



**COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

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August 29, 2008

Honorable Judge J. William McLafferty
Santa Barbara County Superior Court
1100 Anacapa St., 2nd Floor
Santa Barbara, CA 93121-1107

**Civil Service Commission response to Fiscal Year 2007-2008
Grand Jury Report on 'Santa Barbara County Leadership Project: A Good Plan in
Need of Transparency'**

Dear Judge McLafferty:

During its regular meeting on August 21, 2008, the Civil Service Commission adopted the following as the Commission's response to the relevant findings and recommendations in the Fiscal Year 2007-2008 Grand Jury Report entitled "Santa Barbara County Leadership Project: A Good Plan in Need of Transparency".

Finding 5: The Civil Service Commission does not give the appearance of being an independent body, serving both the county administration and county employees.

Recommendation 5: The Civil Service Commission should be given its own budget to pay for a secretary. It should be assigned an office that is separate from the Human Resources Department. In accordance with Section 27-23 of the County Code, it should appoint its own confidential secretary.

Response to Recommendation 5:

There are three recommendations in this paragraph; we discuss each in turn.

A. Budget: If this recommendation means that the Commission should manage its own budget, we disagree.

County Code section 27-24 states that "the civil service system . . . shall be administered by the personnel director. . ." We interpret this language to mean that the Human Resources department (which has replaced the personnel department) administers the budget for the Commission as well as the department. This is an administrative and not a policy making function, and the Commission does not believe that the current arrangement has undermined the Commission's independence.

B. Location of Office: We agree with this recommendation.

We agree that having a separate office for the Civil Service Commission secretary (that is, one not physically within the HR department) is preferable, but it's a work in progress based on the availability of a new location. Chairman Solomon discussed the matter with General Services Director Bob Nisbet. Mr. Nisbet informed the Commission that currently there is no alternative space available with a lockable office that will meet the needs for the Civil Service Commission secretary. He will inform the Commission when a space becomes available.

C. Hiring of Commission secretary: We agree with this recommendation.

County Code section 27-23 states that "The civil service commission may appoint, with the concurrence of the board of supervisors, a confidential secretary. . . ." The Board has delegated its authority in this regard to the Personnel (now the Human Resources) department. The Commission has collaborated with HR on the recruitment process and a committee consisting of a civil service commissioner (Vice-Chair Mariscal) and two HR representatives has interviewed numerous candidates. Members of this committee recently unanimously agreed to extend an offer to one candidate who we anticipate will be hired. This process complies with the Code provision regarding hiring of the Commission secretary.

The Civil Service Commission would like to thank the Grand Jury for their time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Richard Solomon, Chairman
Civil Service Commission

by mp

cc: Grand Jury Foreperson (with CD-ROM)
Michael F. Brown – County Executive Officer