

## **MENDOCINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT TITLED:**

### **MENDOCINO COUNTY'S TRAILING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

#### **Discussion**

The Board of Supervisors welcomes this opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury report titled "Mendocino County's Trailing Information Technology". Current Grand Jury procedures state: "[f]indings are the conclusions or judgements that logically flow from the verified facts." In that regard, the Board of Supervisors encourages the Grand Jury to focus on verified facts and avoid unsubstantiated opinions that tend to inflame instead of inform discussion of this critical issue.

#### **Pursuant to the request of the Grand Jury, the Board is responding to the following:**

- F1. The CEO and BOS have not clearly defined the scope, authority or recruitment strategy for the proposed CIO position.

Partially Disagree. The BOS Information Technology ad-hoc committee is currently engaged with the CEO in refining the job description and duties based on present and projected needs.

- F2. The completion of the 99 Initiatives of the IT Master Plan has been delayed by 21 months due to factors such as a low priority for improving IT, uncoordinated project management, budgetary commitments and demonstrated deficient leadership.

Partially Disagree. The 99 initiatives include a mosaic of tasks with varying levels of effort to address and a range of departments as lead. Some of the tasks can be completed and marked as such, while others represent ongoing responsibilities. County IS staff are developing a matrix of the IT Master Plan Initiatives that will more clearly identify the County's lead, whether the task can be (or has been) simply completed, or if it represents an ongoing effort. Once the ITMP Initiatives are organized in this manner with updated status, County IS will maintain the to-date Schedules going forward. This will include a breakdown of completed, pending, and in process Initiatives.

- F3. The BOS approves funding for the ITMP but does not participate on the ITMP Steering Committee to communicate priorities, provide leadership and approve resources.

Agree. The BOS will ask the IT ad-hoc committee to participate in ITMP meetings.

- F4. Since some costs are recorded in departmental budgets but not consolidated into the ITMP, the total cost of the Initiatives is possibly underrepresented by millions

of dollars.

Agree. Historically, County IS has been responsible for enterprise technology related costs and supporting infrastructure utilizing the IS operating budget and IT Reserve. Departments are responsible for department specific technology related expenditures and it can be difficult to capture the relation of these expenditures to ITMP Initiatives. With the existing structure in place, staff are able to identify expenses in the IT Reserve, IS operating budget and a portion of expenses in designated IT Equipment line item 862230 utilized by all departments. This would not identify expenses allocated to 864370 (fixed assets), 862189 (professional services) or 864360 (structural improvements) which would be combined with other departmental expenses.

- F5. The SO IS Department has been allowed to operate separately from the County's IS department which is a detriment to efficient delivery of services and cost effectiveness.

Agree. While the SO has IS staff independent of County IS, at the discretion of the SO Computer Operations Manager, there is regular interface in the following areas: Networking Infrastructure, System Administration, Telecommunications, and Mobile Device management.

- F6. If the IT staff with access to DOJ systems have received clearance to maintain equipment of the SO, there is no legal obstacle that would prevent reporting to a central IT Department headed by a CIO.

Agree. County IS supports certain aspects of the SO (see F5), but currently has no authorization to access DOJ information or systems. Regardless of Authorization status, ultimate approval must come from the Sheriff.

- F7. Project status reporting is not clearly or regularly represented to the public and the BOS, thus leaving them uninformed of IT's priorities and project initiatives.

Agree. High level project updates are provided in monthly CEO reports, but improvements to Project status reporting have been determined to be a Department need. Efforts are currently underway to further develop Project Management methodologies and tools. Project status to date and change since last report should be included in the monthly CEO report.

- F8. Project Manager position(s) are unfilled, or the need not recognized, which leads to project plans not consistently being prepared for the management of IT Initiatives.

Agree. County IS does not currently have Project Manager positions, though the need for additional Project Management or Project Manager position(s) is recognized. Consideration of potential PM positions is a key component of our

efforts to develop our internal PM practices.

- F9. Project managers and process application analysts are critical and unfilled positions in Mendocino County's IT organization, which is already understaffed given the number of Initiatives in the ITMP as well as on-going operational needs.

Agree. The Board has funded a new Business Analyst position; County IS is currently working with Human Resources to create this. The Business Analyst position will assist in application process improvements. Evaluation of these positions is a high priority for County IS as the need has increased.

- F11. The Auditor/Controller has not established the accounting procedure for the mandated funding reserve established by County Policy 35 which is obsolete and inadequately capped at \$850,000.

Agree. County IS agrees this policy should be reviewed. The Board of Supervisors adopted County Policy 35 in May 2000. Many technology improvements and infrastructure replacements were deferred due to a lack of available funding. In November 2018, the Board of Supervisors adopted the ITMP and allocated funding to critical projects. The IT Reserve currently holds funding for ITMP, enterprise internal service fund (ISF) and Public Safety Microwave Cost Recovery. The Enterprise ISF and Public Safety Microwave Cost Recovery were developed to not only identify cost allocations by entity, but also create a funding mechanism for future replacements. Annual contributions identified for these items currently exceed the amount identified in this policy.

- F12. Unlike many modernized California Counties, there are few mechanisms for the public to request most on-line County services or electronically submit forms thus inadequately serving the needs of the public and efficiently processing through County staff.

Agree.

- F13. The County plans to issue an unnecessary and expensive RFP to select an alternative email service to replace GroupWise, when Microsoft email could simply be implemented. The County already licenses all other Office software from Microsoft except for email which is tightly integrated with all other Microsoft products.

Agree. Migration of over 1,500 mailboxes, accounts, and the associated shares, proxies, contacts, distribution, calendars, etc. is a much more complex process than setting up an account. This requires a large training program as well as working with each department to ensure their embedded processes are not disrupted during this transition. There is the migration of an existing and established email system, to a new hosted platform, this requires DNS, AD integration and hand off. There are many technical and complex components to

successfully migrate the entire enterprise. There is a need for a 3rd party to assist with the migration to ensure it is successful. The RFP process has been completed, resulting in several responses from qualified firms. A scope of work will be developed, with a contract brought to the Board for consideration. The County's transition from GroupWise to Office 365 is expected to take place by Spring of 2022. County could opt for an inexpensive and quick alternative: contract for subscription, create the accounts, skip migration, tell county employees to use GroupWise side by side to access old email messages.

### **Response to Recommendations:**

- R1. The BOS and CEO define the scope, authority, fiscal responsibility, recruitment strategy for and establish the position of Chief Information Officer/Director of Technology by August 1, 2021. Possibilities for filling this position include: outsourcing, consulting service or direct hiring of an at-will director with the charge to complete the ITMP by July 1, 2026. (F1, F2)

Recommended date has expired. BOS to request IT ad-hoc committee to work with executive office to define job description.

- R2. The CIO position focus on improving the IT infrastructure in a steady, timely manner with quarterly public status reporting of active and planned Initiatives to the CEO and BOS including planned start and completion dates, progress status, budgeted cost and spending to date. (F1, F2, F7-F9)

This has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the near future.

- R3. By August 1, 2021, the BOS assign at least one member to take part in the quarterly ITMP Steering Committee meetings and report back to the BOS to set priorities for projects and to facilitate funding. (F3)

Date has expired, but BOS agrees to assign Supervisor Williams to ITMP Steering Committee meetings.

- R4. The BOS establish a consolidated, shared County IT Department responsible for all IT functions under the direction of a Chief Information Officer/Director of Technology by FY 2022. Any centralized IT staff that support the SO shall receive the requisite background check required by DOJ. (F4-F6)

Areas where County IS assists and supports SO IS needs (in a consolidated structure) include Networking Infrastructure, System Administration, Telecommunications, and Mobile Device management.

- R5. The BOS with the CIO, as part of the FY 2022-23 budget, consolidate all IT related costs, including ITMP funds into a single IT budget that accurately reflects total IT costs. These costs could then be appropriately allocated to department

budgets as a proportioned shared service thus providing greater transparency to the public. (F4, F7-F9)

The complexity of funding sources utilized by departments (such as grants) for IT related costs can make combining into a single IT budget problematic. If the County were to proceed with this change, County policy and procedures would need to be modified with significant departmental training. Additional staffing would be necessary within County IS in order to accommodate the associated increase in workload. With the existing structure in place, staff are able to identify expenses in the IT Reserve, IS operating budget and the designated IT Equipment line item (862230) utilized by all departments. This would not identify expenses allocated to 864370 (fixed assets), 862189 (professional services) or 864360 (structural improvements) which would be combined with other departmental expenses.

- R6. The BOS revise Policy 35 by October 1, 2021 and base its funding on the capital cost needs established in the ITMP. (F3, F4, F7-F9, F11)

This has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the near future.

- R7. The BOS, through its CIO, engage a County-government-experienced consultancy to evaluate all websites managed with County funds, including those of Special Districts. This to include recommendations for the design/maintenance strategy and cost/benefit justified funding to better serve the public by January 1, 2022. (F12)

Current management of the primary County Website is done through the County Executive Office. IS serves in an advisory role to this function currently. BOS support concept of County-government-experienced consultancy review.

- R8. The Auditor/Controller, as part of their responsibility for safeguarding County assets, engage an independent outside auditor to evaluate the County's systems, website and network security and recommend corrective actions. This is in addition to continued quarterly phishing testing. (F10)

Whether part of an Auditor/Controller function, or done by Information Services, a Security Audit of County Systems and Networking infrastructure is necessary on a recurring basis independent of Phishing tests.

- R9. By August 1, 2021, the County IS cutover all County email services from GroupWise to Microsoft Exchange as the email server and Outlook for the user interface. (F13)

County IS will have a Project Schedule to share once the process for choosing a Vendor is complete. Original time estimate was June 2022, though preliminary schedule looks to have this Project completed much sooner.