

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

## **HOMELESSNESS IN MENDOCINO COUNTY IS A COMMUNITY CONCERN**

### **Discussion**

The Board of Supervisors welcomes this opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury report titled "Homelessness In Mendocino County Is A Community Concern". 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 majority of members on the COC are employees of other agencies and struggle to address the level of service needed locally without policy guidance from the Board of Supervisors, City elected officials, or other assigned staff.

Partially Disagree. While the COC has been set up to be outside of normal political influence and control, the BOS has implemented policy and actions which will provide needed services. The COC homeless strategic plan was adopted by the BOS. Most of the recommendations of the Marbut Report were adopted in the Strategic Plan. Of the 28 recommendations, only six were not adopted due to reasons of unclear jurisdictional purview.

### **Response to Recommendation:**

- R7. County and local elected officials prioritize the development of specific objectives that meet the homeless issues identified in the Strategic Plan within 180 days of the release of this report. (F7)

The County's Strategic Plan will incorporate an approach to homelessness since this is a key issue within the County. It will be finalized in December of 2021. State allocations from the Homeless, Housing, Assistance and Prevention program will require that the COC and County work together and collaborate on decisions. There will be approximately \$1.1 million for COC and \$1 million for the County during this Phase 3 which will require a coordinated approach.

The County has many homeless support programs offered by Mendocino County Social Services and Behavioral Health. The BOS does receive updates. There is a need for greater collaboration between funding sources. A working group was formed before the pandemic but has not met since. The working group should start up again to collaborate across programs to better provide services to those willing to accept them.

Homelessness issues have been a priority to the County even through the pandemic. The conversion of the Live Oak Apartments demonstrates that the County has worked diligently to provide housing for the homeless. This will continue to be a priority as will be shown by the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Other significant projects that have been completed in recent years are the Willow Terrace facility, Brush Meadows and the collaboration with Rural Communities Housing Development Corporation to complete the Orr Creek Commons projects which are now in their second phase.

There is a need for a willingness to communicate between law enforcement agencies and social services. At times, people will be brought in from distant locations to the County to testify in court and end up homeless. Greater communication between agencies involved and social services could more effectively meet the needs of these people.

The issue of homelessness will require greater collaboration. Residents of the county will need to recognize that "Not In My BackYard" attitudes affect how we can effectively deal with these issues.