

PLUMAS COUNTY GRAND JURY



**2015-2016
FINAL REPORT**

DEDICATION

**Dedicated to the People of Plumas County,
whom we have been privileged to serve.**

**PLUMAS COUNTY GRAND JURY
2015-2016 FINAL REPORT
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**PLUMAS COUNTY GRAND JURY
2015-2016
Roster of Jurors**

Robert Simpton	Foreperson
Stephen Janovick	Foreperson <i>pro tem</i>
Stephanie Horton	Corresponding Secretary
Sharon Covington	Recording Secretary & Parliamentarian
Lance Benbow	Member
Dean Brackett	Member
Jackie Brackett	Member
Gilbert Driscoll	Member
Kelci Duerr	Member
Ian Hudson	Member
Jack Isbell	Member
Rachelle Jilbert	Member
Judy Latour	Member
Brian Luce	Member
Keith Mahan	Member
Richard Phillips	Member
Michael Sanchez	Member
Sandra Simmons	Member



LETTER TO JUDGE HILDE

June 17, 2016

The Honorable Janet Hilde
Presiding Judge of the Grand Jury
Plumas County Superior Court
Quincy, CA 95971

Dear Judge Hilde:

The 2015-2016 Plumas County Civil Grand Jury is privileged to be selected to serve as jurors and respectfully present this Final Report to the Court and the citizens of Plumas County in accordance with California Penal Code, Section 933.

A low number of complaints this year prompted the Grand Jury to review past reports and select the topics for this year's report. As mandated by law, the Grand Jury inspected the Plumas County Jail.

This year of service has given each of the Jurors an opportunity to learn about the administrative policies of Plumas County and make reasonable recommendations in an effort to improve public safety, good business practices, and the efficiency of Plumas County government.

The Plumas County Grand Jury extends its appreciation to each of the County Departments for their cooperation, patience, and prompt responses to all Grand Jury requests. The acceptance of the Findings and the implementation of the Grand Jury's Recommendations is now the responsibility of the County officials detailed in this report.

Thank you for your confidence and support of this important service.

Sincerely,

Robert Simpton, Foreperson
2015-2016 Plumas County Grand Jury

**PLUMAS COUNTY GRAND JURY
2015-2016**

Final Report Distribution List

Judge Janet Hilde

Judge Ira Kaufman

Plumas County Board of Supervisors:

Terry Swofford, district One

Kevin Goss, District Two

Sherrie Thrall, District Three

Lori Simpson, District Four

Jeff Engel, District Five

The Clerk of the Board

County Counsel

Plumas County Building Maintenance Department

Plumas County Human Resources Department

Plumas County IT Department

Plumas County Sheriff

Plumas County Treasurer

Plumas County Library

Plumas County Newspapers: Feather River Publishing

California Grand Jurors' Association

PLUMAS COUNTY GRAND JURY 2015-2016

PREFACE

The Plumas County Grand Jury is an investigative arm of the public. It is composed of a cross section of citizens picked from the five districts of Plumas County and reports its findings to the public by publishing them at the end of its session. The purpose of the Grand Jury is to shine a light on areas where County officials and their staff can improve their performance, offer suggestions on how improvements can be made, and investigate complaints filed by the public. The Grand Jury has no authority or power to institute change; that power lies only with the voting public and the people they elect. Only the voting public can insist on change when public safety issues, lack of sound business practices, and governmental inefficiencies are exposed.

PLUMAS COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

REPORT of the 2015-2016 Plumas County Grand Jury

PLUMAS COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES 2015-2016 Plumas County Grand Jury

SUMMARY

Animal Services Investigation Uncovers Significant Safety Issues

Plumas County Animal Services was last reviewed by a Grand Jury in 2007. The current Grand Jury investigation revealed numerous safety concerns regarding public, employee, and animal welfare. The public should be aware there may be potential risks involved in visiting or utilizing the Animal Shelter.

BACKGROUND

The Grand Jury, under California Penal Code No. 914 is charged with the specific responsibility of investigating and reporting on all aspects of County government. While this Grand Jury did not receive any specific complaints against the Animal Services Department, our research showed that this Department had not been reviewed by a Grand Jury since 2006-2007. The Animal Services Department falls under the control and responsibility of the Plumas County Sheriff. Prior to the Sheriff's Department, the Shelter was the responsibility of the Agriculture Department. About 34% of all California counties have Animal Services under the Sheriff's Office. For California counties under 50,000 population, about 53% have Animal Services under the Sheriff's Office.

Animal Services' Mission Statement and Statement of Function, as found on the County website, relate primarily to the care of the animals in the Shelter and their placement in homes:

Mission Statement:

Enforce Animal Control laws and regulations. When appropriate, work cooperatively with other organizations to increase pet adoptions and reduce unwanted pet populations.

Statement of Function:

The Division of Animal Control is mandated by California State Law and Local Ordinance to:

- Humanely house and dispose of unwanted stray animals.
- Enforce all laws pertaining to the care, custody and control of animals within our jurisdiction.
- Comply with State of California's Rabies Control Program Regulation.

The investigation on which this report is based sought to ensure that the Animal Services Department is meeting these objectives. The Grand Jury discovered additional conditions and concerns, not covered by these objectives, which impact staff and may adversely affect public, employee, and animal safety.

METHODOLOGY

During the course of this investigation, the Grand Jury made both announced and unannounced visits to the Animal Shelter in Quincy. The Grand Jury interviewed all current employees, including Animal Control Officers. In addition, we interviewed employees at animal shelters in other counties, and private animal shelter facilities. The Grand Jury also interviewed the Administrative Sergeant of the Sheriff's Department who oversees the management of the facilities, and reviewed a "proposed draft" of a

Plumas County Animal Shelter Policy Manual. We also reviewed Animal Services' monthly safety meeting records from July 2010 to March 2016.

DISCUSSION

Plumas County Animal Shelter endeavors to be a no-kill facility. An exception allows for euthanizing feral cats and vicious dogs that are either unable to be re-domesticated or that would represent a liability to the County if adopted. The remaining animals are retained at the Facility or sent to other "no-kill" facilities for possible adoption.

The Shelter makes every effort to reunite pets with their owners, or find new homes for pets without owners or whose owners cannot be located. The Shelter maintains a Facebook page with lost pet and adoption information. The Shelter makes available photos of and adoption information about animals currently in the Shelter, which the local papers publish weekly. The Shelter's website provides a link to www.PetFinder.com to facilitate adoptions.

The Shelter evaluates animals for temperament and health before considering them available for adoption. The Shelter works co-operatively with private and other county shelters to help place animals. Cooperation and communication between shelters is critical to ensure that an owner doesn't discard an unwanted animal at one shelter and immediately visit another shelter to adopt a different animal—not serving the interest of either animal. The Plumas County Shelter cooperates with private shelters within the County, assisting in finding homes for animals at either shelter. This helps assure that

only qualified people who will provide good homes can adopt an animal. The private shelters gave high praise for the efforts the Plumas County Animal Shelter makes in working cooperatively with them.

Interviews revealed policy issues of concern and uncovered much needed maintenance problems that relate to safety in the Shelter facility.

Staffing and Inmate-worker Concerns

Jail inmates provide kennel cleaning and feeding services for the County Shelter. The Jail Commander selects inmates who are then transported from the Jail to the Shelter in the morning and returned to the Jail in the afternoon. Usually two inmates work at the Shelter, but sometimes one. The County employs two full-time Animal Control Officers (not deputized), with no other full-time Animal Shelter employees. Two part-time employees assist at the Shelter (a kennel worker on weekends and holidays, and a part-time office worker on an “on call” basis when one of the full time employees is unavailable to work on a given day). Volunteers also help occasionally by walking dogs. One Animal Control Officer is normally on patrol, responding to animal services calls. This often leaves only one Animal Control Officer to supervise one to two inmates; while also staffing the front desk, doing administrative work, greeting the public, and answering phone calls. This results in little or no direct inmate supervision.

There are times when the public is allowed unattended access to the kennels to view animals while inmates are working in the kennels. The potential exists for contact with

and/or confrontation between inmates and the public. This situation creates safety and security concerns and places the County at risk of liability. In addition to possible danger to the public, under these circumstances a person may present as one who wants to adopt an animal, but is in fact going into the kennel area to provide inmates with contraband they are prohibited from possessing.

High Jail inmate turnover results in high turnover in inmates working at the Shelter; this, in turn, means that inmates may have limited training and experience in Animal Shelter procedures. Some inmates do not work conscientiously and may be solely motivated by the desire to be away from the Jail; these inmates show no commitment to proper care of the animals or cleaning the Facility.

Only one Animal Control Officer works in the field responding to calls and patrolling the County. This Officer is required to cover the entire County and may be impossible to contact due to communication problems inherent to the County. At times when multiple animals are loose, another Officer may be required in order to capture all the loose animals. Some areas in the County are unsafe for one responding Officer alone; additional help may be needed from either an additional Animal Control Officer or a Sheriff's deputy.

Shelter personnel, working alone, have felt threatened when pet owners have become confrontational, for instance about fees charged to reclaim an animal. Employee safety becomes a concern, while placing the County at risk for potential liability.

Policy Concerns

The 2006-2007 Grand Jury found that, “There is not a complete operational/administrative manual...” for the Animal Services Department. Ten years later, the 2015-2016 Grand Jury found that there still is no current operational/administrative manual. The *Animal Shelter Policies and Procedures Manual* is still in draft format. The draft manual provided to this Grand Jury is seventy-two pages long and contains important information, including, but not limited to:

- Citation policies
- Failure or refusal to exhibit license
- Investigations
- Impounding of animals
- First Aid to animals
- Common diseases and symptoms
- Cleaning and feeding procedures.

Appendix A shows the full Table of Contents of the draft proposal of the Plumas County *Animal Shelter Policies and Procedures Manual*. There is no specific section referencing Inmate Workers.

The 2005-2006 Grand Jury found that, “On average, Staff Meetings are held only once per year.” (Finding #4) That Grand Jury recommended that Staff Meetings be held a minimum of four times per year. Our review has shown Staff Meetings have not been held as recommended, and there is no record of even annual Staff Meetings being held for some time. While our investigation located no documents concerning staff meetings,

we did find documentation about Safety Meetings. From July 20, 2010, to July 21, 2011, we found documentation for monthly Safety Meetings when it was the responsibility of the Agriculture Commissioner (Animal Services were under the Agricultural Department at this time); these were signed by the Commissioner and all attendees. The next safety-related data we were able to obtain showed from PCSO records from March 2013 to March 2016 that “handouts/attachments were sent out via email.” No signature list identifies that anyone received or read the handouts or attachments.

Employee annual reviews have not been done for a number of years. We could not locate records that any annual evaluations were completed.

Due to no current utilized policy manual, rare and irregularly scheduled staff meetings, and no annual employee reviews, employees do not have standardized training about how the Department should be operating and what their roles should be in the Department. Lack of communication, direction, and understanding of job requirements (along with the staffing issues mentioned) has led to tension in the workplace.

Facility Concerns

The Shelter was equipped with surveillance cameras designed to monitor the kennel areas and office spaces. These cameras have not worked for over two years, creating a security concern.

An emergency generator was placed on the Shelter property shortly after Shelter construction to provide emergency power for the Shelter during electrical outages. However, the generator is located in a separate building and has never been connected to the Shelter's electrical circuitry. During any power outages, lighting, heating and air conditioning are not available to the employees and animals.

This Grand Jury was not able to locate any records of maintenance being performed on the crematory oven, nor could we locate anyone who had knowledge of any current maintenance being performed on the oven. Veterinary cremation ovens of this type can reach temperatures at or above 1400 degrees Fahrenheit. No record of proper service documentation and a lack of proper maintenance is a serious safety concern for the Facility, staff, inmates, public, and animals.

Animal Care Concerns

The Shelter does not provide vaccinations to new animals brought in to the Facility. Our review of other facilities has shown that some other shelters routinely provide worming and vaccinations to new animals to prevent disease from spreading to other animals in a shelter. Some shelters vaccinate cats with the FVRCP combination vaccine, very effective in preventing rhinotracheitis, calcivirus, and panleukopenia (feline distemper). Of particular concern for dogs is Parvo, also known as canine parvovirus (CPV), a highly contagious viral illness that can be deadly to dogs. A private shelter was asked, "If we could change one thing about the County Shelter that would improve your interface with them, what would that be?" The response was, "Parvo shots for all dogs." In addition,

some shelters with whom we spoke also provide shots for dogs for distemper, another highly contagious and serious disease for dogs.

At the Shelter, the outside dog runs are primarily dirt surface with a little bit of gravel. Other facilities visited have used either decomposed granite or woodchips to help reduce levels of mud and dust.

Two large outside holding or exercise areas (each approximately ¼ acre) at the Plumas County Animal Shelter lack interior dividing fences, thus only one dog at a time can use each area. Due to the area involved, it can be difficult to catch an animal which is loose in a large yard.

FINDINGS

- F1. The Grand Jury commends the Shelter and its employees for the excellent job they are doing to reunite lost pets with their owners and to find new homes for abandoned pets. Their cooperative work with other shelters, the use of the internet, and the use of newspaper ads to achieve these goals speaks volumes about the care and concern the Shelter and employees have for the County's pet population. They are fulfilling their Mission Statement and Statement of Function.
- F2. The current under-supervised inmate work program raises multiple safety concerns:
 - A. Inadequate staff levels with inmates present create multiple safety issues for the public, employees and volunteers, and animals.
 - B. Inmates have the opportunity to have unsupervised communication and interaction with the public.
 - C. Inmates have the opportunity to obtain and conceal contraband on Shelter property.
- F3. Under-supervised and untrained inmates do not have proper knowledge of care for the animals and may represent a danger to both the animals and themselves. Further, they may have no external motivation to perform to any required standard.
- F4. Given the size of the County, one Animal Control Officer in the field is not enough to protect the public from vicious or uncontrolled animal situations.
- F5. The absence of an approved and implemented Policies and Procedures Manual, lack of regular scheduled staff meetings, and failure to provide annual employee reviews contribute to misunderstandings among employees.
- F6. Non-functioning security camera surveillance is a serious safety concern for the public, the workers, and the animals.
- F7. The emergency generator for the Shelter is not connected to the Shelter's electrical system, but is operational. In the event of a power outage no heat, air conditioning, or light is available for staff and animals.
- F8. The crematory oven is being used without any regular maintenance or servicing to assure its operational safety, which constitutes a risk to the Facility, staff, public, and animals. No on-site documentation is posted to verify maintenance, service, or operator training.
- F9. The failure to vaccinate all dogs being admitted to the Shelter endangers the health of all dogs at the Facility and in adoptive homes.
- F10. The two large animal exercise yards (approximately ¼ acre each) are not utilized efficiently; the lack of interior fencing allows for only one animal to occupy each of the ¼ acre areas at a time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The Grand Jury recommends the Sheriff's Department and the Board of Supervisors commend Shelter employees and volunteers for their excellent work, caring for, placing for adoption, and locating owners for the animals.
- R2. A. The Grand Jury recommends the Sheriff suspend the inmate work program until the Risk Management Department evaluates the safety and security issues stated in this report:
- 1) Potential risk to the public, employees and volunteers, and animals at the Facility
 - 2) Unsupervised communication and interaction with the public
 - 3) Opportunity to obtain and conceal contraband at the Facility
- B. The Grand Jury recommends that during the time of addressing inmate safety and security concerns, the Board of Supervisors approve funding for the Sheriff to hire a full-time kennel worker to perform the duties that had been assigned to the inmates.
- R3. The Grand Jury recommends that, if an inmate worker program is to be re-implemented, the Sheriff's Office first develop a written policy clearly defining screening and training requirements prior to re-implementing that policy.
- R4. The Grand Jury recommends the Sheriff add an additional Animal Control Officer to the staff of the Shelter.
- R5. A. The Grand Jury recommends the County Human Resources Director work with the Sheriff to finalize the Animal Services Policy Manual and assure its use in training employees, volunteers, and, if applicable, inmates.
- B. The Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff's Department provide all Animal Services employees with current job descriptions, including expectations of job performance.
- C. The Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff's Department conduct annual reviews of each Animal Services employee to evaluate job performance.
- D. The Grand Jury recommends formal staff meetings between the Department head and Shelter employees on a monthly basis, with attendance mandatory. Employees should be allowed to add items to the agenda for discussion.
- R6. The Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors direct Building Maintenance to repair or replace the surveillance camera system with recording capability and arrange for its regular maintenance.
- R7. The Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors direct Building Maintenance to properly install the existing emergency generator and provide regular maintenance.

- R8. The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors allocate and implement regular maintenance and servicing of the Animal Services crematory oven by qualified personnel according to manufacturer's specifications.
- R9. The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors direct and allocate the Sheriff's Department to provide the Shelter with the means to provide basic vaccinations to new animals brought into the Facility.
- R10. The Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors direct and allocate monies to install interior fence partitions for the two large exercise yards to allow for multiple animals to use the outside yards.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:

From the following governing bodies:

- The Sheriff's Office should respond to F1 through F10 and R1 through R10.
- The Board of Supervisors should respond to F1, F2, F4, F5A, F6 through F10 and R1, R2, R4, R5A, R6 through R10.
- Human Resources should respond to F5A and R5A.
- Building Maintenance should respond to F6, F7 and R6, R7.

INVITED RESPONSES

Presiding Judge may respond to the entire report

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 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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APPENDIX A
From the Proposed Draft of the Plumas County
Animal Shelter Policies and Procedures Manual

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THE STATE OF PLUMAS

REPORT of the 2015-2016 Plumas County Grand Jury

THE STATE OF PLUMAS

2015-2016 Plumas County Grand Jury

SUMMARY

What's missing in Plumas County government? The Grand Jury questions the operational efficiency of a Board that is mired in the day-to-day management minutia when they should be focused on strategic planning and creating a vision for the future of Plumas County. The Jury found strong, capable managers running the varied departments of Plumas County Government, but doing so independently and without leadership.

The current budget plan for the County is approaching \$100,000,000 which represents a 30% increase over the 2012 budget. The General Fund portion has remained relatively constant with all the increases coming from outside sources. The population in the same period has decreased. The County has balanced its ever-growing budget by not filling open jobs, some of which are critical to the management of the County.

Plumas County must focus on creating a more efficient government by utilizing all resources available. It can no longer rely on Band-Aid fixes and one time savings.

BACKGROUND

In 2011-2012 the economic downturns at the federal, state and local levels left Plumas County with substantial economic hurdles due to diminished revenues. The Plumas

County Board of Supervisors took unprecedented action and should be commended for keeping the County in the black. The total budget for 2011-12 was \$86,725,515 with 360 employee positions. In April of 2012 the Board of Supervisors terminated the County Administrative Officer (CAO) and left the position vacant. The County Fund Balance was at an unacceptably low level of \$400,000. The Board of Supervisors brought in a Budget Consultant and succeeded in reducing the 2012-13 budget by over \$12,000,000, to \$74,568,155, and brought the Fund Balance up to the acceptable level as required by Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) of \$2,000,000.00. The Board of Supervisors accomplished this with a short term fix using one-time funds, not hiring into unfilled budgeted positions, combining departments, eliminating positions, and delaying maintenance and purchases.

METHODOLOGY

The 2015-16 Grand Jury reviewed the current organizational structure of County government to see if it adequately meets the needs of Plumas County's day-to-day operations. The Grand Jury interviewed each member of the Board of Supervisors, eight appointed Department Heads, three Elected Officials and one Consultant. The Grand Jury looked into the authoritative interaction between the Board of Supervisors and Department Heads (elected and appointed); and the day-to-day working relationships between the Board of Supervisors and Department Heads. Specific budgetary and financial concerns were addressed with the Controller/Auditor/Risk Manager and the Budget Consultant.

The Grand Jury reviewed:

- Grand Jury Reports from 2010 through 2015, and some additional earlier reports as relevant
- Past responses to the Grand Jury Reports of 2010-2015
- Plumas County budgets, past and present
- “Administrative Policy – Budgetary Authority & Procedure” as adopted by the Board of Supervisors on June 7, 2011
- “Administrative Policy – Fund Balance Policy for Finance Statement Reporting”
- *Personnel Rules of Plumas County*, including a compliance audit of the County Personnel Performance Review policy
- *Plumas County Code of Ordinances*
- *Plumas County Purchasing Policy*, adopted by the Board of Supervisors on August 16, 2005
- Minutes and recordings of Board of Supervisors’ meetings
- *Plumas County Organizational Chart*
- *Plumas County Employee Handbook*
- Departmental Organization Charts
- Annual Review dates for Department Heads (2012 – present)
- Newspaper articles from the *Portola Reporter* and *Feather River Bulletin*
- Website of County of Plumas
- Other websites including State of California, California State Association of Counties (CSAC), County Administrative Officers Association of California (CAOAC)

DISCUSSION

County Structure

In order to become familiar with the structure and personnel of the County, the Grand Jury requested a copy of the County Organizational Chart from the Human Resources Department (Appendix A). The Grand Jury found the County Organizational Chart to be inaccurate and outdated, not reflecting a current picture of all County offices, departments, and the chain-of-command. The CAO position, which has been vacant for four years, is still central to the organizational structure on the Chart. The Grand Jury was further concerned that County Officials interviewed were not aware of this document. No written, up-to-date document represents a clear chain-of-command between the Department Heads and the Board of Supervisors, though there are informal common practices. Even the Employee Manual on the County WEB Site still lists the 2012 terminated CAO as the current CAO.

Accountability

In a response to 2014-15 Grand Jury Finding F4, concerning the relationship and contact between the Board and individual Department Heads, the Board stated

Individual members of the Board often work with Department Heads on areas of interest and expertise for those Members.

Similarly, most Board Members told the Grand Jury that they each select Departments with which they are comfortable or have an interest, and those are the ones that get their attention.

The 2011-12 Grand Jury Recommended the Board of Supervisors

...make it mandatory that all Board members, the CAO, the County Council and all Department Heads affiliated with jail operations tour/inspect the County Jail at least annually.

The Board response was:

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is an unwarranted intrusion on the authority of the Sheriff who is charged with... the sole and exclusive authority to keep the County jail and the prisoners in it. (Government Code Section 26605; See also, Penal Code Section 4000.) However, the members of the Board of Supervisors, the County Counsel, and other department heads who provide support services to the jail will continue to respond to the Sheriff's requests to tour or inspect the jail as is appropriate to meet their duties and responsibilities.

The Board has repeatedly used this rationale when issues have arisen concerning the Jail maintenance, Jail Health Department needs, and the Jail Operations Manual. The Board of Supervisors is responsible for all County Property; the Plumas County Jail is County property. The Sheriff, during a current Grand Jury interview, expressed "an open invitation to all County executives affiliated with Jail operations," and stated, "It is not and never has been an intrusion on my authority."

The consensus expressed by the Board of Supervisors and Department Heads is that they have only budgetary responsibility over Elected Officials. According to the Plumas County Code of Ordinances, Sec. 2-4.601.-Establishment:

The CAO shall direct and coordinate the administrative activities of all County Offices, Departments, and Agencies, both appointive and elective...so as not to conflict with the State statutory duties of any elected or appointed officials of the County.

By this Ordinance the CAO responsibilities are broader than budgetary. Given the current situation of not having a CAO, the Board of Supervisors has assumed CAO

responsibilities that entail directing and coordinating all administrative activities including those of Elected Officials.

When interviewed, several Board members reported the Board had difficulty managing the CAO. The Grand Jury could find no clear policy with regard to Board oversight and management of a CAO.

Education/Training

Plumas County provides no formal training for Supervisors other than what the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) offers. A new Supervisor may request this training; it is available but not mandatory. No formal training of newly elected Supervisors exists for duties and responsibilities unique to Plumas County.

CSAC provides ethics training and education for Supervisors on the Brown Act. The Brown Act is a California state law that requires local legislative bodies to hold noticed open meetings and regulates the holding of closed session (Government Code 54950-54963). This critical training is available, but not mandatory, for Supervisors.

Each Board member is responsible to not only know and understand his/her own District, but to also be aware of the various characteristics of the entire County. No formal procedure exists to acquaint Supervisors with the unique issues of each District. One Board Member reported visiting the other Districts.

Each year the Board elects a Supervisor to be the Chairperson who assumes the responsibilities of the CAO of the entire County. No formal procedure defines how the current Chairperson passes on duties and current projects to the incoming Chairperson.

An outside Budget Consultant was hired to address the budget issues of the County and to provide training to the Board of Supervisors on budget formulation. This support allowed time for the newly elected Auditor/Controller to better familiarize herself with the complexities of Government financing. The Budget Consultant has been helpful educating the Board, Department Heads, and Elected Officials on the budget process. Not being an employee of the County, the Budget Consultant is not responsible nor accountable for the day-to-day operations within the County as it relates to the execution of the budget.

Organization

Without a CAO, there is no position to serve as a buffer between the Board, Elected Officials, Department Heads, and the Management Council. The Management Council exists to facilitate communication and cooperation between all Department Heads.

Attendance at monthly meetings is not mandatory and attendance is sporadic. A lack of leadership oversight of this Management Council exacerbates inefficiencies and inhibits progress and positive outcomes.

For four years the Board of Supervisors did not conduct yearly performance reviews of Department Heads as required. On August 11, 2015, the Board passed an “Annual

Performance Evaluation Policy for Appointed County Department Heads;” even though the February 15, 2000, policy, stating the same evaluation rule, was in effect at that time. The Board of Supervisors was aware of that rule, as they quoted it in a response to the 2011-12 Grand Jury. After their response in 2012, until August of 2015, the Board did not follow the policy. Human Resources Department provided the chart below (which does not include all County departments):

Performance Evaluation Dates Jan-5-2016- Jan 4-2012							
	Department	Date Last Evaluation	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Armitage, Clint	Probation						
Cunningham, John	Building	10/20/2015		10/20/2015		6/4/2013	
Gibson, Tim	Agricultural Commissioner	11/10/2015		y			
Hall, Mimi	Public Health	8/24/2010					
Perreault, Robert	Public Works	11/10/2015		11/10/2015			
Preston, Dave	Information Technology	12/16/2014					
Sawchuck, Donny	Facility Services	4/8/2014			4/8/2014		
Sipe, Jerry	Environmental Health	12/22/2010					
Smart, Elliot	Social Services	9/8/2015			9/8/2015		9/10/2013
Steffanic, John	Fair	4/7/2015		4/1/2015			
Trumbo, Gayla	Human Resources	3/3/2015				6/18/2013	
Wilson, Randy	Planning	9/8/2015		9/8/2015			

Presently there is no written evidence that identifies how the previous CAO responsibilities were reassigned. The responsibilities and authority of the CAO included:

- County Budget Officer
- County Safety Officer
- County Insurance/Risk Manager
- County Purchasing Agent
- Day-to-day management of the County government

- Direction and coordination of the administrative activities of all County offices, departments and agencies, both appointed and elected

The Board of Supervisors has not removed the title *County Administrative Officer* or *CAO* from any Plumas County policies and ordinances. The Grand Jury can find no evidence the Board has formally reassigned those duties or revised the County policies and ordinances. Several of the policies found on the Plumas County website refer to the CAO position:

- “Administrative Policy – Fund Balance Policy for Finance Statement Reporting” adopted May 17, 2011 (Appendix B)
- “Administrative Policy – Budgetary Authority & Procedure” adopted June 7, 2011 (Appendix C)
- “Administrative Policy – Budgetary Reserve Policy, Exhibit A” (Appendix D)

The notable exception is the Auditor/Controller who was formally assigned the Risk Management responsibilities, and has successfully integrated this duty into her office and has achieved positive results in reducing County Risk Management liabilities and costs.

Two past Grand Jury Reports (2011-2012 “Kicking the Can Down the Road,” and 2014-2015 “How is Plumas County Doing Without a CAO?”) recommended that the Board of Supervisors fill the CAO position. The Board of Supervisors did not deny the need for a CAO in their responses to either report. The Board of Supervisors responded to the 2011-2012 Recommendation by stating that there were not sufficient funds to fill the position in that fiscal year and that they would determine whether or not to fill the position when

they developed the County budget for the Fiscal Year 2013-2014. In response to the 2014-2015 Grand Jury Recommendations, the Board of Supervisors did not state that there were insufficient funds; all the responses were vague and non-committal. For example, Recommendation R1 states:

The Grand Jury recommends the BOS have a study conducted to review their options and approach for the position of CAO.

The Board of Supervisor response was:

This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The Board of Supervisors will study its options and approach for the CAO position prior to beginning its recruitment. The date when circumstances will permit and warrant such recruitment have yet to be determined.

As this Grand Jury interviewed Department Heads, some stated that money in their budgets could be apportioned to fund the CAO position. In addition, two department heads suggested that non-general fund monies could be allocated to fund a CAO.

At the Board of Supervisors meeting June 16, 2015, the Board heard and addressed comments about the lack of a CAO. In the official audio recording of that meeting the District Attorney made the following points concerning the need for a CAO:

- The County was in dire economic straits when the CAO departed.
- The Board took on lot more work and a lot more risk—meant as a temporary fix.
- Don't avoid hiring a CAO because you have had a bad past experience.
- There is a structural problem without a CAO; without changing the structure to a non-CAO, we've created a system that cannot be sustained:
 - I question day-to-day operations with five people in charge.
 - The Board should be visionary with a CAO executing the vision.

- The Board has lost opportunities.
- Management efficiency has been lost because Department Heads must attend Board of Supervisors meetings, resulting in wasted time.
- Department Heads can't do it alone.
- The Board makes decisions without the best possible information.
- The County lacks strategic direction.
- The budgeting is by triage.
- The County incurs higher consultant costs.
- The Board should look at funded positions in the budget which have not been filled, which could aid in funding the CAO.
- The Board is reactive not proactive.
- Because of these issues, "Now is the time to address hiring a CAO."

At the same recorded Board of Supervisors meeting, the Director of Public Health made the following points concerning funding the CAO position:

- I hear in the County a lot of "we don't have money for this, we don't have money for that..." Lack of money for a CAO is an excuse with a multi-million-dollar budget. It is about priorities. We need to figure out our most important priorities.
- The Board of Supervisors could have been more efficient on numerous occasions.
- The CAO position has been funded through the General Fund; look to non-general fund departments for funding.
- The CAO has responsibilities for all departments, not just General Fund departments.

- Other Counties have different models; some have covered over half of the monies for a CAO from non-general funds. It is not a bad idea to look at how other counties have done it, and learn from them.

Finance

During Grand Jury interviews, the Board of Supervisors and Departments Heads were asked basic finance questions concerning their knowledge of General Fund amounts, cash on hand requirements, reserve fund (retirement), revenue sources, payroll for full time equivalent (FTE) positions, short- and long-term debt, and unfunded liabilities. The Jury received a wide range of answers.

The current Budget Consultant has helped educate the Board about the budget process. However, as a private consultant she does not advocate nor is she responsible for day-to-day budgetary operations. The CAO was previously responsible for compiling and overseeing the County's budget.

In 2015, the State did not award the grant to Plumas County that would have enabled it to begin construction of a new jail. The Grand Jury found no evidence that the Board of Supervisors has a backup plan to fund a new jail or the future ongoing costs associated with jail maintenance. Currently available is approximately \$2,000,000 that was set aside for the construction of the new jail. However, there is a time limit on those funds, and if the money is not used, it can revert to the General Fund.

In the process of interviews, the Grand Jury found areas where the County is missing opportunities to increase revenues.

- The County collects only a portion of the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT), which includes hotel taxes, vacation rental taxes, and special event taxes.
- The County Administrative Officers Association of California (CAOAC) meetings do not include a Plumas County representative at this time. The CAOAC is a resource where intra-county information and potential revenue possibilities are shared.
- County purchases of some available goods and services are not being made within the County or at times within the State. When the County is spending outside of the County and State, it loses its share of sales tax revenue.

Public Safety

Public safety is no longer just patrolling the streets and highways, responding to incidents and managing the Jail. AB109 has populated the Jail with more dangerous inmates, and recent changes in the drug laws will impact law enforcement even more; the liability to the County is continually increasing. The Grand Jury is required to make an inspection of the Jail and after doing so this Grand Jury's conclusions are consistent with the findings of past Grand Juries: Plumas County needs a new jail now.

Public Access

Board of Supervisors' meetings are held on weekdays during working hours, making it difficult for some County residents to attend meetings or have access to the Board. The

format of meetings makes it difficult to ask questions or contribute input to local government. Recordings of meetings are difficult to hear and minutes are minimal.

FINDINGS

- F1. The Plumas County Organizational Chart is outdated, demonstrating a lack of organizational clarity and direction by the Board of Supervisors.
- F2. The job description for CAO was written in 1999. A current CAO job description has not been developed that reflects the needs of the County and the Board.
- F3. By not hiring a CAO the Board of Supervisors has assumed some of the CAO responsibilities and shifted some to Elected Officials and Department Heads, leaving unclear areas of responsibility.
- F4. CAO responsibilities have not been reassigned with updated Department Head/Elected Official job descriptions.
- F5. The Plumas County Code of Ordinances establishes the position of CAO; the position and responsibilities are an integral part of all written County policies. No attempt has been made to fill the position or correct the Ordinance.
- F6. Several Board members reported the Board had difficulty managing the CAO; no clear policy with regard to Board oversight and management of a CAO exists.
- F7. The Board has stated the rationale for not hiring a CAO has been a lack of budget funds. Alternate sources of funding have not been addressed.
- F8. Two of the past four Grand Juries recommended that the Board of Supervisors fill the CAO position. Most of the Supervisors and the majority of department heads interviewed said that the County would operate better with a CAO.
- F9. Current, accurate job descriptions for all County positions are a necessary management tool for evaluating the performance of employees, but are not consistently in place.
- F10. The Board of Supervisors has not followed their written policies requiring annual performance reviews for Department Heads (first adopted in 2000 and re-adopted in 2015).
- F11. The Board of Supervisors did not have a backup plan for replacing the jail when they failed in their attempt to qualify for State Grant funds in 2015. The Grand Jury could find no evidence of a current financial plan in place to replace the jail.
- F12. The County is losing revenue based on:
 - A. Loss of TOT tax revenue
 - B. Lack of opportunities to be informed of possible revenue through non-participation in the CAOAC
 - C. Loss of County and State sales tax revenue due to the County's purchasing outside the County and State

- F13. The Board of Supervisors has no formal method of passing institutional knowledge to newly elected Board Members.
- F14. There is no formal procedure for handing off information from an incumbent Chairperson or Supervisor to his/her successor.
- F15. One Supervisor actively pursues knowledge of other supervisorial districts by visiting the districts.
- F16. County residents often have difficulty attending regular Supervisorial meetings, due to travel and work schedules. Additionally, the format of the meetings makes it difficult to ask questions or contribute input to local government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors and Human Resources update the Plumas County Organization Chart so that it reflects accurately the County's current chain of command.
- R2. The Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors and Human Resources write a job description for a CAO that reflects the current needs of the County and the Board.
- R3. The Grand Jury recommends that in the current absence of a CAO the Board of Supervisors establish clear written guidelines for assigned CAO responsibilities.
- R4. The Grand Jury recommends that in the current absence of a CAO the Board of Supervisors and Human Resources update Department Head/Elected Official job descriptions to reflect reassigned CAO responsibilities.
- R5. The Grand Jury recommends that Board of Supervisors follow the established Plumas County Code of Ordinances regarding a CAO.
- R6. The Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors establish a written policy regarding Board oversight and management of a CAO.
- R7. The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors fund the CAO position this year out of the General Fund and/or utilize alternate funding from non-general fund sources.
- R8. The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors follow the recommendations of this and past Grand Juries to hire a CAO.
- R9. The Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors and Human Resources review all, and when appropriate rewrite, County job descriptions so that they accurately reflect and describe the duties of each office and employee.

- R10. The Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors follow their existing policies and conduct annual performance reviews of Department Heads.
- R11. The Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors establish a clear plan to fund and locate the needed new Plumas County Jail, and ensure that monies currently assigned for the jail remain available for the purpose of replacing the jail.
- R12. The Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors:
- A. Direct the Treasurer/Tax Collector to identify uncollected TOT revenues and see to the consistent collection of those taxes;
 - B. Direct the CAO or a representative of the County to attend CAOAC conferences.
- R13. The Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors create written policies and procedures for:
- A. Educating and informing new Board Members in the responsibilities and rules governing the Board;
 - B. Apprising new Board Members about current Board issues, District-wide and County-wide.
- R14. The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors create a formal procedure for passing information from an incumbent Chairperson to his/her successor.
- R15. The Grand Jury recommends that, in order to inform themselves of other County Districts' needs and concerns, each member of the Board of Supervisors spend a minimum of one day per year in each of the other four Districts in the company of that District's Supervisor.
- R16. The Grand Jury recommends that each District Supervisor conduct a Town Hall meeting in his or her District at least quarterly to insure that all County residents have an opportunity to address individual Board members, and to encourage citizens to participate toward the health of the County.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:

Board of Supervisors are requested to respond to the following:

Findings 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Recommendations: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Human Resources Department Head is requested to respond to the following:

Findings: 1, 2, 4, 9

Recommendations: 1, 2, 4, 9

The Treasurer/Tax Collector is requested to respond to:

Finding 12A

Recommendation 12A

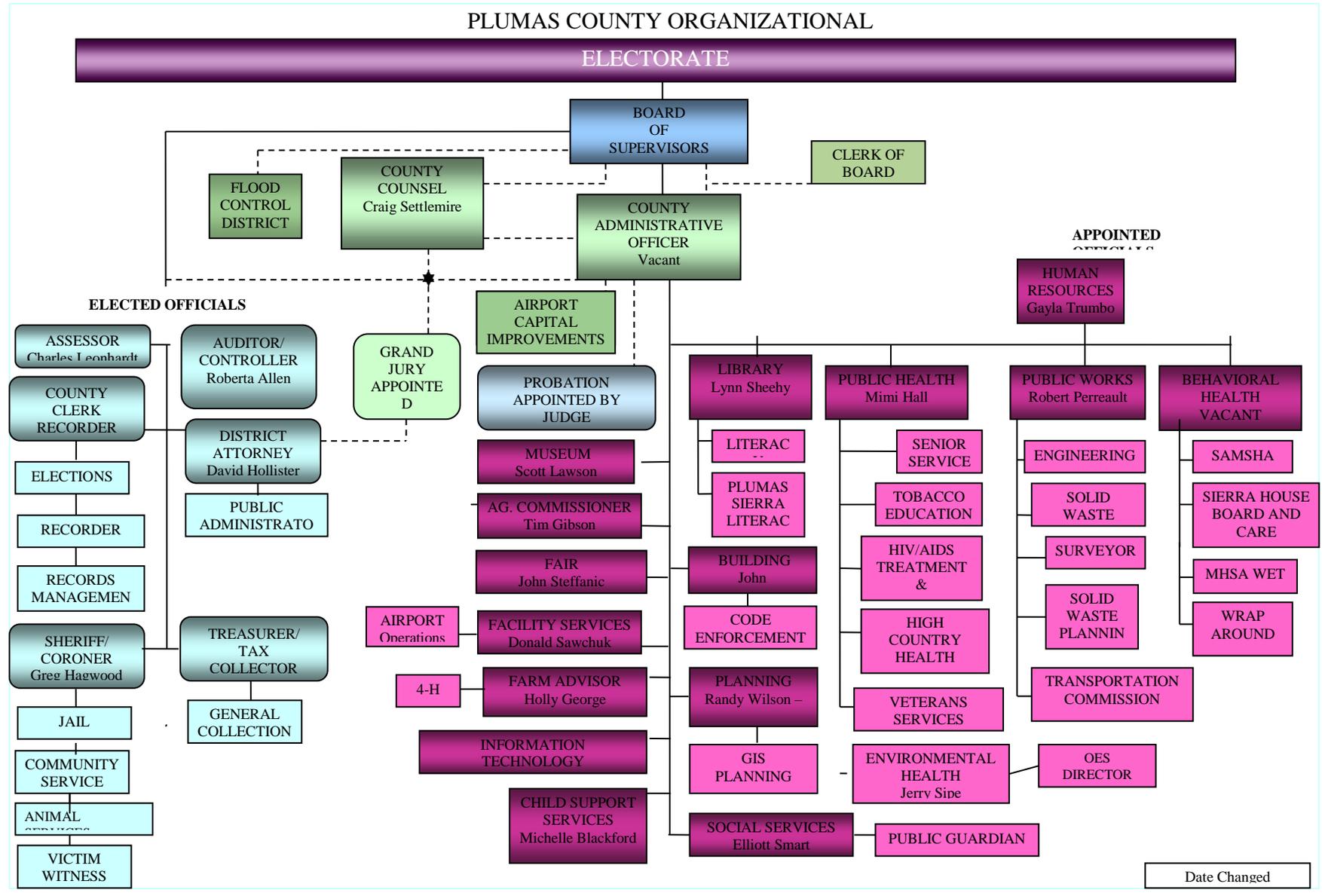
Invited Responses

The Sheriff is invited to respond to:

Finding 11

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 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: PLUMAS COUNTY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Appendix B: Administrative Policy - Fund Balance Policy for Financial Statement Reporting

Exhibit A

Administrative Policy –Fund Balance Policy for Financial Statement Reporting (pg 2)

POLICY

Fund Balances

1. To maintain the County's credit rating and meet cash flow shortfalls, economic downturns or local disaster, the budget shall provide for an anticipated balance in all of the major County funds, to include but not limited to General Fund (all funds starting with 0001), Public Works, Social Services, Public Health, and Mental Health.
2. Fund balance will be maintained to provide the County with sufficient working capital and a comfortable margin of safety to address emergencies and unexpected declines in revenue without the need to borrow for operations.
3. The upper goal for the unreserved/undesignated—now classified as Unassigned Fund Balance, for the General Fund (all funds starting with 0001) should not be less than two months of the previous year's final budgeted appropriations, less transfers out and contingencies.
4. A designation for debt service that is equal to one year of debt service payments will be maintained and shall be recorded as Restricted Fund Balance.
5. Funds in excess of the upper goal may be considered for any purposes deemed to be fiscally prudent for the County as identified and recommended by the County Administrative Officer and Budget Officer and approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Classification of Fund Balances

Fund Balance classifications: Assigned, Unassigned, and Committed are considered "unrestricted" fund balances and the order of spending may be determined, by the County Administrative Officer, Budget Officer and/or Auditor/Controller, according to the specific factors involved. Restricted funds shall be spent according to the purpose for which they were received. Committed funds shall always be spent after Assigned and Unassigned funds have been exhausted. The typical spending order of the General Fund will be Restricted (unless the purpose is not met, if the purpose can be met then these funds shall be spent first), Assigned, Unassigned, and then Committed.

The Auditor/Controller is authorized to evaluate and classify fund balance in accordance with GASB Statement 54.

For amounts that are determined to fall within the Committed Fund Balance classification: The Board of Supervisors shall adopt a resolution to establish or change a previously established amount in conjunction with the approval of the next fiscal years adopted budget, retroactively applied to the previous year's final fund balance classification (no later than October 2nd).

May 17, 2011

Appendix C: Administrative Policy - Budgeting Authority & Procedure

ADOPTED BY
BOS 6/7/11

Administrative Policy –Budgetary Authority & Procedure

PURPOSE

To establish budget related policies/procedures and designate certain administrative and budgetary authorities.

BACKGROUND

Government code starting with section §29000 (County Budget Act) prescribes budgetary legal deadlines and duties. In addition to establishing the various designations and authorities; this policy, as approved by the Board of Supervisors, will define the duties and deadlines in a clear, concise, and easily understood manner following the County Budget Act. The budget authorities had been included each year as part of the overall budget documents. However budget authorities do not typically change every year so they have been included in this policy so that all budget related items can be found in a single document.

POLICY

The Plumas County Board of Supervisors designates the County Administrative Officer as the Budget Officer—the County Officer to administer, maintain, and monitor the budget and all policies and procedures described therein.

A Budget Committee may be established by the Board of Supervisors and shall consist of two Supervisors and any other county officials deemed necessary by the Board of Supervisors.

Budget Deadlines & Designated Officials

The Budget Officer shall prescribe the procedure, to include date due, in which department's requested budgets shall be submitted.

On or before June 10th: Department Heads shall provide the Budget Officer with detailed estimates, including supporting documents, of required financing sources and uses for the departments they administer.

Budget Officer shall review requested budgets for accuracy and determine that funding sources reported are valid. Budget Officer shall make adjustments and provide a balanced, estimating fund balance available, preliminary recommended budget to the Budget Committee

Budget Committee may meet with Department Heads and shall make final recommendations to present to the Board of Supervisors.

On or before June 30th: The Board of Supervisors shall formally adopt a recommended budget as the legal authorization to spend until approval of the adopted budget.

On or before September 8: The recommended budget shall be made available to the public and the Clerk of the Board shall publish notice that budget is available and announce when public hearings will be held.

On or before September 18 (10 days after notice is published): Public hearings shall be held.

On or before October 2: Public hearings shall conclude and Board shall approve the adopted budget.

The Board of Supervisors may adopt the Budget Officer's recommended budget as the adopted (previously referred to as "final") budget using the Budget Officer's estimated fund balances.

Administrative Policy –Budgetary Authority & Procedure (pg2)

Should the Board elect to adopt the budget using the Budget Officer's estimated fund balances, budget transfers (true-up adjustments) shall be required upon receipt of final fund balance available amounts.

Final fund balance available amounts shall be provided to the Budget Officer, by the County Auditor/Controller, after the modified accrual period has ended (July 31st) and fund balance classifications have been determined, in a written report that shows available balance by fund; no later than August 15th.

If the Board of Supervisors did not approve an adopted budget, the Budget Officer shall make adjustments required to balance the budget based on the final fund balance available received from the Auditor/Controller.

If the Board of Supervisors did approve an adopted budget using the Budget Officer's estimated fund balances, the Budget Officer shall bring budget transfer recommendations, balancing the budgets with actual fund balance available, to the Board for approval as early as possible, but no later than October 2.

On or Before December 1: The Auditor/Controller shall file a copy of the adopted budget, following the State Controller's minimum requirements, in the office of the Clerk of the Board and the office of the State Controller.

The Budget Officer shall make the adopted budget available to the public and county departments determining what, if any, additional information is to be included as the State's version is summarized and not in an easily understood format.

Budgetary Authorities

Budget authority, except those as provided in the Administrative Policy –Year End Budgetary Authority & Year End Audit-related Procedures shall be as follows:

Budget transfers requiring Board approval:

1. Between departments if in different funds.
2. Out of contingencies.
3. In/out a fixed asset if not like items and specific (example out of computer into office supplies).
4. Out of salary and benefits.

Budget transfers requiring Budget Officer approval:

1. Between service and supplies.
2. Into a salary and benefit line item from a service & supply line item.
3. Between salary and benefit line items.
4. In/out of fixed assets as long as the items are like items and specific (example: budget is computer asset but amount doesn't qualify as asset, Budget Officer can authorize transfer from computer asset to computer non-asset account).
3. Between department as long as they are in the same fund—if there are two or more departments in the same fund, if not in same fund then Board approval is required.

The Auditor/Controller is authorized to allow salary and benefit line items to go into the negative if needed.

Department Heads shall correct negative salary and benefit amounts before the next payroll; transferring enough money to cover the remainder of the fiscal year.

Any department expenditure or obligation incurred in excess of the specific budget appropriation shall be the personal obligation of the Department Head. The Auditor/Controller shall issue no warrants, except those as provided in the Administrative Policy –Year End Budgetary Authority & Year End Audit-related Procedures, in excess of department's specific budget appropriations.

Administrative Policy –Budgetary Authority & Procedure (pg3)

Hiring Extra Help/Temporary Help employees

The Board of Supervisors delegates to County Department heads, following Human Resource hiring procedures, if there are approved budget appropriations, and upon County Administrative Officer approval, authority to hire extra help and/or temporary help for a period not to exceed 60 days. Board approval is required for extra/temporary help that may exceed 60 days.

Hiring Permanent Employees

The Board of Supervisors may appoint a Critical Staffing Committee to review and make hiring recommendations. Departments shall follow the Critical Staffing Committee's procedures prior to filling any permanent County position.

County Property & Vehicles

In no case shall a County vehicle or County property be used directly or indirectly for any purpose unrelated to County business. No County vehicles shall be taken home unless specifically authorized by the Board of Supervisors or the County Administrative Officer. Authority to take County vehicles home shall be updated annually—approval is revoked at the end of each fiscal year and new approval must be obtained for the next fiscal year.

The disposition, lease, sale, or trade-in of all County owned personal property shall be the Purchase Agent's or his/her designee's sole responsibility consistent with Government Code Section §25504 and Plumas County Code 3-1.19.

Contract/Leases Signing Authority

Departments shall follow the Contract Policy signing authority limits.

Administrative Policy – Budgetary Reserve Policy

PURPOSE

To outline the policies and procedures adopted by the Board of Supervisors regarding provisions for budgetary reserves.

BACKGROUND

Governments should maintain a prudent level of financial resources to protect against reducing service levels or incurring debt because of temporary revenue shortfalls and unpredicted one-time expenditures.

POLICY

The County shall maintain a separate cash account for the purpose of designating funds to be held in reserve for cash flow purposes, revenue shortfalls, or unpredicted one-time expenditures.

1. A General Reserve cash account has been established in the County General Fund.
2. The General Fund General Reserve shall have a target balance of 8 percent of the previous years' revenue receipts (less transfers in) of the departments in all funds designated as General Fund as defined by GASB 34.
3. In years where the General Reserve is less than the target balance, the County Budget Officer may recommend increases to the Reserve.
4. Once the target balance is achieved, the General Reserve shall be maintained at a minimum of \$2,000,000.00. *OK*
5. Changes to the General Reserve, except in cases of legally declared emergency, shall only be made at the time of adopting the budget and require a four-fifths vote by the Board of Supervisors.
6. Use of the General Reserve shall be the last resort in balancing the County budget.
7. The General Funds' General Reserve may be used as a resource for operating cash-flow in the General Funds.
8. The General Reserve may be used as a resource for "dry-period" financing for districts and/or agencies whose funds are held in the County Treasury; loan requests shall be reviewed by the County Administrative Officer, Budget Officer, Treasurer, and Auditor/Controller and shall require a four-fifths vote of the Board of Supervisors.
9. General Reserves in Special Revenue funds shall be kept at a level recommended by the program. If a Special Revenue fund is primarily reimbursable and/or it relies on volatile State/Federal funding, the General Reserves shall be kept at an adequate level to support cash-flow.