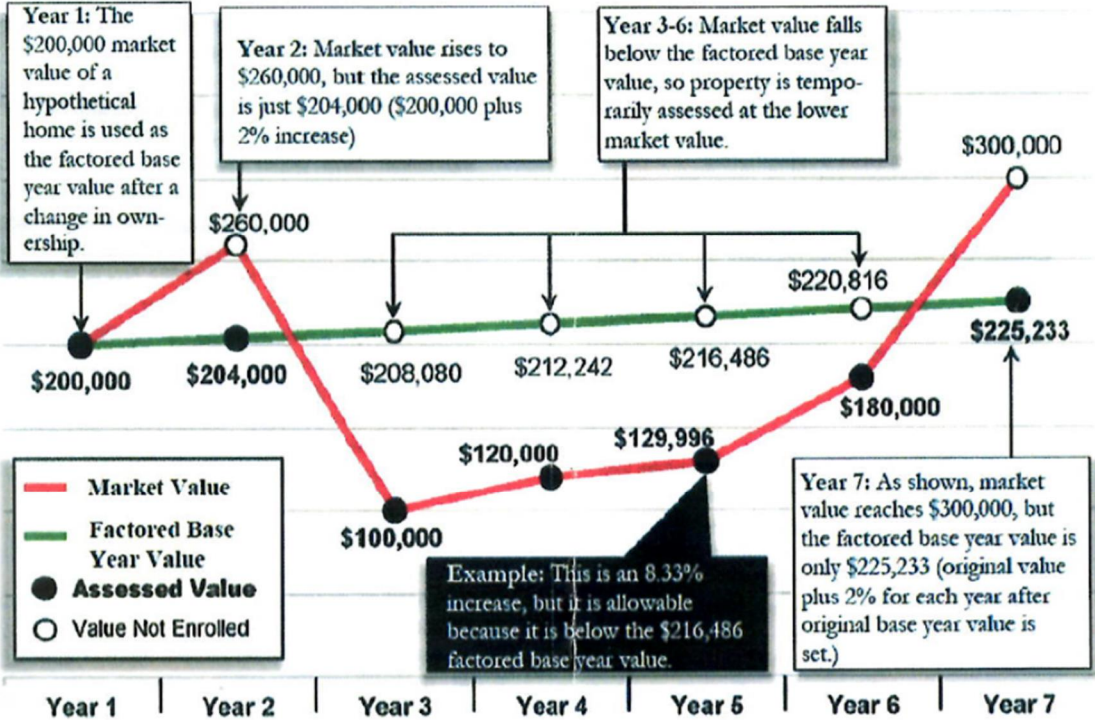
Fundamentals

Property reassessments are a process that local government uses on a regular basis to keep property values up to date. This is an extraordinarily complicated process. Many factors contribute to the final assessed value for a given parcel. The AO has experienced a backlog for the past several years. This backlog results in a delay in the change to the assessed value of properties that undergo a re-appraisable event. Property tax bills are issued on an annual basis and due in two parts.

A correction to an assessment where the AO misses a re-appraisable event in a prior year(s) results in an "escape assessment" tax bill. Examples of an escape assessment are for unreported construction, unreported change in ownership, or as the result of a multi-year backlog. A "supplemental assessment" tax bill is issued when there is a change in ownership or new construction that increases the value of a property. Such bills are necessary for each Fiscal Year (FY) in which the new value is not updated. The current backlog can sometimes result in the need for years of supplemental bills to be issued for residential properties. Sometimes the taxpayer receives these supplemental bills at or near the same time. Significant issues can arise if the property changes hands multiple times before a reassessment is completed. Property owners may be unaware that additional tax bills will be issued.

The Factored Base Year Value (FBYV) is established when a property last changed ownership or was modified due to construction. The maximum amount of property tax cannot exceed 1% of a property's taxable value, plus bonds, service fees and special assessments. There are many factors that cause property values to fluctuate (e.g. loss in market value, destruction, sale, new construction/improvements, exclusions). Two California ballot propositions passed by voters in 1978 contribute to the determination of the assessed value of real property on an annual basis. Proposition 13 (Article XIII A of the California State Constitution) limits the increase to 2% per year. This is the amount the value of property can increase annually in relation to the FBYV. However, since real estate values can also decrease, Proposition 8 permits the decrease in property value. This decrease must be reflected in the assessed value of a property within one year of the decrease. When real estate values rebound after a decline in value adjustment is made, a property assessment can then increase greater than 2% per year, as long as the assessment does not exceed the accrued annual 2% increase from the FBYV.

The following is an excerpt from the AO brochure which shows an example of fluctuations in property value and underscores the many factors that influence assessed property values.

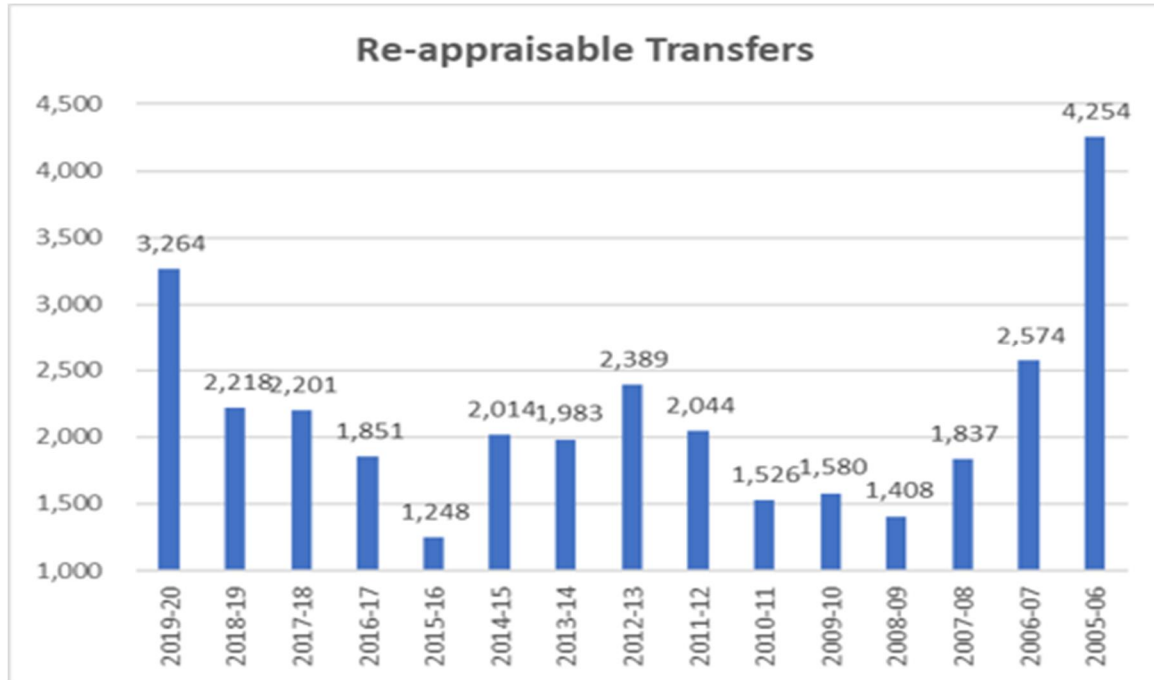


Assessors have the option to use Rule 2 of the California Board of Equalization (BOE) property tax rules, the "Value Concept." This concept bases property value on the sales price and applies to the vast majority of change in ownership reassessments. Rule 2 adjustments are fairly straightforward. There is a presumption that the sales price is the market price. As an alternative to Rule 2, assessors have the discretion to conduct a comparative market analysis, a more time-intensive method. This comparative analysis is mainly done when the sales price does not seem to accurately reflect the true market value of the property. The reassessed value becomes the new FYBV.

Workload and Workflow

The AO generally manages workflow using a first-in, first-out (FIFO) process. Property reassessments subject to Rule 2 still move through the queue in the same way as all other re-appraisable events. This workload management choice significantly impacts the timeliness of reassessments. Any annual increases in the assessed values then result in escape/supplemental bills.

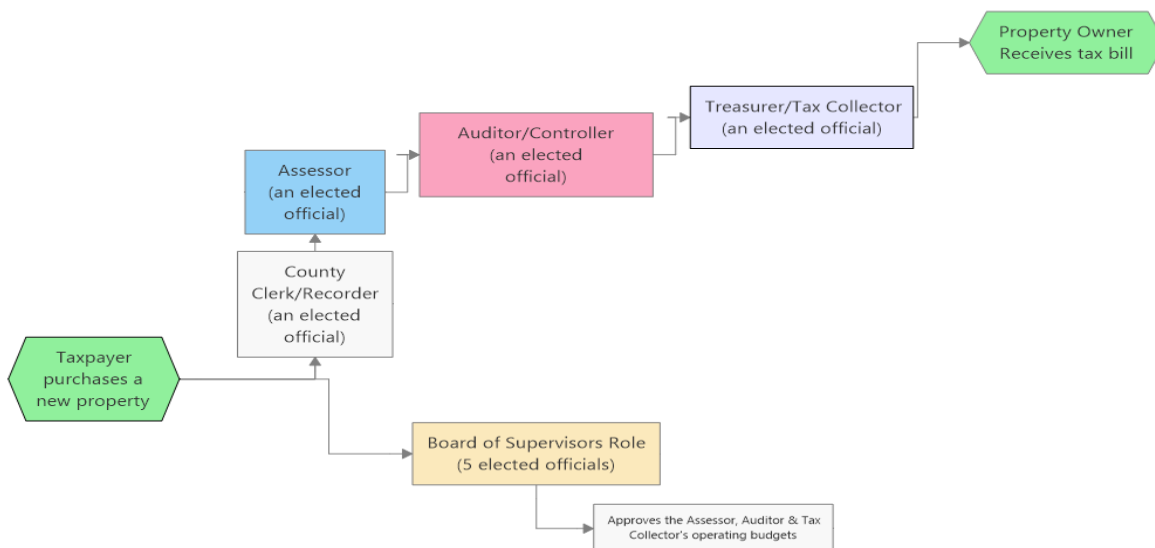
The following table sets forth the total number of re-appraisable transfers resulting in reassessments in Calaveras County, for the past 15 years.



Staffing & Budget

The Assessor is an elected official. The current Assessor has held this title for the past 12 years and is currently the longest serving department head in Calaveras County. She is well known and valued among her peers and has served as president of the California Assessors Association. All County Assessors interviewed expressed their respect for her knowledge of assessment law and her willingness to share information.

The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors (BOS) has budget authority over the offices of the Assessor, Auditor/Controller and Treasurer/Tax Collector all of whom are elected officials. The following diagram illustrates the relationship between the different county departments and the BOS, as well as how tax data flows from one department to the next:



After years of fluctuating budgeted positions, the current AO has the same number of budgeted full-time equivalent positions (17) as the AO had 15 years ago. Note that there was only a budget increase of approximately \$100,000. The chart below shows the relationship between the gross budget and authorized budgeted staff.

<i>Gross Budget and Staffing</i>		
BUDGET YEAR	GROSS BUDGET	PERMANENT STAFF
2019-20	\$ 1,295,736	17.0
2018-19	\$ 1,012,251	16.0
2017-18	\$ 1,326,560	14.0
2016-17	\$ 1,417,712	13.0
2015-16	\$ 1,080,276	13.0
2014-15	\$ 1,034,117	12.4
2013-14	\$ 1,065,665	13.0
2012-13	\$ 1,086,830	13.0
2011-12	\$ 959,289	11.3
2010-11	\$ 995,512	12.0
2009-10	\$ 1,137,768	14.5
2008-09	\$ 1,348,152	18.0
2007-08	\$ 1,355,694	19.0
2006-07	\$ 1,362,920	19.0
2005-06	\$ 1,192,657	17.0

DISCUSSION

The 2016-2017 CCGJ conducted an investigation of the AO to address a citizen complaint. Finding #1 of the report stated, “There is a significant backlog within the Assessor’s Office” and Recommendation #1 stated “The County needs to develop a plan to address this issue through a comprehensive staffing and work methods analysis.” The CAO at the time agreed with Finding #1 and in response to Recommendation #1 stated “This recommendation will be implemented, and analysis of the findings will be presented to the Board of Supervisors and County Assessor by the end of the 2017/18 fiscal year.” Fast forward to today, there is no apparent plan to address the backlog in the AO and there was no report presented to the BOS within the specified time.

Taxpayer Confusion

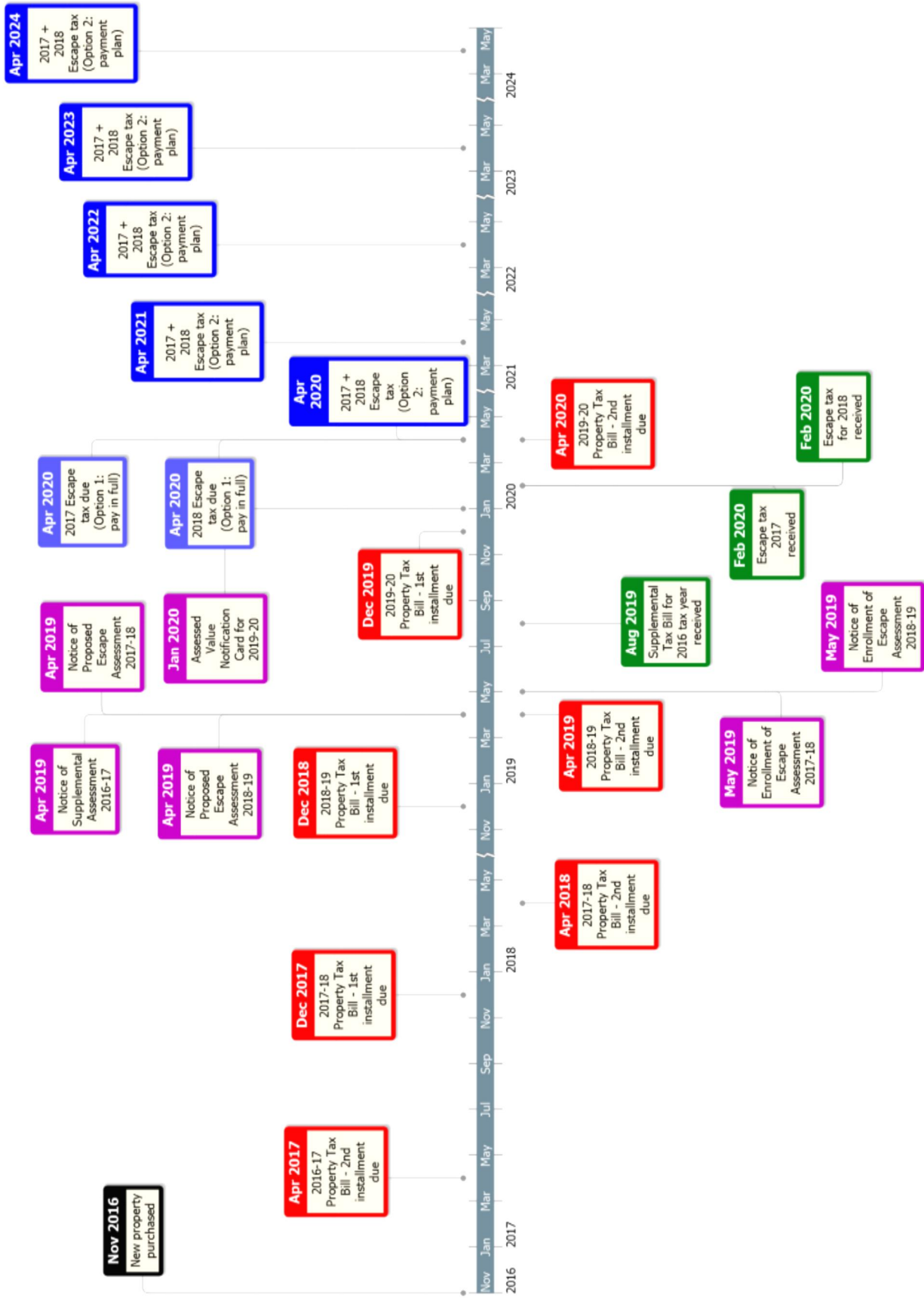
Property assessment law in California is complicated and confusing. Many taxpayers do not understand how Proposition 13 and Proposition 8 work in relationship to each other – namely that a property can decrease in value and be assessed at a lower rate, only to have the market influences raise the price up again to the original price, plus the allowed increase of 2% per year.

The process of reassessment becomes even more complex when the reassessment occurs years after the re-appraisable event. The three to four-year backlog of property reassessments in Calaveras County results in public confusion. While a delayed tax bill may be optimistically considered an interest-free loan, it is often unexpected and can result in a significant amount of money being owed. Payment plans do exist. However, further complications may occur if the property changes hands before all necessary tax bills are issued. If property owners are sufficiently notified about possible forthcoming supplemental tax bills with the issuance of the initial tax bill, taxpayers would be

prepared in the event supplemental tax bills are issued. Currently, there is no information on annual tax bills regarding the potential for future supplemental bills.

Calaveras property owners have publicly voiced concerns regarding fluctuating tax bills and multiple years of supplemental bills, at community meetings, BOS meetings, and to the State Board of Equalization (BOE). Many citizens have expressed their concern with receiving supplemental or escape tax bills issued years after the purchase of a home or property.

In order to illustrate the notices and escape and supplemental tax bills sent to a property owner, an actual example is used from a property sold in November 2016. The following diagram shows the timeframe and process (at the time of this writing) illustrating one property owner's experience:



As illustrated by the previous chart, please note that the property was purchased in 2016. The new owner received annual tax bills based on the previous owner's property value. The new owner received no notifications regarding pending adjustments until 2019. The new owner did not receive the additional 2016 tax bill until August 2019, and the additional 2017 and 2018 tax bills until 2020. The new owner had the option to pay in full (Option 1) or exercise "Option 2," an interest-free payment plan for taxes in excess of \$500. In this case, the County would not receive full payment until eight years after the property changed hands.

In the event a property changes hands after a re-appraisable event, but before a reassessment is completed and a supplemental bill is issued, the former owner may be unaware that additional taxes may be owed. A tax bill that is owed on property no longer in the possession of the seller becomes unsecured, although it is still the seller's responsibility. Unsecured tax bills have a higher rate of default.

Another significant issue which impedes timely reassessments is the failure of a personal representative (e.g. trustee, executor, beneficiary) to notify the AO of a property owner's death. The law requires this notification be made on the proper AO form within one hundred fifty days of the property owner's date of death. A new document is also subsequently recorded with the Recorder's Office, along with a "Change of Ownership" form that goes to the AO.

The backlog of all re-appraisable events in Calaveras County is over 6,800. This is in addition to new ongoing transfers in ownership and new construction. For every fiscal year, or portion of a fiscal year, in which an assessment adjustment is made, a supplemental bill is issued to collect the difference in the tax based on the new assessed value. Conversely, if a property is sold for less and a new FBV is established, the property owner must pay the previous higher rate, pending the filing of an appeal of the assessed value until the new lower value is accepted. The appeals process requires diligence on behalf of the new property owner and must be done annually.

Calaveras County has several unique considerations when it comes to the value of property. The topography and types of homes vary widely throughout the County. Many regions of the County are remote, very private, and have remained in a single family for many decades. Therefore, it is very challenging to create comparable property values on a large scale. Reassessing properties on an individual basis is a time-intensive process.

In the case of the Butte Fire, property loss and damage were significant. Land values following the fire took a surprising upward spike, counterintuitive perhaps, but clearly what the market indicated. To further confuse matters, the fire occurred two and a half months into the fiscal year which meant that for that period, a destroyed or damaged home was assessed at full value, while for the remainder of the fiscal year it was assessed at the reduced value. The AO reduced the land value of all properties within the Butte Fire footprint by 10% for total losses and 5% for partial losses. Due to the variability of damage across properties affected by the fire, the AO sent staff to all properties to complete an appraisal. This approach was very labor and time-intensive but was determined by the Assessor as the best approach for completing accurate values for the damaged properties.

The following value fluctuation factors affected properties damaged in the Butte Fire:

- Loss in property value as a result of damage or destruction to land and/or additions (structures/improvements).
- Increase in land and/or improvements value as a result of market conditions.
- Increase of greater than 2% in value if the property was in "decline in value" status under Prop 8, but significantly increased in market value after the fire.
- Increase in value if previously unknown improvements were discovered during the post-fire field appraisals.
- Lower than expected adjusted value if the damaged or destroyed improvements were not included in the original assessed value.
- Non-current (not up to date at the time of the fire) property values at the AO due to the backlog in property reassessments.

Property owners who experienced an unexpected increase in values after losing property in the fire were especially concerned. The public outcry following tax bills issued after the Butte Fire underscores the confusion that exists with respect to property assessments and the effects of the backlog.

Accuracy vs. Expediency

In all other counties interviewed by the CCGJ, the Assessors' backlogs for reassessments were in the range of two months to two years. Accuracy was considered paramount in all counties, but it was acknowledged that less than 100% accuracy was sometimes acceptable in order to keep up with the workload. In these counties, Rule 2 was applied without other considerations (e.g. comparative market analysis and/or FIFO). It was acknowledged that a lower assessment value was acceptable in order to move through reassessments in a timely manner.

The 2015 Butte Fire affected property values and created the need for reassessments. The CCGJ interviewed Assessors from other counties, some of whom had also experienced disasters. In most cases, reassessments were made a priority in each county in order to create a timely adjusted property tax roll. Most of the reassessments were conducted without field visits. This resulted in more timely reassessments, but lower accuracy. As a result, some property owners were over-assessed and some were under-assessed. None of the Assessors felt that any under-valued reassessments had a significant impact on their county general funds.

In Calaveras County, with respect to the Butte Fire, the opposite strategy was followed. The AO chose accuracy of reassessments as the priority, creating a delayed but more precise result. While the reassessments were more accurate, the delay in supplemental tax bills caused property owners to be confused by supplemental bills and fluctuating property values. From a financial perspective, the backlogs result in delayed property tax revenue. Additionally, the commitment to accuracy in the wake of the Butte Fire further exacerbated the existing backlog.

Taxpayers have the right to an informal review with the AO. Additionally, an appeal can be filed with the County Assessment Appeals Board within 60 days of the date of notice in question. In FY 2019-2020, there were 108 appeals filed.

While the Assessor is directly responsible to the voters, the BOE has oversight of Assessors, and Assessors have an obligation to report statistics to the BOE. The County Property Tax Division of the

BOE is responsible for promoting statewide compliance and uniformity in county assessment procedures and practices. The BOE has a department that can assist taxpayers to evaluate the accuracy or fairness of a property assessment. The Taxpayers Rights Advocate can ensure that an Assessor is following California property tax law but is not in a position to question the timeliness of an assessment as long as an Assessor is complying with the law.

Value and Loss Due to Backlog

All taxes comprise about 25% of the total projected General Fund revenue for FY 2020-2021. This tax revenue is in part comprised of real property and personal property taxes. Understanding the value and economic loss to the county as a result of the backlog is difficult to determine. Until a reassessment occurs, the accurate assessed value cannot be taxed. If the AO were to apply Rule 2 (Value Concept) on all changes in property ownership, without any other considerations, the revenue from tax rolls would more accurately reflect the current value of property in Calaveras County. At the time of this writing, according to the AO, if the residential reassessments were updated to within six months from the time of a title change, a one-time increase to General Fund revenues would be approximately \$2 million to schools and approximately \$1 million to county, city and special districts.

In addition, taxes from supplemental assessments are only collectable if made within the period of the statute of limitations in Revenue and Taxation Code §75.11 in effect at the time the supplemental assessment is made. Currently the statute of limitations is four years. Therefore, while annual tax bills are still issued, any revenue from any increased value is lost after four years due to this statute of limitations.

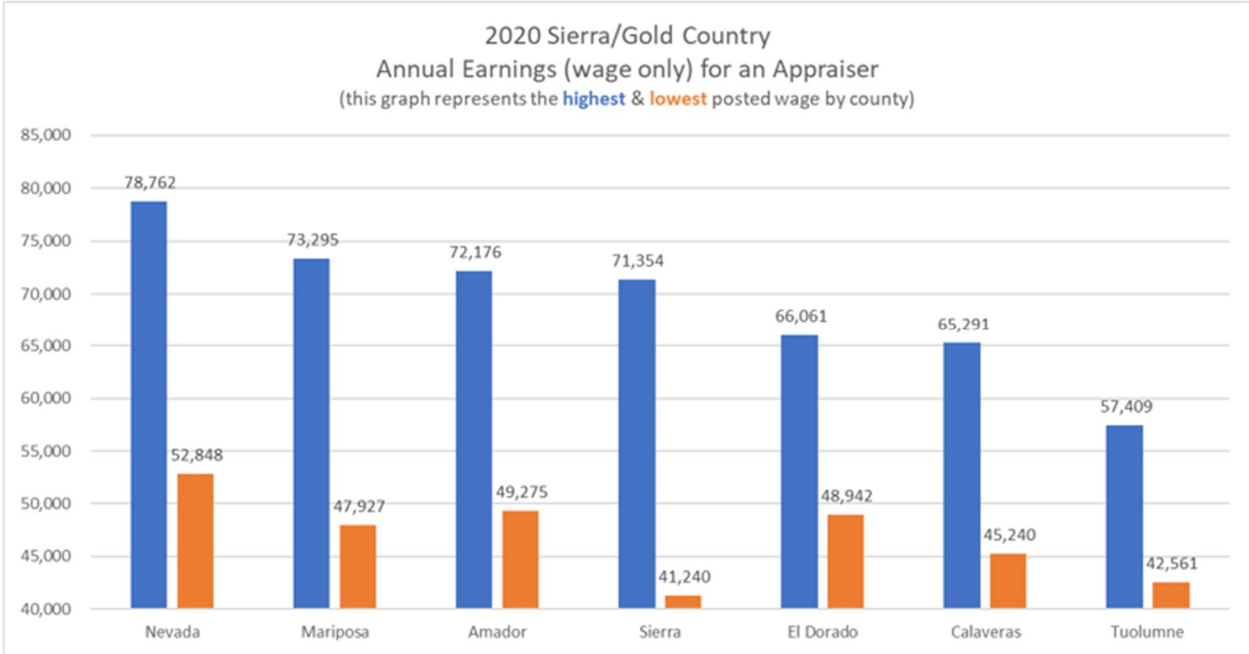
Staffing Issues

Along with the chronic backlog of property tax reassessments, there is persistent understaffing and high turnover in the AO. Recruitment and retention of qualified staff is a significant challenge. The following table shows the number of budgeted full-time positions and unfilled positions over the past five years. Even with the addition of three positions between 2017 and 2019, the AO is still unable to increase staff sufficiently to fill those vacant positions. Pre-COVID, half of the employees at that time had been employed for less than three years. Other counties acknowledged being short staffed at times, but no other county interviewed appeared to have the staffing and retention issues found in Calaveras County. Additionally, numerous Assessors interviewed acknowledged the learning curve in an Assessor's office may take up to two years.

BUDGET YEAR	BUDGETED STAFF	POSITIONS FILLED	UNFILLED POSITIONS
2019-20	17.0	13.7	(3.3)
2018-19	16.0	13.9	(2.1)
2017-18	14.0	13.6	(0.4)
2016-17	13.0	11.5	(1.5)
2015-16	13.0	11.5	(1.5)

The most current appraiser wage information compiled from the various county websites supports the information obtained from interviews conducted by the CCGJ. Calaveras County wages for higher-level appraisers are lower than most foothill counties and lower than most foothill counties for entry-level appraiser positions. Of the ten counties agreed upon by Calaveras County and the Union (Service

Employees International Union) for compensation comparison analyses, only two are foothill counties. It appears that wages for Calaveras County are lagging behind other foothill counties by up to 21% for experienced appraisers and up to 14% for entry level appraisers. This may explain in part the reason for the difficulty in filling positions and retaining employees. The following graph demonstrates this disparity:



The AO is behind three years on residential and four years on commercial reassessments. The AO needs all positions filled with qualified employees. Once qualified people are hired, the AO is obligated to the public/property owners to engage in practices which actively and successfully fosters retention of employees. With current management practices and procedures, and staffing levels, the AO is unable to catch up with the workload. There is also no allowance for overtime.

Many hours and dollars are spent on fully training an AO employee, whether they are in the Valuation Division which includes the appraisers, or in Assessment Services which includes the assessment techs and mapping. At the very outset of training, the Assessor personally spends two weeks with each new employee. There is also formal training and certification which occurs within the first year of employment. This culminates in passing State exams in order to become a Certified Appraiser or a Certified Assessment Analyst. In Calaveras County it takes two to four years of on-the-job training for new employees to be brought up to an acceptable level of proficiency. Continuing education courses also occur on an annual basis for all employees. Various Assessors interviewed discussed the use of creative training techniques, including cross training. An example of a previously successful training and recruitment strategy in Calaveras County was an internship program with a local high school.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND RESPONDENTS

Pursuant to Penal Code §933 and §933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses within 60 days from elected county official(s), and within 90 days from governing bodies. In order to be included and published in the next Grand Jury report, invited responses must be received within 90 days.

After conducting interviews and reviewing reference documents, the Grand Jury findings and recommendations are as follows:

F1. The Calaveras County Administrative Office responded to Finding #1 and Recommendation #1 in the 2016-2017 Calaveras County Grand Jury Report titled "Assessor's Office" and agreed to complete a "comprehensive staffing and work methods analysis." This analysis was never presented to the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors.

R1. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Calaveras County Administrative Office develop a plan to address the backlog issue in the Calaveras County Assessor's Office through a "comprehensive staffing and work methods analysis" and present the findings to the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors and the Calaveras County Assessor's Office by June 30, 2021.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Board of Supervisors
- Calaveras County Assessor

Invited Responses

- Calaveras County Administrative Officer

F2. The Calaveras County Assessor's Office is more than three years behind on residential property reassessments and four years behind on commercial property reassessments which leads to property owner confusion regarding supplemental and/or escape tax bills.

R2.a. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Calaveras County Assessor's Office develop a plan by April 30, 2021, to bring all reassessments up to within one year of the re-appraisable events by June 30, 2022.

R2.b. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Calaveras County Assessor's Office begin authorizing overtime by April 30, 2021, using current appraisers and staff, in order to reduce the backlog by June 30, 2022.

R2.c. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors continue to maintain sufficient funding in the Calaveras County Assessor's Office budget to bring all reassessments to within one year of all re-appraisable events by June 30, 2022.

R2.d. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Calaveras County Assessor's Office develop a plan by April 30, 2021, to provide outreach using public forums and/or notifications to educate property owners about the effects of the backlog.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Board of Supervisors
- Calaveras County Assessor

Invited Responses

- None

F3. The Calaveras County Assessor's Office generally uses a more time-intensive comparative market analysis to determine the new values of properties rather than exclusively using the sales price as the new value.

R3. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Calaveras County Assessor's Office use "Rule 2" beginning April 30, 2021 for all real property ownership changes until these reassessments are completed within one year of the event.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Assessor

Invited Responses

- None

F4. The Calaveras County Assessor's Office currently operates using a first in, first out process that perpetuates the backlog of reassessments often resulting in retroactive adjustments and additional tax bills.

R4. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that by April 30, 2021, the Calaveras County Assessor's Office enact more effective workflow processes in order to complete more timely reassessments.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Assessor

Invited Responses

- None

F5. The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors is not regularly informed regarding the backlog of real property reassessments.

R5. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends, beginning April 30, 2021, the Calaveras County Assessor's Office provide quarterly progress reports to the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors containing information regarding how many reassessments were not completed prior to the expiration of the statute of limitations, as well as the number that are pending/backlogged.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Board of Supervisors
- Calaveras County Assessor

Invited Responses

- None

F6. The Calaveras County Assessor's Office has had a challenging time recruiting and retaining qualified staff.

R6. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that by April 30, 2021 the Calaveras County Assessor's Office work in conjunction with the Calaveras County Human Resources & Risk Management Office to develop a recruitment/retention plan in order to attract and retain qualified applicants.

Required Responses

- Calaveras County Assessor

Invited Responses

- Calaveras County Human Resources & Risk Management Director

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code §929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

REFERENCE SOURCES

- É Anonymous Residential Taxpayer Tax/Escapes/Supplemental Bills
- É Calaveras County Assessor's Office website
- É Calaveras County Treasurer/Tax Collector "Calaveras County Property Taxes and You" CCAO Public Pamphlet
- É CCGJ Citizen Complaints - Confidential
- É 10/10/2011 Recordnet.com "Calaveras Officials Say Computerized Tax System A Bust"
- É 06/28/2016 CAO's Office/Smith & Newell "Agreement for Services between County of Calaveras and Smith & Newell, CPAs"
- É 2017/2018 CA Legislative Analyst's Office Evaluating State-County Assessors' Partnership Agreement Program
- É 04/13/2018 Calaveras Enterprise Times "Muetterties Challenges Leslie Davis for Assessor"
- É 06/30/2018 County Auditor-Controller "County of Calaveras, State of CA Comprehensive Annual Financial Report"
- É 06/30/2018 CAO's Office/Smith & Newell "Single Audit Act Reports Schedules for the FY ended 6/30/18"
- É 06/15/2019 CAO's Office/Smith & Newell "Engagement Letter Agreed-Upon Procedures Appropriation Limit"
- É 06/30/2019 CAO's Office/Smith & Newell "Single Audit Act Reports Schedules for the FY ended 6/30/19"
- É 02/03/2020 Calaveras Treasurer-Tax Collector "Notice of Installment Payment Provision"
- É 2014/2015 CCGJ Grand Jury Report "CAO & Budget Process"
- É 2015/2016 CCGJ Grand Jury Report "CAO & Budget Process"
- É 2018/2019 CCGJ Grand Jury Report "CAO & Budget Process"

APPENDIX

Re-appraisals:

Change in Ownership - When a change in ownership (or transfer) occurs, the Assessor will receive a copy of the deed and determines if a reappraisal is required under State law. If required, an appraisal is made to estimate the new full value of the property, as of the date of transfer. The property owner is then notified of the new assessment and that creates the right to appeal the value.

New Construction - Copies of all building permits are sent to the Assessor by the building officials of the County and each City within the County. If the construction is new, a reappraisal is required that estimates the value added to the full value of the improvements. Maintenance, such as new roofing, is exempt. So is the construction of improvements replacing those damaged or unintentionally destroyed.

Excerpts from Calaveras County Assessor's Home Page

Proposition 13

Real property can only be reappraised upon a change in ownership or new construction. Business personal property, including boats and airplanes, and certain restricted properties remains subject to annual appraisal. Except for these two instances, no increase in the assessed value of any real property can exceed 2% each year, regardless of the rate of inflation. (This limitation does not apply to increases in values resulting from Statutory reductions pursuant to R&T Code Section 51 - Proposition 8)

Supplemental Assessments

In 1983, state law was changed to require taxes to be adjusted as of the exact day of the change in ownership. The Assessor is required to reappraise property immediately upon change of ownership or completion of new construction. The Assessor will issue a notice of supplemental assessment which reflects the difference between the prior and the new assessed values. (The tax liability is prorated based on the number of months remaining in the fiscal year, ending each June 30. Special tax bills are issued in addition to the regular tax bill.)

Changes in Value

When Proposition 13 became law in 1978, it required continuous annual increases in base year values of no more than 2% per year. The resulting assessed values are called "Factored Base Year Values" (FBYV). There was no provision in the new law for reductions in assessed value; even though it appeared that some properties could be declining in value. This dilemma was addressed in 1978 with the passage of Proposition 8. New provisions were added to tax law that allow the Assessor to take "í into account reductions in value due to damage, destruction, depreciation, obsolescence, removal of property, or other factors causing a decline in value." (R&T Section 51b) Pursuant to these provisions, assessed values are required to be the lower of FBYV or Full Value.

Section 51e of the Revenue and Taxation Code (R&T) states that "Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the assessor to make an annual reappraisal of all assessable property." In the course of day to day operations, the assessor may discover situations that warrant special reviews and that could lead to reductions. In most cases, however, factors believed to be damaging to value are commonly brought to the attention of the assessor by knowledgeable property owners. Once a reduction is made, this same R&T Section requires the assessor to perform annual reviews of affected properties to ascertain that the assessed value is still the lower of FBYV (Prop 13) or Full

Value (Proposition 8). In order to do this, the original FBV must be computed forward. When a recovering market indicates that the force of the factor causing a loss has dissipated; the assessor will enroll a higher value not to exceed the FBV and annual reviews will be discontinued. (The change from year to year is not limited to 2%, since Proposition 8 procedures govern.)

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

CENTRAL CALAVERAS FIRE AND RESCUE PROTECTION DISTRICT

December 31, 2020



SUMMARY

The 2019-2020 Calaveras County Grand Jury opened an investigation into the operations of the Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District, based on a citizen complaint. California Penal Code §925 authorizes civil grand juries to investigate and report on the operations, accounts and records of county and other public agencies, officers, departments, or functions.

Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District (District) is one of nine fire districts within Calaveras County. Formed in 1999 and spanning approximately 164 square miles, it roughly encompasses the communities of Glencoe, Mountain Ranch, and Sheep Ranch. This District was heavily impacted by the 2015 Butte Fire. In the years since the fire, the District has put forth two failed ballot measures aimed at increasing District funding.

The Calaveras County Grand Jury found numerous areas of concern regarding the financial transparency of the Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District, the relationship between the District and the Central Calaveras Fire Safety Elves, and opportunities for misuse of District property and resources. There is also a lack of familiarity by District Board of Directors with the Brown Act, and a general lack of an engagement by the Board of Directors which has resulted in little to no oversight of the administrative functions of the District.

Additionally, funding from the Butte Fire PG&E settlement, earmarked for fire recovery and preparedness, was used to purchase highly specialized equipment for uses not within the typical areas of responsibility as outlined in the mission statement of the Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District.

GLOSSARY

BOD	Central Calaveras Fire District Board of Directors
CCFRPD or District	Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District
CCGJ	Calaveras County Grand Jury
Elves	Central Calaveras Fire Safety Elves

METHODOLOGY

The Calaveras County Grand Jury conducted numerous interviews, reviewed internal and public documentation, documentation from affiliated entities, and researched information online. A tour of a fire station within the District was also completed.

BACKGROUND

There are about 3,400 special districts in California, governing a variety of functions such as water management, resource conservation, utilities, sanitation, cemeteries, and others, including fire protection. One of these is the Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District (CCFRPD or District). It is an independent district governed by a five-member Board of Directors (BOD) elected by the community it serves. The BOD is responsible for setting policy and for overseeing the District finances, purchasing, and personnel. The BOD hires the Chief who is accountable to them.

Since 1953, meetings of elected bodies in California have been governed by the Ralph M. Brown Act. This legislation spells out how meetings shall be noticed, publicized, conducted, and recorded, as well as how and which types of personal information must be disclosed by members of a board.

All elected officials are expected to receive training in Brown Act provisions and to follow the requirements. Agendas must be published 72 hours before a meeting, in a public place (e.g. bulletin boards, website, etc.) Meeting minutes must be available in a publicly accessible location; board members may not gather informally where they would constitute a quorum.

While many of the larger districts, commissions, and the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors receive formal Brown Act training, many of the smaller special districts do not. Consequently, some boards must rely on staff or knowledgeable members for guidance.

Fire Districts rely heavily on public funding sources in order to operate. Funds are generated through property tax allotment via the County, parcel taxes, grants, reimbursements from services rendered by strike teams, and the fundraising efforts of the Central Calaveras Fire Fighters Association, a non-profit corporation created to support the District. Direct funding through taxes, is the most effective and consistent way to ensure the District is sufficiently staffed and equipped to function at its highest capacity.

CCFRPD relies largely on volunteer firefighters to carry out its mission to provide fire protection and emergency response to the communities in the northern central region of Calaveras County. There are no full-time employees. Part-time employees serve as Chief, Deputy Chief, Captains, Lieutenants, firefighters, and administrative personnel. Many of the positions receive a stipend for hours worked. There are strike teams which may travel outside the County to assist in fighting large fires. CCFRPD has five fire stations located in separate areas of the District. Only Station #1 on Jesus Maria Road is staffed on a 24/7 basis. The District owns about 20 vehicles, including engines, water tenders, and support vehicles.

In May 2019, the full-time administrative assistant position was eliminated. Duties such as recording BOD minutes, handling of payroll, finances, and office management were assigned to part-time staff, including the Chief. The distribution of responsibility resulted in the Chief having sole access to administrative and financial passwords. In May 2020, the Chief stepped down to fill the newly created position of Deputy Chief, and a new Chief was hired. At the same time, the Board of Directors agreed to review both position assignments in six months. The Deputy Chief maintained control of the responsibilities assumed a year earlier. The passwords and other means of access to financial information were not provided immediately to the new Chief.

The Central Calaveras Fire Safety Elves (Elves), a non-profit corporation, was formed in August 2017 to address numerous issues in the aftermath of the Butte Fire. Many trees which burned in the fire and remained on private property presented safety issues. Additionally, individuals financially affected by the fire or unable to procure their own firewood could benefit from a fuel reduction and distribution program. This would simultaneously address fire fuel concerns and keep homes warm through winter with no cost to the firewood recipients.

In September 2017, the BOD adopted a policy that would permit the Elves to use the District name and allow the District to obtain grants for use by the Elves program. However, the District is required to maintain the responsibility for financial management of any funds received for the Elves via the District.

The Elves program was modeled after successful programs that operate in Arnold and in Amador

County. The program was initially grant-funded. However, the grant funds were actually awarded to the CCFRPD. Additional funds were provided to the District from the PG&E Butte Fire settlement and a portion was designated to fund Elves program equipment. The Elves program was never designed to operate independently of the CCFRPD.

DISCUSSION

The District has had trouble recruiting candidates for BOD positions and two BOD members whose terms were up for election in November 2020 did not file for reelection. All five members are rarely in attendance at the same time at monthly meetings. Members of the BOD do not currently receive formal training in Brown Act requirements, although they do complete the required Form 700, a disclosure form regarding property ownership and business interests.

BOD minutes were formerly recorded and published by the administrative assistant. Since the elimination of the administrative assistant position, the Chief, or Deputy Chief, is responsible for recording and publishing the minutes. Minutes were not published to the website from May 2019, when the administrative assistant left, to mid-2020. Most, but not all, minutes are now available on the website. The portion of the website related to the BOD includes an outdated photo of the Board members and does not list current members. Although there is a link to the Policy and Procedure Manual on the website, it does not link to a copy of the Manual.

Financial support from the community for the CCFRPD is mixed. Residents participate in fundraising events sponsored by the Central Calaveras Fire Fighters Association, and make donations to that group, but have yet to sufficiently support ballot measures that would increase the parcel tax to ensure increased funding for the District. In 2016 and 2018, CCFRPD put on the ballot a proposed parcel tax. In 2016, the proposed tax was \$75 per year per parcel. In 2018, the proposed tax was \$150 per year per parcel. Both measures were defeated by small margins. The 2016 measure lost by 6.27% (about 50 votes); the 2018 measure lost by 2.14% (about 30 votes).

In 2018, the District sent out informational postcards and staffed tables in community centers in order to inform the public about the importance of supporting the ballot measure. Voter support for a parcel tax did increase from 2016 to 2018 even when the proposed tax was doubled. An article in the November 3, 2019 Sacramento Bee indicates that fire districts successful at passing ballot measures are those with strong community engagement.

In recent years, fluctuations in CCFRPD personnel positions have frequently been the result of budgetary constraints and grant funds expiring. From 2017 to the present, there are several examples of Chief, Captain, and Lieutenant positions being reduced to part-time without benefits, to volunteer status without benefits, or eliminated in an effort to stretch all available funding and maintain as many personnel as possible. There is only one other fire district in the County with a Deputy Chief position.

In August 2017, the Central Calaveras Fire Safety Elves was formed to remove fire-damaged trees on private property and to provide firewood to seniors, veterans, disabled, and low-income people in Calaveras County. They subsequently obtained non-profit 501(c)3 status. The Elves was designed to operate in partnership with the CCFRPD in line with the District mission of fire prevention. However, the Elves would perform services outside of regular CCFRPD activities. The Elves rely upon the District for insurance, vehicles, and other resources. The BOD made this

partnership possible in September 2017 by adopting a policy which enabled the District to support the Elves and obtain funding for the Elves program.

Private non-profit corporations are normally outside of civil Grand Jury purview. Because of the relationship between the CCFRPD and the Elves program, the Calaveras County Grand Jury (CCGJ) examined the elements of the Elves program that directly affected the operations of the CCFRPD. Current District procedures regarding the use of resources such as fuel, vehicles, and staff time make it extremely challenging to track use for the Elves separate from other District use. This makes it impossible to completely quantify the cost of the Elves program to CCFRPD.

The CCFRPD received a Calaveras Community Foundation Butte Fire Cleanup grant of \$49,982.01 in November 2017 to start the Elves program. Since the Elves had just formed and were working in coordination with the District, and it was unlikely the foundation would award such a large sum to a newly formed organization, the District applied for the grant. As the recipient of the grant, the District was ultimately responsible for tracking expenses associated with the grant and keeping them separate from other District expenses.

During the one-year term of the grant, the activities and progress of the Elves program, and the expenses associated with it, were never discussed at BOD meetings. The BOD approved all monthly District expense transmittals, which included the grant expenses, without discussion. Over the course of a year, about \$35,000 was spent on log removal and property preparation; about \$15,000 was spent to purchase a number of tools and equipment to carry out the terms of the grant. Because the grant funds were awarded to the District, these items are the property of CCFRPD.

Two Elves program project sites were identified in this Calaveras Community Foundation grant proposal to establish the Elves program. These sites accommodated the equipment and processing activities undertaken by the program and were specifically included in District liability insurance coverage. Over the past three years, assets purchased by the District for use by the Elves program were primarily housed at these two locations. The lease for one location was revoked and the District has the obligation to remove all equipment and materials from the site. At the time of this writing, equipment and materials remain on the site. Equipment belonging to the CCFRPD is currently being kept at the remaining project site, which is a private residence.

In April 2019, the District received a subsequent grant of \$8,000 from the Calaveras Community Foundation for the Senior Fire Safe Homes project. This grant was for chimney cleaning and the purchase and installation of smoke detectors and reflective address signs for senior citizens within the District. Per District policy, the District was obligated to maintain control of and account for this grant money. However, the Chief at the time authorized that the check for this grant be deposited into the bank account of the Elves, rather than into the CCFRPD bank account. This reduced the ability of the District to adequately track the expenses.

Per the terms of the grant, the Elves purchased necessary materials, including the smoke detectors and some reflective signs. However, due to a lack of public interest, as well as a lack of professionals, and volunteer assistance, and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was halted. In August and December of 2019, the Elves returned the unspent grant money to the District. The District reported to the grantor that only a portion of the Senior Fire Safe Homes grant was able to be spent. The District then returned the unspent funds to the Calaveras Community Foundation in 2020, along with a report about how the used portion of the funds was spent.

In June 2019, the BOD passed Resolution 2019-008 titled "PG&E Butte Fire Recovery and Preparedness Program." The resolution requested that Calaveras County provide \$150,000 from the PG&E settlement money for equipment and personnel to equip and staff the Elves program for one year with the intention to gear up fuel reduction projects and produce more firewood for citizens within the County. The request included \$54,890 for a firewood processor and \$41,500 for a grapple trailer, as well as funding for small engine tools and maintenance. Additionally, about \$50,000 would fund a volunteer coordinator and stipends for volunteers.

The County Administrative Office countered that this PG&E money could be used to purchase equipment but not fund staffing or volunteer stipends, and an amended resolution was passed by the BOD in August 2019 that requested \$101,120 for the purchase of equipment and its maintenance. The County Administrative Office agreed to provide the funding for these purchases in September 2019 and the District subsequently purchased the items as outlined in the resolution. Over the one-year term of the Butte Fire Recovery and Preparedness Program, the Elves increased firewood production three-fold and facilitated the work of an AmeriCorp group that undertook fuel reduction projects until COVID-19 precautions and a state-wide lockdown ended their service term early.

Due to current District procedures for obtaining fuel, both diesel and unleaded gasoline, it is impossible to differentiate the fuel costs of the Elves program with the CCFRPD fuel costs. The previous Chief allowed the Elves to use the CCFRPD gasoline account at a local fueling station. Additionally, the diesel pump at Station #1 does not have a mechanism to ensure that all diesel used is logged and therefore accounted for.

The Elves reported delivering a total of 256 cords of firewood, clearing 7 properties, and clearing 88,044 cubic feet of flammable materials from private property. While the Elves' efforts benefited these individual properties and homeowners, the majority of the District did not experience a direct benefit. The Elves plan to dissolve at the end of 2020. It is unclear what will happen to the equipment that was purchased for them and if it can be used by the District. Lot clearing and firewood production are not currently within the scope of official District activity.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND RESPONDENTS

Pursuant to Penal Code §933 and §933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses within 60 days from elected county officials, and within 90 days from governing bodies. In order to be included and published in the next Grand Jury report, invited responses must be received within 90 days.

After conducting interviews, reviewing reference documents, and conducting facility tours, the Grand Jury findings and recommendations are as follows:

F1. Members of the Board of Directors of Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District have expressed unfamiliarity with Brown Act requirements, which limits the ability of the BOD to ensure members are adhering to the Act.

R1. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Board of Directors receive formal training in Brown Act requirements by April 30, 2021.

Required Responses

- Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District Board of Directors

Invited Responses

- None

F2. The Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District website is out of date and has inaccurate and incomplete information with regards to Board of Directors membership, and the District Policy and Procedure Manual.

R2. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Board of Directors ensure that the Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District website is updated as Board of Directors membership changes, and that policies and procedures are modified by March 31, 2021.

Required Responses

- Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District Board of Directors

Invited Responses

- None

F3. The Chief and the Board of Directors Treasurer do not have the necessary access to financial information related to the District, which limits financial oversight and accountability.

R3. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Chief and Board Treasurer be provided full access to all District financial records and that financial records be stored and maintained at District Fire Station #1 by February 1, 2021.

Required Responses

- Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection Board of Directors

Invited Responses

- None

F4. Considering the Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District budget constraints, the Deputy Chief position is unnecessary for such a fiscally strained district .

R4. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Board of Directors review the Deputy Chief position assignment to determine efficacy, by December 31, 2020.

Required Responses

- Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection Board of Directors

Invited Responses

- None

F5. Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District funds were improperly transferred to the Central Calaveras Fire Safety Elves, a non-profit corporation, which prevented the Board of Directors from overseeing the management of those funds.

R5. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District Board of Directors immediately ensure District funds are managed directly by the District.

Required Responses

- Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District Board of Directors

Invited Responses

- None

F6. With no effective tracking system to differentiate the usage of Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District fuel and fuel credit accounts, there is no way to determine the true cost to the District of the Central Calaveras Fire Safety Elves use of fuel obtained through the District accounts.

R6. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Board of Directors direct the Chief to create a procedure to track all usage of Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection fuel accounts, by March 31, 2021.

Required Responses

- Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District Board of Directors

Invited Responses

- Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District Chief

F7. The Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District purchased specialized equipment for the Central Calaveras Fire Safety Elves that is otherwise useless to a fire district in carrying out its mission.

R7. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Board of Directors review its priorities and ensure that spending and asset acquisition is in line with the Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District mission statement and capabilities, by June 30, 2021.

Required Responses

- Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District Board of Directors

Invited Responses

- None

F8. The inability to pass parcel tax measures is evidence that the Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District has not sufficiently engaged with the citizens of the community.

R8. The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection District::

- a) Increase community outreach and engagement about District Services
- b) Propose a new parcel tax measure, by the March 2022 primary election and increase public education about the need for support, beyond 2018 efforts.

Required Responses

- Central Calaveras Fire and Rescue Protection Board of Directors

Invited Responses

- None

REFERENCE RESOURCES

- CCFRPD Board of Directors Meeting minutes, January 2017 to October 2020 CCFRPD Transmittals and Ledger Reports
- 2020 CCFRPD Policies and Procedures Manual
- Calaveras County Auditor Controller records of CCFRPD Budget and Actuals by Budget Class
- Sacramento Bee Nov. 3, 2019, by Ryan Sabalow: "This California Firefighter Nearly Died. Then Voters Laid Him Off--in Fight for Lower Taxes"
- CentralCalaverasFire.org

DISCLAIMER

This report was issued by the Calaveras County Grand Jury with the exception of one Juror who recused himself. This Grand Juror was excluded from all parts of the investigation, including interviews, deliberations, and the writing and approval of this report.

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code § 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.
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RESPONSES TO 2018-2019 CALAVERAS GRAND JURY

The Responses may be reviewed in their entirety at the online address below.

<https://grandjury.calaverasgov.us/Responses>