



RECEIVED

NOV 18 2014

CITY OF TAFT

*Kern County*  
**GRAND JURY**

2014 – 2015

Dennis Mike Elliott  
Foreperson

Ella Abrams

Weslie Brown

Gary Chaffin

Andrea Derrick

Sandra Essary

Catherine Garcia

Ray Grissom

Earlene Hightower

Judith House

Warren Jones

Mahlon Keel

Michael McNatt

Patricia Mosher

Guy Porter

Barbara Rycerski

Donna Schaffel

Vaughn Shaw

Teresa Vasquez

November 17, 2014

Craig Jones, City Manager  
City of Taft  
209 E. Kern Street  
Taft, CA 93268

Attn: Mr. Jones

Attached is a copy of the enclosed 2014-2015 Grand Jury Final Report concerning the City of Taft in accordance with the provisions of Penal Code Section 933.05(f) which states as follows:

“A grand jury shall provide to the affected agency a copy of the portion of the grand jury report relating to that person or entity two working days prior to its public release and after the approval of the presiding judge. No office, agency, department, or governing body of a public agency, shall disclose any contents of the report prior to the public release of the final report.”

Please note that this report is confidential until public release. The Grand Jury will be releasing this report to the public on **November 24, 2014**. Accordingly, **you are instructed not to disclose the contents of the report until that time has run.**

Thank you for your consideration and cooperation.

Respectfully,

Dennis Mike Elliott, Foreperson  
2014-2015 Kern County Grand Jury

# CITY OF TAFT

## **PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:**

On August 28, 2014, the Cities and Joint Powers Agreement Committee (Committee) interviewed the City Manager in Taft, California (City). An inquiry by the 2014-2015 Kern County Grand Jury (Jury) was made regarding the operation and management of the City pursuant to Penal Code §925a.

## **PROCESS:**

The Committee met with the City Manager, the Human Resources Director, and the Finance Director at City Hall located at 209 East Kern Street. The Committee reviewed prior Kern County Grand Jury reports, the City website; City Council meeting agendas and minutes along with various publications to prepare questions pertinent to the inquiry.

## **BACKGROUND**

Taft is located in the foothills approximately 30 miles southwest of Bakersfield. The City was originally called "Siding Number Two" by the Sunset Railroad in the early 1900's. The name Moron was also used to refer to Taft until a fire burned much of the town. The name was changed to Taft in honor of the 27<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. The City's approximate population is 9,700, which includes 2,700 prison inmates. There are two prisons in Taft, the Modified Community Correctional Facility (MCCF), owned by the City, and the Taft Federal Prison.

## **FACTS:**

- A. The City Manager was appointed to the office in July, 2012 by the City Council.
- B. The City employs a full time Grant Writer who has obtained grants to revitalize downtown by repairing sidewalks, curbs and resurfacing the City streets. Bus shelters were built and security cameras were installed in the five City buses. Five additional police vehicles were purchased with grant money.
- C. The City has signed a four year agreement with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to house up to 640 inmates at the MCCF. The term of the agreement is from December 1, 2013, through June 30, 2018.
- D. Approximately 35% of the City's population is retired Chevron employees living on their stock holdings and retirement.
- E. The City's primary source of revenue is from Sales Tax at \$1.6 million and \$3.6 million from the MCCF.

- F. New businesses currently under construction are a Best Western Motel and a Taco Bell restaurant. There is also a need for housing and a tract of approximately 40 homes is under construction.

## **FINDINGS:**

- F1. The Committee found the City Manager to be very well prepared and most cooperative in providing the Standard Agreement regarding the MCCF, the City's Annual Financial Report for fiscal years ending June 30, 2012, and June 30, 2013.
- F2. The City has a disaster plan; however, the City Manager reported they coordinate with the Kern County Fire Department. Funding is needed to develop the City's supplemental disaster plan. Disaster training and exercises are planned within the next six to twelve months.
- F3. The City's water is provided by West Kern Water District. The City has been assured a water supply for the next ten years.
- F4. The West Side Recreation & Park District provides a well-rounded, wholesome program of leisure time activities for people living in the City. Recreational programs include:
- Bowling alley
  - Senior Activities
  - Nutritional meals
  - Bus trips to Eagle Mountain Casino
  - Swimming at the Natatorium

## **COMMENTS:**

The City Manager's office was well prepared for our visit, appears to be running efficiently and takes great pride in serving their community.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- R1. The City should schedule emergency training drills for all employees by June 30, 2015. (Finding 2)

## **NOTES:**

The City of Taft should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review. Persons wishing to receive an email notification of newly released reports may sign up at: [www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury](http://www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury), click on: Sign up for early releases.

Present and past Kern County Grand Jury Final Reports and Responses can be accessed through the Kern County Library system and the Kern County Grand Jury website:  
[www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury](http://www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury).

**RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS TO:**

**PRESIDING JUDGE  
KERN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT  
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR  
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

**cc: FOREPERSON  
KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY  
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 600  
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

### § 933. Findings and Recommendations (Excerpt)

No later than 90 days after the grand jury submits a final report on the operations of any public agency subject to its reviewing authority, the governing body of the public agency shall comment to the presiding judge of the superior court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the governing body, and every elected county officer or agency head for which the grand jury has responsibility pursuant to Section 914.1 shall comment within 60 days to the presiding judge of the superior court, with an information copy sent to the board of supervisors, on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of that county officer or agency head and any agency or agencies which that officer or agency head supervises or controls. In any city and county, the mayor shall also comment on the findings and recommendations. All of these comments and reports shall forthwith be submitted to the presiding judge of the superior court who impaneled the grand jury. A copy of all responses to grand jury reports shall be placed on file with the clerk of the public agency and the office of the county clerk, or the mayor when applicable, and shall remain on file in those offices.....

As used in this section "agency" includes a department.

### § 933.05. Responses to Grand Jury Reports (Excerpt)

- (a) For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury **finding**, the responding person or entity 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 therefor.
- (b) For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury **recommendation**, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:
- (1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
  - (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 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 publication of the grand jury report.
  - (4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.
- (c) However, if a finding or recommendation of the grand jury addresses budgetary or personnel matters of a county agency or department headed by an elected officer, both the agency or department head and the board of supervisors shall respond if requested by the grand jury, but the response of the board of supervisors shall address only those budgetary or personnel matters over which it has some decision making authority. The response of the elected agency or department head shall address all aspects of the findings or recommendations affecting his or her agency or department.
- (f) A grand jury shall provide to the affected agency a copy of the portion of the grand jury report relating to that person or entity two working days prior to its public release and after the approval of the presiding judge. No officer, agency, department, or governing body of a public agency shall disclose any contents of the report prior to the public release of the final report.

(emphasis added)