

**Response to Grand Jury Report Form**

Report Title: Warming Centers

Report Date: June 18, 2023

Response by: Johannes Hoevertsz Title: Director for the Department of Public Infrastructure

Agency/Department Name: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

**FINDINGS:**

F4, F6

I (we) agree with the findings numbered: \_\_\_\_\_

I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: \_\_\_\_\_

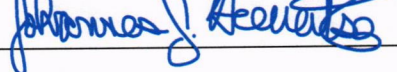
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed with an explanation of the reasons.)

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

R6, R7

- Recommendations numbered: \_\_\_\_\_ have been implemented.  
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered: R6, R7 \_\_\_\_\_ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.  
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered: \_\_\_\_\_ require(s) further analysis.  
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. ***This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.***)
- Recommendations numbered: \_\_\_\_\_ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.  
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 8-22-2023

Signed: 

Number of pages attached: 2

(See attached PC Civil Grand Jury Response Requirements)

**Department of Public Infrastructure Responses to  
“Warming Centers” Grand Jury Report**

**FINDINGS**

**F4.**

Failure by the County, including the Board of Supervisors to plan and prepare in advance for warming centers during extreme weather emergencies, results in inefficient last-minute responses, leaving unhoused individuals exposed to severe cold.

Sonoma County Public Infrastructure partially disagrees with this finding. On June 12, 2023, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Extreme Temperature Response Annex to the Emergency Operations Plan. The Plan outlines the policies, procedures, and area partners' roles in response to an extreme temperature incident and provides criterion for implementing this annex to unincorporated Sonoma County. It also positions the County as the Operational Area to prioritize the support of pre-established facilities and the expansion of their warming or cooling services and if necessary, establish additional facilities.

**F6.**

A lack of identification of, and agreements with, warming facilities in advance of cold weather emergencies leads to a deficit of easily accessible spaces when those emergencies occur.

Sonoma County Public Infrastructure partially disagrees with this finding. On June 12, 2023 the Board of Supervisors adopted the Extreme Temperature Response Annex to the Emergency Operations Plan. The Plan positions the County as the Operational Area to prioritize the support of pre-established facilities and the expansion of their warming or cooling services and if necessary, establish additional facilities. Locations will be established through pre-authorized memorandums of understanding and used as contingency locations when there are gaps in service across the Operational Area.

Furthermore, since 2010 the winter shelter in west-county has been operating from the Guerneville Veterans Memorial Building. The winter shelter program provides emergency food and shelter during the wettest and coldest months, and is open seven days a week from 5:00 pm to 7:00 am and provides services including: meals, bedding, shower facilities, and limited supplies for daily needs. The County contracts with West County Community Services to provide winter shelter operation services.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **R6.**

By December 31, 2023, the Board of Supervisors will direct staff to identify facilities within the unincorporated areas of the County that can be used as warming centers, and sign MOUs with the management of such facilities as necessary. (F4, F6)

#### **Response:**

Recommendation R6 will be implemented in the future. Under the county's Extreme Temperature Response Annex Plan, potential County-supported warming and cooling center locations will be identified. This list of locations will be established through pre-authorized memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and used as contingency locations when there are gaps in service across the Operational Area. Consistent with Section V. Roles and Responsibilities (page 19-20) of the Plan, the Department of Human Services will identify potential warming/cooling center locations and activate MOUs as needed. Sonoma County Public Infrastructure will: Manage and maintain building emergency power systems including UPS, generators, and fuel re-supply; Evaluate building safety upon loss of power; and Provide alternative facilities in support of continuity of operations efforts. Funding for management and maintenance of facilities must be identified to support successful execution of the actions.

### **R7.**

By September 30, 2023, the Board of Supervisors will direct the responsible department (as defined in the policy recommended in R1) to identify County facilities, including unused or underutilized facilities, that will be available to be used as warming centers for unhoused people in extreme cold weather. (F6)

#### **Response:**

Recommendation R7 will be implemented in the future. In accordance with the county's Extreme Temperature Response Annex Plan Section V. Roles and Responsibilities (page 19-20), the Department of Human Services will identify potential warming/cooling center locations. Sonoma County Public Infrastructure will support this effort by identifying County facilities, including unused or underutilized facilities, that will be available to be used as warming centers for unhoused people in extreme cold weather.