



August 1, 2001

Office of the Grand Jury  
Post Office Box 829  
Riverside, California 92502

ATTN: David Howitt, Foreperson  
2000-01 Riverside County Grand Jury

RE: 2000-2001 Grand Jury Report -- Inmate Welfare Fund

Dear Sir:

This report is in response to the Grand Jury Report on the Sheriff's Inmate Welfare Fund (IWF), issued June 26, 2001. Penal Code Section 4025(e) provides discretion to the Sheriff of each county in the manner in which the funds are managed. Sheriff Larry D. Smith has opted to create a committee, with citizen representation, to provide for effective and productive administration of the Inmate Welfare Fund. The Sheriff manages this fund within the guidelines established by PC4025(e) and the existing process is well within those guidelines.

The Grand Jury outlined the following recommendations (as indicated in *italics*). Included is the response to those recommendations.

1. *That the IWF Bylaws and Policies be revised to include accounting and audit requirements to provide clearer visibility of the fund usage.*

The IWF Bylaws are currently under revision. The current Bylaws include provisions for accounting and audits. There is no lack of visibility in how funds are spent.

2. *Include private citizens with varied backgrounds in the IWF Committee.*

The Sheriff's IWF committee includes a private citizen. Each of the five correctional facilities is represented at the committee meetings to ensure the specific needs of the inmates at each of the facilities are met. The Sheriff is comfortable with the makeup of the IWF committee.

3. *Include a County Counsel representative at all meetings.*

The majority of business conducted at IWF meetings is routine in nature. When an issue does arise that requires some type of legal interpretation, that issue is forwarded to county counsel for opinion. This process has worked well for the Sheriff and meets the needs of the committee.

4. *Submit an annual itemized report of expenditures from the IWF to the Board of Supervisors, post such report in each facility and make the report available to the public.*

An annual report is currently submitted to the Board of Supervisors, as required by law. The annual financial report is not a classified document and any citizen or inmate that demonstrates a legitimate need for the information can acquire a copy of it.

5. *Make current IWF financial information available on a bi-monthly basis and in a format that can be easily understood.*

With the availability of an annual financial report and with the occurrence of documented, regularly scheduled bimonthly meeting in which IWF finances are routinely discussed, there is no need to generate a separate bimonthly report. The existing format of meeting minutes and annual financial reports provides an adequate accounting of the Fund.

6. *Complete audits in a timely manner.*

Audits are to be completed annually and historically have been. It was recently discovered that there had been a two year lapse since the last audit due to a switch from calendar year financial reporting to fiscal year financial reporting. That has been corrected.

7. *Increase allocation to those programs that more directly benefit inmates, such as health education and reading programs.*

Programs presented to the committee that involve health education, reading or any other topic, may be funded by IWF. All programs and requests for materials and equipment are routinely discussed at IWF meetings. The relative merit of those requests is presented to the committee, discussed, and evaluated for funding, purchase or implementation.

8. *Fund additional library resources for inmates.*

This recommendation is not clear. There is currently a pilot program in place which uses IWF purchased computer systems to operate the law library at RPDC. Once this system has been approved as adequate by the county judges, these systems will be purchased and installed in all jail facilities in the county. The IWF also purchases books and reading materials for inmates. Due to limitations in physical storage and security considerations, those materials are maintained at a manageable level.

9. *Organize job fairs for inmates prior to their release and/or provide them with job seeking skills.*

The Sheriff's Department currently provides inmate training programs that teach job skills in such areas as landscaping, construction, computer skills, printing, and auto repair. Certificates of achievement are issued to successful inmates and those persons are taught how to apply for and interview for employment.

The Inmate Welfare Fund is reasonably and responsibly administered within the guidelines and confines of the law. As noted above, areas of concern to the Grand Jury have been, or will be corrected. There are no significant changes anticipated for the IWF or how the Sheriff manages

the trust fund. The Sheriff welcomes the input of the Grand Jury and appreciates the time and effort that group has put into their research.

If my staff or I can answer any questions or address any additional concerns, please feel free to contact Chief Deputy Robert Dotts at 909.955.2400.

Sincerely,

LARRY D. SMITH, SHERIFF

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Dotts', written over a printed name.

Robert Dotts,  
Chief Deputy