

June 29, 2007

Humboldt County Grand Jury  
825 Fifth Street  
Eureka, CA 95501

Dear Foreman and Members of the Grand Jury:

Thank you for your service to the citizens of Humboldt County and recognize the effort it takes to put together your 2006-2007 Final Report.

### **Regarding Grand Jury Report #2007-LJ-02 “Police Use Of Force.”**

The Fortuna Police Department places a high priority on the ethics of all our personnel. Most certainly on using only what force is reasonably necessary to control and or arrest a noncompliant person. We pride ourselves on taking the extra time to communicate and deescalate agitated, resistive or mentally ill subjects before any type of force is used. We think that this is demonstrated in our extremely low level of citizen’s complaints regarding the use of force as well as a very low level of citizen’s claims against the City of Fortuna in comparison to other cities that participate the Redwood Empire Municipal Insurance Fund (REMIF)<sup>1</sup>.

### **Concerning Finding/Recommendation #1. “Use Of Less Lethal Force”**

The Fortuna Police Department fully complies with and exceeds POST training mandates. Additionally we require at least bi-annual training on the use of non-lethal force related to defensive tactics and impact weapon training. We require yearly training on the use of less lethal force, which includes Taser and less lethal shotgun fired beanbag type munitions. We require all our personnel to take part in Force Option Simulator training at a minimum of every two years and plan to do this on a yearly basis. One of our Sergeants is a Force Option Simulator Instructor and one of our officers is a Defensive Tactics Instructor at the College of the Redwoods. Additionally, we take full advantage of any training related to less lethal force offered by the College of the Redwoods.

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<sup>1</sup> REMIF members are the cities of Cloverdale, Cotati, Healdsburg, Rohnert Park, Sebastopol, Sonoma, St. Helena, Ukiah, Willits, Arcata, Eureka, Fort Bragg, Fortuna, Lakeport, Windsor

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Police Department  
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Parks and Recreation  
(707) 725-7620  
Fax (707) 725-7576  
5 Park Street

Public Works  
(707) 725-7650  
Fax (707) 725-7651  
180 Dinsmore Drive

In addition to our internal training the Fortuna Police Department would consider working with the College of the Redwoods and the local Law Enforcement Training Managers Association to develop additional training in the ethical use of force and in less lethal force training.

### **Concerning Finding/Recommendation #2 “Deployment Of Tasers”**

The Fortuna Police Department has had Tasers deployed for the past five years. In fact the Fortuna Police Department was one of the first, if not the first Law Enforcement agency in Humboldt County to purchase and deploy Tasers. Every sworn member of the Fortuna Police Department has been issued a Taser and is required to carry a Taser on uniformed patrol.

All our personnel are fully trained by our own Taser certified instructors before being authorized to utilize the Taser. In addition all our personnel are required to attend a POST certified Electronic Weapons Operators Course to supplement our internal training.

### **Concerning Finding/Recommendation #3 “Expense/Funding Tasers”**

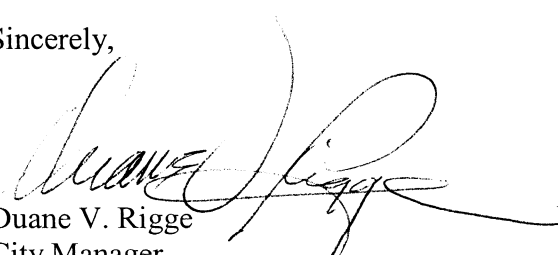
The Fortuna Police Department has historically recognized the need for less lethal force options for law enforcement personnel. We have placed a priority on funding for the purchase of Tasers. Each of our sworn staff of fifteen officers has been issued a Taser. The FY 2007-2008 City Budget has \$1500 programmed for spare Tasers.

In conclusion, the City is exceeding proud of all of our Fortuna Police Department personnel in regards our Ethics in general and particularly at it pertains to the use of force. We are committed to providing the necessary training and equipment to be able to effectively take individuals into custody using the least amount of force possible.

Once again, thank you to all the members of the Grand Jury for your service to our communities.

If you have any questions regarding this subject please contact Chief Kitna.

Sincerely,

  
Duane V. Rigge  
City Manager

  
Kris Kitna  
Chief of Police

Copy to: Fortuna City Council