



**CITY OF NOVATO**  
CALIFORNIA

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Susan Wernick

City Manager  
Adam McGill

July 16, 2020

The Honorable Judge Andrew Sweet  
Marin County Superior Court  
P.O. Box 4988  
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report " Cyberattacks: A Growing Threat to Marin Government,"

Dear Judge Sweet,

At its regular meeting of July 14, 2020, the Novato City Council reviewed the above report which requests they City of Novato respond to Reccomendations R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, and R9 of the report. The City's response to all is attached.

If the members of the Grand Jury require additional information, please contact City Manager Adam McGill at [amcgill@novato.org](mailto:amcgill@novato.org).

We appreciate the work of the Grand Jury and thank you for your service to our residents and Marin County.

Sincerely,

Denise Athas  
Mayor  
City of Novato

Cc: Lucy Dilworth, Foreperson  
Marin County Civil Grand Jury  
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room #275  
San Rafael, CA 94903

**RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**REPORT TITLE: "Cyberattacks: A Growing Threat to Marin Government"**

**REPORT DATE: May 11, 2020**

**RESPONSE BY: City of Novato**

**GRAND JURY FINDINGS**

- The City of Novato agrees with the findings numbered: **F3, F7 and F10.**
- The City disagrees wholly or partially with the findings numbered **F4, F5, F6, F8, and F9**

**GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Recommendations numbered **R4, R7, R8** have been implemented.
- Recommendations numbered **R5, R6 and R9** have not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future.
- Recommendations numbered **N/A** requires further analysis.

Date: \_\_ August 5, 2020 \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: Denise Athas

**ATTACHMENT A: RESPONSE OF THE CITY OF NOVATO TO GRAND JURY  
REPORT “CYBERATTACKS: A GROWING THREAT TO MARIN GOVERNMENT”**

GRAND JURY FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

The responses below have been made from the perspective of the City of Novato’s experience with cybersecurity. We do not have full insight on the cybersecurity practices of other Cities and Towns in Marin County.

**F3. Transparency is lacking regarding cybersecurity because past breaches have not been publicly disclosed, and city and town councils have not facilitated public discussion of cybersecurity issues.**

Response: Agree

The City will develop a mechanism and policy that clarifies public reporting of breaches.

**F4. Most elected officials in Marin’s cities and towns are not sufficiently engaged in ensuring robust cybersecurity policies and procedures are in place.**

Response: Disagree

The Novato City Council has supported, through its annual budget, IT services and infrastructure that address cybersecurity measures and would be supportive of further actions in this area. In addition, the City has regularly made the maintenance and upgrade of cybersecurity practices a part of the City’s annual goals and objectives. Over the past several years, the City Council and City Manager have received periodic updates on the status of the City’s cybersecurity goals and programs. These updates include past, ongoing, in-progress, and upcoming efforts regarding security for network infrastructure, desktop, mobile devices, users, internal processes, and disaster recovery. They also include information about known attempted ransomware attacks.

**F5. County and municipal officials and managers have been generally unaware of breaches that have occurred outside their own agencies in Marin and therefore have not felt the need to collaborate on measures to improve cybersecurity.**

Response: Disagree partially

The City of Novato has not consistently been made aware of breaches outside of our agency, however issues of cybersecurity have been discussed by the Marin Managers Association

**F6. Municipalities have been lax in following FBI guidance that cybersecurity breaches be reported to federal law enforcement**

Response: Disagree

The City of Novato maintains Department of Justice compliant network connectivity to serve our Police Department and have a process for reporting breaches to federal authorities.

**F7. Marin’s cities and towns have not made a concerted effort to standardize around a common set of best practices with respect to cybersecurity.**

Response: Agree

We agree that more can be done to share cybersecurity best practices. While the strategy and approach to cybersecurity in Marin cities and towns have not been standardized amongst all jurisdictions, most of the cities and towns utilizing the MIDAS network share the network security protocols in place for MIDAS and a number of cities and towns have relied on a common service provider to implement local network security solutions through Marin IT. The City of Novato will work with the recently formed Marin Information Security Collaboration (MISC) between Marin County regional agencies to develop and share best practices for cybersecurity.

**F8. The Marin County Council of Mayors & Councilmembers has not made cybersecurity a priority, which has minimized the awareness and engagement of elected officials in cybersecurity matters.**

Response: Disagree partially

While the Marin County Council of Mayors & Councilmembers have not made cybersecurity a focus over other pressing regional issues, the Novato City Council has made cybersecurity a priority through the City's annual budget and strategic plan. For the past several years, the City Manager and Council have been briefed on the status of our security program, long-term projects, and actions-to-date related to the security of the City's network.

**F9. The Marin Managers Association has not done enough to facilitate the sharing of cybersecurity information and resources among its members.**

Response: Disagree

December 2019, the City of San Rafael made a presentation to the Marin Managers Association about a recent overhaul of their IT service delivery model (including cybersecurity). Their presentation included a consultant they hired to conduct an assessment of their service model and the president of the company who manages their cybersecurity.

#### **GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES:**

**R4. Starting in fiscal year 2020–2021, the county board of supervisors and the city and town councils should request their managers report, at least annually, regarding their cybersecurity profile and any measures being taken to improve it.**

Response: This recommendation has been implemented.

Historically, the City of Novato's Information Technology Division has provided periodic reports to the City Manager and the City Council on current cybersecurity risk and threat assessments and actions underway by City staff to combat these threats. City staff will continue to provide these reports at the request of the City Council and City Manager on a periodic basis.

**R5. Starting in fiscal year 2020–2021, the county, cities, and towns should convene periodic discussions, at least annually, in a public forum such as a board or council meeting, regarding the importance of good cybersecurity practices for our government, residents, and other organizations.**

Response: Agree.

City of Novato employees, elected officials, and anyone with access to the City network are required to participate in regular cybersecurity training and receive email updates to current and trending security threats. The City periodically sends out public communications about known scams and prevention measures. The City will continue to explore additional means for educating the public about cybersecurity. Starting in October 2020, the County of Marin will host an NCSAM event that is open to members of the public to facilitate a discussion on cybersecurity. As a member of the recently formed Marin Information Security Collaboration (MISC), Novato will help promote this event to our residents and organizations.

**R6. The county and each city and town should adopt a policy to report to federal law enforcement any cybersecurity intrusion that results in financial fraud or unauthorized disclosure of information and make that intrusion public.**

Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future.

Were the City of Novato to become victim to any of the above attacks, staff would work closely with all law enforcement personnel, including federal law enforcement, as required to properly respond to the threat. While we have a process for reporting breaches, we are updating the documentation and determining whether a policy is required beyond existing procedures that are consistent with the above recommendation.

The County of Marin has access to existing security policy templates that have been developed in collaboration with the California Counties Information Services Director's Association (CCISDA) Information Security Council (ISC). These templates will be shared with the members of the recently formed Marin Information Security Collaboration (MISC) and will be considered for updates to the City of Novato's own security policies.

**R7. Within 180 days of the date of this report, cities and towns should implement the first four practices described in the Best Practices section of this report, regarding mandatory user training, email flagging and filtering, password management, and backup.**

Response: This recommendation has been implemented.

The City of Novato currently follows the first six practices described in this report. Network security is currently managed by the City's staff who monitors and responds to threats, provides network backups, and manages cybersecurity training. Staff is required to participate in annual security training including email updates on current threats, phishing simulations, regular password changes. We also have measures in place for email flagging, spam filtering, and regular backups of City files and servers. Mobile device management has been implemented throughout the organization. We have started requiring multi-factor authentication for City staff who have access to City Financial system, networks and documents, and plan to have this rolled out to all users in the next few months.

**R8. In fiscal year 2020–2021, cities and towns should complete an analysis of the feasibility of implementing the remainder of the practices described in the Best Practices section of this report.**

Response: This recommendation has been implemented.

The City of Novato is committed to protecting information and data from external threats. Some measures require more funding than is currently available however we are actively working to implement the remaining best practices.

**R9. In fiscal year 2020–2021, cities and towns should, through the Marin Managers Association, complete an analysis of the feasibility of contracting with a cybersecurity expert to be available to cities and towns on a shared basis, in order to raise the overall level of cybersecurity in Marin’s cities and towns.**

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis.

This recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. The City of Novato City Manager will work with the Marin Managers Association to add the consideration of hiring a cybersecurity firm to the list of potential shared services that is currently in development.

2020 AUG 10 P 2:30

MARIN COUNTY  
COUNSEL'S OFFICE