

Solano County Board of Supervisors

Response to Grand Jury Report

Issued May 28, 2009

Flooding of the Hall of Justice, Adjacent Facilities and Areas within the City of Fairfield

Solano County Board of Supervisors responses to the Grand Jury Report:

Finding 1

As the Hall of Justice ground floor is several feet below ground level in a flood plain area, sustained winter rains, inadequate drainage system the proximity to the Suisun Slough, result in flooding of the building. Until this situation is resolved, flooding of the area will continue to be a drain on taxpayer resources.

Department of General Services Response to Finding #1

The Department of General Services partially agrees with the finding. Property losses incurred by the County as a result of flooding are covered by an "All Risk and Flood" property insurance policy issued through the California State Association of Counties (CSAC). The policy has a \$5,000 deductible. In the two flooding incidents that occurred since 1995, insurance payments covered all property losses up to the amount of the County's coverage, with federal disaster assistance grants through FEMA covering the deductibles.

Board of Supervisors response to Finding #1

The Board of Supervisors concurs with the Department of General Services' response to the Grand Jury's finding.

Recommendation 1

The County should aggressively lobby the State to secure funding for replacement or renovations and upgrades to the Hall of Justice.

Department of General Services Response to Recommendation #1

This recommendation requires further analysis. In accordance with existing court facility transfer agreements between the Administrative Office of the Courts and Solano County, both parties have funding responsibility for improvements to the Hall of Justice. To the extent a project is identified that requires a State share of funding for the improvements, the County will lobby the State to provide their share of funding to address this issue.

Board of Supervisors response to Recommendation #1

The Board of Supervisors concurs with the Department of General Services' response to the Grand Jury's recommendation.

Finding 2

Currently, no adequate external barriers exist to impede or hold back runoff from entering the buildings, especially those entrances below street level. Until this situation is resolved, flooding of these building will continue to be a drain on taxpayer resources.

Department of General Services Response to Finding #2

The Department of General Services partially agrees with the finding. The existing storm drain infrastructure provides adequate drainage for normal rainfall and runoff to protect the buildings, including those entrances below street level. Flooding only occurs during severe storm events. When severe storms are anticipated, the County installs temporary barriers around the Hall of Justice which reduces the impacts of flooding significantly.

Board of Supervisors response to Finding #2

The Board of Supervisors concurs with the Department of General Services' response to the Grand Jury's finding.

Recommendation 2

The County should consider constructing a retaining wall around the Hall of Justice, Sheriff's Office, and Office of Emergency Services. Pedestrian ramps for access would have to be included. This will help to add sufficient protection to the buildings from surface runoff.

Department of General Services Response to Recommendation #2

This recommendation requires further analysis. The recommendations for the construction of retaining walls and pedestrian ramps around the facilities affected by flooding are included in the final draft of the Fairfield Drainage Analytical Study. This was received by the Department of General Services in July 2009. The Study's findings and recommendations are still being analyzed and evaluated at this time.

However, for sufficient protection to be obtained, extensive work would be required in order to reduce water intrusion from underground piping and conduits that contribute to the flooding of buildings. In addition, extensive re-configuration of parking, driveways, and pedestrian access to the site will need to be evaluated. The cost of these improvements or the State's share of the cost has not been determined at this time.

When the analysis and evaluation are completed, General Services will submit its recommendations to the County Administrator's Office.

Board of Supervisors response to Recommendation #1

The Board of Supervisors concurs with the Department of General Services' response to the Grand Jury's recommendation.

Finding 3

The City of Fairfield and Solano County have not implemented any of the recommendations within the several studies to alleviate the threat to surface flooding within the City. Without a comprehensive solution that addresses all related issues, flooding of County buildings may continue to be an annual event.

Department of General Services Response to Finding #3

The Department of General Services disagrees with this finding. Flooding at the County buildings is not an annual event. County staff routinely cleans and inspects the existing storm drain systems located on County property to insure that the system will perform as designed and will handle normal rainfall and drainage demands. The Facilities Division has constructed temporary barriers for all of the affected openings at the Hall of Justice building to minimize flooding within the building during major storms events. In addition, several steps to improve storm water drainage have been implemented. The County has worked with the City of Fairfield and repairs to the drainage system that may have partially contributed to the flooding of the County buildings in December 2005 flood have been completed. The City has routinely cleaned vegetation from the Clay Street ditch. In 2008, the City excavated and re-established the flow line of the Clay Street ditch increasing the flowage capacity. Improvements have also been made that will increase drainage flow under the railroad crossing.

Board of Supervisors response to Finding #3

The Board of Supervisors concurs with the Department of General Services' response to the Grand Jury's finding.

Recommendation 3

The County of Solano and the City of Fairfield should review the four alternatives stated in the March 2008 study and implement the most effective recommendations: new Detention Ponds, New Pumps (Washington Street Station), Upgrades to Storm Drain Boxes and County Pump Station.

Department of General Services Response to Recommendation #3

This recommendation requires further analysis. As indicated in our response to Recommendation 2, the Department is still evaluating the findings and recommendations of the March 2008 Fairfield Drainage Analytical Study. Analysis to determine the most cost effective solutions, funding sources, cost responsibility, environmental impacts and coordination of efforts between agencies are on-going. In addition, other alternatives that are not identified in the study may exist and should be considered.

Board of Supervisors response to Recommendation #3

The Board of Supervisors concurs with the Department of General Services' response to the Grand Jury's recommendation.

When presented, the Board will review the analysis and staff's recommendations. However, the timing of any capital improvements will have to be evaluated within the context of the existing fiscal crisis facing the County today and the foreseeable future. The Board has the difficult task of establishing funding priorities for many essential and critical programs, competing for limited County dollars. Regrettably, there is not enough funding for all.