

# **New Yreka Police Department Facility**

## **SUMMARY**

The 2016-2017 Civil Grand Jury has discovered that over the past 12 years, the lack of planning for the relocation of the Yreka Police Department has resulted in delays, funding shortfalls and bad publicity for the City. Previously, the 2005-2006 Civil Grand Jury conducted a watchdog investigation of the Yreka Police Station located at 412 W. Miner Street. Their final report resulted in seven recommendations to the City. The City acknowledged the Civil Grand Jury's concerns and agreed with most recommendations. In 2010-2011, the Civil Grand Jury again conducted a watchdog investigation related to the police station. The resulting report had many recommendations similar to the 2005-2006 report. When the 2016 2017 Civil Grand Jury learned that a building for the new police station had been purchased in 2014, but still awaits necessary renovations, the Jury again opted to review the status of the Yreka Police Station project.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2014, the property and building at 1400 Fairlane Road was purchased by the City for use as the new Yreka Police Station. The 2016-2017 Civil Grand Jury decided to revisit the process by which this decision was made. Meanwhile, the Police Department continues to be housed in the old Carnegie Library Building at 412 W. Miner Street. The newly purchased police station continues to sit vacant today, after more than 12 years have passed and almost a million dollars have been spent. The City Council has recently chosen to solicit new bids for the necessary remodel of the building.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The Grand Jury interviewed Yreka Police Department staff, Yreka City Administrative staff and past and present Yreka City Council members. In addition, Grand Jury members toured the current police station, reviewed plans for the new facility and attended various City Council meetings and work study sessions.

Further, the following documents were reviewed:

- Prior Civil Grand Jury Reports, 2005-2006 and 2010-2011
- Yreka City Council meeting minutes
- Yreka Police Department Needs Assessment Report dated 9/24/2012
- Yreka Police Department Site Evaluation Report 1400 Fairlane Road 5/14/2013
- Yreka Police Department Site Evaluation Report Campus Drive 9/8/2013
- Appraisal Report of Industrial Building Location: 1400 Fairlane Road dated 12/12/2013
- Grant Deed and Attachment dated 5/9/2014
- Certified Copy of Decree of Distribution of the Estate of Russell Crandall
- City Council Memorandum Rejection of All Bids for Yreka Police Department Remodel Project dated 4/1/2016

- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development article entitle “Planning for Real Estate Acquisition and Relocation” HUD Handbook 1378



**PICTURE OF THE NEW POLICE DEPARTMENT**

## **DISCUSSION**

At this juncture, it is important to note what this report is not. This investigation and report is **not** a referendum or criticism of the Yreka Police Department (YPD), nor is it an analysis or critique of the Department’s structure, strategies, effectiveness, leadership, efficiency or statistics. Rather, this report is an evaluation of the City’s on-going decision-making process and activities with regard to the Police Department’s facilities and location. This report is also not intended to be an endorsement of any site, option or strategy that may or may not have been considered. The Grand Jury is solely reviewing the process that was employed to evaluate and reach conclusions regarding the potential relocation of the police department.

In an article entitled “Planning for Real Estate Acquisition and Relocation” the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), states: “Planning can ‘make’ or ‘break’ your project. A well-planned project may be completed on time and on schedule, whereas, a poorly planned project can result in delays, funding shortfalls, bad publicity, and even legal action. As a result, all acquisition and relocation activities should begin early in the project planning process.”

Pursuant to the 2005-2006 Grand Jury findings and recommendations, the City of Yreka began to assess the inadequacy of the Police Department building. Prior Grand Jury reports, including findings, are public information and are available for review.

Twelve years have passed since the 2005 2006 Civil Grand Jury YPD report was published. Today, building concerns identified in that report remain unresolved. At this point, the City has spent nearly \$1,000,000 in evaluation and acquisition of the new site, only to let it continue to stand vacant since purchase with no comprehensive plan for occupancy.

During the current investigation, it became apparent that the City had no overall citywide strategic plan upon which to rely for guidance during the decision-making process. One area of agreement emerged from all eighteen interviews conducted by the Grand Jury: the existing Yreka Police Department facilities, built in 1915, remodeled and occupied in 1970, are inadequate and inappropriate for police department operations.

On March 8, 2017, the Yreka City Council decided to move forward with the renovation of the new police department site. The decision to do so was influenced by many factors, some of which are outlined below:

- In 2011, the Police Department requested that Yreka City Council seek a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the purpose of evaluating the need for a new police station. Had that grant been requested and obtained, it would have resulted in \$43,750 in funding towards the cost of the evaluation. According to meeting minutes, the Council voted not to pursue this potential source of new funds due to a short deadline.
- A building assessment of the existing police facility conducted in January 2011 confirmed the existence of contained asbestos throughout both the original 1915 construction and the 1970 addition.
- A subsequent safety inspection conducted in 2012 found numerous new building code and other violations in addition to those previously reported by the 2005 2006 Grand Jury. Again, the city responded and largely agreed.
- On September 24, 2012, a needs assessment was completed. The analysis concluded that: “the existing multi-level facility no longer meets the space needs of the Department, and does not provide appropriate public and employee access for persons with disabilities, as required by the American with Disabilities Act and the California Building Code. Due to the extensive age of the Facility and the raised floor design, the removal of hazardous materials required to complete renovation and the necessary re-design for accessibility to the facility point towards options other than renovation of the existing building.”
- Between 2005 – 2013, the City evaluated 24 locations, including raw land and existing buildings. Three site evaluations were requested, conducted and considered. A budget was established November 22, 2013, in the amount of \$1,865,694. **This figure was not based on the estimated cost of design or construction, but rather on available funds.**
- In December 2013, an appraisal of a building located at 1400 Fairlane Road was conducted. On April 17, 2014, the City of Yreka purchased the Fairlane building for \$800,000.

- On October 17, 2014, an architectural contract was issued for the remodel of the Fairlane building to meet the needs of police department operations.
- In February 2016, bids for the remodel were requested, and in March 2016, all bids received were rejected due to projected building costs.
- In the Fall of 2016 the decision was made to commit a city staff person to oversee the relocation project.

Today, the City is in the same position as it was in 2014, except that it now owns a building with complete architectural drawings for a new police station. The City is currently considering modifications to the building design so that construction costs fit within the approved budget, and to offset the possibility of increased costs due to inflation. New bids will then be solicited.

In conclusion, when considering one of the largest expenditures made by the City in the past several decades, it may have been helpful for the Yreka City Council members to have a strategic master plan upon which to build the decision-making process. It should be noted that the City Council, in conjunction with the Economic Development Council, has taken steps to develop and complete a citywide comprehensive strategic plan.

## **FINDINGS**

- F1. The City of Yreka entered into a search for a new police station having no short or long-range comprehensive plan.
- F2. The City entered into a search for a new police station with no defined budget.
- F3. Only recently was City staff assigned the responsibility to oversee finding solutions to police station relocation issues.
- F4. In March 2017, the City Council voted to reopen the bid process for remodeling the property at 1400 Fairlane Road.
- F5. The City, in conjunction with the Economic Development Council, has begun the process of creating a comprehensive city-wide strategic plan.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- R1. In order to minimize future conflict regarding large projects, the City Council should complete its comprehensive citywide strategic plan by the end of 2017.
- R2. Before beginning future projects, the City should insure that a budget is in place.
- R3. The City should provide direction and designate responsibility for project management to specific individuals at the start of every project.

R4. Again, the City should provide direction and designate responsibility for project management to specific individuals at the start of every project.

R5. The City is to be commended for initiating steps for a comprehensive citywide strategic plan, and we encourage a speedy completion of the plan.

#### REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:

From the following governing bodies:

- The City Council of Yreka: Recommendations 1 and 5

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.
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