



## *Gateway to the Redwoods*

111 E. Commercial Street  
Willits, California 95490  
Tel | 707.459.4601  
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[www.cityofwillits.org](http://www.cityofwillits.org)

September 25, 2025

Honorable Judge Ann Moorman  
Mendocino County Superior Court  
100 North State Street, Dept. E  
Ukiah, CA 95482

**RE: City Response to 2024-24 Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury Report titled,  
"Healing the Toxic Culture in the City of Willits Workplace"**

Honorable Judge Moorman:

Please find attached the City of Willits City Council response to the 2024-25 Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury Report titled, "Healing the Toxic Culture in the City of Willits Workplace." As requested by the Grand Jury, in accordance with California Penal Code section 933.05(a) and (b), responses have been provided to Grand Jury Findings F1, F2, F3, F4 and F5 and to Grand Jury Recommendations R1, R2, R3 and R4.

The attached response was approved by the City Council at the September 24, 2025 meeting.

AYES: Burton, Strankse, Gonzalez, Alaniz, and Allman.  
NOES: None.  
ABSENT: None.

Sincerely,

Tom Allman, Mayor  
City of Willits

Encl.



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### **RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT**

**Report Title:** Healing the Toxic Culture in the City of Willits Workplace  
**Report Date:** June 30, 2025

**Response Form Submitted By:**  
**Consolidated Response Title : Willits City Council**

**Willits City Council**  
**111 East Commercial Street**  
**Willits, CA 95490**

**Response MUST be submitted, per Penal Code §933, no later than September 29, 2025**

#### ***Findings***

"I (we) agree with the findings numbered:

**1, 3, 4.**

"I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings numbered:

" **2, 5.**

(attach a statement specifying any portions of the Findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefore.)

#### ***Recommendations***

" Recommendations numbered:

**4.**

have been implemented. (attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)

" Recommendations numbered: **1,2.**

have not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future.  
(attach a time frame for implementation)

- .. Recommendations numbered: 3  
require further analysis. (attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer and/or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed; including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This time frame shall not exceed six (6) months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury Report)
- .. Recommendations numbered: \_\_\_\_\_  
will not be implemented because they are not warranted and/or are not reasonable. (attach an explanation.)
- 

I/We have completed the above responses and have attached, as required, the following number of pages to this response form:

Number of pages attached: 2

I/We understand that the responses to the Grand Jury Reports are public Records. They will be posted on the Grand Jury website [www.co.mendocino.ca.us/grandjury](http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/grandjury). The Clerk of the court is required to maintain a copy of the response.

Please submit this signed response form and any attachments as follows:

First Step: E-mail (word documents or scanned pdf file format) to:

- The Grand Jury Foreperson at [mary@mendocinograndjury.org](mailto:mary@mendocinograndjury.org)
- Superior Court Judge Ann Moorman: [acm@mendocino.court.ca.gov](mailto:acm@mendocino.court.ca.gov)

Second Step: Mail all originals to:

- Mendocino County Grand Jury  
P.O. Box 939 Ukiah, CA 95482

Printed Name: Thomas A. Allman

Title: Mayor

Signature: 

Date: 09/26/2025

**Willits City Council Response to the Findings and Recommendations Designated for  
Response in the 2024-25 Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury Report entitled  
“Healing the Toxic Culture in the City of Willits Workplace”**

**FINDINGS**

**Finding F1:**

The Grand Jury found the existence of a toxic and intimidating workplace culture at the City of Willits (excluding the Police Department). This has prompted highly qualified, dedicated workers to leave City Employment.

**Response to Finding F1:**

The Willits City Council agrees that the Grand Jury found the existence of a toxic and intimidating workplace culture at the City of Willits (excluding the Police Department). However, it is unclear which highly qualified, dedicated workers are referenced in Finding F1 nor does the report indicate the time in which the referenced employees left their employment. As such, Willits City Council cannot comment on the reasons that such employees left their employment.

**Finding F2:**

The Grand Jury found the Willits City Council failed to provide oversight of top management for compliance with personnel policies.

**Response to Finding F2:**

The Willits City Council respectfully disagrees with Grand Jury Finding 2.

The F2 finding is a conclusion reached by the Grand Jury and based upon (1) its interpretation of Section 3.1 of the city’s Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual, and (2) its determination that the City Council has not conducted annual performance reviews of the City Manager as required by its Manual of Procedures and Protocols.

Section 3.1 of the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual is merely a statement of the City Council’s limited role and involvement with the city’s employees. Specifically, it is a statement that the City Council *will not exercise any control directly over the city’s personnel*. Section 3.1 does not discuss a duty to provide oversight of top management. The council acknowledges it has a duty to provide oversight of the City Manager; Section 3.1, however, does not address that duty. Rather, that section is merely a statement that is consistent with Willits Municipal Code chapter 2.08.070, subdivision R which describes the broad and exclusive role of the City Manager to provide supervision and management of all subordinate city employees.

Additionally, as explained in the Council’s Response to Finding F5 below, the Grand Jury’s conclusion that the Willits City Council failed to conduct annual performance reviews of the City Manager by April 30 of each year is inaccurate.

**Finding F3:**

The Grand Jury found the City of Willits employees do not have an effective avenue for bringing complaints to the attention of top management. This is due to the failure to follow the Willits Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.

**Response to Finding F3:**

The Willits City Council agrees with Grand Jury Finding F3.

**Finding F4:**

The Grand Jury found the City of Willits presently does not have a Director of Human Resources. Portions of the Willits Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual expressly contemplate such a position as employees are instructed to seek help from the Director of Human Resources.

**Response to Finding F4:**

The Willits City Council agrees with Grand Jury Finding F4.

**Finding F5:**

The Grand Jury found that the Willits City Council had not conducted annual performance reviews of the Willits City Manager by April 30 of each year.

**Response to Finding F5:**

The Willits City Council respectfully disagrees wholly with the Grand Jury Finding F5.

Specifically, the Council conducted annual performance evaluations of the manager on the following dates: 2/9/2022, 2/8/2023, 3/13/2024, 4/10/2024. Additional performance evaluations of the City Manager were made on the following dates: 1/22/25, 2/26/25, 3/12/25, 3/21/25, 3/28/25. These evaluations and dates can be confirmed in the public records for those dates.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation R1:**

The Grand Jury recommends the Willits City Council direct its City Manager to demonstrate compliance with the existing written Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual for the City of Willits, by July 31, 2025.

**Response to Recommendation R1:**

The recommendation has not been implemented but will in the future. The City Manager in question and the Willits City Council agreed to a Separation Agreement in March 2025. All future City Managers will be expected to comply with existing written Personal Policies and Procedures for the City of Willits at the time of hiring and as situations warrant. The City Manager's ability to follow the existing Personnel Policies and Procedures will be part of their annual evaluation.

**Recommendation R2:**

The Grand Jury recommends the Willits City Council create a mechanism for compliance and oversight to ensure all personnel policies are being followed, by January 1, 2026.

**Response to Recommendation R2:**

The recommendation has not been implemented but will be in the future. A review of the existing role of our HR Department and of our Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual is in order before we create such a mechanism. Decisions about how to best ensure all personnel policies are being followed will be made as soon as possible.

**Recommendation R3:**

The Grand Jury recommends the Willits City Council direct the Willits City Manager to restore and fill the position of Human Resources Director by January 1, 2026.

**Response to Recommendation R3:**

The recommendation requires further analysis. We are currently fiscally unable to hire additional HR staff and so additional options are needed. Further analysis by the Willits City Council would focus on ensuring that all employees have a safe work environment and that there is a means for them to share HR related concerns about other staff and their supervisors safely and without fear of work-place reprisals. All available solutions will be explored to better match the needs of employees. Decisions about how to best provide the kind of support an HR Director would normally provide will require further analysis.

**Recommendation R4:**

The Grand Jury recommends the Willits City Council conduct annual performance reviews of the Willits City Manager by April of each year.

**Response to Recommendation R4:**

The recommendation has been implemented. The Willits City Manager received performance evaluations annually from the Willits City Council before April 30<sup>th</sup> in 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2025-45**

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILLITS APPROVING THE RESPONSE TO THE 2024-2025 CIVIL GRAND JURY REPORT ENTITLED "HEALING THE TOXIC CULTURE IN THE CITY OF WILLITS WORKPLACE" AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY CLERK TO FORWARD THE RESPONSE TO THE PRESIDING JUDGE OF THE MENDOCINO COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT AND FOREPERSON OF THE MENDOCINO COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY.**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Penal Code section 933, a public agency that receives a Grand Jury Report addressing aspects of the public agency's operations must comment on the report's findings and recommendations contained in the report in writing to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court with a copy to the Foreperson of the Grand Jury; and

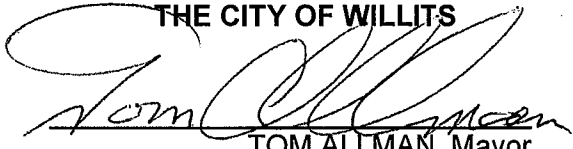
**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Willits has received and reviewed the 2024-2025 Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury Report released on June 30, 2025 entitled "Healing the Toxic Culture in the City of Willits Workplace and reviewed the City's prepared response to the Report

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the City Council of the City of Willits does hereby resolve as follows:

**Section 1.** The City Council of the City of Willits approves and authorizes the response to the 2024-2025 Mendocino County Grand Jury Report entitled "Healing the Toxic Culture in the City of Willits Workplace," a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated herein.

**Section 2.** The City Council of the City of Willits directs the City Clerk to forward the City's Grand Jury Report response to the Presiding Judge of the Mendocino County Superior Court and to the Foreperson of the Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury.

**PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED**, this 24th day of September, 2025.

**THE CITY OF WILLITS**  
  
TOM ALLMAN, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

I, Delores Pedersen, City Clerk of the City of Willits, do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly passed, approved and adopted by the City Council of the City of Willits, California, at its regular meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of September 2025, by the following vote:

AYES:           Burton, Strankse, Gonzalez, Alaniz, and Allman.  
NOES:           None.  
ABSENT:       None.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DELORES PEDERSEN, City Clerk