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## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



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August 14, 2018

Honorable John B. Ellis  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
County of Solano  
600 Union Avenue  
Fairfield, CA 95433

### **RE: Response to Grand Jury Report – Property Tax Assessment and Payment Processing Review**

Judge Ellis:

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933(c) and 933.05, the Solano County Board of Supervisors responds to Finding 1 and Recommendations 1a, 1b and 1c contained in the 2017/2018 Grand Jury Report entitled "Property Tax Assessment and Payment Processing Review."

#### **Finding 1**

The Solano County Grand Jury finds a regular pattern and practice of repeated assessment appeals initiated by a few large commercial property owners that extends for many years. This pattern has resulted in the County incurring significant defense costs and ongoing fiscal opportunity losses amounting to millions of dollars.

#### **Recommendation 1a**

Since the primary basis of the pattern of the appeals is an annual claim that the value of their commercial property is but a fraction of the assessor's current and previously mutually agreed to valuations, the problem is evidentiary. The AAB's established rules and procedures be strictly applied to these cases in order to encourage a timely and rational resolution of valuation questions.

#### **Recommendation 1b**

The AAB take steps to expedite the assessment appeals process and limit granting of waiver agreements under Rule 10 of Local Rules. Similarly, written requests for postponements must show good cause for a postponement under Rule 25 of the Local Rules.

#### **Board Response to Recommendation 1b**

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the recommendation and will encourage the County staff and departments who support the AAB process to utilize local AAB rules.

## **Recommendation 1c**

The Board of Supervisors, County Counsel and the Chair of the AAB take all available measures to obtain relief from the regular pattern of repeated, prolonged appeals that expose Solano County to unnecessary risk and potential financial loss.

### **Board Response to Recommendation 1c**

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the recommendation and will encourage the County staff and AAB to continue efforts to reduce prolonged appeals.

## **Finding 2**

Solano County Integrated Property System (SCIPS) Replacement Project - SCIPS is an aging application using unsupported, outdated software with limited technical resources. Platform updates are expensive and disruptive. A multiyear replacement project has been authorized and a \$10 million reserve fund created. The vendor product currently recommended by the stakeholders is not fully in production in California. Delay in replacing the current system puts the County at operational and financial risk due to the dwindling viability of SCIPS.

## **Recommendation 2**

County project team in the SCIPS replacement program continue to monitor the installation in Southern California. Based on results of that installation, the County's options be revised if necessary. Upon final system selection, it is imperative for the Solano County stakeholders to work together closely to implement the installation, testing, security and training on a new integrated property system for end users.

### **Board Response to Recommendation 2**

The Board of Supervisors agrees and has authorized funding and proceeding with replacement of the County Integrated Property Tax System. The County Administrator and Department of Information Technology retained a project manager, signed a contract with Thomson-Reuters and allocated staff to begin data preparation and process documentation. The project manager will be coordinating the County project team which includes representatives from the Assessor-Recorder, Treasurer-Tax Collector-County Clerk and Auditor-Controller offices.

Respectfully,

JOHN M. VASQUEZ, Chair  
Solano County Board of Supervisors

cc: Clerk of the Board, Solano County Board of Supervisors  
Marc Tonnesen, Assessor-Recorder  
Simona Padilla-Scholtens, Auditor-Controller  
Chuck Lomeli, Treasurer-Tax Collector-County Clerk  
Dennis Bunting, County Counsel, Solano County  
Solano County Grand Jury Office