



May 26, 2023

Alameda County Board of Supervisors
1221 Oak Street, Suite 536
Oakland, CA 94612

Alameda County Sheriff Yesenia Sanchez
1407 Lakeside Drive, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-4305

President Miley, Sheriff Sanchez, and Board Members:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Hayward City Council and the Hayward Police Department to make you aware of criminal activity, which is occurring at the Alameda County Assessment Center (AC) located on Foothill Boulevard in the City of Hayward and to request your assistance in addressing the issues occurring at this facility. The Hayward Police Department has been made aware of assaultive conduct by juveniles at the AC against other AC residents and AC staff. More disturbingly, HPD was advised of possible human trafficking of juveniles housed at the AC by other juveniles at the AC, working in coordination with adults outside the facility.

For background, we understand that the County Assessment Center is supposed to provide a temporary safe haven for displaced/runaway foster youth and other children who need a transitional location as they are awaiting placement elsewhere. Sometimes youth are placed here because they are expelled or removed from other living situations due to behavioral issues. In the beginning of January of 2023, the Hayward Police Department (HPD) was notified that, as of mid-February, the AC would no longer be staffed by deputies from the Alameda County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) for onsite security. On January 27, 2023, HPD staff met with Alameda County Department of Children & Family Services staff to discuss the change in procedures and the impacts of the associated workload.

At that meeting, AC staff advised that pursuant to their operating procedures, they were not allowed to lock the doors from the inside and had a "hands-off policy" regarding stopping the children (anyone over ten (10) years of age) from walking out of the AC and going "AWOL." They planned to hire a private security company, as they did prior to the on-site presence of the ACSO, and the private security company would also be bound by the same "hands-off policy."

Ultimately, the HPD assumed the responsibility of responding to calls for service at the AC on February 15, 2023. In late March 2023, HPD staff was contacted by a representative of the newly hired private security company (Diligence Security Group). The security company representative expressed frustration with the AC staff and could not believe juveniles were allowed to engage in conduct they were witnessing. In addition to assaults between juveniles, assaults on staff, and "AWOL" juveniles who were allowed to walk out of the



building freely, security company staff witnessed the grooming and recruiting of ten (10) to thirteen (13) year-old girls by other older, more sophisticated juveniles for the purpose of human trafficking. No AC staff has ever contacted HPD to report this activity.

Since being made aware, the HPD has been investigating this criminal activity. HPD investigators interviewed a twelve (12) year-old juvenile who described her experience at the AC. After being taken to the AC, the twelve (12) year-old was recruited by two (2) older juveniles (described as “regulars” at the AC) to engage in prostitution. The twelve (12) year-old described being fearful of these older juveniles as they were violent and had assaulted others in the past. These older juveniles took the twelve (12) year-old from the AC to the “Blade,” a known prostitution area in Oakland. When the twelve (12) year-old was told she would be required to engage in prostitution, she declined, prompting the older juveniles to assault her. She was able to flee and call 911 from a nearby gas station where she was located by the Oakland Police Department. The AC staff reported the twelve (12) year-old missing and the “Blade” was provided in the original missing person’s report, suggesting the AC staff had knowledge of what was happening. HPD investigators were able to obtain arrest warrants for the older juveniles, who have since been arrested. This investigation is ongoing.

The criminal activity described above is not new and has been allegedly happening at the AC for years. During multiple meetings between HPD and AC staff, AC staff confirmed they cannot turn juveniles away and, even if they demonstrate problematic or criminal behavior, juveniles are allowed back into the AC as there are no other alternatives for placement. In addition, since ACSO deputies left the facility, HPD is responding to between 1 to 3 calls for service per day at this location.

As you can imagine, this state of affairs is beyond concerning for Hayward officials and the Police Department. It is incumbent that the County and Sheriff’s Office take immediate action to address these issues. We would recommend a combination of the following action steps:

- Begin a longer-term plan to relocate this center to a more appropriate location within Hayward or elsewhere and basically “start over.” This is supposed to be a confidential facility and location but clearly, it has become very well known. We are happy to continue to house this facility in Hayward assuming the operational and management issues are addressed.
- Immediately resume ACSO supervision and security at the site 24 hours a day until the larger operational issues are addressed. If this does not occur, HPD will evaluate how to provide this security on site and we intend to bill the County for our services.
- Immediately evaluate staffing and protocols at the facility, including possible replacement of current staff with others from the County, until longer term solutions can be identified.



The City of Hayward recognizes that this center provides critical services for children in need in our community and we stand ready to assist the County in securing an alternate location within Hayward. We also stand ready to help address other issues if the County needs our support. This current situation is untenable and must be addressed immediately.

Our acting Police Chief Bryan Matthews and City Manager Kelly McAdoo are available to begin conversations with County staff on this issue. We look forward to hearing back from the County on their action plan in the near future.

Sincerely,



Mark Salinas
Mayor

- c. Hayward City Council
Hayward City Manager Kelly McAdoo
Hayward City Attorney Michael Lawson
Hayward Acting Chief of Police Bryan Matthews
Alameda County Administrator Susan Muranishi

