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SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA



FROM: EXECUTIVE OFFICE

SUBMITTAL DATE: July 30, 2002

SUBJECT: Response to Grand Jury Report: Riverside County Office on Aging

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

- 1) Approve with or without modifications, the attached response to the Grand Jury's recommendations regarding the Riverside County Office on Aging.
- 2) Direct the Clerk of the Board to immediately forward the Board's finalized response to the Grand Jury, to the Presiding Judge, and to the County Clerk-Recorder (for mandatory filing with the State).

BACKGROUND: On June 18, 2002, the Board directed staff to prepare a draft of the Board's response to the Grand Jury's report regarding the Riverside County Office on Aging.

Section 933(c) of the Penal Code requires that the Board of Supervisors comment on the Grand Jury's recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the Board, and that a response be provided to the Presiding Judge of the Supervisor Court within 90 days.

TONY CARSTENS
Deputy County Executive Office

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FINANCIAL DATA:

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----|-------------------------|------|-----|
| CURRENT YEAR COST | \$ | ANNUAL COST: | \$ | |
| NET COUNTY COST | \$ | IN CURRENT YEAR BUDGET: | Yes/ | No/ |
| | | BUDGET ADJUSTMENT FY: | Yes/ | No/ |

SOURCE OF FUNDS:

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE.

County Executive Officer Signature

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Buster, seconded by Supervisor Wilson and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is approved as recommended.

Ayes: Buster, Tavaglione, Venable, Wilson and Mullen
 Noes: None
 Absent: None
 Date: July 30, 2002
 xc: E.O., Grand Jury, Presiding Judge, Co. Clerk-Recorder (2)
 Office on Aging

Nancy Romero
 Clerk to the Board
 By:
 Deputy

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Department Recommendation: Consent Policy
Per Executive Office: Consent Policy

SPECIFIC FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RIVERSIDE COUNTY OFFICE ON AGING

Finding #1:

There are more than 50 agencies in the county that offer services for seniors. RCOOA is developing a computer date system to list the services that are provided by each agency.

The Office on Aging disagrees partially with the finding.

There are thousands (not 50) of agencies in the county that offer services for seniors that are included in the computerized data base the Office on Aging has used for years. This database (known as the Virtual Resource Data Base) will supplement and enhance the existing database in the Office on Aging and has been reformatted to make it available to other county departments that could benefit from its use.

Finding #2:

RCOOA funds are used to provide a variety of services including case management for:

- ***assisted home living, adult day care, preventive health care***
- ***home delivery of meals, nutritional advice, and transportation***

The Office on Aging agrees with this finding.

The services offered by the Office on Aging also include congregate meals in addition to the home delivered meals that were referenced.

Finding #3:

Riverside County lacks transportation for seniors living in remote locations. Those seniors, who use available public transportation, find many bus stops do not provide benches, route maps, and schedules.

The Office on Aging disagrees partially with the finding.

There are some transportation options for seniors living in some remote areas, such as the TRIP (Transportation Reimbursement Information Program) managed by the Partnership to Preserve Independent Living. The Riverside County Office on Aging has a contract to do intake for this program through the Helpink countywide 800 510 2020 number.

The Riverside County Office on Aging also has contracts with community agencies to provide transportation services in some remote areas of the county.

However, findings from community wide assessments and focus group sessions do confirm that transportation remains a high priority of seniors in Riverside County.

Finding #4:

Due to the current senior population, as well as projected growth, additional case managers are needed to meet workloads.

The Office on Aging agrees with this finding.

Available funding for case management services is far below the current and projected need for this service.

Recommendation #1:

RCOOA expedite the development and implementation of the computer data system.

The Office on Aging agrees with this finding.

This is a top priority in the Board of Supervisors approved strategic plan of the Advisory Council on Aging and the Office on Aging. The Virtual Resource Data Base model has been developed, with assistance from county IT, and tested in several county departments, using State grant funding from the CA. Dept of Health Services.

Full implementation of the system across interested county departments and community sites will depend on available funding from other grants or perspective users of the data base product. The Office on Aging continues to pursue these options under the guidance of the Advisory Council on Aging Integration Work Team. The next objective of this group is the development of a business plan for the VRDB, and to pursue funding options for implementation.

Recommendation #2:

RCOOA develop and implement a plan to provide both private and public transportation for seniors residing in isolated areas of the county.

The Office on Aging disagrees wholly with the finding.

The three CTSA's (Coordinated Transportation Service Agencies) are mandated under federal and state law to develop and implement transportation plans for Riverside County.

The Office on Aging conducts community needs assessments and public hearings on the transportation needs of seniors and adults with disabilities, and makes this information available to the CTSA's.

The Advisory Council on Aging recently held a public forum on transportation issues affecting seniors and adults with disabilities in Riverside County, and heard extensive testimony from providers and consumers on current transportation programs and resources, and unmet transportation needs. This information was disseminated widely, and also provided a basis for advocating for improved transportation services for seniors and adults with disabilities in the plan that is developed and implemented by the CTSAs.

Recommendation #3:

Riverside County Transit Authority provides benches, route maps and bus schedules at all public bus stops.

Office on Aging agrees with the finding, but has no direct control over Riverside County Transit Authority.

This recommendation will be shared with the Advisory Council on Aging to be included in their advocacy efforts for improved and expanded transportation. The Council will ask RCTA to make improvements at bus stops.

Recommendation #4:

RCOOA immediately hire a minimum of three additional case managers to meet current and expected workloads.

The recommendation will be fully implemented within the next 60 days.

Case management is a top priority in the Board of Supervisors approved strategic plan for senior services. Hiring of new case management staff in the Office on Aging is always contingent upon available grant funds from the Older Americans Act and the Older Californians Act. Additional social work case managers will be needed for some time as the senior population ages.

Recent increases in Older Americans Act funding will support the creation of two additional social work positions. These positions are being filled. A third social work case manager will be hired on a temporary basis using one year planning grant funds recently approved by the CA. Dept of Health Services to test a new integrated case management model in partnership with the RCRMC and other community agencies in Riverside County. That position will become permanent if Older Americans Act or Older Californians Act funding is available when the planning grant ends (June 03).

The Office on Aging will continue to assess the need for additional case managers in our home and community based service system. It will also continue to promote coordinated case management across programs in county departments and community agencies serving seniors and adults with disabilities.

July 30, 2002

Ms. Mary Ellen Johnson
Foreperson
Office of the Grand Jury
County of Riverside
P.O. Box 829
Riverside, CA 92502

Riverside Transit Agency
1825 Third Street
P.O. Box 59968
Riverside, CA 92517
Phone: (909) 565-5000
Fax: (909) 565-5001

Dear Ms. Johnson:

On June 3, 2002, the Grand Jury interviewed the chief executive officer of the Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) regarding operational issues. On June 4, 2002, the Grand Jury issued a recommendation to the Riverside County Office on Aging and the RTA. Those recommendations are listed below:

1. The Riverside County Office On Aging expedite the development and implementation of the computer data system.
2. The Riverside County Office On Aging develop and implement a plan to provide both private and public transportation for seniors residing in isolated areas of the county.
3. Riverside Transit Agency provide benches, route maps, and bus schedules at all public bus stops.
4. Riverside County Office On Aging immediately hire a minimum of three additional case managers to meet current and expected workloads.

Item #3 was the only issue that related directly to the RTA.

On July 25, 2002, the RTA's Board of Directors unanimously approved an action plan to address the recommendation of the Grand Jury. The Board of Directors authorized this letter to outline the RTA's history as relates to bus stop improvement and explain its planned course of action toward the Grand Jury's recommendation.

Over the past 1-½ years, the RTA aggressively pursued the installation of bus stop benches throughout the service area. In the past year 207 benches were placed at a capital cost of \$56,925. The RTA's FY 02-03 capital budget includes an additional \$200,000 for bus stop improvements. Also included in the FY 02-03 budget, were the addition of one supervisor, three grounds-keepers, and two service trucks.

These personnel and trucks will assist the RTA to better maintain existing bus stops and continue the placement of bus benches. This will bring the bus stop amenities department to a total of 1-supervisor and 9 stops & zones grounds-keepers who are dedicated exclusively to bus stop maintenance.

Ms. Mary Ellen Johnson
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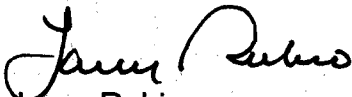
The RTA cannot establish a goal of placing a bench at each bus stop within the service area. By Agency and local jurisdiction's standards for bus bench placement, the location of many of the Agency's bus stops do not have sufficient space for bus bench placement and/or do not have an adequate surface to anchor a bus bench. Many bus stops have loose gravel or dirt surfaces; bus benches cannot be anchored to these surfaces. An unanchored bus bench would be susceptible to sliding and could easily be pushed or moved into traffic, thus endangering the lives of the passengers and drivers.

The RTA does agree with the Grand Jury that each bus stop should have a route information sign. The RTA's Board of Directors approved the following actions in response to the Grand Jury's recommendation:

1. The Agency respond to the Grand Jury with a commitment to continue to place bus benches, within the financial constraints of the Agency's budget, at all bus stops that can safely and reasonably accommodate a bench with each placement strictly adhering to the regulations of the local jurisdiction and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Priority will be given to stops that have the greatest number of daily passenger boarding's and special consideration will be given to bus stops that are frequented by seniors and disabled passengers; and,
2. The Agency respond to the Grand Jury with a commitment to install route maps at all bus stops.

I hope this explanation and commitment adequately address the Grand Jury's recommendation. Please do not hesitate to contact me if have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,


Larry Rubio
Chief Executive Officer

LR/mh

cc: RTA Board of Directors
Kennard R. Smart, Jr., Agency General Counsel