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**City of Madera Police Department
Unveiling Truths of Local Law Enforcement**

**Madera County Grand Jury
Final Report 1920-05
December 21, 2020**

17 **SUMMARY**

18 The City of Madera Police Department (MPD) is facing challenges in a community that is
19 growing economically and in racial diversity. The law enforcement officer’s job is both
20 physically and mentally challenging. In an instant, officers can be thrown into extremely
21 stressful situations. The City of Madera Police Department is staffed by a pool of young,
22 motivated officers and an experienced command structure. High-risk encounters coupled with a
23 focus on community relationships in the efforts to serve and protect the City of Madera residents.
24 How these officers cope with work related stress and maintain compassion as positive role
25 models is what guided the MCGJ focus.

26
27 **BACKGROUND**

28 When the Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) started considering what areas within public
29 safety to investigate, it was decided to review the City of Madera Police Department (MPD)
30 There were several reasons for this choice, including police stress reduction programs, police in
31 community outreach programs, crime statistics, police department staffing, and procedural
32 deficiencies.

33 The City of Madera Police Department is made up of 70 sworn officers (able to carry a firearm
34 on duty) and 35 non-sworn employees. The department is organized into 3 divisions:

35 Administration: Community outreach, including. (97 Neighborhood Watch programs), dispatch,
36 and non-sworn personnel.

37 Operations: The largest division of the department comprised of patrol personnel.

38 Investigations: Detective Unit, Special Investigations Unit, and Code Enforcement.

39 Code Enforcement and Animal Control are part of the police department.

40 The police department also has two K9 (canine) officer. One K9 is trained as a drug
41 sniffing/identifying dog and the other one is a multi-purpose bite/attack dog. The K9 officers are
42 issued bullet proof vests. Summertime temperatures make prolonged wearing of vests
43 problematic for K9 officers.

44 The cost for each K9 officers to be service ready is \$10,000 with an additional \$10,000 for
45 training. This one-time cost does not include the costs for veterinary care and food for these
46 canine officers which can vary with each K9 officer. The K9 officers work vehicles are unique
47 and specifically designed for K9 officers and their human partner.

48
49 **METHODOLOGY**

- 50 • Researched policy and procedures manuals for Madera Police Department.
- 51 • Reviewed Peace Officers’ Standards and Training (POST) requirements.
- 52 • Interviewed city and county agency personnel.
- 53 • Examined related state adopted legislation related to officer’s stress. (SB 542, AB1116).
- 54 • Participated in ride along sessions with Madera Police Department.

55 **DISCUSSION**

56 **DEALING WITH STRESS**

57 The City of Madera Police Department (MPD) officers are responsible to address a wide range
58 of situations. At any time during the work shift, the officer may respond to a violent incident, a
59 domestic dispute, or a natural disaster. These unpredictable events may require the officer to
60 provide emergency first aid, or act as a social worker. The officer might have to be a grief
61 counselor or remove a child from an abusive home environment. It must be noted that the officer
62 is never truly off duty as they are expected to respond in emergency situations. New situations
63 facing all police agencies raised the question of how MPD deals with increased stress.

64
65 Police officers across the United States are expected to adapt daily to new challenges. One
66 officer related how he had to experience both a child's death and a double beheading.
67 The MCGJ examined the recovery process in place to deal with the aftermath of such a traumatic
68 event. Most local law enforcement agencies have chaplains who ride along with patrol officers
69 to comfort and counsel the victims of violent crimes. While chaplains primary focus is on the
70 victims of crime, their presence is also beneficial to the officers and deputies who are the First
71 Responders to these traumatic events. The presence of a chaplain provides a resource that, if
72 needed, can engage in a confidential manner with the officers. The chaplain keeps these
73 conversations private. In Madera the departments supervising officers evaluate the individual
74 incident and the responding officer. It is then determined how to best serve the recovery of the
75 responding officer.

76
77 Madera Police Department has a psychologist available to engage with officers and evaluate
78 their response to traumatic events and recommend further treatment or temporary changes in
79 assignment if determined to be necessary.

80
81 The continual daily stress imposed on first responders can manifest itself in many ways. Marital
82 issues, job burnout, isolation, and lack of empathy, even suicide are all responses to occupational
83 stress. Nationwide, in 2017, 103 Firefighters committed suicide and 140 Police Officers took
84 their own lives. In contrast, 93 Firefighters and 129 Police Officers died in the line of duty in the
85 same year. These numbers are from a nationwide study.

86
87 Internal peer support groups have been established in the Madera Police Department to provide
88 immediate and long-term support for first responders. The guidelines for peer support are
89 currently informal and each officer may choose whether to participate or not. The participation
90 can vary, as some officers prefer to work out issues at the gym. Each officer is unique and may
91 not want to share personal issues with other officers. There is some reluctance to share as it could
92 be viewed as a weakness. They rely on themselves to be fit mentally, physically, and
93 emotionally. Lack of sleep and working excessive overtime can be impediments to their
94 emotional and physical health.

95
96 **State Legislative Action**

97 It is noteworthy that the California Legislature has recently attempted to provide additional
98 support for First Responders. SB542 entitles First Responders to Workmen's Compensation
99 benefits for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. AB1116 "California Firefighter Peer Support and

100 Crisis Referral Services Act” provides First Responders the opportunity to seek help when they
101 feel overwhelmed by traumatic events encountered in the workplace. (ca.gov)

102

103 **COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

104 The police department is continually building relationships with the community as a daily
105 practice. The approach of the Madera Police officers is to treat every person with respect without
106 any favoritism. The practice of mutual respect between officers and the public has resulted in no
107 complaints lodged against the department for rude behavior. “Coffee with a Cop” allows
108 community members to interact with officers and see how much they care about the people of
109 the community.

110 The department is involved with the hospital, community development, housing authority and
111 the school district with programs such as Gang Resistance, Education, and Training, (GREAT).
112 This program teaches life skills, violence prevention, conflict resolution techniques, and
113 problem-solving skills. It allows for positive interaction and teaching opportunities between
114 officers and the citizens of Madera.

115 The department is trying to address peer pressure at the junior high level with the GREAT
116 Program, and officers are actively involved in this program. This entails officers involved in
117 school campus activities, participating in community outreach events, and continuing to use any
118 interaction with citizens as teachable opportunities to maintain positive relationships with the
119 citizens of Madera. The department has a Gang Task Force as well as a Special Investigations
120 Unit. The Special Investigations Unit consists of the Madera Police, Chowchilla Police, Madera
121 County Sheriff, and Probation officers. The Special Investigations Unit meet formally for Special
122 Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) meetings on a regular basis to collaborate.

123

124 Members of the MCGJ were able to experience a “ride along” with officers. The diversity in
125 what the officers experienced was wide. It could be anything from a bicyclist riding at night
126 without a light to a suspected burglary or a DUI (driving under influence), never knowing what
127 was coming next. The MCGJ found the officers to be accommodating dealing with offenders
128 yet following the law.

129

130 **Key accomplishments from the 2019/2020 Fiscal Year:**

131 According to the Madera Police Department the following Key Accomplishments were
132 accomplished in 2019/2020.

133 *Growing popularity of community outreach programs as applications for the Citizens’ Academy,*
134 *Parent Project, and Madkids Camp exceeded the number of spots available. As a result, an*
135 *additional three Citizens’ Academy classes, with one in Spanish, were added.*

136 *Every patrol officer is now equipped with a body-worn camera, which garners public trust and*
137 *the ability to quickly resolve citizens’ complaints, thereby helping protect the city against*
138 *frivolous complaints.*

139 *The department has delivered, once again, on the promise of achieving faster response times*
140 *with the passage of Measure K. For the last two years, officers have lowered their response time*
141 *by 30 seconds.*

142 *Measure K enabled the department to hire 11 new officers beginning in 2017. This new staffing*
143 *has significantly increased the capacity of the department. Officer-initiated field activity has*
144 *increased by over 46 percent during this time, which is critical to the department’s mission since*
145 *this proactive component of policing has the greatest impact on property crimes and certain*
146 *violent crimes, such as street robberies.*

147 *The department utilizes social media to spread and receive information. The department*
148 *currently has more than 44,500 social media followers, creating a network to disseminate*
149 *information and work collaboratively with the public to solve crimes that may have otherwise*
150 *gone unsolved. The department’s weekly feature titled “WhoIsThisWednesday” promotes posts*
151 *with surveillance videos of crimes, allowing the public to help identify suspects. This program*
152 *has a success rate of over 60 percent.*

153 *Members of the department participated in 15 Neighborhood Watch meetings, with over 97*
154 *Neighborhood Watch groups and five Business Watch groups, respectively.*

155 *The Communications Center received and processed over 122,400 emergency and non-*
156 *emergency calls for 2019.*

157 *Department personnel handled 60,432 events, which included calls for service and officer-*
158 *initiated activity, in 2019.*

159 *Responded to 2,187 welfare checks, 1,448 burglar alarms, 1,605 stray animal calls, and 3,646*
160 *request-for-assistance calls in 2019.*

161 *Successfully integrated the Code Enforcement tracking system.*

162 *Code Enforcement conducted 518 rental housing inspections; a 33 percent increase compared to*
163 *2018.*

164 *Code Enforcement personnel handled 308 public nuisance complaints, issuing 537 notice-of-*
165 *violations and citations.*

166 *The Investigations Unit handled 1,177 cases in 2019, a 29 percent increase from 2018, and*
167 *closed over 99 percent of the cases during the calendar year.*

168 *Officers arrested 338 persons for driving under the influence.*

169 *Personnel completed 38 homeless encampment/river cleanups in coordination with Public*
170 *Works.*

171 *MPD partnered with Criscom Company to proactively seek out grant funding for public safety.*
172 *Criscom Company is currently working on a multimillion-dollar SAFER grant to hire seven fire*
173 *fighters and submitted for COVID-19 grant funding for the City.*

174 *\$130,000 added to Measure K Police Reserve Fund.*

175 *This is a snapshot of the work done by Madera Police Department taken from the 2020/2021*
176 *Madera City Budget.*

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181 **CRIME STATISTICS IN THE CITY OF MADERA**

	HOMICIDE	RAPE	ROBBERY	AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	VIOLENT CRIME	BURGLARY	LARCENY	MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT	PROPERTY CRIMES
2014	6	17	72	210	305	472	1007	207	1686
2015	3	16	94	334	447	462	1135	325	1922
2016	3	24	99	393	519	299	1266	301	1866
2017	4	26	106	233	369	296	981	349	1626
2018	6	37	92	260	395	241	898	207	1346
2019	3	32	77	223	335	235	824	242	1288
Percentage decrease from 2018					-15%	Percentage decrease from 2018			-3%

182 Taken from the City of Madera Police Department Annual Report 2019

183 <https://www.madera.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/PD-Annual-Report-Final.pdf>

184

185 **POLICE DEPARTMENT STAFFING AND COMPENSATION:**

186 The MCGJ discovered that currently there are 15 unfilled positions at Madera Police
 187 Department. A comparative search of average annual income for police officers revealed the
 188 difference between Fresno and Madera Police officers. Average annual income for Fresno
 189 officers is \$57,000. Average annual income for Madera officers is \$50,000. (Current city budget
 190 for both Fresno and Madera)

191 It follows that maintaining or increasing the funding for the Madera Police Department would
 192 better serve the community.

193 Expanded training and hiring more officers would be the recommended path forward. The
 194 current ratio is one sworn (able to carry firearm on duty) officer per 1000 citizens. At the time of
 195 this report the department has 105 employees. This number includes 70 sworn officers. The FBI
 196 recommends 1.5 officers per 1,000 residents. It also includes code enforcement, community
 197 redevelopment, and neighborhood watch.

198

199 **PROCEDURAL DEFICIENCIES**

200 The two most common deficiencies the MCGJ heard from department personal were:

201 1. With recent law changes, defendants do not stay in jail. This is called the “Zero Bail” policy
 202 for non-violent offenders. An officer referenced one incident where a defendant stole four
 203 vehicles in one night and was released from jail in between each incident.

204 2. The time utilized to deal with California Code 5150 or an involuntary commitment of
 205 individuals who present a danger to themselves or others due to signs of mental illness.

206 When a call to law enforcement comes in regarding an individual who appears to be a danger to
 207 themselves or others, an officer is dispatched to evaluate the situation. In most cases the
 208 individual is not violent. The officer must determine if the individual needs to be placed on a
 209 5150 hold despite the officer having minimal if any formal medical training in this area. If it is
 210 determined to be necessary, an ambulance is called and an EMT transports the individual to a

211 mental health facility with the officer following the ambulance. Madera lacks sufficient services
212 to handle mental health crisis with Madera Community Hospital as the primary facility to receive
213 and evaluate these patients. The police officer must remain at the hospital for extended periods of
214 time while the individual is evaluated, resulting in the officer not being available for other duties.
215 This has severely impacted the Madera Police Department and the unfilled positions in the
216 department.

217 The cost to taxpayers for a 5150 24-hour hospital hold is \$1000 per patient. Some of the cost is
218 carried by the county and some is shared by the state. This contrasts with the program available
219 in Fresno county where the Exodus Psychiatric Health Facility operates. Exodus is a licensed
220 facility with 16 beds within a locked and monitored environment. The Fresno Police that have a
221 5150 patient can transfer custody of the person to be evaluated at the facility and return to
222 regular duty without unnecessary loss of time. The cost of this program to Fresno County is \$200
223 per patient. The difference in cost is due to patient care being billable to Medi-Cal or personal
224 insurance. This reduces the cost directly absorbed by the County Of Madera. The lack of a local
225 mental health facility or option for MPD in handling people in a mental health crisis is a problem
226 that has no current solution. The County needs to take a closer look at this situation. One option
227 can be a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Madera County and Fresno County to
228 cooperate in transferring patients in crisis into the Exodus facility in Fresno.

229

230 FINDINGS

231 **F1.** The MCGJ finds that the Madera Police Department works on multiple levels to build and
232 strengthen positive relationships with community members.

233 **F2.** The MCGJ finds there are 15 funded positions that currently are unfilled at the Madera
234 Police Department.

235 **F3.** The MCGJ finds that Madera County is not effectively handling the individuals Madera
236 Police Department identifies as having a mental health crisis (5150).

237

238 RECOMMENDATIONS

239 **R1.** MCGJ recommends that the Madera Police Department continue to foster the relationships
240 within the community through the efforts already in place. and be open to the suggestions
241 brought by community groups and individuals.

242 **R.2** MCGJ recommends that during Fiscal Year 21/22 currently open positions at the Madera
243 Police Department be filled.

244 **R3.** MCGJ recommends that the Madera Police Department immediately work with the
245 Madera County Board of Supervisors to provide adequate mental health services.
246

247 REQUIRED RESPONSES

248 Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:

249 From the following elected county officials within 60 days:

250 Madera County Board of Supervisors

251 200 West 4th Street

252 Madera, CA 93637

253

254 Mayor of the City of Madera

255 205 4th St, Madera, CA 93637

256

257 Madera City Council

258 205 W 4th St, Madera, CA 93637

259

260 Madera County District Attorney

261 209 W Yosemite Ave, Madera, CA 93637

262

263 Madera County Sheriff

264 2725 Falcon Drive, Madera, CA 93637

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266 **INVITED RESPONSES**

267 Chief of Police, City of Madera Police Department

268 330 South C Street, Madera, CA 93637

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270 Department Head, Madera County Department of Public Health

271 1604 Sunrise Avenue, Madera, CA 93637

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273 Department Head, Madera County Department of Behavioral Health

274 209 East 7th Street, Madera, CA 93637

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

279

280 **BIBLIOGRAPY:**

281 “*Mental Health and Suicide of First Responders*. Ruderman Family Foundation White Paper

282 Study. April 2018”

283

284 SB542 (Section 2. Section 3212.15 “Workers Compensation” California Labor Code) amended

285 11/18/2019.

286 AB1116 (Section 2. Article 21. Section 8669.5 “California Firefighter Peer Support and Crisis

287 Referral Act” California Government Code) amended 11/18/2019.

