

2025/2026

Tehama County Grand Jury

Final Consolidated Report



The Tehama County Grand Jury is an independent panel of citizens responsible for investigating local government operations to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with the law.

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TEHAMA COUNTY GRAND JURY P.O. Box 1061
Red Bluff, CA 96080

June 20, 2026

California Penal Code §933(a) states:

"Each grand jury shall submit to the presiding judge of the superior court a final report of its findings and recommendations that pertain to county government matters during the fiscal or calendar year."

In conformance with the aforementioned Penal Code requirement, the 2025-2026 Tehama County Grand Jury approves and respectfully submits this report to the Honorable Judge Todd Bottke Presiding Judge, Superior Court of California, and County of Tehama.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joan L. Allen".

Joan L. Allen
Foreperson



FINAL REPORTS SUBMITTAL/ APPROVAL STATEMENT

The 2025-2026 Tehama County Grand Jury approved this final report.

Joan L. Allen

Foreperson, 2025-2026 Tehama County Grand Jury

I accept for filing the final report of this 2025-2026 Tehama County Grand Jury.

Honorable Judge Todd Bottke

Presiding Judge of the 2025-2026 Tehama County Grand Jury

2025-2026 Tehama County Civil Grand Jury

OFFICERS

Foreperson	Joan Allen
Pro Tempore	John Brewer
Secretary	Dawn Alves
Corresponding Secretary	Diane Casey
Librarian	Stephanie Mayfield
Treasurer	Eric Frey

MEMBERS

Joan Allen	Dawn Alves
Miguel Barriga	John Bohrer
John Brewer	Victoria Burton
Gayle Carter	Diane Casey
Domenic Catona	James Danielsen
Stephen Forrest	Eric Frey
John Gentry	Doug Hammond
Stephen Laymon	Jennifer Lenwell
Stephanie Mayfield	Ross Snyder
Rylie Vise	



On June 26, 2025, The Honorable Judge Todd Bottke empaneled the 2025-2026 Tehama County Grand Jury following the completion of questionnaires and in person interviews of all prospective jurors. After being sworn in, the Foreperson and Foreperson Pro Tem attended an orientation workshop hosted by the Civil Grand Jurors' Association of California. The full grand jury and alternates later completed a two-day training workshop with the same organization on jury roles, procedures and expectations.

Grand jurors are officers of the Court and serve as an independent body. To preserve the Grand Jury's effectiveness and credibility, members must remain free from outside influence. All proceedings, including complaints, are confidential, and jurors must not discuss jury matters with anyone, including spouses, friends, or acquaintances, during or after their term.

During our term, the Jury received numerous complaints. The panel (excluding recused members) reviewed each complaint and voted on whether to pursue it. Based on the initial complaints, we organized the panel into three committees: County Government, City Government, and Criminal Justice. Each committee began its work by interviewing the complainant to gather additional information. By the conclusion of our investigations, we interviewed 39 individuals, many more than once, for a total of approximately 60 interviews. Those interviewed included county employees, city employees, department heads, elected officials, former elected officials, former employees and members of the public.

The Honorable Judge Bottke appointed an exceptional group to serve on this year's Grand Jury. The panel brought a breadth of experience, knowledge and judgment that helped us evaluate the information received and prepare this report. It has been a privilege to serve with this representative group of Tehama County citizens in the performance of this important civic duty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joan L. Allen". The signature is written in black ink and has a fluid, connected style.

Joan L. Allen

Foreperson

Tehama County Grand Jury 2025-2026

Acknowledgements

The Tehama County Grand Jury sincerely thanks those who provided support, guidance, and assistance throughout the term, including:

Honorable Judge Todd Bottke, Grand Jury Supervising Judge

Sheryl Knutson, Court Services Specialist

Andrew Plett, Tehama County Deputy County Counsel

Matt Rogers, Tehama County District Attorney

California Grand Jury Association Trainers

Tehama County Board of Supervisors

Tabetha O'Quinn, Staff Analyst, Tehama County Administration

Ashley King, Administrative Assistant, Tehama County Administration

David Bliss, Information Systems Manager, Tehama County Administration

Maria Viera, Office Assistant III, Tehama County Department of Agriculture

Glossary

§	Section
ARB	Accident Review Board
BoS	Board of Supervisors
CA	Chief Administrator
CDCR	California Department of Corrections
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CPD	Corning Police Department
DH	Department Head
DOJ	Department of Justice
DUI	Driving Under the Influence
F	Finding
PA/PG	Public Administrator/Public Guardian
PC	Penal Code
POST	Police Officer Standards and Training
PWD	Public Works Department
R	Recommendation
RBPD	Red Bluff Police Department
RC	Road Commissioner
TAGMET	Tehama and Glenn Methamphetamine Enforcement Team
TC	Tehama County
TCDPW	Tehama County Department of Public Works
TCGJ	Tehama County Grand Jury
TSCO	Tehama County Sheriff's Office

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND CREDIBILITY ISSUES

SUMMARY

The Tehama County Sheriff has a documented history of conduct issues dating back more than two decades, and multiple contradictions exist between his statements to the Grand Jury, the materials he provided, and independent evidence from documents, official reports, and witness testimony. These inconsistencies, combined with a pattern of selective memory, minimization, and denial of well-documented events, significantly undermine his credibility and that of the leadership culture within the Tehama County Sheriff's Office.

METHODOLOGY

Evaluation of the Sheriff's credibility was performed by comparing his statements during his Grand Jury interviews and the 426-page information packet he provided against independent, verifiable sources. These include official reports (California Department of Justice letter, Accident Review Board findings, Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Compliance Inspection Checklists and Addendums), Tehama County personnel policies, prior Grand Jury transcripts, and consistent witness testimony. Findings are based on patterns of inconsistency between the Sheriff's statements and corroborated evidence.

Key facts supporting this assessment include:

1. In November 2002, the California Department of Justice (DOJ) determined that the Sheriff (then a TAGMET Agent) and a Corning Police Officer "fabricated a basis for the stop" of a drug trafficking suspect. The DOJ referred the matter to the Tehama County District Attorney at the time with a Brady List¹ referral for both individuals. Although the District Attorney did not make the Brady List referral concerning the Sheriff, the DOJ explicitly described the conduct of the officers as "irresponsible and unethical."
2. The Sheriff has often contacted County Department heads to complain that he was being treated in a manner that was not consistent with county policy or state law. Examples of this include:
 - The Sheriff's dislike of how sick leave accrual was treated as he transitioned from a "county employee" to an "elected official" and,
 - His assertion that Tehama County Personnel Policy 8102 was violated when he filed a complaint against a county department head.

¹ The Brady List is a record maintained by law enforcement agencies and prosecutors identifying officers whose past conduct may impair their credibility as witnesses. It originates from *Brady v. Maryland* (1963) and its extension in *Giglio v. United States* (1972), which require prosecutors to disclose to the defense any evidence that could impeach the credibility or reliability of a government witness, including law enforcement officers.

In these instances, the Sheriff was made aware of the procedures and was told that these same procedures were followed for all county employees and elected officials. However, the Sheriff appears to minimize policy concerns when he himself may be violating them. One example involves his actions during Board of Supervisors deliberations on amendments to the employment contract of his wife, then serving as the county's Public Guardian/Public Administrator. According to witness testimony, the Sheriff appeared at one of these meetings in full uniform and waited outside the room for several hours while the Board reviewed his wife's contract; he also expressed disapproval of proposed amendments to her employment contract at the November 2024 Board of Supervisors meeting. The Sheriff's visible involvement creates the appearance of attempting to influence county hiring and contract decisions involving an immediate family member who was a department head. The fact that his wife was already employed in a high-level county position does not exempt the conduct — it heightens the nepotism and conflict-of-interest issues.

3. On August 7, 2025, an immediate family member of the Sheriff, who was hired as a Deputy Sheriff, was involved in an on-duty automobile collision. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) investigation showed high speed prior to impact, and the Accident Review Board (ARB) classified the collision as preventable. In his Grand Jury interview and within the 426-page information packet he provided, the Sheriff claimed he “remained outside the investigation,” and that vehicle data showed “rapid deceleration.” These statements directly conflict with the official ARB and CHP findings and reflect a minimization of the documented facts and severity of the incident. This pattern of minimizing verified evidence raises significant credibility concerns regarding the Sheriff's account of events under his command.
4. A former Tehama County Supervisor resigned her position following misconduct allegations. Prior to her resignation the former Supervisor was involved in a traffic stop for suspected DUI. The former Supervisor, who was not found to be driving under the influence during the traffic stop, later filed a “false police report complaint” with the Sheriff's Office concerning this incident. The Sheriff's Office began an investigation focusing on certain Tehama County officials that called in the suspected DUI. Following the misconduct allegations the Supervisor agreed to a settlement with the District Attorney's office which included her resignation and waiver of her complaints against Tehama County and its employees. This occurred on October 28, 2025. However, the false police report investigation continued. The TCSO detective working this case confirmed continued investigative steps on direction from the chain of command, and public press releases were issued. The Sheriff asserted in his interview and information packet that he had “nothing to do with the investigation” into the former Supervisor's false police report complaint yet simultaneously claimed there were “clear-cut policy violations” by county officials. These statements are inconsistent with his claimed lack of involvement.

5. The 2024-2025 Tehama County Grand Jury's certified transcripts were released. These transcripts include the interview with the Tehama County Personnel Director. The Personnel Director was asked whether BOS confidential closed-session information was missing and who the director believed was responsible for the leaks. The director stated that confidential information was missing and who the responsible party was. The Sheriff, as documented in his formal complaint, turns the Personnel Director's confirmation of missing confidential information and leaks into an accusation of inaction and cover-up by the Personnel Director, County Counsel, and the County Chief Administrator. However, according to the transcripts, the Personnel Director was never asked what actions were taken to address the breach, whether affected employees were notified, or whether any investigation or corrective measures were initiated. The Sheriff presents his conclusion of inaction and cover-up as established fact while the underlying testimony or evidence does not support the leap he is making.
6. In his Grand Jury interview, the Sheriff was asked about an incident that occurred while he was an officer with the Corning Police Department. He stated that he had permission from his then-Sergeant to take his wife in a police department vehicle to Plumas County. During that trip, he bypassed a road construction barricade and collided with heavy construction equipment. Both the Sheriff and his wife were hospitalized, with one requiring life-flight transport. The Sheriff's claim of having permission to take his wife in an official vehicle was directly contradicted in testimony before the Grand Jury by the Corning Police Chief at that time, who stated that only the Police Chief could authorize such use of a department vehicle and that no permission was granted.
7. The Sheriff stated that when he left the Corning Police Department in 2008, he was asked not to leave. This was directly refuted by the Police Chief at the time who stated that he only wishes a departing employee success in their future endeavors.
8. Regarding allegations of bullying and creating a hostile work environment, the Sheriff stated in his interview that he does not bully and is not responsible for a hostile workplace. This assertion has been refuted by multiple witnesses, including those who described patterns of "projects" (targeted individuals), indirect retaliation ("stir the pot"), belittling at Board of Supervisors meetings, anger during disagreements, fear of retribution, and creating trouble indirectly so he is not directly involved.
9. The Sheriff stated in his interview and information packet that he had "no involvement" in his son's hiring process, "no access" to the psychological examination results, and "no knowledge" of the academy selection criteria. He further attested that his daughter "was hired after going through the county's hiring process" with involvement by the Personnel Director, and that these hires occurred when he was a Captain and not while he was Sheriff. These statements reflect an attempt to distance himself from any responsibility for hiring decisions involving his immediate family members.

10. As the elected Sheriff and head of the Tehama County Sheriff's Office, he bears ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all hires meet required qualifications, including education verification, psychological suitability examinations, and mandated training such as PC 832 Firearms certification. However, an official POST Compliance Inspection Checklists and Addendums report dated November 4, 2025, shows compliance deficiencies in the Sheriff's Office. These include at least one officer missing education verification and psychological suitability declaration, and another Jail Deputy missing the required PC 832 Firearms course. These documented deficiencies raise questions about the consistency and reliability of the hiring and qualification standards under the Sheriff's leadership.

FINDINGS

F1. The evidence establishes a clear and consistent pattern of conduct that undermines the Sheriff's credibility. These facts are corroborated across official reports (DOJ, ARB, POST), documentary evidence (emails, press releases, policy excerpts), and consistent testimony from current and former law enforcement, current and former county administration, and elected officials. The Sheriff's repeated denials, selective recollection, and attempts to reframe documented events create a clear pattern that undermines his credibility and that of the leadership culture within the Tehama County Sheriff's Office.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Grand Jury recommends that the 2026-2027 Grand Jury continue monitoring compliance with any mediation, training, or oversight measures implemented as a result of this investigation.

INTIMIDATION, BULLYING AND UNDERMINING IN THE WORKPLACE

SUMMARY

The 2025-2026 Grand Jury received complaints alleging undermining, nepotism, harassment, intimidation, abuse of authority, retaliation and the creation of a hostile work environment within Tehama County government. The primary focus was on the Tehama County Sheriff and the Tehama County Sheriff's Office (TCSO).

Upon reviewing the complaints, utilizing interviews, email chains, social media references, other evidence and the Sheriff's own statements, the Grand Jury finds consistent, corroborated patterns of misconduct. These include retaliation against critics, favoritism toward family and allies and misuse of law-enforcement resources. We found the Sheriff's statements frequently conflicted with the testimonies of multiple witnesses and documents, raising serious credibility concerns.

What is abundantly clear from our investigation is that the conditions of "discord, disorder and tension" within County government identified by the 2024-2025 Grand Jury continue to this day. The conflict between the Sheriff and county administration continues to plague Tehama County government. The dysfunction has damaged employee morale, increased turnover, deterred recruitment and impaired county government operations. Immediate reforms are recommended.

The facts we discovered, as well as our findings and recommendations to address those issues, are not repeated here, but are presented below in the body of this report.

BACKGROUND

The 2024-2025 Grand Jury forwarded a complaint they were unable to fully investigate due to their term expiring on June 30, 2025. The complaint alleged that actions by a few Tehama County Public Works managers at a Board of Supervisors meeting to consider appointing a Road Commissioner, was actually symptomatic of a broader pattern of conspiring by the Tehama County Sheriff, and others to undermine the County Administrator, administrative staff and the Board of Supervisors.

The 2025-2026 Grand Jury assigned the complaint to the County Government committee. The Grand Jury subsequently determined that the complaint warranted an official investigation.

As we proceeded with our investigative work we received a similar complaint letter. That second complaint letter, dated June 12, 2025, was likely provided to the prior Grand Jury and simply wasn't forwarded to us when their term expired. In addition to conspiring to undermine, the additional complaint alleged intimidation, bullying, harassment, retaliation, and nepotism on the part of the Sheriff directed at County administration. In any event, we received the second complaint in October 2025. The late receipt of the additional complaints and accompanying

information delayed our investigation and required the reproduction and resubmittal of a substantial collection of documents.

As of this writing, the prior (2024-2025) Grand Jury recommendation (R-1) of mediation between the Sheriff and the Chief Administrator remains unfulfilled despite the (10/01/2025) GJ deadline contained within their report. Mediation is vitally important. The delay in its implementation has exacerbated the chasm between the polarized factions and negatively affects the efficient operation of many facets of County government. We offer our own updated recommendation in this regard. See Recommendation No. 1 below.

METHODOLOGY

The County Government Committee of the Grand Jury conducted interviews with 36 current and former county officials, employees, County Supervisors, law enforcement and members of the public. Additionally, there were follow-ups with several key witnesses. All interviews were recorded and conducted under the standard confidentiality admonishment.

The Grand Jury reviewed extensive documentary evidence, including:

- Formal complaints and email chains
- Accident Review Board report of TCSO vehicle incident occurring August 7, 2025.
- Tehama County Personnel Rules Sections 8102 (Harassment) & 8103 (Respectful Workplace)
- 2002 California Department of Justice letter
- The Final Consolidated Report of the 2024-2025 Tehama County Grand Jury
- Interview summaries from all witnesses
- Minutes of the Board of Supervisors meetings
- Government Code Sec. 3060 *et seq*
- Government Code Sec. 24000 *et seq*

DETAILS AND DISCUSSION

ROAD COMMISSIONER ISSUE:

The prior County Public Works Director & Road Commissioner resigned in February of 2025. Efforts to fill that position commenced almost immediately. A number of alternatives were

offered and considered by Tehama County Public Works (PW) managers, the Chief Administrator and administrative staff. The Board of Supervisors was kept abreast of these discussions and participated in closed session meetings to provide direction.

During our investigation, we discovered that PW managers had worked with County Administrative staff to develop a plan to fill the vacant position of the County Road Commissioner. The managers had suggested that an engineering firm be contracted for Road Commissioner duties and then recommended that the contract be awarded. In an email dated April 16, 2025, PW Managers expressed gratitude to administrative staff for supporting the recommendation they had offered.

The process culminated in a staff report recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. However, when that replacement plan was presented to the Board of Supervisors during their April 22, 2025 meeting, the same PW managers who undersigned the April 16 email spoke to derail the recommendation. In their comments to the Board, the managers expressed budget concerns, recommended hiring from within the department rather than hiring a consulting firm, and other alternatives, some of which had been previously considered and rejected. The recommended action at that meeting died on a 2-2 vote. Afterwards, the same PW managers were seen conversing with the Sheriff outside the County Administration Building.

When interviewed and questioned regarding their unexpected opposition, the PW managers cited concerns about the formatting of the contract attached to the staff report, as well as concerns about the impacts to the department's budget. While these may have been legitimate issues, the concerns could and should have been presented to County Administration in the days before the April 22 BoS meeting instead of during the meeting. We believe the incorrect contract format was an easy fix, and the budget impacts would have been somewhat mitigated by the net savings resulting from the unfilled position. Additionally, one of the PW managers later stated "I don't know" when asked about the reasons for their opposition.

When asked about assembling with the Sheriff after the meeting, one of the Public Works managers stated that the discussion was regarding where they should go for lunch.

Our investigation revealed a significant bias against the Chief Administrator by at least one of the PW managers, and a friendship with the Sheriff from another. One manager sought the advice of the Sheriff regarding a potential "insubordination" charge associated with their opposition. Additionally, one of the managers was overheard uttering "nice working with you" to the Sheriff after the Board of Supervisors meeting on April 22nd. While that statement was later claimed to be mere sarcasm after the contentious meeting, it remained questionable to the Grand Jury.

The insubordination by the PW managers appears to have been addressed in accordance with the County's Personnel Rules. The Grand Jury makes no additional recommendation regarding this

specific incident.

More than one witness testified that they believed the Sheriff was responsible for the reversal of Public Works managers' position in an effort to undermine the CA in the public meeting. The Sheriff later denied any role in the matter.

Fact

The Public Works managers had ample opportunity to advise the CA and Administrative staff that they would oppose the action recommended in the staff report at the public meeting of the Board of Supervisors. But, instead of providing a heads-up, they opposed a recommendation they themselves had envisioned and forwarded to County Administration.

SUBSEQUENT COMPLAINTS

While we investigated the primary complaint, additional complaints were presented alleging similar actions on the part of the Sheriff to intimidate, bully, harass and retaliate against county employees as well as nepotism, which could create a toxic work environment. These complaints had also originally been directed to the prior Grand Jury but arrived too late for that panel to properly investigate prior to the end of their term on June 30, 2025.

We began to interview the complainants and soon learned that two of the Sheriff's children worked for the Tehama County Sheriff's Office. Additionally, a complaint regarding harassment of County employees by a small but vocal group was presented. We added nepotism and public harassment to our list of items to investigate.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN SHERIFF AND CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR

The conflict between the Sheriff and county administration continues to plague Tehama County government. At this point, we believe it's important to provide a brief summary that chronicles the history of conflict between the County Administrator (CA) and the Sheriff. The conflict has since spilled over to include discord with others in county administration, including County Counsel and the Personnel Director.

Both the CA and Sheriff acknowledge the quarrel originated in November of 2022. At that time the prior Tehama County Sheriff, issued a press release, dated November 7, announcing the suspension of day-time patrol services, citing "a catastrophic staffing shortage". The Tehama County Sheriff's Office press release was provided to the media and on social media sites, without prior discussion or disclosure with/to the Board of Supervisors or County Administration. At the time of the Tehama County Sheriff's Office press release, the current Sheriff was a Captain and the "Sheriff-elect". The former Sheriff had placed the Sheriff-elect in an elevated role with more responsibility in order to facilitate his transition to Sheriff. The

Sheriff-elect would take office in January of 2023.

The CA and Board of Supervisors were naturally concerned with the implications for public safety, since the Tehama County Sheriff's Office had informed criminals that there would be no daytime deputies patrolling the rural areas of the County.

The motives of the patrol suspension were questioned by the CA and the Board of Supervisors. Many within county government viewed the suspension as a political action by the former Sheriff that the Sheriff-elect would reverse upon assuming office and thereby reap the political benefit.

In light of the urgency of the issue, the Board of Supervisors met on Thursday November 10, 2022, in special closed session to address the suspension of daytime patrol. They approved their own press release at that meeting. However, that document release was delayed at the request of the then District 2 Supervisor, despite her support of it on November 10th. The CA then joined in a November 14th telephone conference with the then District 2 Supervisor, the then Sheriff and the Sheriff-elect, who sought to modify the Board of Supervisors Press Release. The CA was unable to modify the document without presenting it for Board approval at the next scheduled Board of Supervisors meeting (November 22, 2022). The Board press release approved November 10th was then made public by the CA on November 14, 2022.

The Sheriff claims that the CA was untruthful to him regarding the delivery date of the Board press release. On November 15, 2022, after reading a Los Angeles Times article that referenced the Board press release, the Sheriff-elect sent a text message to the Chief Administrator. That message stated, "Did you already send out the press release we talked about yesterday? If so, when?" On November 16, 2022, the CA curtly responded "No", without providing clarity. The Sheriff elect thanked the CA for his response. Oddly, the Sheriff-elect did not point out that he'd read the story in the media or challenge the CA's response.

If the Sheriff-elect asked the CA about the "modified" press release, then the response was accurate. If the question was regarding the Board's approved press release however, the CA's response was misleading.

This Grand Jury was unable to determine which press release the question related to. The Grand Jury believes, however, that the ambiguity surrounding this matter could have been quickly resolved with clearer text messaging and communication between the CA and Sheriff-elect.

The BoS Press Release detailed their-prior actions to increase pay for Deputy Sheriffs in order to alleviate the staffing shortage. Notable among the increases was a 22.8% increase that they approved on November 8, 2022.

In any event, conditions changed and day patrol was restored in late February 2023, less than 2 months after the Sheriff-elect became Sheriff.

Facts

The dispute between the CA and the current Sheriff originated with the Tehama County Sheriff's Office suspension of daytime patrol in November of 2022.

The CA had no authority to modify the Board of Supervisors Press Release approved on November 10, 2022.

The Sheriff believes the CA lied to him regarding the release date of the Board of Supervisors Press Release.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR POSITION

The Chief Administrator (CA) is a position appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The job description states the CA "receives policy direction from the Board of Supervisors," and "Provides direct supervision of assigned administrative personnel and supervision of appointed County Department Heads." The CA "is the top management position in the County administrative structure."

The CA's authority does not include supervision of elected-officials, including the Sheriff. The CA's employment may be terminated by a majority vote of the Board of Supervisors.

TEHAMA COUNTY SHERIFF POSITION

The Sheriff is elected by the citizens of the County. The Sheriff position is defined within State Law, specifically Government Code Title 3, Division 2, Part 1, Chapter 1 (Section 24000 *et seq*) and Tehama County Charter Section III. The Sheriff is the primary law enforcement officer in the County. He administers the Tehama County Sheriff's Office. He was elected in 2022 and took office in January of 2023. His term would normally expire in four (4) years. However, through action of the State of California, the elections of county sheriffs were made to coincide with Presidential elections. So, his term was extended for 2 years and now runs through December of 2028.

Since the position is elected, the Sheriff position is largely independent of scrutiny by the Board of Supervisors or the CA. The one exception to this is budgeting. The annual Tehama County Sheriff's Office budget is the responsibility of the Board of Supervisors. The Sheriff's independence certainly contributes to the rift between the Sheriff and the Chief Administrator.

In California, removing a sheriff can occur only by recall election or upon recommendation of the Grand Jury followed by superior court action in accordance with Government Code Section 3060 *et seq*.

SHERIFF'S WIFE'S EMPLOYMENT

Until recently, the Sheriff's wife served via employment contract as the County's Public Administrator-Public Guardian (PA-PG). Upon performance review, the Personnel Director, County Counsel and CA recommended that her contract not be extended. After their own review, the Board of Supervisors opted not to extend that employment contract, and it expired in November 2025. Through Board action on December 9, 2025, the PA-PG duties have since been transferred/assigned to the Department of Social Services Executive Director.

Facts

Numerous witnesses described the Sheriff sitting for hours just outside the room where his wife's (the PA-PG's) evaluation was occurring in closed session, while armed and in uniform. This was perceived to be an act of intimidation directed toward the BoS as well as the CA, Personnel Director and County Counsel.

RELATIONSHIPS AND GRIEVANCES

Multiple witnesses describe having good relationships with the Sheriff up until disagreeing with him, voting against his objectives or recommending actions contrary to his intentions. Several told us that when those divergences occurred the Sheriff would essentially terminate the relationship and subsequently avoid interaction and communication. Additionally, more than one described how, after such incidents, they noted increased presence of Tehama County Sheriff's Office vehicles in the vicinity of their residences which they felt was not coincidental.

Several County Department Heads and Supervisors described similar relationship experiences or incidents with the Sheriff. The common pattern they described was disagreement, confrontation, followed by belittling, bullying and, oftentimes, retribution. For that reason, some choose to avoid interaction with the Tehama County Sheriff's Office in general, and with the Sheriff specifically. As a result, important department to department communication and cooperation is hindered. This is a terribly inefficient way to operate any organization.

This Grand Jury found that jail inmates with mental health issues whose sentences had expired were, occasionally, released and dropped off at the County Mental Health facility at the direction of the Sheriff, without proper coordination with Mental Health staff. As a result, Mental Health staff has been forced to reactively respond to find emergency housing for the former inmates.

In light of this information, as well as the ongoing dispute with the CA, it appears to us that the Sheriff may have trouble resolving conflicts. That could be a trait that's part of a law enforcement officer's customary right/wrong world. However, it fundamentally conflicts with attributes necessary to effectively manage a public agency where thoughtful discussion, debate, compromise, and collaboration (i.e., teamwork) is an absolute necessity.

This Grand Jury learned that several employees have filed grievances against the Sheriff with the Personnel Director. We also found that a similar parallel-investigation was being conducted by

Sacramento law firm under contract with the County. That investigation stems from a personal complaint filed by the Sheriff against the CA and then a counter complaint filed by the CA against the Sheriff. The County has authorized the expenditure of up to \$250,000 for that work.

Facts

In an email dated May 29, 2025, the Sheriff sought to delay and weigh-in on the Board of Supervisors closed session performance evaluation and potential contract extension of County Counsel.

Numerous current or former County employees described instances of intimidation, harassment, bullying or retaliation by the Sherriff.

The Tehama County Sheriff's Office delivered mental-health patients to the Mental Health facility, without coordinating with Mental Health staff.

The County has expended significant resources to investigate employee vs. employee personal grievances.

The Sheriff's trouble resolving personal disputes creates unnecessary tension within County government.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR RELATIONSHIPS WITH DEPARTMENT HEADS

In the interest of fairness, this Grand Jury looked into whether the Sheriff's continued dispute/conflict with the CA were shared by other County Department Heads. Obviously, if others had similar experiences, the CA's management style, personality or behavior might need to be addressed and corrected.

The County has twenty-one department heads. Fifteen of those are appointed positions and six are elected "officers of the county." Those include the Sheriff, County Clerk, Auditor, Treasurer, Assessor, and District Attorney. It's worth noting that we have found no significant disputes between the CA and any current department heads, except the Sheriff.

Elected Department Heads are outside the traditional county chain of command and are responsible only to the voters. We believe some process should be implemented to address conflicts and disputes on the part of all employees with others in the workplace. Ideally, that process could reduce the considerable costs the County currently incurs to investigate personal disputes within County government.

“FALSE” POLICE REPORT MATTER

One notable example of intimidation and undermining involved the Sheriff’s actions associated with the Tehama County Sheriff’s Office’s investigation of a “false” police report by County Administrative staff. That matter commenced on March 25, 2025, with the discovery of a tumbler belonging to then District 3 Supervisor that was left behind after a Board of Supervisors meeting. The tumbler was found to contain what was believed to be alcohol. Those in attendance thought the then District 3 Supervisor might be impaired and a hazardous driver. Consequently, a phone call was made to the Red Bluff Police Department (RBPd) who promptly found the vehicle and completed a traffic stop. The then District 3 Supervisor was found not to be impaired and released at the scene.

The then District 3 Supervisor subsequently filed a complaint with the RBPd alleging it was a “false” police report. The RBPd stated the complaint was due to legitimate concern and rejected the claim. The Tehama County District Attorney was of the same opinion. Then District 3 Supervisor then filed a complaint with the Tehama County Sheriff’s Office. Despite that conclusion by RBPd and Tehama County District Attorney, the Tehama County Sheriff’s Office opted to conduct their own investigation of the matter. The pursuit of this investigation seems completely contrary to the campaigns across the country that encourage you to “Report Suspected Drunk Drivers.” The campaigns utilize public service advertisements appearing on billboards, message boards, broadcast media and social media.

One Department Head present when the tumbler was discovered was soon contacted by a TCSO Detective attempting to schedule an interview. That Department Head immediately felt retaliation from the Tehama County Sheriff’s Office for merely doing the right thing. So, instead of agreeing to be interviewed, that Department Head felt compelled to hire an attorney at their own personal expense. At that point, the Tehama County Sheriff’s Office investigation seemed to stall for a few weeks.

On May 13, 2025, then PA/PG (the Sheriff’s wife) employment contract was being considered. The recommendation was for a short 6-month extension. The then PA/PG desired a lengthier extension. Interestingly, right after Board of Supervisors’ approval of the limited extension, the investigating detective recontacted the Department Head suspected of making the call about the potentially impaired driver, who was also part of the contract extension decision, seeking an interview. This coincidental timing was viewed by the Department Head and others as a clear attempt by the Sheriff to intimidate.

The Sheriff’s Office issued a press release on Monday, June 2, 2025. The press release stated they were investigating “certain members of the Board of Supervisors and specific Tehama County Department Heads.” A prior email (sent the previous Thursday, May 29, 2025) from the

Tehama County Sheriff's Office to Board of Supervisors and senior administrative staff referenced "potential criminal conduct," apparently on the part of the reporting party as well as County Counsel.

Tehama County Sheriff's Office stated the investigation would be conducted by both a detective and the Undersheriff. The investigating detective contacted the CA to advise him that the Department Head had "lawyered up," which seemed to imply impropriety or guilt on their part. Soon after, the Department Head was subject to insults from members of the public at Board of Supervisors meetings, who said the Department Head and the CA "should be fired."

On September 9, 2025, the District 1 Supervisor and (then) District 3 Supervisor both publicly called for the termination of the Department Head as well as the Chief Administrator and County Counsel.

In October of 2025, the then District 3 Supervisor resigned her position. In her resignation agreement she waived all criminal and civil complaints against the County and its employees and agents. However, the Tehama County Sheriff's Office continued with their investigation after her resignation.

The Sheriff claims his office wasn't informed about the resignation-agreement and so the investigation continued. This is questionable because the resignation was a top story in local broadcast media and the press, including social media. The TCSO investigators were informed of the agreement in early December, but apparently never followed up. It similarly seems odd that the former District 3 Supervisor, an associate of the Sheriff, didn't inform him of the agreement herself.

The Sheriff denies being a part of the false report investigation but was kept up to date on the progress. He similarly denies purposely attempting to harass, intimidate, bully or retaliate against anyone. He attributes such claims to his "direct" personality.

Facts

The RBPD determined the police report filed on March 25, 2025, regarding suspected impaired driving, was not a "false" police report. The DA agreed that filing the report was appropriate.

Despite the decisions of the RBPD and Tehama County District Attorney, the Sheriff opted to initiate an independent investigation of those involved with reporting the matter.

The TCSO continued that investigation even after the District 3 Supervisor resigned and waived all criminal and civil complaints against the County.

The TCSO assigned both a Detective and the Undersheriff to conduct the investigation of the "false" police report incident.

POLITICS

Since the Sheriff is elected, one would expect that politics would affect his position. It stands to reason that the Sheriff would try to make decisions to please his constituents in order to get reelected. This is true not just of him, but virtually all elected officials.

However, we have found the Sheriff often works through political means to retaliate against those he perceives as enemies. To accomplish this, he has befriended certain members of the Board of Supervisors and works with them to accomplish his ends. This became acutely apparent with his relationship with the former District 3 Supervisor. This Supervisor often clashed with the CA, other Board of Supervisors members and administrative staff, and made no secret of her disdain for the CA. This Grand Jury concludes that the Sheriff saw his common ground with the former Supervisor and used his relationship with her to accomplish his objectives.

Evidence of similar interaction with the District 1 Supervisor has emerged. Witnesses have described how he was initially cordial with the CA, but after developing a relationship with the Sheriff, now essentially refuses to speak with the CA and publicly calls for his termination. He has publicly stated his intention to fire the CA and others in administration as well.

Unlike the Sheriff who is generally immune from BoS termination, the CA serves at the consensus of the Board of Supervisors. Consequently, he could be terminated with a majority vote (3-2) of the five members of the Board of Supervisors if such action was properly agendized, noticed and published. While the Sheriff has denied actively seeking the termination of the CA or anyone else, many witnesses testified they are convinced he does. With the former District 3 Supervisor and District 1 Supervisor clearly aligned to fire him, the CA was merely one vote away from termination for much of 2025.

The prior Grand Jury found that the former District 3 Supervisor had likely taken documents from closed sessions, including a performance evaluation regarding the former PA/PG (Sheriff's wife). Many believe that the document was then provided directly to the Sheriff and the Sheriff's wife. Unauthorized removal of documents from a closed session is a violation of the Brown Act (State Law). The 2024-2025 Grand Jury recommended charges for that violation, and others, be filed.

The Tehama County District Attorney prepared charges and presented them to the former District 3 Supervisor on July 1, 2025. This Grand Jury viewed a video filmed outside the County Administration building where the former District 3 Supervisor immediately passed those charging documents to the Sheriff. When faced with prosecution for the alleged Brown Act violation and other matters (see above) the former District 3 Supervisor resigned her Supervisorial seat on October 28, 2025.

COORDINATION WITH PUBLIC COMMENTORS

Witnesses consistently identify a small but vocal group that seems to coordinate to criticize county staff at Board meetings and on social media.

Specific incidents include the one on September 7, 2025, when one member of the group took a photograph of the backside of a Department Head (DH) during a Board of Supervisors meeting. The photo was subsequently posted online and then presented as a complaint alleging “vulgar” attire. Note that we do not believe the attire was at all inappropriate. In any event, the DH regarded the photo and posting online as sexual harassment. This was the same DH “targeted” during the tumbler issue.

A member of the group later filed a complaint with the Public Employees Retirement System regarding her volunteer work.

The Sheriff admits communicating with several members of the group. Some of the group acknowledge that relationship with the Sheriff and/or his wife. Several witnesses testified that coordination between the Sheriff and the group is readily apparent due to statements made at the Board of Supervisors meetings and then online in social media posts.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDINGS

F1. The Public Works managers withdrew their support of the consultant contract just six days after collaborating with and then thanking County Administrative staff for assisting in developing a suitable replacement solution.

F2. The PW managers withholding of information from the County Administrator and administrative staff, then presenting testimony contrary to that presented in the staff report at the April 22, 2025, Board of Supervisors meeting, clearly undermined the County Administrator and administrative staff and was disingenuous, unprofessional and insubordinate.

F3. The Grand Jury found no conclusive direct evidence that Public Works managers were coerced to reverse their position at the April 22, 2025, Board of Supervisors meeting. However, the timing and circumstances are noteworthy. After the managers’ sudden change in position, and immediately after the BoS meeting, they were observed meeting with the Sheriff outside the County Administrative Building. In the context of the broader pattern of conduct documented elsewhere in this report, these circumstances raise questions of possible involvement or influence.

F4. The ongoing dispute between the Sheriff and the CA could have been largely avoided had the Tehama County Sheriff’s Office worked with County Administration and the Board of

Supervisors to discuss budgetary limits and identify solutions to what was a short-term staffing shortage that occurred in 2022 under the direction of the prior Sheriff.

F5. Poor communications between the CA and the then Sheriff-elect regarding the Board of Supervisor's "Elimination of Day Patrol" Press Release has contributed to the distrust and animosity between the Chief Administrator and the Sheriff.

F6. The Sheriff often attempts to use his position to intimidate and/or influence County elected officials and staff members.

F7. The conflicts between the Sheriff and county administration continue to plague Tehama County government. The dysfunction has damaged employee morale, increased turnover, deterred recruitment, and impaired county government operations.

F8. In the course of our investigation, we found department heads were generally quite supportive of the Chief Administrator.

F9. The RBPd, who was the investigating agency on the possible DUI call, stated there was legitimate concern and rejected the claim of a false police report. The Tehama County District Attorney was of the same opinion. Despite those conclusions, the Tehama County Sheriff's Office opted to conduct their own investigation of the matter.

F10. Continuing to investigate the District 3 Supervisor "false" police report matter, even after her resignation waived all criminal and civil complaints, appears to be in retaliation toward County employees and officers.

F11. Utilizing a Tehama County Sheriff's Office detective and the Undersheriff to investigate the false police report regarding the tumbler incident was a significant waste of employee time and public resources.

F12. The Sheriff has purposefully intimidated, harassed, bullied, or retaliated against multiple elected or appointed County employees.

F13. The Sheriff has contributed to a toxic work environment in county government and administration through retaliation and intimidation against those who challenge him. This pattern is corroborated across departments and time.

F14. The Sheriff actively befriends, supports and defends those he believes will help accomplish his political objectives.

F15. The Sheriff rejects and opposes those he views as adversaries, including targeting them for retribution, retaliation or termination.

F16. The Sheriff often weighs in on the affairs and actions of other county administrators and departments.

F17. Criticism of government is every American's right in accordance with the First Amendment. However, concerted efforts that target or threaten staff or that cross the line of common decency are negatively affecting morale and staff efficiency within county government.

F18. All members of the public should comply with the Public Code of Conduct adopted by the Board of Supervisors on September 16, 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Grand Jury recommends the Tehama County Board of Supervisors order structured, mandatory mediation between the Sheriff and the Chief Administrator with a neutral external mediator, accountability measures, and follow-up reporting.

R2. The Grand Jury recommends the Sheriff and Chief Administrator participate in structured, mandatory mediation with a neutral external mediator, accountability measures, and follow-up reporting by November 2, 2026.

R3. The Tehama County Board of Supervisors mandate annual conflict-resolution and anti-retaliation training for both elected and appointed department heads. We further recommend that the BoS monitor compliance with this recommendation by November 2, 2026,

R4. The Chief Administrator and Personnel Director create, and the Board of Supervisors adopt an ombudsman, or third-party process, to respond to complaints filed between employees, whether elected or appointed by November 2, 2026,

R5. The Sheriff focus less on the actions of other departments and more on administering the Sheriff's Office; the job for which he was elected.

R6. The Public Code of Code of Conduct adopted by the Board of Supervisors on September 16, 2025, should be projected on the video screen just prior to and during the public comment period at the commencement of each Board of Supervisors meeting on or before November 2, 2026,

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the following responses are required:

Tehama County Board of Supervisors respond to R1, R4, R6.

Tehama County Sheriff respond to F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F9, F11, F12, F13, F15, R2 and R5.

INVITED RESPONSES

The Grand Jury invites the following individuals to respond:

The Chief Administrator and Personnel Director respond to R3.

In accordance with California Penal Code §933.06, one member of the Tehama County Grand Jury has recused themselves from participation in the investigation, deliberation, and preparation of this section of the report due to a potential conflict of interest or other qualifying circumstance.

NEPOTISM

SUMMARY

The Tehama County Grand Jury received citizen complaints of possible nepotism at the Sheriff's office. The Tehama County Grand Jury was also investigating complaints of intimidation and bullying and the potential link that nepotism could have in the overall investigation. This prompted the decision to conduct this investigation into the inconsistent application of anti-nepotism rules throughout county departments. The concern that nepotism creates the perception of unfair treatment for employees of the Tehama County Sheriff's Office and that it impacts morale, safety, security and public trust, is of the utmost concern.

During the investigation the Grand Jury found that all county departments apply Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM except TC Sheriff's Office when addressing the employment and supervision of family members within the department.

The Grand Jury determined that no other elected or appointed county department head employed immediate family members within their own department at the time of the investigation. Only three other departments employed family members, totaling 22 individuals. The TC Sheriff's Office, at the time of the investigation, had 26 family members, including 2 members of the Sheriff's immediate family.

The Grand Jury determined that the TC Sheriff's Office applies Lexipol Policy 1050 Nepotism and Conflict of Interest rather than Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM when addressing the employment and supervision of family members within the department.

The Grand Jury learned that Lexipol is a company that, among other things, provides legally vetted policies for public safety agencies that can be used directly as written, or as a basis to create a policy that fits an agency's needs.

Within the Tehama County(TC) government, a Lexipol policy manual is posted on the website for each of three law enforcement agencies; TC Sheriff's Office, TC Probation Department, and TC District Attorney Bureau of Investigation. In regard to nepotism, TC Probation Department and TC District Attorney Bureau of Investigation both apply Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM. Only the TC Sheriff's Office applies the Lexipol Policy 1050 Nepotism and Conflict of Interest.

The nature of nepotism makes it difficult to measure the impact as employees are often concerned about a negative response if they report issues related to family members in the same department. Several interviewees expressed concerns regarding perceived conflicts of interest associated with the employment of family members within the TC Sheriff's Office. Such a perception is the main ethical concern a nepotism policy is meant to address and prevent.

The Grand Jury recommends that all county departments apply Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM as the countywide standard governing the employment and supervision of family members while allowing supplemental operational procedures that do not conflict with the Personnel Rule.

Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM explicitly states, "Department Heads shall not employ, or recommend for employment, any family members to a position in their department." Therefore, the Grand Jury further recommends that Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM be updated in order to clarify the definition of a department head so that the definition includes elected officials and removes any ambiguity, and the rule should clearly state that Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM shall be applied by all departments.

BACKGROUND

The TC Sheriff's Office has 26 family members amongst its employees. Two are immediate family members of the Sheriff. The Tehama County Grand Jury interviewed executive level employees at TC Sheriff's Office, the Personnel Department and other departments, as well as reviewed all of the Tehama County Personnel Rules and Lexipol policies known to be in place regarding nepotism and conflict of interest. In addition, the Grand Jury reviewed county hiring and promotional forms for individuals.

The Grand Jury confirmed that the TC Sheriff's Office applies Lexipol Policy 1050 Nepotism and Conflict of Interest rather than Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM in regard to the employment and supervision of family members within a department.

The Grand Jury compared the Lexipol Policy 1050 Nepotism and Conflict of Interest to Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM including the stated purpose, the stated impact of not having such a policy and the stated impact of not adhering to the policy, particularly in the most concerning instance of a department's employment of the department head's family member. After this review, the Grand Jury decided to include the aspect of nepotism in the full investigation in order to make a recommendation that would improve the county work environment by strengthening and supporting a fair, merit-based system that has the potential to increase safety, security and the public trust.

Tehama County has a long history of prohibiting nepotism in the workplace. In June of 1992, the Board of Supervisors(BoS) requested a Personnel Committee of the Board to adopt a "nepotism policy which prohibits the employment of a person who is an "immediate family member" of an employee in a position of supervisory responsibility over said person and who is employed within the same department, office, or division." The final policy was vetted through the bargaining units in place at the time and approved by BoS on September 15, 1992. This policy stood in practice until personnel rules were updated and combined in an easy access handbook

for all departments and the public, with Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM, approved by BoS on July 17, 2018.

The TC Sheriff's Office implemented the Lexipol Policy 1050 Nepotism and Conflict of Interest sometime after 1992 and prior to 2018.

METHODOLOGY

Documents

The Tehama County Grand Jury reviewed the following documents:

- Lexipol policy manual
- Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM
- Prior County Nepotism policy approved 9-15-1992
- Various other Tehama County Personnel Rules
- County Charter
- New hire, promotional and discipline records

Other

We also reviewed:

- County and city law enforcement websites for posted policy manuals

Interviews

During this investigation Tehama County Grand Jury conducted interviews with 36 individuals. Some individuals were interviewed multiple times. Interviewees included Tehama County residents, several administrators, past administrators, managers, employees and past employees of various Tehama County Departments, including some specific to TC Sheriff's Office.

DISCUSSION

Relatives in the workplace

As of March 24, 2026, Tehama County has 890.6 allocated employee positions. There are 21 department heads, which includes 6 elected and 15 appointed.

Within the county departments, excluding TC Sheriff's Office, there are six family members employed at TC Probation Department, 10 family members employed at the TC Department of

Social Services, and there are six family members employed at the TC Public Works Department. The TC Sheriff's Office has 26 family members working within a department of 123 positions. Employing family members that are not supervised by other family members or are not a member of the department head's family, does not violate either nepotism policy discussed in this report.

None of the elected or appointed department heads employ their own family members, except the Sheriff, who employs two of his immediate family members.

“Family members” is defined in the Tehama County Personnel Rules as “spouse or significant other; natural, step or legal: child; grandchild; parent; grandparent; sibling; niece; nephew; aunt; uncle; father-in-law; mother-in-law; son-in-law; daughter-in-law; or individual living in the employee’s immediate household.”

Purpose of Nepotism Policy

Nepotism as defined by County policy: The practice of an employee using his or her influence or power in the employment setting because of a personal relationship.

Nepotism as defined by Lexipol policy: The practice of showing favoritism to relatives over others in appointment, employment, promotion or advancement by any public official in a position to influence these personnel decisions.

Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM states:

- “Due to the potential for perceived or actual conflicts of interest that may impact daily working relationships, such as favoritism or personal conflicts from outside the work environment, Tehama County employees are prohibited from having any supervisory authority over a family member.”
- “Tehama County is committed to a policy of employment and advancement strictly based on qualifications and merit. It is found by the County that a business purpose exists relating to supervision, safety, security, and morale, and the public’s trust in the agency’s qualifications and merit-based employment practice and dictates that a prohibition on supervision of family members within county departments is essential to the equal and fair treatment of employees and applicants.”
- “Department Heads shall not employ, or recommend for employment, any family members to a position in their department. Other appointing authorities and/or supervisors shall not employ, or recommend for employment, any family members to a position of employment in which they would have any direct or indirect supervisory authority over said family member.

Lexipol Chapter 10 Personnel Policy 1050 Nepotism and Conflict of Interest states:

- “The purpose of this policy is to ensure equal opportunity and effective employment practices by avoiding actual or perceived favoritism, discrimination or actual or potential conflicts by or between members of this department. These employment practices include: recruiting, testing, hiring, compensation, assignment, use of facilities, access to

training opportunities, supervision, performance appraisal, discipline and workplace safety and security.”

- “Employees are prohibited from directly supervising, occupying a position in the line of supervision or being directly supervised by any other employee who is a relative or with whom they are involved in a personal or business relationship.”

Analysis of policies

Both policies include the stated purpose of avoiding actual or perceived conflicts of interest, or favoritism. Both policies include a prohibition on the supervision of family members. Both policies cite “safety and security” as a potential concern if the policy is not followed.

In addition, Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM also includes “morale” and the “public’s trust” as something to be upheld by the adherence to the policy. Morale and public trust are not mentioned in Lexipol Policy 1050 Nepotism and Conflict of Interest.

Observations of citizens’ public responses to County business are a clear indication that public trust is a highly valued motivation for creating and following policies that remove any perception of impropriety and requires voluntary adherence to ethical standards.

A notable difference between the two policies:

1. Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM prohibits “direct or indirect supervision” of family members. Lexipol Policy 1050 Nepotism and Conflict of Interest only prohibits “direct” supervision and states “the department will not prohibit all personal or business relationships between employees”.
2. Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM contains the explicit directive that “Department Heads shall not employ, or recommend for employment, any family members to a position in their department.” A statement such as this is absent from the Lexipol policy.

A reasonable person would consider that the stated purpose of “avoiding perceived favoritism” would require that a department head would not employ his/her own family member and employees would not be directly or indirectly supervised by a family member.

Avoiding a perceived conflict of interest may seem to be a subjective pursuit, and at times becomes an ethical question as to how this can be done. Lexipol Policy 1050 Nepotism and Conflict of Interest does not include the specific directive prohibiting a department head (elected official) from hiring a family member. The omission of language specifically addressing department-head employment of family members results in operational differences between the

two policies; also, the omission of that statement does not remove the ethical consideration and responsibility to the public and employees of avoiding the appearance of favoritism.

Consistency reflects fair practices

Lexipol policies are available for all public safety agencies. Within the TC government, the Lexipol manual was found posted to the websites for TC Probation Department, TC District Attorney Bureau of Investigation, and TC Sheriff's Office. The Grand Jury verified that the TC Probation Department and the TC District Attorney Bureau of Investigation applies Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM regarding nepotism-related matters, while the TC Sheriff's Office applies Lexipol Policy 1050 Nepotism and Conflict of Interest. Each of these agencies may apply Lexipol policies for other areas. The Grand Jury's inquiry focused on operational differences in the application of nepotism-related policies among county departments. When only one department determines to use a different policy than all of the other departments, it increases the perception of conflict of interest for that one department.

Impact of perceived conflict of interest

The Tehama County Grand Jury strongly believes in the importance of department heads not employing family members, and that there should not be exceptions within the County departments. It is important to note that while the perception of favoritism is a subjective matter, it was clearly expressed as a perception and concern throughout the investigation.

The cumulative list, from both policies, of the consequences for not upholding ethical principles in the area of nepotism and conflict of interest includes: the potential negative impact on daily working relationships; safety; security; morale; and public trust.

FINDINGS

F1. The Tehama County Sheriff applies Lexipol Policy 1050 Nepotism and Conflict of Interest in place of Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM when addressing the employment and supervision of family members within the department.

F2. The Sheriff has determined that the Lexipol Policy 1050 Nepotism and Conflict of Interest allows him to employ his own family members. TC Sheriff's Office has a history of allowing indirect supervision of family members. This has resulted in the perception of nepotism, favoritism and conflict of interest existing in TC Sheriff's Office and has eroded a sense of fairness and trust and is a contradiction of Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Tehama County Grand Jury recommends that:

R1. The County Board of Supervisors direct all county departments, including TC Sheriff's Office, to apply Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM as the countywide standard governing the employment and supervision of family members, while allowing departments to adopt supplemental operational procedures that do not conflict with the Personnel Rule. Completion date: November 2, 2026.

R2. The County Board of Supervisors direct County Personnel Department to update Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM in order to clarify the definition of a department head so that the definition includes elected officials and removes any ambiguity; and so the rule clearly states that Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM shall be the countywide standard for all departments. Completion date: November 2, 2026

R3. The Tehama County Sheriff, as Department Head, applies Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM, and/or reviews and revises the TC Sheriff's Office Lexipol Policy 1050 Nepotism and Conflict of Interest to ensure consistency with Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM regarding department-head employment of family members and direct or indirect supervision of family members. The Grand Jury intends for the language to apply for any and all future hires, or family relationships that develop between employees. Remedies are outlined in Tehama County Personnel Rule §1308 NEPOTISM. Completion date: November 2, 2026.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the following response is required:

Tehama County Board of Supervisors respond to R1 and R2 within 90 days of receipt of this report.

Tehama County Sheriff respond to F1, F2 and R3 within 90 days of receipt of this report.

INVITED RESPONSES

The Grand Jury *invites* the following individuals to respond:

Tehama County Sheriff : respond to R1 and R2 within 60 days of receipt of this report

Tehama County Personnel Director: respond to F1, R1 and R2 within 60 days of receipt of this report

COMMUNICATION

SUMMARY

The Grand Jury received complaints, and in the process of investigation, reviewed extensive documentation related to communication between the Tehama County Sheriff's Office, the Board of Supervisors, and County Administration. What emerged from this review is not simply poor communication, but a system that does not function in a consistent, reliable, or disciplined manner.

Communication occurs through multiple, often competing channels. At times it is informal, undocumented, delayed, or avoided altogether. Expectations are unclear, responses are inconsistent, and critical information is not always shared across leadership.

The result is a breakdown in coordination, conflicting narratives, and a pattern in which issues are not resolved when first raised, but instead escalate into larger conflicts, complaints, and investigations.

BACKGROUND

The County structure requires consistent and coordinated communication between elected officials, department heads, and administration. The Grand Jury found that while formal channels exist, they are not consistently used, and expectations for communication are not clearly defined or enforced.

METHODOLOGY

Documents reviewed included emails, memoranda, timelines, and internal communications. Interviews were conducted with administrators, elected officials, staff, and members of the public.

DISCUSSION

Breakdown in Communication Channels

Communication frequently occurs outside formal channels. Phone calls, side conversations, and undocumented meetings are used in place of consistent, trackable communication. This limits transparency and creates gaps in shared understanding.

Lack of Clear Communication Protocols

There is no shared standard for how communication should occur. There are no clearly defined expectations for response times, or follow-up. Each individual appears to operate under their own interpretation of what communication requires.

Delayed, Inconsistent, or Avoided Communication

Communication is not only inconsistent, but at times avoided. Responses are delayed or do not occur. In some cases, communication stops entirely following disagreement, eliminating any opportunity for resolution.

Conflicting Information

Different parties describe the same events in different ways. There is not a centralized or coordinated communication process to ensure consistent information. This leads to confusion and competing narratives.

Reliance on Indirect and Unverified Communication

The Grand Jury observed multiple instances in which information affecting leadership relationships was communicated indirectly through third parties rather than through direct, documented communication between the individuals involved. In several interviews, concerns involving elected officials or County leadership were described not as firsthand communications, but as reports relayed through intermediaries.

This reliance on second-hand information increases the risk of misunderstanding, distortion, and selective interpretation. When indirect accounts are treated as established fact without direct confirmation, communication becomes vulnerable to mischaracterization and mistrust. The Grand Jury found that this pattern contributes to conflict by replacing direct clarification with assumption-based reactions.

Such practices further weaken already strained communication channels and reinforce a culture in which informal narratives carry greater influence than direct institutional dialogue.

Use of Public and Informal Channels

Issues that should be addressed internally are often raised publicly. Public comment, social media, and external communication are used in place of internal processes, further complicating resolution and increasing conflict.

Breakdown in Trust

Trust between leadership, staff, and stakeholders is significantly diminished. This lack of trust drives indirect communication, selective sharing of information, and avoidance of direct engagement.

Governing by Public Communication Rather Than Internal Coordination

A recurring feature of the communication breakdown is the use of public press releases to announce or respond to significant County operational matters before internal coordination has occurred. Evidence reviewed by the Grand Jury reflects that a major point of conflict began when the incoming Sheriff publicly announced the suspension of

daytime patrol services without prior review or coordinated communication with the County Administrator or the Board of Supervisors.

This event illustrates a broader pattern in which matters requiring internal discussion and coordinated leadership response are instead first communicated publicly. The Sheriff operates as an independently elected official, while the County Administrator's authority over the Sheriff is limited primarily to budgetary and administrative processes. In this structure, the absence of advance coordination has contributed to repeated public messaging conflicts between the Sheriff's Office, County Administration, and the Board of Supervisors.

Subsequent public statements issued by multiple parties have reinforced conflicting narratives rather than resolving underlying operational disagreements, further contributing to mistrust and escalation.

Escalation Through Reciprocal Complaint Processes

As communication increasingly shifts into public and adversarial channels, disagreements are no longer resolved through direct internal coordination but instead reappear as formal complaints, counter-complaints, and parallel investigations. The Grand Jury found that this pattern reduces opportunities for timely resolution, leads to spending diminishing financial resource, and further diminishes direct communication between County leadership.

Evidence reviewed reflects that when disputes arise, communication often becomes delayed, limited, or confined to formal email exchanges lacking sufficient explanation to resolve underlying disagreements. Rather than restoring coordination, these exchanges frequently reinforce distrust and move unresolved matters into public forums such as Board of Supervisors meetings, press releases, or external legal processes.

One example involves the continuation of investigative activity after the resolution of matters involving a former District 3 Supervisor. Although legal settlements had resolved the underlying dispute, related investigative actions continued, consuming additional County resources and prolonging conflict beyond the point at which coordinated closure might reasonably have occurred.

Similarly, the Grand Jury notes that mediation between the Sheriff and County Administrator was recommended by the prior Grand Jury as a means to reduce conflict and restore effective communication. Both parties were aware of that recommendation, yet no evidence was presented showing that either side actively initiated the process. This reflects a broader pattern in which acknowledged solutions are identified but not affirmatively pursued, allowing conflict to persist unresolved.

Pattern of Communication and Escalation

The record reflects a continuous pattern: issues are raised through proper channels, remain unresolved, and then reappear later in escalated form.

Some of these issues were addressed through the personnel department and sometimes with County Counsel. Staff repeatedly attempted to operate within policy and legal limits. Despite this process, issues were not resolved at the point of origin. As communication deteriorated, matters shifted from open internal discussion to controlled or investigative processes, often without clear resolution of the original concern. This pattern reflects a communication environment in which issues are not consistently resolved at the point of origin but instead persist and re-emerge in different forms as conflict escalates.

FINDINGS

- F1. Communication between County leadership is inconsistent and not reliably conducted through formal channels.
- F2. The County lacks clearly defined and consistently applied communication protocols.
- F3. Communication is at times delayed, inconsistent, or avoided.
- F4. Conflicting information contributes to confusion and lack of shared understanding.
- F5. Informal and public communication channels are used in place of structured internal processes.
- F6. A lack of trust negatively impacts communication.
- F7. Communication failures contribute directly to escalation of conflict.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The Board of Supervisors, in conjunction with the TCSO, should establish and enforce a formal communication protocol, defining and implementing clear expectations for communication, including response timelines, escalation procedures, and mandatory training that are congruent with each other.
- R2. The County and the Tehama County Sheriff's Office (TCSO) should establish common guidelines governing the use of informal and public communication in official County and departmental business.

R3. The Board of Supervisors should implement training for leadership on communication standards, interagency coordination, and conflict resolution.

R4. The Board of Supervisors should implement structured internal processes designed to resolve issues before they escalate into formal disputes, public conflict, or parallel investigations.

Required Responses

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the following responses are required:

Tehama County Board of Supervisors respond to F1, F7, R1, R2, R3 and R4

Tehama County Sheriff respond to F1 and F2

How To Respond To Recommendations Contained In This Grand Jury Report

Pursuant to California Penal Code §933.05, the person or entity responding to each Civil Grand Jury finding shall indicate one of the following:

1. The respondent agrees with the finding.
2. The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons, therefore.

The person or entity responding to each Grand Jury recommendation shall report one of the following actions:

1. The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implementation action. This implementation is from the governing body of the public agency.
2. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.
3. The recommendation requires further analysis, with 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 the head 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 the publication of this Grand Jury Report.
4. The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation, therefore.

Send all responses to:

The Honorable Todd Bottke
Presiding Judge of the 2023 Tehama County Grand Jury
1740 Walnut St.
Red Bluff, CA 96080

Responses to the Grand Jury Final Report are due as follows:

1. Within 60 days of issuance of the 2026 final report for all elected officials.
2. Within 90 days of issuance of the 2026 final report for governing bodies of a public agency.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE: DETENTION FACILITIES REVIEW

California Penal Code 919 b requires the Tehama County Grand Jury to inquire annually into the condition and management of the detention facilities in Tehama County. California Penal Code 939.9 states that the grand jury may make no declaration or recommendation on any matter unless they carry out a full investigation. The 2025-2026 Grand Jury conducted inquiries, but no investigation into three of the four facilities in the county.

Salt Creek Conservation Camp #7, 10655 Round Valley Rd, Paskenta, CA 96074

The camp is operated jointly by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). On October 28, 2025, three members of the Tehama County Grand Jury toured the Salt Creek Conservation Camp. The Camp Commander, the Assistant Commander and the CAL FIRE Division Chief conducted a tour of the facility and gave information on all aspects of their operation including the inmate selection process, their housing, duties, vocational and rehabilitation programs and the various programs and projects in which the inmates serve the community. The facility has a capacity for 120 inmates; the population is currently 78.

Tehama County Juvenile Detention Facility 1790 Walnut St., Red Bluff, CA 96080 This facility is operated by the Tehama County Probation Department. On May 12, 2026, three members of the Tehama County Grand Jury conducted a site inspection led by the Juvenile Detention Facility Superintendent and the Chief Probation Officer. They toured the facility and were given information on the condition and management of the operation as well as answers to questions from grand jury members. The facility has a capacity for 64 youths; the current population is 16.

Tehama County Jail 502 Oak St., Red Bluff, CA 96080

This facility is operated by the Tehama County Sheriff's Office. On May 20, 2026, four members of the Tehama County Grand Jury conducted a site visit. The Captain of the Custody Division lead us on a tour of all areas of the jail facility and explained inmate management procedures, staff recruitment, management and training as well as other management policies. We were also given a tour of the new Reentry Facility which will be turned over to the Sheriff's Department for occupation on June 1, 2026. The jail currently holds 171 inmates with a capacity of 193. With the new Reentry Facility added the capacity will be over 250.

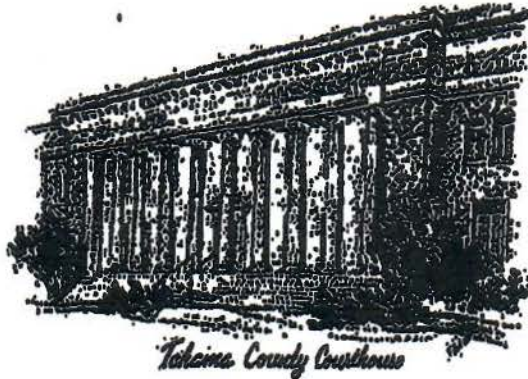
The Ishi Conservation Camp #18, 30500 Plum Creek Rd., Paynes Creek, CA 96075

The camp is operated jointly by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). At the time of our inquiry the camp was undergoing a comprehensive audit by the California Board of State and Community Corrections and could not accommodate our site visit.

Board of Supervisors
COUNTY OF TEHAMA

Gabriel Hydrick
Chief Administrator

District 1 – Rob Burroughs
District 2 – Tom Walker
District 3 – Pati Nolen
District 4 – Matt Hansen
District 5 – Greg Jones



1/29/26
[Handwritten signature]

September 23, 2025

Honorable Jonathan W Skillman, Presiding Judge
Tehama County Superior Court
1740 Walnut Street Red Bluff, CA 96080

RE: 2024-2025 Grand Jury Report Response to Findings and Recommendations

Dear Judge Skillman,

Pursuant to Penal Code § 933 and 933.05 the Tehama County Board of Supervisors presents the following responses to the findings and recommendations contained within the 2024-2025 Grand Jury report pertaining to re-entry center staffing and Tehama County in turmoil.

Is Staffing Shortage Blocking New Re-Entry Center's Future?

Board of Supervisors of the County of Tehama shall respond to:

- Findings F2, F4, F9, F10
- Recommendation R1a-c and R2.

Findings:

F2. No county official has provided a clear plan for how staffing at the Re-Entry Center will be funded.

Disagree partially:

When completed, the Re-Entry Center will be staffed by the current jail staff and occupied by the current inmate population.

The Board has given raises to correctional staff, in the last round of employment negotiations, in order to improve recruitment and retention, however, neighboring jurisdictions have been able to provide more and have nullified any forward progress the small increases in pay and benefits may have made.

Faced with a looming budget deficit in the next fiscal year, a public safety sales tax initiative will be presented to voters in November of 2026. The largest portion of the funds, which are all earmarked for public safety, will be directed to Sheriff's Department for this purpose.

F4. Like many counties in California, TCSO is struggling to recruit new correctional officers due to competition from more attractive employment opportunities, contributing to ongoing jail understaffing.

Agree:

Butte County has recently passed a large general sales tax initiative. Butte County has provided significant raises to correctional staff and is offering large "sign-on" bonuses for new employees.

Tehama County does not have the economy to keep up with the "feeding frenzy" of salary and benefit increases offered by other jurisdictions within an hour commute of Tehama County. This situation is not new and has always been a struggle for Tehama County public safety agencies and directly affects the Tehama County Sheriff's ability to recruit and retain correctional staff.

F9. Without resolving the staffing shortage, the new Re-Entry Center will be unable to fulfill its intended purpose.

Disagree partially:

The Re-Entry Center is going to be an extension of the jail and will serve to locally house the inmate population. Increasing the number of staff will directly increase the number of inmates being housed under Title 15 and 24. Without sufficient staffing the Re-Entry Center will not be fully utilized. The Day Reporting Center will serve as the local re-entry program.

F10. Previous attempts to secure funding for Re-Entry Center staffing through county tax measures have been unsuccessful due to insufficient community support.

Agree:

83% of voters did not support Measure G in 2020. Unofficial polling reflects a distrust that the County would utilize the proposed 1% sales tax revenue for the intended purpose.

Recommendations:

R1a. The BOS and the TCSO shall work together to provide a plan to secure the money needed to fully staff the Re-Entry Center and the Jail. This plan should be presented at a BOS meeting by January 1, 2026.

The recommendation requires further analysis:

The BOS, TCSO and other public safety departments are working cooperatively to draft a public safety tax initiative to secure funding for jail staffing and other public safety needs. A cost analysis and plan to achieve full correctional staffing along with an analysis of anticipated revenue from a sales tax initiative, and/or other sources, shall be reported by December 31, 2025.

Tehama County In Turmoil

Board of Supervisors of the County of Tehama shall respond to:

- Findings: F1, F2, F4, F6, F7, F10
- Recommendations: R1, R3, R4, R5

Findings:

F1. The BOS meetings are a cause for concern due to the inability of the Board to operate as a cohesive team.

Agree:

The five members of the Board will not agree with each other 100% of the time. Disagreements should be respectful and civil.

F2. Animosity between several of the BOS inhibits the ability to get county work done in a timely manner.

Disagree In part:

The working relationship of the Board has not inhibited the ability of Tehama County staff to get work done in a timely manner, but the conflict amongst the Board does affect staff.

F4. A member of the BOS has expressed intent to remove the CA, Personnel Director, and County Counsel. This has caused unnecessary tension within County Administration.

Agree, but two Board Members have expressed that intent.

F6. Although paid by the County, BOS members are not County employees and are not bound by County personnel rules. This lack of enforceable standards for elected officials appears to reduce accountability and encourage poor behavior, undermining a respectful workplace.

Agree in part:

BOS members are expected to abide by the same expectations, rules and laws as other county employees. BOS members are also required to abide by State and Federal employment laws. It is the inability to enforce these standards that negatively impacts the workplace and can encourage bad behavior. The discipline policy does not apply to elected officials. They answer to the people. Corrective action can be taken by the Grand Jury or the people through a recall. The Personnel Ad Hoc Committee is working to determine which policies the Board is bound to follow.

F7. All of the current BOS agreed that a Code of Conduct for the BOS would be beneficial. Implementing a Code of Conduct could enhance public trust, improve working relationships within the BOS, and set consistent expectations that support a respectful and effective governing environment.

R1b. The BOS shall reinstate the Ad Hoc Public Safety Tax Initiative Working Group by August 30, 2025. This group shall present a plan for securing additional tax revenue without unduly burdening the citizens of the county. All revenue shall go to a dedicated public safety fund for jail and Re-entry center staffing. The plan shall be presented at a BOS meeting by December 31, 2025.

The recommendation has been implemented.

The Ad Hoc Public Safety Tax Initiative Committee is currently active after taking a pause for approximately 6 months. Recommendation R1b suggests all revenue generated by the tax initiative be directed towards jail and Re-entry staffing. The Committee's current recommendation is to earmark the money generated by the sales tax to improve and support all public safety departments (Sheriff, District Attorney, Probation and Fire). The Sheriff's Office would receive the largest percentage of funds using a distribution formula.

R1c. The BOS and the TCSO shall work together to present a plan to educate the community on the necessity of these funds and gain community trust that the funds will be used as intended. Efforts could include but should not be limited to; town hall meetings, public presentations, facility tours, PSAs, etc. This plan should be presented at a BOS meeting by December 31, 2025.

This recommendation has not been implemented but it will:

The proposed sales tax initiative is a cooperative effort of all public safety departments which includes the Board of Supervisors, Sheriff, District Attorney, Probation and Fire. The BOS and TCSO will provide the legally acceptable, necessary information to support the sales tax initiative, but will lean heavily on labor organizations and citizens to market the measure to the public.

R2. The BOS and the TCSO work together to make a plan to address retention and possible bonuses for attracting and retaining correctional officers. This plan shall be presented at a BOS meeting by January 1, 2026.

This recommendation has not been implemented but it will:

As part of the cost analysis requested for the R1a; proposed salary, benefits and "bonuses" should be considered as a necessary component for recruitment and retention.

Agree:

The County will adopt the code of conduct for the BOS.

F10. The TCGJ observed that the BOS sometimes goes beyond its policy-making role by micromanaging the CA, making it difficult for the CA to effectively carry out his responsibilities.

Disagree partially:

This behavior likely occurred in the past but does not seem to be occurring with the current BOS.

Recommendations:

R1. The BOS shall hire an outside mediator to resolve differences between the Sheriff and the CA by October 1, 2025.

The recommendation has not been implemented but will be:

The BOS recognizes the importance of a cooperative relationship between the Sheriff and the CA. Mediation will be offered in the future pending the outcome of a formal investigation and within six (6) months of the outcome of the current/pending investigation.

R3. The BOS shall adopt and sign the TCGJ's suggested Code of Conduct, or institute their own version, by October 1, 2025. This Code of Conduct shall be reviewed and revised as needed and shall be signed annually by the serving BOS.

The recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented by October 1, 2025.

R4. The BOS shall adopt the Public Code of Conduct suggested by the TCGJ, or write one of their own, by October 1, 2025. The Code shall be placed on the front page of the BOS agenda that is available to the public. TCGJ also suggests it be projected on the screen prior to the official start of the BOS meeting.

The recommendation has not been implemented but will be:

The Code of Conduct will be distributed via a link that is posted on the website and displayed in the Board chambers.

R5. TCGJ recommends the Public Comment period be moved from the beginning of the BOS meetings to the end of the meetings by October 1, 2025.

The recommendation will not be implemented:

The BOS must balance its responsibility to get County business accomplished efficiently with the desire of the public to be involved in the process. Public comments can set a negative tone and delay the start of official business. Some commenters use their time to talk about things that don't even pertain to County business.

The meeting is a public forum where the constitutional right of free speech is protected. In considering the recommendation, the BOS will limit the open public comment time to 30 minutes at the beginning of the meeting. If the comment period is closed by the chair after 30 minutes, an additional public comment period will be opened at the end of the meeting. This will be brought back to the Board after January 1, 2026 to evaluate the change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Hansen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

District 4 Supervisor Matt Hansen, Chairman
Tehama County Board of Supervisor



CITY OF RED BLUFF

555 Washington Street, Red Bluff, California 96080
(530) 527-2605; Fax (530) 529-6878
www.cityofredbluff.org

August 6, 2025

Honorable Jonathan W. Skillman
Presiding Judge of the Tehama County Superior Court
1740 Walnut Street
Red Bluff, CA 96080

*Reviewed
AWL
8/26/25*

RE: City of Red Bluff Response to the 2024–2025 Tehama County Grand Jury Report: Red Bluff Roads

Dear Judge Skillman

The City of Red Bluff, having received and reviewed the Findings of Tehama County Grand Jury dated June 24, 2025, hereby submits the following responses:

RESPONSES TO FINDINGS

F1. According to the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) survey completed in December 2023. The city's 135.99 lane miles have an average PCI rating of 39 on a 100-point scale, indicating that the majority of roads are in poor condition. This low rating suggests that many streets require immediate maintenance or rehabilitation to prevent further degradation.

The City agrees with Finding F1: The City acknowledges the accuracy of the PCI survey and has incorporated its results into the City's Pavement Management Program. This database is now being used to prioritize repairs and allocate available resources efficiently.

F2. Funding for maintenance and upgrading the roadway surface has been inadequate.

The City agrees with Finding F2: The City agrees that historical funding levels have been insufficient to maintain or rehabilitate the roadway network to desired PCI standards. Despite efforts to secure grants and pursue Measure R (a special sale tax measure placed on the ballot by the City) in 2024, financial constraints remain a major challenge.

F3. Due to the City of Red Bluff's untimely repair and maintenance of roads, costs are increasing.

The City agrees with Finding F3: Deferred maintenance has resulted in roads falling below the threshold for preventative treatment, requiring more expensive reconstruction. The City's current 5-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) aims to address this trajectory as funding is made available.

F4. The City of Red Bluff has difficulty securing funding grants.

The City agrees with Finding F4: The City has faced challenges in obtaining competitive grant funding, often due to limited staff capacity, matching fund requirements and the overall limited grants available at the State and Federal levels. Despite this, the City has applied for state and federal grants, including the RAISE and LaMalfa grants, and continues to seek funding sources. In July of 2025, the City hired a full-time in-house grant writer to secure funding for streets and other capital improvements. The City has been able to successfully pursue and obtain limited grant funding through a joint Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities grant application with an affordable housing developer that provides allocations for limited street improvements in conjunction with a multifamily housing project.

F5. The roadways in the City of Red Bluff create hazardous and unsafe driving conditions, presenting a significant liability risk to the city.

The City agrees with Finding F5: Roadway conditions do present increased safety risks. The City is prioritizing risk mitigation through targeted repairs, ADA compliance improvements, and visibility upgrades. The City has increased its localized repairs as part of a scheduled maintenance program. Further, when specific emergent hazards are identified, streets crews are responsive in correcting the issue from potholes to tree obstructions.

RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Grand Jury recommends Public Works should create a plan for improving the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) of the roadways and communicate this to the public within one year of issuance of this report.

The R1 recommendation will be implemented within one year: The City will develop and publicly share a PCI improvement plan by June 1, 2026, aligned with the existing Capital Improvement Plan.

R2. The Grand Jury recommends Public Works conduct annual (starting in 2025) community forums to gather feedback on roadway conditions and facilitate communication with the public.

The R2 recommendation will be implemented: Public Works will initiate community forums beginning in 2025 to engage residents and gather feedback on street conditions and priorities.

R3. The Grand Jury recommends Public Works create a plan to downsize roadway projects' scope of maintenance to reduce cost and improve likelihood of project completion. Plan should be completed in 2025.

The R3 recommendation will be implemented in 2025: A plan to phase and scope projects for cost-efficiency will be developed in 2025 and integrated with the Pavement Management Program.

R4. The Grand Jury recommends Public Works should make a plan to increase grant funding in 2025.

The R4 recommendation will be implemented in 2025: The City will identify additional funding opportunities and may consider working with consultants or regional partners to improve grant competitiveness. Additionally, in July of 2025, the City hired a full time in-house grant writer to secure funding for streets and other capital improvements.

R5. The Grand Jury recommends Public Works should allocate annual funds for roadway maintenance with budget breakdown and communicate this to the public in 2025 (and going forward).

The R5 recommendation has been implemented and will continue to be implemented: Annual roadway maintenance budgets are now tracked through the Pavement Management Program and will be shared with the public beginning with the FY 2025–26 budget cycle.

R6. The Grand Jury recommends the City of Red Bluff should create a space for designated roadway maintenance and work in progress updates on its website within 6 months of issuance of this report.

The R6 recommendation will be implemented: The City will develop and publish a public-facing webpage within six months of the report's issuance to provide regular updates on road maintenance activities and projects.

R7. The Grand Jury recommends that the City of Red Bluff propose a special use sales tax dedicated to city street improvements and enhance public awareness through social media advertising to promote the proposed tax.

The R7 recommendation requires further analysis: While Measure R (special sales tax measure for streets) was not approved by voters in 2024, the City will evaluate future tax measure strategies and public outreach approaches. This analysis will be conducted over the next 12 months in conjunction with community engagement efforts.

CLOSING STATEMENT

The City of Red Bluff acknowledges the findings of the Tehama County Grand Jury and appreciates the thorough evaluation of our city's roadway infrastructure. We remain committed to making data-driven and community-supported investments in street maintenance, safety, and sustainability.

Respectfully submitted,


Kris Dieters, Mayor
City of Red Bluff

CC: Tehama County Grand Jury 2025-2026 – Foreperson
P.O. Box 1061
Red Bluff, CA 96080



TEHAMA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dave Kain, Sheriff-Coroner

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 729, Red Bluff, CA 96080

*Reviewed
JKW
9/29/25*

Main Office: 22840 Antelope Blvd., Red Bluff, CA 96080

(530) 529-7940 / (530) 529-7933 FAX

Jail/Dispatch: 502 Oak St., Red Bluff, CA 96080

(530) 529-7900 / (530) 528-7614 FAX

September 9, 2025

Tehama County Grand Jury 2024/2025

P.O. Box 1061

Red Bluff, CA 96080

The Honorable Jonathan W. Skillman

Judge of the Superior Court

1740 Walnut Street

Red Bluff, CA 96080

Re: Tehama County Sheriff's response to 2024/2025 final report

Dear Honorable Judge Skillman:

As always, let me start by thanking the members of the Grand Jury for their arduous work and dedication this past year; I have received and have thoroughly reviewed the 2024/2025 Tehama County Grand Jury Final Report. I am pleased to respond to the following items as requested by the Grand Jury.

F-2. Response: Partially Agree.

The Sheriff's Office, under both the prior and current administrations, has multiple times provided informational presentations to the current and former Boards of Supervisors in accordance with the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) guidelines. These presentations included clear plans outlining the staffing requirements for the re-entry center, including the number of positions needed and the associated costs. Each time, the Board approved these staffing plans.

However, no county official has developed or implemented a plan identifying how the staffing costs will be funded.

F-4. Response: Agree.

The Tehama County Sheriff's Office (TCSO) is experiencing significant challenges in remaining competitive in the labor market for correctional deputies. Comparator counties consistently provide higher pay, benefits, and hiring incentives, placing TCSO near the bottom of the salary / benefits scale which causes on going difficulty attracting and retaining qualified candidates.

Furthermore, between 2022 and 2024, California's Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by approximately 15%. During that same period, correctional deputies in Tehama County received cumulative wage increases of only about 5.5%, further widening the gap between market conditions and compensation levels for this critical classification.

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Professionalism, Dedication, Integrity, and Excellence

F-6. Agree.

This has been an ongoing issue for the Tehama County Jail, which has lacked adequate space for safety and sobering cells for inmates confined within the facility. The problem is expected to be further exacerbated by the anticipated increase in inmate population following the jail expansion

F-8. Partially Disagree.

Volunteer-led community programs were significantly reduced during the COVID-19 era; however, over the past year they have resumed and continue to operate within the jail, particularly in the areas of substance abuse recovery and religious services. In addition, educational opportunities are available to inmates through the use of jail-issued tablets, which provide access to a variety of learning resources.

F-9. Partially Agree.

The facility was originally designated a "re-entry center" as part of the original funding source. Over time, however, it was determined that the building would instead be utilized for mainline jail inmates rather than as a traditional re-entry facility.

The purpose of this expansion is to provide additional housing capacity for individuals who are chronic or habitual offenders. The new facility will also include a modern kitchen, laundry facility, and medical wing, replacing critical infrastructure that has significantly aged since the original jail was built in 1974.

The Sheriff's Office will deploy a combination of staffing strategies to operate these facilities and to transfer inmates from the existing jail into the new housing units, thereby expanding capacity and improving overall efficiency.

R-1a.

The Tehama County Sheriff's Office has been working in conjunction with the Board of Supervisors for many years to establish staffing plans and cost estimates, allowing the county to evaluate potential funding sources. Currently, the TCSO and BOS are jointly committed to proposing a public safety sales tax measure, which would provide ongoing funding to support the jail expansion.

It should be noted that over the past seven years, the Sheriff's Office has surrendered approximately \$7.5 million in salary savings back to the County. Based on current staffing cost estimates, this amount would have funded the staffing of the new facility for approximately nine years.

The Sheriff's Office remains committed to working with the Board of Supervisors to identify sustainable funding sources. This includes exploring alternatives outside of a potential sales tax measure, in the event such an initiative does not pass. TCSO considers the successful staffing of the new reentry facility and expanded jail capacity to be vital to ensuring the safety and security of the community.

R-1c.

The recommendation has been implemented in part and will continue to be implemented.

The Tehama County Sheriff's Office has already been working in conjunction with the Public Safety Tax Ad Hoc Group to move this initiative forward as a potential ballot measure for the November 2026 election. The Sheriff's Office acknowledges the ongoing need for sustainable funding to support jail housing and operations, and to ensure adequate staffing through recruitment and retention efforts.

The Sheriff's Office hopes the Board of Supervisors also recognizes the priority and necessity of jail expansion and public safety and remains committed to identifying alternative funding sources in addition to a sales tax initiative to ensure long-term stability.

R-2.

The recommendation will be implemented.

The Tehama County Sheriff's Office is committed to increasing salaries and benefits for all staff, including correctional deputies, as a means of retaining qualified and well-trained employees and attracting new applicants. By doing so, the Sheriff's Office will be positioned to recruit local talent and ensure that this talent is retained in service of public safety for years to come.

The Sheriff's Office further supports the use of retention bonuses to reward employees who have dedicated themselves to serving their community, rather than relying solely on hiring incentives.

Additionally, the County should regularly review comparator counties for the same job classifications and conduct compensation and classification studies to ensure that salaries remain consistent with surrounding agencies. These comparator counties are already utilized during collective bargaining negotiations and should serve as the benchmark for competitiveness.

The Sheriff's Office also encourages the County to enter negotiations earlier with bargaining units in order to resolve disputes before contracts expire. This proactive approach would help build trust and morale among employees while reducing the risks associated with prolonged negotiations.

R-3.

The recommendation will be implemented.

The Tehama County Sheriff's Office will produce a written plan prior to December 31, 2025, outlining steps to expand safety and sobering cell capacity within the jail. A preliminary plan was previously identified during the jail expansion project, which envisioned repurposing the areas currently occupied by the laundry and kitchen facilities in the main jail as potential sobering and safety cell space once those operations are relocated.

The Sheriff's Office will formalize this into a written plan once the new facilities are operational and the designated spaces in the main jail become available, allowing the County to move forward with this critical project.

R-4.

The recommendation will be implemented.

The Tehama County Sheriff's Office currently provides access to rehabilitative and educational programs, including AA, NA, and GED coursework, through inmate tablets, which are available to inmates during most hours of the day.

In addition, depending on both Sheriff's Office staffing levels and the availability of Health Services Agency staff, the Sheriff's Office will make efforts to restore in-person, volunteer-led community programs by September 30, 2025.

Sheriff Dave Kain extends his appreciation and respect to the volunteers of the Grand Jury for their hard work and dedication in producing this annual report. He recognizes the difficulty, and in some respects near impossibility, of consolidating information from multiple departments—often involving issues that span more than a decade—into an accurate and accessible report for the public.

The Sheriff further appreciates the Grand Jury's continued dialogue and efforts to better understand and help address issues related to the Sheriff's Office. Unfortunately, during this evaluation period, the Sheriff's Office has continued to experience staffing shortages like those faced in the past. These shortages place both physical and mental strain on staff and, at times, affect the level of service the Office can provide to the public.

Despite these challenges, the Sheriff's Office remains committed to identifying and hiring qualified candidates and to serving the community to the fullest extent possible with the resources available.

Sincerely,



Jeff Garrett
Undersheriff



**OFFICE OF COUNTY COUNSEL
COUNTY OF TEHAMA**

727 Oak Street, Suite 223
Red Bluff, California 96080
(530) 527-9252 Telephone
(530) 527-9255 Facsimile


6/11/26
MARGARET E. LONG
County Counsel

Daniel B. Klausner, Senior Deputy
Andrew D. Plett, Deputy
Benjamin Ramsey, Deputy
Brittany T. Ziegler, Deputy

September 10, 2025

Grand Jury
Joan Allen, Foreperson
P.O. Box 1061
Red Bluff, CA 96080

To the Honorable Jonathan W. Skillman and Grand Jury Members:

Please consider this letter as County Counsel's response to the 2024-2025 Grand Jury Investigation Report.

F10. The TCGJ observed that the BOS sometimes goes beyond its policy-making role by micromanaging the CA, making it difficult for the CA to effectively carry out his responsibilities.

Agree Partially

County Counsel agrees that no individual Board member should be directing staff or directly involved in the day-to-day operations of staff. The Board's main responsibility is to set policy. County Counsel does not have sufficient information to comment on whether "micromanaging" of CA is occurring.

R3. The BOS shall adopt and sign the TCGJ's suggested Code of Conduct, or institute their own version, by October 1, 2025. This Code of Conduct shall be reviewed and revised as needed and shall be signed annually by the serving BOS.

County Counsel has no authority to direct the Board but is happy to assist in drafting or revising a Code of Conduct.

Thank you for your hard work on these matters.

Sincerely,



MARGARET E. LONG
County Counsel

MEL/st



TEHAMA COUNTY GRAND JURY
P.O. Box 1061
Red Bluff, CA 96080

Tehama County Citizen Complaints - How to File a Complaint

Any Tehama County citizen may address the Grand Jury to express concerns regarding all levels of misconduct of local officials or employees of inefficiencies in local government. Complaints can be submitted by completing a Grand Jury Complaint Form. Complaints are treated as confidential. The Grand Jury is NOT REQUIRED to investigate any or all complaints but may choose whether to investigate as part of its watchdog duties. Complaint forms can be obtained as follows:

- Via the Superior Court of California County of Tehama website: <https://www.co.tehama.ca.us/grand-iurj> , then click on Complaint Form.
- Citizens may also pick up a form at the Superior Court, 1740 Walnut St. Red Bluff, CA 96080.

Complaints must be in writing, signed, dated and addressed to:

TEHAMA COUNTY GRAND JURY
P. O. Box 1061
Red Bluff, CA