

2024-25 YOLO COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

CONTINUITY AND COMPLIANCE REPORT

SUMMARY

Every year, in Yolo County, a group of ordinary citizens takes an oath to serve as grand jurors. The function of the Yolo County Civil Grand Jury is to act as a "watchdog" for the public, investigating the operations of local government to ensure efficient and honest government operations. They examine county and city governments, special districts, and joint powers agencies to ensure public funds are being used appropriately. The Grand Jury determines which officers, departments and agencies it will investigate during its term of office. The Yolo County Civil Grand Jury also investigates complaints from citizens. After obtaining substantiated findings in the cases investigated, the Grand Jury makes recommendations for improvements.

Each term of service is for the period of one year, and each term operates independently from any other Grand Jury year. During the term, the Grand Jury gathers information, conducts interviews, and writes reports that are often published toward the end of the term. Responses to these reports are often received after the end of the term and reviewed by the succeeding Grand Jury. It is the obligation of the successive Grand Jury to evaluate these responses for statutory compliance and completion.

APPROACH

- The 2024-25 Grand Jury reviewed required and invited responses to findings and recommendations in compliance with California Penal Code 933.05.
- The 2024-25 Grand Jury reviewed the reports and responses from the 2022-23 Yolo County Grand Jury and the 2023-24 Yolo County Grand Jury.
- In some cases, the 2024-25 Grand Jury interviewed the responding agencies to gain additional insight into the responses provided.

DISCUSSION

According to the Penal Code, for each grand jury finding, the respondent shall indicate one of the following:

1. The respondent agrees with the finding.
2. The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation therefor.

As to each Grand Jury recommendation, the respondent shall report one of the following actions:

1. The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary of the implemented action.
2. The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future including a timeframe for implementation.
3. The recommendation requires further analysis with an explanation and the scope and parameter of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.
4. The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation for the response.

CONCLUSION

The 2024-25 Yolo County Grand Jury concluded that the responses to the 2022-23 Grand Jury recommendations except as described in Appendix A, are in compliance with the Penal Code. Furthermore, the responses received to the 2023-24 Grand Jury are compliant and most of the follow-up actions have been implemented or are in the process of being accomplished.

APPENDIX A

2024-25 Yolo County Civil Grand Jury Yolo County Public Cemeteries Compliance Report

KNIGHTS LANDING CEMETERY DISTRICT

The 2022-23 Grand Jury Compliance Report made the following recommendation related to the Knights Landing Cemetery District:

(R-7) The Knights Landing Cemetery District should establish a website by September 1, 2024.

Findings by the 2024-25 Grand Jury:

F-1 The Knights Landing Cemetery District is not in compliance with state law (Government Code sections 6270.6 and 53087.8) and has not established a website or adopted a hardship resolution according to Yolo Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) 2024 Website Transparency Scorecard.

Recommendations by the 2024-25 Grand Jury:

R-1 The 2024-25 Grand Jury recommends the Knights Landing Cemetery District establish a website or adopt a hardship resolution by January 1, 2026.

R-2 The Grand Jury recommends that the trustees of the Knights Landing Cemetery District investigate available cost-saving options for the implementation of a website. Yolo LAFCO offers a website management system designed for smaller local governments that may not have enough in their budgets to implement a website. The Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF) provides scholarship funds for special districts to create their own website. A one-page application for these funds can be found at <https://www.sdlf.org/scholarships/sdlf-scholarships>. The funds are granted on a first come, first served basis, and are evaluated on the 15th of the month until the funds are used for the year.

COTTONWOOD CEMETERY DISTRICT

The 2022-23 Grand Jury made the following recommendation related to the Cottonwood Cemetery District:

(R-5) The Cottonwood Cemetery District should establish a website by January 1, 2024.

Findings by the 2024-25 Grand Jury:

F-1 The Cottonwood Cemetery District is not in compliance with state law (Government Code sections 6270.6 and 53087.8) and has not established a website or adopted a hardship

resolution according to Yolo Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) 2024 Website Transparency Scorecard.

Recommendations by the 2024-25 Grand Jury:

R-1 The 2024-25 Grand Jury recommends the Cottonwood Cemetery District establish a website or adopt a hardship resolution by January 1, 2026.

R-2 The Grand Jury recommends that the trustees of the Cottonwood Cemetery District investigate available cost-saving options for the implementation of a website. Yolo LAFCO offers a website management system designed for smaller local governments that may not have enough in their budgets to implement a website. The Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF) provides scholarship funds for special districts to create their own website. A one-page application for these funds can be found at <https://www.sdlf.org/scholarships/sdlf-scholarships>. The funds are granted on a first come, first served basis, and are evaluated on the 15th of the month until the funds are used for the year.

COMMENDATIONS

The 2024-25 Grand Jury understands the limited funds and resources it takes for the upkeep and administration of these cemeteries. The trustees of the cemetery districts are volunteers, and we applaud each of them for their service to the communities in which they serve.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury requires responses to its Findings and Recommendations as follows:

- Board of Trustees Cottonwood Cemetery District
- Board of Trustees Knights Landing Cemetery District