

July 10, 2014

FROM: Chris Jerdonek, Vice President
TO: Elections Commission

SUBJECT: Civil Grand Jury Report re: Commission Websites (1 page + attachment)

The purpose of this memo is to share with the Elections Commission the findings of a recent San Francisco Civil Grand Jury report called, "Survey of San Francisco Commission Websites" (25 pages, dated June 2014).¹ I thought the report was worth sharing because we have the ability to act on its recommendations with regard to our own website.

On July 9, 2014, the Civil Grand Jury released a press release (see attached, one page) announcing their report. The report has four findings (see pp. 7-8). The first three are the ones we have the ability to act on. I will quote or paraphrase these three findings below:

- 1) Disability and language support
 - a) Statements of accommodation for people with disabilities (e.g. for the purpose of attending meetings) should be easily located on commission websites.
 - b) When commission websites are developed to include language support, that support should be provided in the same languages used in the voter's guide.
- 2) Commissions should post their annual reports on their website and provide to the San Francisco Public Library the URLs to each of those reports.
- 3) Commissions should keep and post to their website a record of commissioner attendance.

Thank you.

¹ The reports of the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury are available at: <http://civilgrandjury.sfgov.org/> .



City & County of San Francisco CIVIL GRAND JURY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

LOOKING FOR CURRENT INFO ON CITY COMMISSIONS? GOOD LUCK WITH THAT

SAN FRANCISCO (JULY 9)– In a survey of commission websites in San Francisco, the 2013-2014 Civil Grand Jury found that almost half of City commissions did not post required annual reports, and that there is no consistent effort to make other important facts about commissions, such as commissioner attendance, available to the public.

Because people turn to the Internet for information and answers, the Civil Grand Jury surveyed the Internet presence of 32 San Francisco commissions. The Jury found that commissions do a good job of providing agendas, announcing meetings, and posting minutes. However, only 53% post annual reports, and fewer provide a link to those reports to the San Francisco Public Library, as required by law. The only information available about commission attendance was a single year of records on the Mayor's Web page, and one commission that posted commissioners' attendance online. Additionally, there isn't any complete, publicly available list of all City commissions, which is a hindrance to public participation in government processes.

The Jury made four recommendations to the Mayor that will increase accountability and improve accessibility to San Francisco commissions.

The Superior Court selects 19 San Franciscans to serve a year term as Civil Grand Jurors. The Jury has the authority to investigate City government and inspect records, interview officials, and receive relevant information from the public. At the end of its inquiries, the Jury issues a report outlining its findings, and recommendations to address them. City agencies identified in the report receive copies and must respond with agreement to implement the recommendations, in whole or in part, or to not accept them. The Board of Supervisors conducts a public hearing on each Civil Grand Jury report.

The public may view the reports online at <http://civilgrandjury.sfgov.org/>.

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