



February 16, 2022

Via Regular Mail and Email: sbcgj@sbcourts.org

The Honorable Gustavo Lavayen
Superior Court Presiding Judge
County of Santa Barbara
312 East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA 93454

Re: Grand Jury Report "Lompoc Police Department, Moving Toward a Safe and Proud Community"

Dear Judge Lavayen:

The 2021 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury released a report following an investigation of the Lompoc Police Department. The report is entitled, "Lompoc Police Department, Moving Toward a Safe and Proud Community." The Grand Jury's investigation included information obtained from a variety of interviews that included police officers and City staff members. Additionally, the report provides historical information on police officer staffing, specialized units, the Lompoc Jail, and department equipment. The Grand Jury's conclusion is that Lompoc needs to promote growth and sustain a safe environment. A response for each of the relevant findings and recommendations is required.

The following responses from the Lompoc Police Department are in accordance with California Penal Code 933.05.

Finding 1:

The Lompoc Police Department needs a Co-Response team dedicated to its geographical area.

Response: Agree

Recommendation 1

That the Lompoc City Council negotiate with the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office and the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors on behalf of the Department of Behavioral Wellness to add a Co-Response team dedicated to the Lompoc Valley.

Response: Requires further analysis.

The City of Lompoc and the Lompoc Police Department recognize the value of having a Co-Response team to address crises involving mental illness. Lompoc has cooperated with a non-profit organization that is advocating the "CAHOOTS" (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) program that was founded in Eugene, Oregon. The program consists of a first responder teamed up with a mental health clinician. The Lompoc Police Department provided statistical information to a consultant that was contracted by the non-profit organization. At the onset of the

proposal, the Chief of Police was in support of the program provided that a funding source was identified that would not rely on the City's general fund. To date, that funding source has not been identified. During the past year the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department implemented a Co-Response Team that is proving to be effective and reducing the demand for patrol deputies. Recent statistics have shown that the Co-Response team handled in excess of 1600 calls in which only 11 arrests were made. Over 1500 calls were resolved by providing counseling and referral services to the clients. The Sheriff's Office has extended the assistance of the Co-Response team, when available, to the City of Lompoc. The City of Santa Barbara and recently the City of Santa Maria, have also implemented Co-Response teams in partnership with the Department of Behavioral Wellness. The Lompoc Police Department has sought input from the agencies that have implemented those teams and will prepare a staff report for the City Council not later than June 16, 2022 to evaluate and consider the viability of establishing a Co-Response team.

Finding 2

The Lompoc Police Department is short-staffed and has been for a number of years, causing gaps in service.

Response: Disagree partially with an explanation. The short-staffing in the Department is not currently causing gaps in service. Explanation below.

Recommendation 2

That the Lompoc City Council explore the option of contracting with the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office for targeted support while the Lompoc Police Department returns to full strength.

Response: Will not be implemented.

The Lompoc Police Department was faced with multiple challenges in 2020 and 2021 as a result of a loss of personnel due to lateral transfers to neighboring agencies and the effects of the pandemic (at one point there were only 32 deployable officers). To further exacerbate the situation, the City was dealing with a substantial increase in violent crime and an increase in homicides. Fortunately, the Department is now in full recovery mode. During the first six months of last year, the Department made requests to the Sheriff's Office to provide staffing and selective enforcement in the aftermath of a shooting or following a homicide. In each instance the assistance was provided for 24-48 hour intervals. There were three requests made during the first six months. During the remaining six months, there was only one request for assistance. Since September of 2021 the Department has not made any requests for additional assistance from the Sheriff's Office.

The Lompoc Police Department has made great strides in recruitment and hiring of sworn and professional staff. Currently, there are three sworn vacancies and two professional staff vacancies. There have been no resignations or lateral transfers of sworn personnel during the past year. There is one trainee in the field training program who is expected to successfully complete the program by May 2022. The Department also has four trainees currently attending the Alan Hancock Police Academy. Those trainees are scheduled to complete their training in June 2022. In July of 2021 the Lompoc City Council authorized an increase to the Department by adding two Lieutenants. Those positions will serve to create a viable succession plan, enhance the management team, and will also serve as an incentive for retention. The Department has also made other strides in recovery by establishing the Special Investigation Unit, and restoring the School Resource Officer.

The Honorable Gustavo Lavayen
February 15, 2022
Page 3 of 3

In the coming months, the Lompoc Police Department will re-deploy a traffic/motor officer and reactivate a Community Services Section. The progress that has been made and the prospect of additional funding should provide the basis for increasing the level of police service, community engagement, and sustaining public safety efforts.

Sincerely,



Jenelle Osborne, Mayor
City of Lompoc

- cc. Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
By email: sbcgj@sbcourts.org
And by mail:
Santa Barbara County Courthouse
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Santa Barbara, CA 93101

- cc. Honorable Lompoc Mayor Pro Tem and Council Members
Dean Albro, City Manager