

Fenix Project
Migration off the Main Frame
Grand Jury Case 16-009
Public Release June 9, 2017
(BOS Response due NLT September 7, 2017)

Background

The El Dorado County Grand Jury investigated the El Dorado County (EDC) Information Technology (IT) Department projects to migrate applications to a new computing platform and decommission the mainframe computing platform, citing the delay of the Fiscal Enterprise and Information Exchange (FENIX) Project implementation as reported by the 2015- 2016 Grand Jury.

The organizational structure and management practices of EDC create significant challenges to the migration and success is not assured. The 2016-17 Grand Jury issued the following Findings and Recommendations.

The Grand Jury requested a response from the Board of Supervisors. Following is the County of El Dorado's response to the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury in accordance with Penal Code §933 and §933.05.

Grand Jury Findings

GJ F1. Absent an IT strategic plan, supported by the BOS and senior leadership of EDC, the IT department lacks solid direction and the ability to manage projects to successful completion.

BOS Response: The Board of Supervisors disagrees partially with the finding. The County hired a Director of Information Technologies in April of 2017. The Board and current senior leadership support the Director and the Strategic Plan being finalized. Through the application modernization process, the IT Department has identified the need for additional project management resources and business analyst resources to be successful in the long-term. Since a PMO (Project Management Office) currently does not exist within the IT Department, the Department has recommended hiring third party project managers for the LMIS (Land Management Information System) and Property Tax system replacement projects and senior leadership has supported the decision.

GJ F2. EDC has a complex IT operating environment, created by using multiple platforms (software and hardware), that requires diverse IT skills sets and is expensive to maintain.

BOS Response: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding.

GJ F3. Having the IT functions decentralized provided an uncoordinated leadership that has created complexity, the risk to operations and increased operating costs.

BOS Response: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding.

GJ F4. The lack of a single senior, professional, Chief Information Officer (CIO) with county-wide IT responsibility has created an environment where department heads set policy and direction at odds with county-wide priorities and needs.

BOS Response: The Board of Supervisors disagrees with the finding. The County hired a Director of Information Technologies April 2017. Policy is being created and established by the director, in conjunction and coordination with all department heads.

GJ F5. The lack of support from various departments for the IT migration project creates roadblocks to IT's success.

BOS Response: The Board of Supervisors partially disagrees with the finding.

While some resistance was experienced in the past, the IT migration project currently enjoys broad-based support from County Departments.

GJ F6. Elected Officials functioning as Departments Directors that are not accountable to the BOS or CAO cannot be required to comply with the demands of the application migration.

BOS Response: The Board of Supervisors disagrees in part with the finding. While elected department heads do not report directly to the Board of Supervisors or the Chief Administrative Officer, elected department heads are not without accountability. Elected officials participate in County administrative activities as do other Department Heads, and are ultimately accountable to the voting public.

Grand Jury Recommendations

GJ R1. The BOS should require IT, in coordination with the CAO (aligned with the EDC Strategic Plan) to develop a five-year IT Strategic Plan that is approved by the Board.

BOS Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. However the County agrees that an IT Strategic Plan is necessary. The Director of Information Technologies and the CAO's office have been working on a three-year plan aligned the EDC Strategic Plan. It is anticipated that the three year plan will be presented for approval and implemented by December 2017.

GJ R2. The five-year strategic plan should provide for the consolidation of a fully integrated, countywide, IT Organization that can achieve all the goals and objectives of the five-year Strategic Plan.

BOS Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. Complete consolidation is not standard across California Counties, could be infeasible within a County organizational structure, and may not be advisable in all circumstances. However, partial consolidation of information technology functions has been an area identified by the County as an opportunity to gain efficiencies, and the Chief Administrative Office continues to work with the IT Director and County departments to identifying appropriate areas for consolidation under a

centralized Information Technologies Department model. It is anticipated that consolidation efforts will remain focused on central service departmental functions. It is anticipated that the Sheriff's Office, which is responsible for specialized and complex information systems with expanded requirements for security, will remain responsible for information technology functions within the Sheriff's Office.

GJ R3. The BOS should make the IT Director (CIO) position, reporting to the CAO, responsible for countywide IT and the consolidation of the fragmented IT functions under one centralized county IT Department.

BOS Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. While appointed Department Heads serve at the pleasure of the Board, the County Charter states that the Chief Administrative Officer has the duty and the power to coordinate the work of all offices and departments, both elective and appointive, and devise ways and means to achieve efficiency and economy in all county operations. The County Charter, Section 401, also provides that "All department heads and officers of the county, both elected and appointed, shall cooperate with the Chief Administrative Officer so that the Chief Administrative Officer may achieve complete coordination of all county activities." Furthermore, County Ordinance Code Section 2.13.070, subsection A, states that the Chief Administrative Officer shall "monitor the overall performance of departments and review methods and procedures and formulate recommendations to the Board for increased efficiency..." The Chief Administrative Office continues to work with the IT Director to ensure efficient operations of the information technology function, including identifying appropriate areas for consolidation under the central county IT Department.

GJ R4. To the maximum extent allowed by state law the BOS should grant the CAO the authority over all EDC operating departments, either through amendment of the El Dorado County Charter or via the Board's own budget allocations. To ensure the cooperation and full participation of all departments with the five-year Strategic Plan.

BOS Response: This recommendation requires further analysis. The Chief Administrative Officer is currently responsible for overseeing and coordinating the work of all departments. Any recommended changes to the County Charter should be evaluated and developed by the Charter Review Committee. Any recommendation will be considered by the Board of Supervisors. Recommendations from the Charter Review Committee are anticipated to be presented to the Board of Supervisors by or before May of 2018.