



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name:	County Executive Office
Department No.:	012
Agenda Date:	September 16, 2025
Placement:	Departmental Agenda
Estimated Time:	60 minutes
Continued Item:	No
If Yes, date from:	
Vote Required:	Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director: Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
Contact Info: Tanja Heitman, Assistant CEO
SUBJECT: Response to 2024-25 Grand Jury Reports on Deaths in Custody

DocuSigned by:

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County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Consider and adopt the Board of Supervisors' responses to the 2024-25 Grand Jury reports entitled "Fatal Head Injury at the Northern Branch Jail: A Custody-Related Death Investigation (Attachment A)," "Another Suicide in Santa Barbara County Jail: Inmate's Death Should Have Been Prevented (Attachment B)," and "Preventable Death at the Northern Branch Jail: A Death-in-Custody Investigation (Attachment C)";
- b) Authorize the Chair to sign the letters included in Attachment A, Attachment B, and Attachment C, and forward the letters and responses to the Presiding Judge of Santa Barbara County Superior Court; and
- c) Determine pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines 15378(b)(5) that the above actions are not a project subject to CEQA review, because they are government administrative activities that do not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment.

Summary Text:

On June 24, 2025, the Santa Barbara County Grand Jury issued reports entitled "Fatal Head Injury at the Northern Branch Jail: A Custody-Related Death Investigation," "Another Suicide in Santa Barbara County Jail: Inmate's Death Should Have Been Prevented," and "Preventable Death at the Northern Branch Jail: A Death-in-Custody Investigation." Today, the Board will consider the proposed responses to these reports, adopt their preferred responses, and authorize the Board Chair to sign the response letters. The Board is required to respond in writing to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court within 90 days of the report issuance.

Discussion:

In the report entitled “Fatal Head Injury at the Northern Branch Jail: A Custody-Related Death Investigation” (Attachment D), the Grand Jury reviewed the death in custody of incarcerated individual “AAO.” The report concluded there were deficiencies and limitations relating to the intake screening process and the electronic health record, which the report states impacted medical staff decisions about AAO’s health needs and risks upon arrival at the jail. The Board of Supervisors is named a responder to Findings 1 through 3, and Recommendations 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, and 3b.

In the report entitled “Another Suicide in Santa Barbara County Jail: Inmate’s Death Should Have Been Prevented” (Attachment E), the Grand Jury reviewed the death in custody of incarcerated individual “CC.” The report concluded there were systemic issues within the Main Jail that limited staff’s ability to safeguard CC’s well-being. The Board of Supervisors is named a responder to Findings 1 through 7, and Recommendations 1a-1d, 2, 3a, 3b, 4, 5a, 5b, 6a, 6b, 7a, and 7b.

In the report entitled “Preventable Death at the Northern Branch Jail: A Death-in-Custody Investigation” (Attachment F), the Grand Jury reviewed the death in custody of incarcerated individual “CF” and concluded that the medical care provided to CF did not meet jail medical procedure requirements. The Board of Supervisors is named a responder to Findings 1 through 3, and Recommendations 3a and 3b.

Refer to Attachments A-C for the County’s responses to all three reports.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Staff anticipates no fiscal or facilities impacts as a result of the Board’s action on this matter.

Special Instructions:

1. As per the recommended actions, please forward the signed letters and responses to the Presiding Judge of Santa Barbara County Superior Court, Patricia Kelly, at pkelly@sbcourts.org and to the Grand Jury at sbcgj@sbcourts.org, no later than the required response date of Monday, September 22, 2025.
2. Please send a copy of the signed letters and a copy of the minute order to Nicole Parmelee, CEO’s Office Principal Analyst, at nparmelee@countyofsb.org.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Board of Supervisors Response – “Fatal Head Injury at the Northern Branch Jail: A Custody-Related Death Investigation”

Attachment B – Board of Supervisors Response – “Another Suicide in Santa Barbara County Jail: Inmate’s Death Should Have Been Prevented”

Attachment C – Board of Supervisors Response – “Preventable Death at the Northern Branch Jail: A Death-in-Custody Investigation”

Attachment D – 2024-25 Grand Jury Report entitled “Fatal Head Injury at the Northern Branch Jail: A Custody-Related Death Investigation”

Attachment E – 2024-25 Grand Jury Report entitled “Another Suicide in Santa Barbara County Jail: Inmate’s Death Should Have Been Prevented”

Attachment F – 2024-25 Grand Jury Report entitled “Preventable Death at the Northern Branch Jail: A Death-in-Custody Investigation”

Attachment G – Sheriff’s Office Response – “Fatal Head Injury at the Northern Branch Jail: A Custody-Related Death Investigation”

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Attachment H – Sheriff's Office Response – “Another Suicide in Santa Barbara County Jail: Inmate’s Death Should Have Been Prevented”

Attachment I – Sheriff’s Office Response – “Preventable Death at the Northern Branch Jail: A Death-in-Custody Investigation”

Authored by:

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