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December 3, 2020

Honorable Russell Hom, Presiding Judge
Sacramento County Superior Court
720 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **Sacramento County Grand Jury Report: “911 – The Sacramento Police Department Vacancy Crisis”**

Dear Judge Hom,

Pursuant to Penal Code § 933 and 933.05, the following specific responses are submitted to you regarding the Grand Jury’s Findings and Recommendations on *911 – The Sacramento Police Department Vacancy Crisis*.

Findings

Finding 1: For several years Sacramento PD has lagged behind the national standard for number of officers based on population. This was caused by budget reductions during the 2008 recession resulting in staff reductions that, in spite of significant recruitment efforts, have never been fully restored.

Response to Finding 1: The City of Sacramento agrees with this finding.

Finding 2: While recruitment seems to be a high priority within the Department, there is no line item budget for recruiting police officers and there is no continuity in police officer recruitment staffing.

Response to Finding 2: The City of Sacramento agrees with this finding.

Finding 3: Unlike other Northern California law enforcement agencies, the Sacramento Police Department requires a potential recruit or transfer from another agency to have an A.A. Degree or 60 hours of college instruction. While the Department believes the requirement helps to assure higher quality policing, it may also unnecessarily preclude the Department’s ability to consider otherwise highly qualified candidates. This requirement makes Sacramento PD less competitive for attracting recruits.

Response to Finding 3: The City of Sacramento disagrees with this finding. The Sacramento Police Department places a priority on hiring the best candidates. Studies indicate that college-educated officers function at a higher level, and the Sacramento Police Department remains competitive for highly qualified candidates. The education requirement is waived

for individuals who have four years of service in the United States Armed Forces, and who have obtained an honorable discharge.

Finding 4: Differences in law enforcement agency responsibilities and job functions appear to be determining factors in recruitment more than salary and benefits.

Response to Finding 4: The City of Sacramento agrees with this finding.

Finding 5: Public officials support for the Department is a critical factor in improving departmental morale and in responding to community criticism of the Police Department. Community criticism of the Department has a negative impact in the recruitment of new officers and the morale of existing officers

Response to Finding 5: The City of Sacramento agrees with this finding.

Finding 6: Rapid growth in population away from the city center not only supports the need for additional police officers for patrol duties but also limits the amount of time available for officers to complete required administrative tasks and do community outreach.

Response to Finding 6: The City of Sacramento agrees with this finding.

Finding 7: Due to the current demands of the job, officers are not able to spend as much time as would be desirable developing relationships within the communities they serve.

Response to Finding 7: The City of Sacramento agrees with this finding.

Finding 8: The Grand Jury recognizes the Department has taken steps in reviewing policies specifically related to tattoos.

Response to Finding 8: The City of Sacramento agrees with this finding.

Finding 9: The main target groups for recruitment are millennials or Gen Y individuals whose career needs and concerns vary from veteran officers.

Response to Finding 9: The City of Sacramento disagrees with this finding. While the City recognizes that the two groups identified by the Grand Jury are the most likely source of new officers, the Sacramento Police Department focuses its recruitment efforts on hiring the best candidates available, regardless of age.

Finding 10: The resources allocated to public relations to enhance the image of the Police Department are inadequate. It must be noted that the Police Department is making some positive changes in public relations with rap videos and freeway signage etc.

Response to Finding 10: The City of Sacramento partially disagrees with this finding. The Sacramento Police Department contains a Public Information Division composed of Sergeant, Officer, and Civilian employees. Division personnel organize and manage press conferences, media releases, social media accounts and regularly respond to constituent and media inquiries.

Finding 11: The current hiring process is antiquated and too long which may discourage potential recruits. The Grand Jury notes that the Police Department is reviewing how the process might be updated and shortened.

Response to Finding 11: The City of Sacramento agrees with this finding.

Finding 12: POST training requirements for driving and marksmanship contribute significantly to candidate washout/failure at the Police Academy.

Response to Finding 12: The City of Sacramento agrees with this finding.

Finding 13: The Community Service Officer program has made a positive contribution to both the Sacramento PD and the citizens it serves. Not only has it enabled the PD to reduce call response times even as the population has grown but it has provided a good pool of candidates to fill full time police officer positions.

Response to Finding 13: The City of Sacramento agrees with this finding.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The Sacramento City Council and the Sacramento Police Department should work together to include the positions and budget authority necessary to permanently establish an on-going recruitment function in the Department. The position and budget authority should be included in the 2021-2022 Sacramento PD budget proposal considered for approval by the City Council.

Response to Recommendation 1: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but the City Council and Sacramento Police Department intend on adjusting budgeting authority to address on-going recruitment needs. Necessary positions and budget authorities will be included in the 2021-2022 Sacramento Police Department budget proposal.

Recommendation 2: The Sacramento Police Department should review potentially eliminating the A.A. degree and 60-unit requirement to attract new recruits. The review should consider waiving those requirements for potential recruits with professional training and expertise that could be equally relevant (Military, Lateral Police Transfers). This review should begin immediately with an implementation of its recommendations during FY 2020-2021.

Response to Recommendation 2: This recommendation will not be fully implemented. The Sacramento Police Department places a priority on hiring the best candidates. Studies indicate that college-educated officers function at a higher level, and the Sacramento Police Department remains competitive for highly qualified candidates. The education requirement is waived for individuals who have four years of service in the United States Armed Forces, and who have obtained an honorable discharge.

Recommendation 3: **The Grand Jury recommends that elected officials support and highlight the positive accomplishments of the Police Department and the vital mission/services provided by law enforcement, which in turn would encourage recruitment and retention of officers and would improve the morale of the Department. The Grand Jury recommends this becomes a priority immediately.**

Response to Recommendation 3: This recommendation has not yet been fully implemented, and remains a work in progress. The Chief of Police and City Manager are engaging with the City Council to identify more opportunities and mediums for overtly supporting the Sacramento Police Department.

Recommendation 4: **The Sacramento City Council and the Sacramento Police Department should work together to include the positions and budget authority necessary to permanently establish an on-going recruitment function in the Department. The position and budget authority should be included in the 2021-2022 Sacramento PD budget proposal considered for approval by the City Council.**

Response to Recommendation 4: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but the City Manager and Sacramento Police Department will recommend to the City Council budgeting authority be adjusted to address on-going recruitment needs. Necessary positions and budget authorities will be included in the 2021-2022 Sacramento Police Department budget proposal.

Recommendation 5: **In an effort to improve public perception, the City should consider using a professional public relations firm and/or seek pro bono assistance of an ad agency to create a multi-faceted advertising campaign with the goals of building a collaborative relationship between the community and citizens and highlighting law enforcement as a career. The City's Public Information Office should present a public relations plan to the City Council and the PD for their consideration by the end of calendar 2020.**

Response to Recommendation 5: This recommendation requires further analysis. Currently, the City of Sacramento's Public Information Officer and the Sacramento Police Department's Public Information Officers work in conjunction to adequately convey information to the media and the public regarding careers with the Sacramento Police Department.

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Recommendation 6: The Department should explore ways to shorten the entire recruitment hiring process. This process should begin immediately with a completion date within the next 12 months.

Response to Recommendation 6: This recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 7: The Grand Jury recommends the Police Chief continue to work with POST officials to update or change cadet marksmanship and driving standards and to give candidates the attention needed to better prepare them for those requirements. The Goal for completion would be within the next 12 months.

Response to Recommendation 7: This recommendation has been implemented as to Sacramento Police Department recruits.

Recommendation 8: The Grand Jury recommends the Sacramento City Council and the Police Department continue to expand and make permanent the CSO Program and provide a strategy for the utilization of the CSO position by December of 2021.

Response to Recommendation 8: This recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 9: The Grand Jury recommends that bi-annual open forum style town hall meetings with the police officers moderated by the Mayor, City Manager, Police Chief and the Police Union Representative be conducted that would give officers and management an opportunity to discuss areas of concern and interest with the goal of bolstering support between police officers and community leaders. The Grand Jury recommends this meeting begin within the next six months.

Response to Recommendation 9: This recommendation has not been implemented, but will be in the future, along with the Sacramento Police Department's ongoing outreach efforts.

Recommendation 10: The Grand Jury recommends the Police Department establish a committee or forum of younger officers to provide input on the type of "incentives" or programs that are geared to the younger professional lifestyle in order to attract new officers. The goal would be to drive changes in the Police Department that will attract new candidates including lateral transfers and also assist in retaining current officers. The Grand Jury recommends this should be done within the next six months.

Response to Recommendation 10: This recommendation has not been implemented, but will be in the future, along with the Sacramento Police Department's ongoing recruitment efforts.

Recommendation 11: The Grand Jury compliments the City and Sacramento Police Department for reviewing and relaxing restrictions on tattoos and encourages them to take similar actions on body piercings and below the collar ponytails. The Police Department should reflect not only the diversity of the community but also what is now more prevalent

and acceptable in order to increase the recruitment pool and better relate to the public they serve. The Grand Jury recommends this work begin immediately.

Response to Recommendation 11: This recommendation has been implemented.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these responses.

Sincerely,

Howard Chan
City Manager
(on behalf of the Sacramento City Council)