

August 12, 2026

The Honorable Judge Stephen P. Freccero
Marin County Superior Court
P.O. Box 4988
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988

Massey Bambara, Foreperson
Marin County Civil Grand Jury
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room #275
San Rafael, CA 94903

Re: Marinwood CSD Grand Jury Report Response

Dear Judge Freccero and Foreperson Bambara,

Please accept the included response from Marinwood Community Services District Board of Directors to the recent Marin County Civil Grand Jury report "Better Service at Lower Cost – Optimizing Essential Services for the Future of Marin."

The included response was discussed and approved by the Marinwood Community Services District Board of Directors during open session at their regular meeting conducted August 11, 2026.

Of note: While the report broadly references "special districts" as a whole, the contents of the report seemed to focus primarily on water, sanitary and fire protection services. As Marinwood CSD is not responsible for providing water nor sanitary services, we found some content, findings and recommendations as not relevant to our agency. All responses provided were in regards to our responsibility to provide fire protection services as that seemed to be a primary focus of this report.

Furthermore, the report seemed to focus only on district-to-district consolidation and did not allude to opportunities that may exist for consolidation and/or shared services between towns/cities or between special districts and towns/cities.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric Dreikosen
District Manager



775 Miller Creek Road
San Rafael, CA 94903
T: (415) 479-7751
F: (415) 479-7759
www.marinwood.org

Board of Directors:
Christopher Case
President

Lisa Ruggeri
Vice President

Kathleen Kilkenny
Sivan Oyserman
Bill Shea

District Manager
Eric Dreikosen

Response to Grand Jury Report

Report Title: Better Service at Lower Cost – Optimizing Essential Services for the Future of Marin

Respondent/Agency Name: Marinwood Community Services District

Submitter Name: Eric Dreikosen Title: District Manager

FINDINGS

- Agree with the findings numbered: _____
- Disagree *partially* with the findings numbered: F1 – F7
- Disagree *wholly* with the findings numbered: _____

(Attach a **statement** specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefor.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R1, R2, R4, R6, R7, R9 have been implemented.
(Attach a **summary** describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a **timeframe** for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered R3, R5 require further analysis.
(Attach 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 director 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.)
- Recommendations numbered R8 will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an **explanation**.)

Date: 8/11/20 Signed: Eric Dreikosen

Number of pages attached: 5

MARINWOOD COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
Responses to Grand Jury Report
“Better Services at Lower Cost – Optimizing Essential Services for the Future of Marin”
Findings & Recommendations:
Discussed and Approved in Open Session on August 11, 2026

Marinwood CSD was requested to respond to findings F1-F7 and recommendations R1-R9

Report Finding F1:

Marinwood CSD Response: Disagree Partially

- F1. The current fragmented structure of special districts results in unnecessary duplication of administrative services and operational efficiencies.**

Marinwood Community Services District recognizes there are almost always operational efficiencies that can be gained in any work environment, be it through consolidation with another agency(ies) or via internal improvements. However, it has not been made clear administrative services become more efficient solely through consolidation or that there is existing unnecessary duplication of administrative services between agencies.

Report Finding F2:

Marinwood CSD Response: Disagree Partially

- F2. Some districts perform competently but lack sufficient scale to support long-term strategic investment in infrastructure, technology, staffing, and resilience.**

While Districts with more limited resources can often be challenged to support long-term investments, the same can be said for larger districts with seemingly greater resources. Bigger is not always better and often times smaller districts can more effectively navigate long-term investment needs such as those mentioned.

Report Finding F3:

Marinwood CSD Response: Disagree partially

- F3. Smaller districts are disproportionately vulnerable to staffing disruptions and catastrophic events that could rapidly impair service delivery.**

Staffing challenges can impact any size district. While larger agencies may inherently have higher staffing levels to compensate for such challenges, they also often typically have larger human resource needs creating proportionate or even greater challenges during staffing disruptions and catastrophic events.

Report Finding F4:

Marinwood CSD Response: Disagree partially

- F4. Although consolidation is a popular idea among many elected board members, current governance structures, absence of board member term limits, and fear of loss of political influence discourage boards and administrators from initiating consolidation even when they recognize its benefits.**

It is unclear that applying board member term limits equates to a more open approach towards consolidation. In fact, it can have the opposite effect if a new board member comes into the role with a priority on retaining local control. Often times, more tenured board members may have a much more thorough understanding of the benefits of consolidation over local control and more open to pursuing such consolidations.

Additionally, consolidation between agencies is a long and complex process that can benefit from the stability and consistency provided by longer tenured board members. To have new board members enter in the middle of this process can result in process delays or even contrary opinions, thus negatively impacting any consolidation initiatives.

Report Finding F5:

Marinwood CSD Response: Disagree partially

F5. Service and pricing inequities currently exist across Marin and may increase if consolidation and functional collaboration do not accelerate.

Marinwood CSD does not have jurisdiction for sewer services so cannot comment on such in an educated manner. However, service and pricing levels are dependent upon multiple factors, including geographic considerations. It is unclear how consolidation eliminates these cost-of-service variable factors.

Report Finding F6:

Marinwood CSD Response: Disagree partially

F6. Performance metrics for essential, mission-specific services exist but they are not readily available and standardized, which prevents meaningful public comparison of district effectiveness and undermines accountability.

Marinwood CSD supports increased transparency and meaningful public reporting and engagement. All Marin County fire agencies have a long history of collaboration and standardizing services where applicable, practical and attainable. Though, unique communities have unique service needs. Creating a standard set of metrics across all agencies is not always an apples-to-apples comparison.

Report Finding F7:

Marinwood CSD Response: Disagree partially

F7. Without proactive reform, future consolidations are more likely to occur through crisis-driven intervention, resulting in greater disruption and higher costs.

Marinwood CSD strives to act in a proactive manner. However, crisis-driven intervention does not always result in consolidation as the best solution and can sometimes lead to rash and faulty long-term decision making in this regard.

Report Recommendation R1:

Marinwood CSD Response: This recommendation has already been implemented

R1. By January 1, 2027, all special district boards should have conducted their first semi-annual consolidation exploration meeting with similar districts and will have established a regular meeting schedule moving forward.

In regards to fire protection service delivery, the District has long engaged applicable fire agencies to gauge willingness to discuss consolidation opportunities. Most recently, Marinwood CSD and the City of San Rafael continue to meet regularly and engage in exploration of creating an even greater regional approach to fire protection services.

Of note, the grand jury report seems to focus on District-to-District consolidation opportunities and does not reference that in some cases the most logical consolidation partners can be a City, Town or the County, not necessarily another District, depending on the public service being contemplated.

Report Recommendation R2:

Marinwood CSD Response: This recommendation has already been implemented

R2. By October 1, 2026, the Board of Supervisors should direct the development of comprehensive, cost-efficient shared services (such as IT, legal, finance, HR/payroll, harmonized compensation/benefits package, insurance) for special districts to optimize expenses and secure a Marin-wide acceptable quality standard. First limited-service offerings are encouraged to be made available by January 1, 2027.

Marinwood CSD has an established history of shared services with other agencies.

This includes an existing shared services agreement for fire services between Marinwood CSD and the City of San Rafael.

The CSD already utilizes the County for select legal services through the County Counsel's Office, select employee benefits and use of the County Treasury to hold funds. While other shared services with the County have been explored, and some implemented at past points, the District found it to be more efficient and cost-effective to manage these services in-house.

As an independent special district, Marinwood CSD participates in a risk-pool administered by the Special District Risk Management Authority consisting of hundreds of other special districts in California to provide for Property & Liability insurance as well as Workers' Compensation insurance.

Report Recommendation R3:

Marinwood CSD Response: Requires further analysis

R3. By January 31, 2027, with the assistance of the County, all districts should develop and publish on their website standardized, comparable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with regard to service pricing, finance, staffing, operations, and customer satisfaction.

To date, Marinwood CSD is not aware that the County of Marin has communicated a willingness to lead such an initiative nor does the CSD have authority to direct the Board of Supervisors in this regard. Furthermore, for many public services, standardized KPIs may not be advantageous nor practical due to the unique service needs of unique communities.

Should the County commit to such a role, Marinwood CSD would be willing to participate in these discussions to the extent practical and relevant.

Report Recommendation R4:

Marinwood CSD Response: This recommendation has already been implemented

- R4. By January 31, 2027, each district should publicly update findings and progress regarding consolidation opportunities, and share those findings with the Board of Supervisors and the public on a semi-annual basis.**

During recent fire consolidation discussions with the City of San Rafael, Marinwood CSD has been very transparent. This included a standing item on board meeting agendas intended precisely for this purpose. Furthermore, our local Board of Supervisors representative has been provided updates as to status and progress made, as appropriate.

Report Recommendation R5:

Marinwood CSD Response: Requires further analysis

- R5. By January 31, 2027, the Board of Supervisors should oversee compliance with R1-R4 and update the public on the districts' performance.**

Marinwood CSD is not aware of any such commitment made by the Board of Supervisors nor does the CSD have authority to direct the Board of Supervisors in this regard.

Report Recommendation R6:

Marinwood CSD Response: This recommendation has already been implemented

- R6. By October 1, 2026, in the process of implementing R1 and R2, districts should prioritize functional consolidation in operations, procurement, training, and administration as a precursor to formal consolidation.**

As mentioned previously, Marinwood CSD has a long history of inter-agency shared services as well as discussions with other agencies regarding applicable consolidation of services. For fire services, many aspects of fire service operations have already been functionally consolidated between Marinwood CSD and the City of San Rafael. Both agencies continue discussions and exploration towards the complex process of further consolidation.

Report Recommendation R7:

Marinwood CSD Response: This recommendation has already been implemented

- R7. By October 1, 2026, the district's board compensation, benefits, length of service, date of term end, and expenses related to board work should be clearly and prominently posted on each district's website and updated annually.**

The Marinwood CSD Board of Directors serve without any compensation or benefits. This is stated on the District website and the Board Bylaws, both publicly available via the following links:

<https://www.marinwood.org/about-us/board-directors>
<https://www.marinwood.org/about-us/board-documents>

The top link also includes information regarding current term length and end date for each individual director.

Furthermore, relevant and free of charge training opportunities are provided to board directors via the District's membership with the California Special Districts Association.

Report Recommendation R8:

Marinwood CSD Response: Will not be implemented because it is not warranted

- R8. By June 1, 2027, special districts should adopt term limits of two consecutive four-year terms for all board members. Staggered implementation of term limits to avoid disruptions is encouraged.**

As elected officials, the voters of Marinwood CSD should be able to decide who they want to serve in this position and for how long.

Report Recommendation R9:

Marinwood CSD Response: This recommendation has already been implemented

- R9. By June 1, 2027, board compensation structures should be reviewed across districts, and considered for adjustment. All components of board compensation should be posted on their website (see best practice example in Appendix B).**

Marinwood CSD has a long-standing policy of board directors serving without compensation. At this time, the Board has not indicated a desire to revisit this policy to allow for board member compensation. As such, this recommendation is not applicable to this agency.