**Grand Jury Finding – F1:** Accessibility of the approved budget on the County website and limited review in the County Clerk’s office may not serve the needs of all citizens.

**Grand Jury Finding – F2:** Reviewing the County budget is difficult for the public and staff to understand.

**Grand Jury Finding – F3:** Publicly available copies of the fiscal year budget have different formats which makes use, understanding, and comparison difficult.

**Grand Jury Finding – F4:** Unspent personnel costs, the largest part of the County’s budget, is left to accumulate in department budgets when vacancies occur until year-end. If unaddressed, this accumulation of unspent funds then becomes unavailable for needed uses and transfers during the current fiscal year.

**Grand Jury Finding – F5:** The County accounting system, Banner, is being supplemented and/or duplicated by many users across most County departments.

**Grand Jury Finding – F6:** The strong emphasis on historical data in budget preparation has created an environment that restricts flexibility and the incentive to save.

***RESPONSE FROM BOARD OF SUPERVISORS***

* **Recommendation R1**: The Board of Supervisors should provide an approved copy of the County budget in all public libraries, by September 30, 2022, allowing citizens the opportunity to review it on their own time.

**Response to R1:** The Board agrees.

We acknowledge not all citizens of Siskiyou County have access to the internet or they prefer physical copies of documents. To that end, we will work with the County Librarian to distribute copies of the adopted budget to each library branch in Siskiyou County.

* **Recommendation R2**: The Board of Supervisors should attach a summary glossary of important terms, and acronyms, with definitions to all copies of the budget to help citizens and staff to understand the budgeting terminology by August 31, 2022.

**Response to R2:** The Board disagrees.

Accounting used by government is substantially different from accounting used by for-profit organizations. Unless one is regularly exposed to, or has formal education in governmental accounting, it is difficult to understand the unique aspects of the County budget. Many documents already exist that detail glossaries of important budgeting terms and are readily available on the State Controller’s website.

* **Recommendation R3**: Copies of the budgets available to the public at the Clerk’s, Auditor’s Office and County web page should use the same format by September 30, 2022.
* **Recommendation R3b**: The Board of Supervisors should incorporate a summary of the budget, prepared annually by the County Administrative Officer titled “Budget Highlights”, anywhere the budget is made available for review by September 30, 2022.

**Response to R3/3b:** The Board disagrees.

The format of the budget presented to the Board of Supervisors for Recommended and Adopted budget are the same. The copy available for review in the Clerk’s office is an exact copy of the documents submitted to the Board for approval. Budget highlights are contained within the Recommended Budget each year. The County is required to submit its Adopted Budget to the State Controller by December 1 of each year, in a specific format. This specific format is the copy that is available in the Auditor’s Office and posted to the County website.

* **Recommendation R4**: The Board of Supervisors should consider a periodic review, perhaps quarterly, to evaluate unspent personnel funds under County control, identifying funds that the County could use for changing priorities during the fiscal year by September 30, 2022.

**Response to R4:** The Board disagrees.

This finding is inaccurate, as departments may utilize salary savings to cover budgetary shortfalls, without authorization from the Board of Supervisors. The decision to transfer salary savings for use elsewhere is at the discretion of the Department Head.

* **Recommendation R5**: The Board of Supervisors should oversee the development of a system to assure that all fiscal personnel be made aware of and trained on Banner’s capabilities by December 31, 2022.
* **Recommendation R5b**: To reduce duplication of accounting systems, the Board of Supervisors should establish a panel to evaluate all departments’ accounting needs and systems currently in use. This should include possible modifications to Banner system by June 30, 2023.

**Response to R5/R5b:** The Board agrees.

County Administration, in collaboration with the Auditor’s Office, has re-launched monthly training for fiscal staff on procedures for various County fiscal tasks, including budget preparation and ongoing administration. This will include a session on Banner and its various functions. The County is currently evaluating its accounting system needs and will bring a recommendation to the Board once their research is complete.

* **Recommendation R6**: To deemphasize the use of historical data in budget preparation, the Board of Supervisors should encourage departments and the budget team to react to changes and priority shifts in preparing budgets accordingly by January 1, 2023.

**Response to R6:** The Board disagrees.

Departments prepare their budgets according to their needs and business operations. Every department has different priorities, based upon services they provide to the County and its constituents. Therefore, we leave it to the Department Heads to decide what their priorities are and budget accordingly.

* **Recommendation R6b:** The Board of Supervisors should provide additional direction by communicating to all department heads and staff a set of County priorities and goals prior to the beginning of each year’s budgeting process by January 1, 2023.

**Response to R6b:** The Board disagrees.

This recommendation is inaccurate as the Board adopts the upcoming fiscal year “Budget Principles” contained within the Budget Highlight narrative, of which lists the priorities and goals for the fiscal year.