



**County of Inyo
Response
to 2016-2017 Final
Grand Jury Report**

October 17, 2017

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Inyo County Board of Supervisors

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Assistant Clerk of the Board: Darcy Ellis

The Board of Supervisors meets every Tuesday, with some exceptions, at 8:30 a.m. in the Board of Supervisors Room at the County Administrative Center, 224 N. Edwards St., Independence, CA. Correspondence may be sent to the Board at: P.O. Drawer N, Independence, CA 93526, or c/o the Assistant Clerk of the Board at dellis@inyocounty.us. Agendas and minutes may be found at: http://www.inyocounty.us/Board_of_Supervisors/.

2016 Election Day

Inyo County Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters P.O. Drawer F Independence, CA 93526

“During September 2016, the Inyo County Grand Jury received an invitation from the Inyo County Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters to serve as members of the Election Observer Panel on Election Day, November 8, 2016. Three jurors agreed to serve as Election Observers and visited all of the Inyo County polling places on Election Day.”

--pg. 18, Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Inyo County Grand Jury Final Report

FINDINGS

FINDING 1: “Signage outside of the polling places was present.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: Agree.

FINDING 2: “Polling place accessibility was adequate.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: Agree.

FINDING 3: “The Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters and staff have very carefully and logically pre-planned election procedures.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: Agree.

FINDING 4: “The Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters and staff have provided training for the volunteer poll workers and volunteer ballot counters.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: Agree.

FINDING 5: “The volunteer poll workers and volunteer ballot counters were enthusiastic, dedicated and well trained.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: Agree.

FINDING 6: “The poll workers maintained the security of completed ballots.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: Agree.

FINDING 7: “The Clerk-Recorder has the vision to provide better and quicker service to County residents and to provide more outreach, including training to all levels of authorized government and special districts.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: Agree. The Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters confirms that this is her vision for the Elections Department.

FINDING 8: “Replacement of the circa 2000 computers, circa 2005 ballot counting scanners and other associated election hardware and software are priorities.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: Agree. The Board of Supervisors has prioritized the replacement of this equipment in both policy and budgetary actions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: “The ICGJ recommends that the Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters re-examine polling place signage to ensure that voters can easily find their polling places while driving. The Inyo County Road Department could consider procurement of mobile changeable message displays similar to those utilized by Caltrans. In addition to a variety of informational uses throughout the year, these could be placed near polling places to assist new voters. It is also recommended that all elected related mailings from the Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters include polling place physical addresses.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *To the extent the recommendation addresses a budgetary or personnel matter under the decision-making authority of the Board of Supervisors, it will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.* The duly elected Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters has indicated she will follow through on this recommendation, and although the Board has no authority to assign this task, it does principally support the Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters’ commitment to efforts to make the voting process easier and more transparent for the residents of Inyo County, and provides funding through the budget for these efforts.

Regarding mobile changeable message displays similar to those utilized by Caltrans, such hydraulic trailer-mounted message boards cost approximately \$30,000 each, plus operations and maintenance costs. There may be an opportunity to procure one or two of these signs for emergency services operations, in which case it might be possible to deploy these signs for civic purposes like identifying polling places; but it is unlikely the County could afford enough signs to stage one at every polling location. With regard to the recommendation that the signs be purchased and operated by the Inyo County Road Department, the Board of Supervisors notes that the County is generally prohibited from using Road Department funds and resources for non-road activities without reimbursing the Road Fund for these costs at considerable added administrative expense. Inyo County’s polling places – the Tri-County Fairgrounds in Bishop, Big Pine Town Hall in Big Pine, the Courthouse in Independence, and Statham Hall in Lone Pine – are prominent community gathering spots that with minimal research even on the part of new voters should not be difficult to find. At this time, the Board of Supervisors cannot justify the expense of either a single or multiple hydraulic trailer-mounted message boards to help guide voters to these locations, or the use of staff time toward procuring, staging, operating, and maintaining these machines. This would be a particularly unwise investment in light of possible actions by the Board to convert Inyo County to a vote-by-mail county per Senate Bill 450. The conversion requires at least one ballot drop-off location for every 15,000 registered voters, and allows every voter in the County to register to vote by mail.

RECOMMENDATION 2: “Since inclement weather can be expected on November election days, the ICGJ recommends that polling place accessibility be re-examined by the Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters and by Public Works to ensure that all voters can easily and safely enter and exit their polling places.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *To the extent the recommendation addresses a budgetary or personnel matter under the decision-making authority of the Board of Supervisors, it will not be implemented because it is not warranted.* The duly elected Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters has indicated that she will re-examine accessibility of polling places to ensure the ease and safety with which voters can enter and exit these locations during inclement weather. Where polling places are located adjacent to County rights-of-way, Public Works Road crews will abide by the County’s adopted Snow Removal Policy which prioritizes where and when plowing will occur based on

safety and other factors. The Board again wishes to note that possible conversion to an all-vote-by-mail county per Senate Bill 450 will reduce the number of polling places required in Inyo County and allow all residents to vote by mail – and thus avoid complications presented by inclement weather – if they choose. Approximately 70 percent of Inyo County’s registered voters currently vote by absentee (mail-in) ballot.

RECOMMENDATION 3: “The ICGJ recommends that consideration be given to establishing another staff position in the office to enable the Clerk-Recorder to provide better and quicker service to County residents and to provide more outreach, including training.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *This recommendation has been implemented.* The Board of Supervisors approved adding a second Office Technician I position to the Inyo County Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters’ office, and deleting a vacant Office Clerk position, as requested by the Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters and recommended by the County Administrative Officer, when it adopted the 2017-2018 Budget on September 19, 2017.

RECOMMENDATION 4: “The ICGJ recommends that the Inyo County Board of Supervisors fund the replacement of the circa 2000 computers, circa 2005 ballot counting scanners and other associated election hardware and software with modern, upgradeable technology.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *This recommendation will be implemented in the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year.* The Board of Supervisors established the Elections Innovations Trust in Fiscal Year 2014-2015 to begin setting aside funds to replace the County’s aging elections equipment (the cost of which had been estimated at up to \$650,000). To date, the Board of Supervisors has appropriated \$216,353 for the Trust to replace the County’s voting system and, as part of adopting the 2017-2018 Board Approved County Budget on September 19, 2017, the Board identified an additional \$160,000 that would be available for the Trust if necessary. In Fiscal Year 2016-2017, the Board also authorized the Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters to proceed with issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) from companies interested in and able to provide Inyo County with a new, certified voting system. The Board declared a successful bidder for the project on October 3, 2017 and authorized the Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters to enter into further negotiations with the company for the purchase or lease of a new system in the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year. The Board of Supervisors also recognizes that there are outside funding sources that may – and, in principal, should – assist with upgrades of voting technology and as such, actively lobbies for State and Federal aid by supporting legislation that will provide counties with the resources they need to meet State and Federal election mandates.

COMMENDATIONS

COMMENDATION 1: “The Inyo County Grand Jury commends the Inyo County Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters and staff, recognizing that they are dedicated, enthusiastic, and productive hard working public servants.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Agree.* The Inyo County Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters and her elections staff are to be commended for their professionalism, hard work, dedication, and commitment to public service, specifically with regard to public relations efforts and their due diligence where election integrity, voter education, and community outreach is concerned.

COMMENDATION 2: “The Inyo County Grand Jury commends the remarkable residents of this County who so willingly volunteer to serve as poll workers, ballot counters, drivers, and in-office volunteers during election preparation, on election days, and through post-election wrap up.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Agree.* The Inyo County Board of Supervisors joins the Inyo County Grand Jury in commending our dedicated, tireless, and talented election volunteers, who help make casting a ballot in Inyo County an often painless and easy process and help ensure the utmost accuracy of our ballot counts.

Citizen Complaint: Cleanliness of Restrooms at a County Office

**Inyo County Health and Human Services Department
Public Health Division
207A W. South Street
Bishop, CA 93514**

“The Inyo County Grand Jury initiated an investigation in response to a letter of complaint regarding the Inyo County Public Health Division.”

--pg. 22, Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Inyo County Grand Jury Final Report

FINDINGS

FINDING 9: “The restrooms appeared clean and well stocked with sanitary supplies. They are cleaned each evening by a contracted cleaning agency, but employees are obliged to attend to any emergency cleanup during office hours.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Disagree partially.* The restrooms at the 207A W. South Street Public Health Division offices are clean and well-stocked with sanitary supplies. However, the Board of Supervisors wants to clarify that the restrooms are cleaned and maintained by employees of the Inyo County Public Works Department and not a contracted cleaning agency.

FINDING 10: “Both restrooms are small and difficult to access, especially for the disabled.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Disagree partially.* The bathrooms in Public Health are for employees and are not identified as public restrooms and meet applicable legal accessibility requirements for current employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: “The Inyo County Health and Human Service’s Public Health Division can seek a contract modification to include as needed daytime janitorial services in addition to the contracted evening services.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.* The restrooms at Inyo County Health and Human Service’s Public Health Division are cleaned by Inyo County Public Works employees, and have been found to be sanitary and well-stocked. Inyo County HHS maintains regular contact with staff in the Inyo County Public Works Department to address issues related to the cleanliness of all HHS offices, including the Public Health Division. Inyo County HHS will continue to work with Public Works to address issues relative to janitorial service, and if the need for potential scheduling changes and/or additional staff resources is identified, will engage Public Works about such possibilities, dependent upon Public Works’ staffing capacity and HHS’ funding availability. Furthermore, Inyo County HHS does not have the authority to contract for janitorial services in lieu of the janitorial services provided by County staff.

RECOMMENDATION 2: “Prioritize all public contact Inyo County departments with offices in Bishop for inclusion in the construction of the consolidated county office building.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *This recommendation has been implemented.* The County’s planning efforts to date for the proposed consolidated County office building include providing space for all “public contact” departments with an existing presence in the Bishop area; including Health and Human Services programs. The County also wants to acknowledge the Grand Jury’s continued recommendations supporting the possible development of a consolidated County office building.

COMMENDATION

COMMENDATION 1: “The ICGJ commends the management and staff of the Public Health Division for their commitment to and caring for the citizens and families of Inyo County.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Agree.* The Inyo County Board of Supervisors joins the Inyo County Grand Jury in commending the hard-working management and staff of the Public Health Division for their dedication to and professionalism in providing front-line services that improve and preserve the health and well-being of the public.

Inyo County Free Library Operation and Budget

**Inyo County Free Library
P.O. Box K
Independence, CA 93526**

“The Inyo County Grand Jury undertook an investigation into the Inyo County Free Library budget, operation and programs.”

--pg. 27, Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Inyo County Grand Jury Final Report

FINDINGS

FINDING 1: “The Library is underfunded and has been since 2010.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Disagree wholly.* The Board of Supervisors appreciates the Grand Jury’s desire to see increased funding for the County Library, and recognizes there are many citizens who also value and advocate robust library services. The Library is a discretionary service. There is no mandate and there is no formula to determine adequate funding levels. As such, funding for the County Free Library is appropriate, given the County’s limited resources, other demands for those resources and the level of utilization.

The Board of Supervisors has sole constitutional authority for approving the County Budget, and welcomes the Grand Jury’s input and recommendations – as it does from all citizens – as to how the Board might consider best allocating the County’s scarce financial resources between essential and discretionary programs and services. We believe the Inyo County Free Library is and has been reasonably and appropriately funded relative to the County’s need to also provide funding for dozens of other County programs and services from the same pool of limited General Fund dollars; ranging the Sheriff’s Office to the Eastern California Museum to the elections equipment. There is only a finite amount of money available to fund both essential and discretionary County services and, like the Library, most of these other County programs services would be happy to get a bigger slice of the County budget pie. While there is always room to disagree about how much funding one County program or service receives at the expense of another program or service, at the end of the day, the County has to adopt a balanced budget that meets a wide variety of needs and desires. The County has done a commendable job of providing Library funding and maintaining robust Library hours. (Library branches in the Owens Valley maintain public hours five [5] days a week and, until 2014, were open six [6] days a week).

The Grand Jury Report suggests an “average” budget for a library serving Inyo County’s population size should be \$931,000 – a figure from the 2016 Library Journal’s annual budget survey for libraries serving populations sized 10,000 to 24,999. However, the County respectfully suggests that this number alone may not be a reliable benchmark for determining what constitutes an appropriate county library budget. Every county has unique operational factors. We note that the Library Journal’s annual budget survey omits other relevant information such as the economic profiles of the cities and counties (or districts) that operate the responding libraries, and the

responding libraries' circulation and user numbers. These are just three of the relevant data sets that should be considered when comparing budgets among jurisdictions and their respective ability to fund libraries and other services.

Data from the California State Library, as well as a survey of other rural California counties similar to Inyo, also supports the contention that Inyo County Library services are adequately funded:

Library Branches & Hours

Colusa County

Library Branches: 7
 Total Days of Operation per Week: 23
 Average Days per Branch per Week: 3.3
 Average Hours per Day: 5.8

Inyo County

Branches: 6
 Total Days of Operation per Week: 25
 Average Days per Branch per Week: 4.2
 Average Hours per Day: 5.5

Mariposa County

Branches: 4
 Total Days of Operation per Week: 15
 Average Days per Branch per Week: 3.75
 Average Hours per Day: 4.9

***Mono County (Operated by Office of Education and NOT Mono County)**

Branches: 6
 Total Days of Operation per Week: 33
 Average Days per Branch per Week: 5.5
 Average Hours per Day: 5.6

Plumas County

Branches: 4
 Total Days of Operation per Week: 17
 Average Days per Branch per Week: 4.25
 Average Hours per Day: 6

Trinity County

Branches: 3
 Total Days of Operation per Week: 9
 Average Days per Branch per Week: 3
 Average Hours per Day: 4.7

** Operated by the Mono County Office of Education under the direction of the Mono County Superintendent of Schools and the Mono County Library Authority Board*

We note that Inyo County maintains four (4) library branches open five (5) days per week in Independence, Bishop, Big Pine and Lone Pine. The Colusa, Mariposa and Mono County main branches are open six (6) days a week. Of those, only the Colusa and Mariposa library systems are county-funded. The only other library branches open five (5) days per week are the Lee Vining, Benton, and Bridgeport branches in Mono County, which, again, is operated by the Mono County Office of Education, and the Quincy branch in Plumas County. Among the selected county-funded library systems, there are only 7 branches open five (5) or more days per week, and four (4) of those branches are Inyo County libraries.

Visitation

Despite similar schedules, and thus proportionate levels of accessibility available to the public, the comparable county-operated library systems – based on data from the State Library Survey – saw, on average more than twice as many visitations per hour open in 2015-2016 (14 visits) than Inyo County libraries did in total (5 visits). The statewide average was 72. In fact, Plumas County, with three (3) branches open 17 days a week an average of six (6) hours a day, saw 13 visits per hours open; Mariposa County, which operates four (4) branches open an average of 4.9 hours a day, saw 27.17 total visits per hour open. The Inyo County figure is based on rough estimates. In the future, better data might somewhat alter the visitation figures, but the fact remains that the visitation numbers for Inyo County are much lower than in comparable jurisdictions.

Circulation

Inyo County's total library circulation fell from 91,083 in 2008-2009 to 45,602 in 2015-2016-- for an almost 50% reduction in total circulation. During the same time period, circulation per capita similarly dropped from 5 books per person in 2008-2009 to 2 books per person in 2015-2016. Circulation per hour declined from 11 books/hour to 6 books/hour, compared to a statewide average of 94 books/hour; and, an average of 16 books per hour among five like counties used for comparison (Mariposa, Mono, Colusa, Plumas, and Trinity).

Total operating expense per circulation at the Inyo County Library increased during this same time period, from \$7.16 per book to \$10.42 per book – 40% more per circulation than the statewide average (\$7.64 per book) or comparable counties' average (\$7.71 per book) average. Taking lower circulation numbers into account, if the Inyo County Library was underfunded, as asserted by the Grand Jury, the cost per circulation should be lower not higher.

Over the last 12 fiscal years (2006-2007 to 2017-2018), there has been, on average, less than a 7% difference between the Department Requested Budget and the Board Approved Budget (including both increases and reductions). Over the last 11 fiscal years, the Library came in *under budget* every fiscal year, for an average of \$70,699.91 a year in funding that was requested by the department, incorporated into the Recommended Budget, authorized in the Board Approved Budget and not spent. Funding for Books and Subscriptions was approved by the Board *at or above* the level requested by the department 9 out of 11 of the past fiscal years. The levels requested by the Department have remained relatively static: \$30,000 to \$35,000 each fiscal year. Despite the downward trend in circulation and visits and based on annual budget requests from the Library, Inyo County has maintained roughly the same sized collection between 2008-2009 (111,772) and 2015-2016 (117,905), according to the California State Library data.

FINDING 2: “The Library does not have the staff to perform basic operations without the aid of volunteers. Staff reductions are negatively impacting the operation of the Library including unscheduled closures of the Library branches.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Disagree partially.* Reductions in library staffing (occurring through attrition rather than lay-offs) may have created certain operational challenges within the library system. However, these challenges need not be, and have not been, insurmountable. The use of volunteers is one way to meet such challenges and, given the County’s perennial budget constraints, the use of volunteers should be encouraged whenever possible. The Board of Supervisors wants to use this opportunity to acknowledge and thank those people who have volunteered their time and energy to support and enhance library operations. The Board of Supervisors also wants to acknowledge that, on several occasions, members of this Board have heard and were disturbed by complaints that the Library failed to fully embrace volunteer services when offered. Staff is and historically has been encouraged to utilize volunteers whenever possible, regardless of staffing levels. It is a long, time-honored tradition that libraries throughout the country, in cities and counties large and small with budgets of varying sizes, thrive with the support of volunteers.

We agree that existing library staff could have been better deployed by the Library Director in recent years by rotating staff between library branches instead of having some staff assigned almost exclusively to a fixed location. In fact, additional funding was added to the Library’s Motor Pool budget in the Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Board Approved Budget for this purpose. Such dexterous use of staff may have limited the need for unscheduled library closures. However, we also recognize that some of the closures may have been unavoidable due to the coincidence of the timing of staff vacations, illness, and/or projects or trainings wreaking havoc on the schedule. These unscheduled closures should, however, be distinguished from the scheduled closures of branches experienced in 2016 as the result of extensive work ramping up to completion of the Library Automation Project

However, as indicated by the Library hours analysis provided above, we would argue that, even with occasional unscheduled closures, Inyo County still maintains library hours that match or exceed other, similar rural California counties including Colusa, Mariposa, Plumas and Trinity. And, based on the visitation and circulation numbers cited above, a strong argument can be made that staffing levels are reasonable for a Library system experiencing steadily declining circulation and library visits.

The Board of Supervisors relies on County staff to deliver the highest possible services commensurate with its fiscal realities. While there may always be room for improvement, without the Grand Jury providing specific examples of not having “staff to perform basic operations,” the Board has no reason to believe this has not occurred within the County Library. We expect the Library Director to manage priorities and staff to ensure basic operations do occur, even if this means making recommendations to restructure library operations or reallocating staff resources away from “low volume” branches to where the resources are most needed.

FINDING 3: “The Bishop Friends of Library are the primary funding sources for the Library Automation Project.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Disagree partially.* Completion of the Library Automation Project last year was made possible by a generous and appreciated contribution of \$25,000 from the Friends of the Bishop Library. However, the Library Automation Project was in progress for 12 years, during which time the Board of Supervisors consistently appropriated General Fund dollars and staff resources on an ongoing basis for automation. In fact, in Fiscal Year 2015-2016, the Board moved funds from Contingencies at the Mid-Year Budget Review to cover the purchase of equipment necessary to complete the Library Automation Project, and the following year, in Fiscal year 2016-2017, added two (2) temporary Library I positions to the Library budget, at a General Fund cost of \$19,802, to similarly aid in completion of the project. The Library Automation Project was truly a collaborative effort. We believe that these public-private collaborative efforts should be viewed in a positive light and encouraged.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: “Within 6 months of this report, explore options to stabilize Library funding.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.* The Board of Supervisors acknowledges the Grand Jury’s recommendation that the Library budget receive more funding – presumably at the expense of other County programs and services – and believes it has considered and acted on this recommendation as part of its adoption of the Fiscal year 2017-2018 Board Approved County Budget. However, it is not clear what the Grand Jury considers stabilized Library funding, and the County maintains that the “average” budget cited in the Grand Jury report for a library serving Inyo County’s population size – \$931,000 – may not be an accurate reflection of what constitutes stabilized funding, and may not be justified given the County’s funding constraints, and low circulation and visitation at the Library branches.

However, the Board does recognize that the Library budget may be still be lower than ideal, but also recognizes that most County departments face similar financial strains, as does the County as a whole. As noted during the 2017-2018 Budget Hearings, the County is projected to be facing *at least* \$1,686,788 in higher costs simply to adopt the status quo budget for next fiscal year, including \$1.1 million in additional pension costs and \$560,000 in wage increases. Not calculated yet are higher health insurance and retiree health costs as well as the potentially massive cuts to federal Health and Human Services funding, which will have a ripple effect on other funding sources. Given these and other factors, the Board of Supervisors cannot justify a significant increase to the Library budget short of a cash windfall. However, if and as resources become available, and circumstances warrant such action, the Board of Supervisors is committed to taking steps necessary to address funding and staffing shortcomings in all of its departments. It should be noted that, as of 2015-2016, 98.49% of the Library’s operating income came solely from the County budget, compared to the statewide average of 92.27% and an average of 87.42% among five comparable counties. Some grant and in-kind funding may not be reflected in the State report. Nevertheless, the Board believes that there may be more grant funding opportunities that could and should be pursued in an effort to bolster the Inyo County Free Library.

RECOMMENDATION 2: “Explore options to increase 2017-2018 staffing budget [to] meet operational needs and prevent unannounced closures.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *This recommendation has been implemented.* The Board of Supervisors notes that repeated prior direction to the Library Director to rotate personnel among library branches instead of solely and steadfastly assigning the majority of staff to just one specific branch, has been and remains a reasonable means of mitigating or remedying some of the challenges faced by the Library system. Nevertheless, the functional benefits of adding additional staff to the Library’s Authorized Staffing – particularly benefits associated with opportunities to take on new projects and initiatives now that the Library Automation Project is complete – cannot be disputed. Recognizing this, the Board of Supervisors’ Approved County Budget for Fiscal Year 2017-2018 funded adding a full-time, librarian level position to the Library’s Authorized Staffing, and the Board is glad that it could afford to do so. We also note that the Library Director has warranted that adding this librarian level position to the Authorized Staffing will resolve the long-running staffing debate and should eliminate the occurrence of most spot library closures.

RECOMMENDATION 3: “Explore options to increase 2017-2018 budget to allow for completion of Library Automation Project.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted.* The Assistant County Administrator and Library Director attended the May 16, 2017 Board of Supervisors meeting to announce the completion of the Library Automation Project and scheduling of a ribbon-cutting for June. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors ultimately held a special public meeting at the Bishop branch on June 2, 2017, with an open house following adjournment, to commemorate the project’s completion.

COMMENDATION

COMMENDATION 1: “The Grand Jury commends the Library Staff, Volunteers, and the Friends of the Library for the dedication and caring they have for the Library and the services they provide to the community.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Agree.* The Board of Supervisors joins the Inyo County Grand Jury in offering praise to the Library Staff, Volunteers, and the Friends of the Library (in Bishop and Lone Pine) for their support of the Inyo County Free Library and its patrons.

Inyo County Jail

550 South Clay Street

Independence, CA 93526

“As mandated by California Penal Code 919(b), ‘the Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county.’ In accordance with that mandate, the 2016-2017 Inyo County Grand Jury inspected the Inyo County Jail.”

--pg. 5, Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Inyo County Grand Jury Final Report

FINDINGS

FINDING 1: “The concrete floor in the intake area is heavily stained.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: Agree.

FINDING 2: “The walk-around deck in the control tower is without a continuous guardrail or warning stripes.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: Agree.

FINDING 3: “The control panel in the tower is outdated and replacement parts are hard to acquire or locate. A new panel would cost upwards of \$500,000.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: Agree.

FINDING 4: “Staff stated that the facility lacked enough isolation/segregation cells.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: Agree.

FINDING 5: “Printer table in the booking room area has sharp edges, which poses a hazard to both staff and incoming prisoners.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: Agree.

FINDING 6: “Response time can have an effect on the evaluation of the mental state of a subject at the time of booking and incarceration.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: Agree.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: “The Grand Jury recommends a deep cleaning of the concrete floor in the intake area.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: This recommendation will be implemented in the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year.

The Sheriff has indicated that Inyo County Jail staff and inmate work crews will be cleaning the area to remove stains.

RECOMMENDATION 2: “Continue the yellow and black painted line on the edge of the walk around in the control tower or add on to the partial existing rail.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: This recommendation will be implemented in the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year.

The Sheriff’s Department has indicated that it will order the supplies needed to paint continuous yellow-and-black warning stripes around the edge of the control tower.

RECOMMENDATION 3: “Set aside or seek funding for the procurement of a new control panel.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *This recommendation requires further analysis.* In Fiscal Year 2016-2017, the County provided \$12,000 in the Budget for a Jail Repair and Replacement Evaluation that identified deferred maintenance projects, such as a boiler project, replacement of HVAC units, and jail hinges and installation, now funded in the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Board Adopted Budget. The Board does recognize that the control panel will need to be replaced at some point, and funding sources for a similar evaluation of the control panel and subsequent replacement – at a potential cost of at least \$500,000 – will need to be identified in future budgets. Grant funding and/or contributions to a fund similar to the Elections Innovations Trust could surface as options.

RECOMMENDATION 4: “Find or create space which could be set aside for additional isolation/segregation cells.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *This recommendation requires further analysis.* Options for addressing the lack of isolation/segregation cells, including a costly and disruptive facility remodel, will have to be explored through a facility evaluation and possible cost-benefit analysis. The Sheriff’s Department has indicated its commitment to seeking possible State grant funding through the Board of State and Community Corrections to fund a facility evaluation.

RECOMMENDATION 5: “For staff and inmate safety, either pad or round the edges of the printer table in the intake area.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *This recommendation will be implemented in the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year.* The Sheriff has indicated that his staff will submit a work order to mitigate the issue.

RECOMMENDATION 6: “Establish a workable policy with County Health and Human Services staff regarding response time to the facility to assess the mental condition of incoming prisoners at the time of incarceration and/or booking.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *This recommendation is being implemented.* Sheriff’s Department and Health and Human Services staff have been working to coordinate both mental health and substance abuse response protocols. The County has seen improvement in this area and will continue working on solutions through ongoing coordination.

COMMENDATION

COMMENDATION 1: “The Inyo County Grand Jury commends all Inyo County Sheriff Department personnel for their dedication to the work and responsibilities inherent in their positions, and maintaining an efficient and well-maintained facility.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Agree.* The men and women of the Sheriff’s Department are to be commended for their hard work, commitment, and professionalism, and for ensuring our jail operations run smoothly, safely, and in compliance with State and Federal law.

Inyo County Juvenile Detention Facility

201 Mazourka Canyon Road

Independence, CA 93526

“According to California Penal Code 91, the Grand Jury is authorized to ‘inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county.’ The Inyo County Juvenile Detention Facility is one of the mandates responsibilities of the 2016-2017 Inyo County Grand Jury.”
 --pg. 8, Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Inyo County Grand Jury Final Report

FINDINGS

FINDING 1: “The odor of mildew strongly suggests a persisting fungal infestation constituting a potentially serious health risk to detainees and staff.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Disagree wholly.* There is an occasional, noticeable odor inside the facility that has been present for many years. The County has taken steps to both identify and eliminate the odor and neither mildew nor any other fungal infestation has ever been found. Professionals who inspected the facility determined the odor to be harmless.

FINDING 2: “Rust and corrosion is a preventable blight that detracts from a clean and orderly appearance.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Agree.*

FINDING 3: “A reliably operating generator is essential to the secure operation of the facility, particularly in an area that experiences power outages and frequent weather extremes.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Agree.* The County must have a reliable generator serving the Juvenile Detention Facility. The current generator is an older model and while it may not always start automatically, it can be relied upon to start manually; Building and Maintenance personnel test the generator monthly during the summer and weekly during the winter to make sure of this.

FINDING 4: “The Policy and Procedures Manual must be up to date to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Agree.*

FINDING 5: “The Probation Department has not inspected all of the facilities of the four counties in the MOU.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Disagree partially.* The Probation Department has visited and toured the South Lake Tahoe Juvenile Treatment Center. All of the facilities that Inyo Probation has a Memorandum of Agreement with for out-of-county detainment of juveniles are inspected bi-annually by the Board of State and Community Corrections.

FINDING 6: “The vinyl flooring issue i[n] the kitchen at JKBS is unattractive and presents the risk of bacteria and other pathogens.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Outside County jurisdiction.* This finding is outside the jurisdiction of the County of Inyo County. The Jill Kinmont Boothe School is operated by the Inyo County Superintendent of Schools. The County does not have any oversight of the school property or facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: “Broaden efforts to identify, and eradicate, the mildew problem in the control room.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted.* Considerable efforts and resources have been expended for more than a decade on identifying the “mystery odor” at the Juvenile Detention Facility and its source. The County has embarked on an exciting Juvenile Services Transition with Health and Human Services, which included closing the Juvenile Detention Center during the week and which is starting to see positive results among local juvenile offenders and at-risk youth. Limited County resources would be better spent continuing and even expanding on these efforts. Obviously if there is evidence of mildew or other fungal infestation in the control room, the County will provide appropriate mitigation efforts.

RECOMMENDATION 2: “Implement a regular anti-corrosion inspection and prevention program.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *This recommendation will be implemented.* Staff will conduct weekly inspections of the facility to address issues such as this.

RECOMMENDATION 3: “Ensure that the generator is reliable and starts automatically in the event of power outage.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *This recommendation is being implemented.* As discussed, Building and Maintenance staff regularly inspect the generator to ensure it can be relied upon to start manually in the event of power outages. Probation staff plans to explore options for a replacement generator that will also start automatically, once funding for such a purchase has been identified.

RECOMMENDATION 4: “Ensure that the Policy and Procedures Manual is regularly updated as required.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *This recommendation has been implemented.* The Probation Department has been working to update the Policy and Procedures Manual, which, as a component of the inspections completed by the Board of State and Community Corrections, was found in compliance to standards. New rules and regulation are added on an as-needed basis throughout the year. The manual will also be undergoing an evaluation.

RECOMMENDATION 5: “Institute a periodic inspection schedule for facilities in transport counties in the MOU.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *This recommendation will be implemented in the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year.* Probation staff plans to visit each facility throughout the year.

RECOMMENDATION 6: “The Inyo County Superintendent of Schools, which runs the JKBS facility, take immediate action to repair the flooring defect.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Outside of the jurisdiction of the County.* The County has no authority or oversight of the Jill Kinmont Boothe School operations or facilities, however, we presume that the Inyo County Superintendent of Schools will respond.

COMMENDATION

COMMENDATION 1: “The Grand Jury commends the Inyo County Probation Department, the Bishop Unified School District, and the staff of the Inyo County Superintendent of Schools, for their creative, resourceful and enthusiastic embrace of the challenges presented by this transition. These challenges cannot be overstated.”

COUNTY RESPONSE: *Agree.* All of the administrators, supervisors, rehabilitation specialists, support staff, and teachers should be commended for their hard work and dedication to providing effective, efficient, and needed services to Inyo County youth and their families in an effort to remove and/or prevent youth from entering the criminal justice system.