



ORANGE COUNTY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

September 13, 2019

The Honorable Kirk H. Nakamura
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, California 92701

RE: Response to 2018-2019 Grand Jury Report "If It Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It"

Dear Judge Nakamura:

In compliance with Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, please find the Orange County Auditor-Controller's response to the 2018-2019 Orange County Grand Jury Report, "If It Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It."

As the Acting Auditor-Controller of Orange County, I thank the 2018-2019 Grand Jury for their diligence in preparing the report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Salvador Lopez".

Salvador Lopez
Acting Auditor-Controller

Enclosure

cc: Donald Noble, FY 2019-2020 Orange Grand Jury Foreperson

**Orange County Auditor-Controller
Responses to Findings and Recommendations
2018-2019 Orange County Grand Jury Report
*“If It Ain’t Broke, Don’t Fix It”***

FINDINGS

F1. The Auditor Controller’s department identity as a “taxpayer watchdog”, complete with a “bulldog logo”, created an adversarial image for some members of the Board of Supervisors.

Response: Agrees with the finding. The late Auditor-Controller, Eric Woolery, did not intend to create an adversarial image. As stated in the Grand Jury report, the watchdog branding was meant to encourage fiscal responsibility, such as recognizing individuals in the community “who [exhibit] excellence in monitoring public money.” The logo was created at the direction of the late Auditor-Controller. The next Auditor-Controller may choose to retain, modify, or end this image.

F2. The need for the Auditor Controller’s “Community and Government Relations” team has been questioned by the Board of Supervisors.

Response: Agrees with the finding. The Grand Jury found a number of other County Auditor-Controllers with similar units.

F5. Realignment of the Internal Audit Department from the Auditor Controller to the Board of Supervisors has reduced staff mobility and cross training and may have adversely affected morale.

Response: Agrees with the finding. Staff mobility and cross training have been significantly reduced, requiring a transfer application and interview for employees wishing to expand their accounting and auditing skills. This contributes to lower morale, as it hinders employees’ career paths.

F7. Disagreements between the Board of Supervisors and the Auditor Controller’s Office over Supervisor mailers and a controversial pension payment were argued in the public arena, creating public dismay as well as distrust between the departments.

Response: Agrees with the finding. Although there were initially public conflicts over Supervisorial mailers, subsequent conflicts were prevented by developing a process in which County Counsel would confirm the legality of each mailer before payment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R3. By September 30, 2019, the Board of Supervisors and County elected officials should discuss and resolve differing opinions in a constructive and professional manner, without airing disagreements in a public forum.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. The late Auditor-Controller, Eric Woolery, had been in regular communication with the two new members of the Board of Supervisors since they took office. He had also met with two other Board members and was seeking meetings with the remaining Board member.

The Acting Auditor-Controller, Salvador Lopez, has already had introductory meetings with members of the Board and will maintain lines of regular communication with them. The Acting Auditor-Controller will work constructively and professionally with each Board member.