



Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts' Websites

[Summary](#) | [Background](#) | [Methodology](#) | [Discussion](#) | [Findings](#) | [Recommendations](#) | [Request for Responses](#) | [Bibliography](#) | [Attachments](#) | [Responses](#)

SUMMARY

The 23 independent special districts within the boundaries of San Mateo County (County) served approximately 739,000 residents and received nearly \$100,000,000¹ in property tax revenue last fiscal year. Each special district provides a specific set of services, such as police and fire protection, harbor management, mosquito abatement, sewer services and garbage collection, water services, recreation services, and open space preservation. A statewide poll² has shown that Californians value local control and local management of these services. That same poll, however, indicates that only a quarter of California's residents are familiar with the work of special districts. Do County residents know who manages these districts, how wisely their money is being spent, and with what efficiency the services are being provided? Each district operates a website, purportedly for the purpose of informing its constituents about the district's business. The 2013-2014 San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) investigated the utility and transparency of the County's 23 independent special districts' websites. The Grand Jury found that 15 districts had substantial inadequacies in revealing information regarding finances, staff and Board of Directors' or Commissioners' contacts, and Board or Commission minutes. All 23 districts omitted some transparency regarding financial data, meeting agendas and minutes, election procedures and terms of office, or lists of the compensation of Board or Commission members. For the benefit of their districts' constituents, the Grand Jury believes this information should be easily accessible on all special districts' websites.

BACKGROUND

Special districts are defined as "any agency of the state for the local performance of governmental or proprietary functions within limited boundaries."³ This means that a special district is a form of local government that provides a specific set of services to the public within a geographically limited area. California's first special district was formed in 1887. The Turlock Irrigation District was created to meet the water needs of San Joaquin Valley farmers. Since that time thousands of special districts have been formed and dissolved statewide.

Special districts are formed because counties and cities often cannot provide all of the services

¹ Property tax information provided by the County of San Mateo Controller's Office, March 2014. See Appendix G.

² The Association of California Water Agencies and the California Special Districts Association Poll commissioned the poll in 2004.

³ California Government Code §16271(d)

their constituents demand. They have most of the same basic powers as counties and cities. They can issue bonds, impose special taxes, levy benefit assessments and charge service fees.⁴

With over 2,000 special districts located in California, it is important to recognize the different types of special districts. Approximately two-thirds of the state's special districts are independent districts. They have their own separate governing boards elected by the districts' own voters. The San Mateo County Harbor District is an example of an independent special district. The County's voters elect the five Commissioners who oversee the District. Conversely, city councils or county boards of supervisors govern dependent districts. The Crystal Springs County Sanitation District is a dependent district, governed by the County Board of Supervisors. For the purposes of this report, the Grand Jury investigated only independent special districts.

METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury adopted a website transparency checklist, created by the Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF)⁵. The sister organization of the SDLF is the California Special Districts Association (CSDA). The CSDA has been in existence since 1969 to "promote good governance and improve core local services through professional development, advocacy, and other services for all types of independent special districts."⁶ The SDLF was created in 1999 and defines itself as "a 501(c)(3) organization formed to provide educational opportunities to special district officials and employees to enhance service to the public provided by special districts in California."⁷ The Grand Jury reviewed the website of each of the County's independent special districts and evaluated the information provided based on the criteria in the checklist. In addition to simply searching for the requested items in the list, the Grand Jury also evaluated the ease with which a user might find those items.

For true transparency all of the following items should be readily apparent:

- Names of Board or Commission members and their terms of office
- Names of general manager, fire or police chief, and key staff along with contact information for each
- Election procedure and deadlines
- Board meeting schedule (regular meeting agendas must be posted 72 hours in advance)
- District's mission statement
- Description of district's services/functions and service area
- Authorizing statute/enabling act
- Current district budget
- Most recent financial audit
- Archive of Board meeting minutes for at least the last 6 months

⁴ "What's So Special About Special Districts? A Citizen's Guide to Special Districts in California" is an informational paper prepared by the Senate Local Government Committee. It can be found at: www.clerk.calaverasgov.us

⁵ See appendix B for the checklist

⁶ The CSDA can be found at www.csda.net

⁷ The SDLF can be found at www.sdlf.org.

- List of compensation of Board or Commission members and staff and/or link to State Controller's webpage with the data

In addition, the website of each district should include at least 4 of the following:

- Post Board or Commission member ethics training certificates
- Picture, biography and email address of Board or Commission members
- Last 3 years of audits
- Reimbursement and compensation policy
- Financial reserves policy
- Downloadable Public Records Act request form
- Audio or video recordings of Board meetings
- Map of district boundaries/service area
- Most recent Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) studies or link to LAFCo's site⁸

Interviews

After the websites were surveyed, the Grand Jury interviewed board members and key employees from districts whose websites were found to be substandard against the transparency benchmark. The Grand Jury also interviewed professional website developers to gain an understanding of the cost, difficulties and labor intensity of creating and managing a useful and interactive website.

DISCUSSION

The Grand Jury is convinced that taxpayers are best served when they understand who administers their special districts, how each special district is spending their property tax monies and/or the fees for services received for its enterprise activities⁹, and how constituents can make their voices heard.

The Grand Jury's inquiry reveals that only minor impediments exist for a district to provide true transparency. Typical costs for professional website developers range from \$1000 to \$9000 to create a website that can be updated by district in-house staff.¹⁰ A developer can both create the site and provide the training and tools necessary for in-house district employees to manage and update as needed.

The Grand Jury found no attempt to intentionally obfuscate beneficial information. Based on our interviews we found the following to be the common reasons for substandard transparency:

⁸ San Mateo County's LAFCo MSRs and SOIs can be found at <http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/portal/site/lafco>

⁹ Enterprise activities are those services for which a fee is paid by the customer i.e. sewer service, water, garbage, etc.

¹⁰ Price ranges are based on input from professional website developers who work with non-profits and government agencies.

FINDINGS

- F1. Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.
- F2. Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.
- F3. Privacy concerns of Boards of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contact information.
- F4. Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.
- F5. No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction¹¹ program offered by Special Districts Leadership Foundation (SDLF).
- F6. No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.¹²
- F7. Only 2 of 23 independent special districts in the County have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.¹³
- F8. No general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification.¹⁴

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.
- R2. By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above.
- R3. Each district will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.
- R4. Districts will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.
- R5. Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015.
- R6. Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015.
- R7. District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.

¹¹ See Appendix C and <http://sdlf.org/DODprog.htm>

¹² See Appendix D and <http://sdlf.org/transparency.htm>

¹³ See Appendix E and <http://sdlf.org/SDGprog.htm>

¹⁴ See Appendix F and <http://sdlf.org/SDAprog.htm>

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal code section 933.05, the grand jury requests responses to the foregoing recommendations:

From the following governing bodies:

- Bayshore Sanitary District
- Broadmoor Police Protection District
- Coastside County Water District
- Coastside Fire District
- Colma Fire Protection District
- East Palo Alto Sanitary District
- Granada Sanitary District
- Highlands Recreation District
- Ladera Recreation District
- Los Trancos County Water District
- Menlo Park Fire Protection District
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
- Mid-Peninsula Water District
- Montara Water and Sanitary District
- Mosquito and Vector Control District
- North Coast County Water District
- Peninsula Health Care District
- Resource Conservation District
- San Mateo County Harbor District
- Sequoia Health Care District
- West Bay Sanitary District
- Westborough Water District
- Woodside Fire Protection District

The governing bodies indicated above should be aware that the comment or response of the governing body must be conducted subject to the notice, agenda and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Civil Grand Jury.

Senate Local Government Committee (2010, October), What's So Special About Special Districts?, *Inyo County*, http://www.inyocounty.us/Recorder/Documents/Whats_So_Special.pdf

Nelson, C. (2013, November 21), New transparency portal for special districts launches today, *California Forward*, <http://www.cafwd.org/reporting/entry/new-transparency-portal-for-special-districts-launches-today>

(2008), Special Districts: Compensation for Directors and Trustees, *California Special Districts Association*, <http://www.csdanet.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Special-Districts-Compensation-for-Directors-and-Trustees.pdf>

Jones, J. (2012, September 26), In U.S. Trust in State, Local Governments Up, *Gallup.Com*, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/157700/trust-state-local-governments.aspx>

APPENDIX A



**California Special
Districts Association**

Districts Stronger Together



BY THE NUMBERS

Large or small, special districts are responsive to the neighborhoods and regions they serve. Policy addressing special districts should focus on the quality of service delivered to citizens rather than assumptions about quantity or size. The numbers speak volumes to the ability of special districts to meet evolving local needs.

Critical Role for Millions of Californians Daily

- Deliver water and treat wastewater for more than 30 million residents
- Protect 11 million residents from fire and other hazards
- Operate more than half of California's critical access hospitals
- Supply water to 90 percent of California's farmland
- Provide other core services throughout the state: flood defense, mosquito and vector control, trash collection, resource conservation, and airport, port and harbor, and cemetery management.

Created to Serve Local Communities through Voter Approval

- Voters have approved 2,162 independent special districts. It is important to note that while the State Controller's 2010-11 report lists 4,772 "special districts," over half are actually non-profit corporations or components of other governments, such as cities and counties.
- An emphasis on efficient service delivery is why special districts have taken the lead in self-initiating the majority of the more than 150 consolidations and mergers over the last two decades, when and where it was appropriate.
- According to a Senate Local Government Committee report (2010), special districts have consolidated by more than seven percent over the past 20 years.

A Thoughtful, Local Process

- District reorganizations are researched and approved by the Local Agency Formation Commission, whose state mandated goal is to assure that changes in governmental organization occur in a manner which encourages orderly growth, discourages sprawl, preserves agricultural and open space lands and safeguards the delivery of efficient and quality municipal services.
- A one-size-fits-all, top-down approach does not work with core local services. Deliberate study and planning at the local level is necessary to ensure viability and identify efficiencies. Ultimately, the power to reorganize local services should always rest with the local citizens who established and depend on them.

For more information please visit www.csda.net



District Transparency Certificate of Excellence *checklist*

Showcase your district's commitment to transparency

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- Current Ethics Training for all Board Members**
(Government Code Section 54950)
 - Provide copies of training certificates along with date completed
- Compliance with the Ralph M. Brown Act**
(Government Code Section 54950 et. al.)
 - Provide copy of current policy related to Brown Act compliance
 - Provide copy of a current meeting agenda (including opportunity for public comment)
- Adoption of policy related to handling Public Records Act requests**
 - Provide copy of current policy
- Adoption of Reimbursement Policy, if district provides any reimbursement of actual and necessary expenses**
(Government Code Section 53232.2 (b))
 - Provide copy of current policy
- Annual disclosure of board member or employee reimbursements for individual charges over \$100 for services or products. This information is to be made available for public inspection. "Individual charge" includes, but is not limited to: one meal, lodging for one day, or transportation.** *(Government Code Section 53065.5)*
 - Provide copy of the most recent document and how it is accessible
- Timely filing of State Controller's Special Districts Financial Transactions Report - includes compensation disclosure.** *(Government Code Section 53891)*
 - Provide copy of most recent filing
SDLF staff will verify that district is not listed on the State Controller's non-compliance list
- Conduct Annual Audits**
(Government Code Section 26909 and 12410.6)
 - Provide copy of most recent audit and management letter and a description of how/where documents were made available to the public
- Other Policies – have current policies addressing the following areas** *(provide copies of each):*
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Code of Ethics/Values/Norms or Board Conduct
 - Financial Reserves Policy

WEBSITE REQUIREMENTS

- Maintain a district website with the following items**
(provide website links; all are required)
 - Names of Board Members and their terms of office
 - Name of general manager and key staff along with contact information
 - Election procedure and deadlines
 - Board meeting schedule (Regular meeting agendas must be posted 72 hours in advance pursuant to *Government Code Section 54954.2 (a) (1)* and *Government Code Section 54956 (a)*)
 - District's mission statement
 - Description of district's services/functions and service area
 - Authorizing statute/enabling act (Principle Act or Special Act)
 - Current district budget
 - Most recent financial audit
 - Archive of Board meeting minutes for at least the last 6 months
 - List of compensation of Board Members and staff and/or link to State Controller's webpage with the data
- Website also must include at least 4 of the following items:**
 - Post Board Member ethics training certificates
 - Picture, biography and email address of board members
 - Last 3 years of audits
 - Reimbursement and Compensation Policy
 - Financial Reserves Policy
 - Online/downloadable Public Records Act request form
 - Audio or video recordings of board meetings
 - Map of district boundaries/service area
 - Link to California Special Districts Association mapping program
 - Most recent Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) studies *(full document or link to document on another site)*

Continued on reverse



Questions about SDLF or the transparency program? Call us for more information at 916.231.2939

APPENDIX C



SHOWCASE YOUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Districts Of Distinction Application

The Districts of Distinction program is an accreditation program that enables districts to demonstrate to their communities, the media and legislators their commitment to operate in a sound, responsible manner. Districts apply for designation as a District of Distinction by submitting financial audits, policies and procedures and proof of training received by directors and executive staff.

Requirements:

FINANCIAL AUDITS

Districts must demonstrate they undergo regular financial audits, have no major deficiencies and apply any recommendations to future years.

What to submit:

- Copies of the three most recent district audits, including financial statements and management letters. Each audit, including findings and recommendations, will be reviewed by a member of the Certification & Audit Review Advisory Committee. Committee members are volunteers from the special district community, including district controllers, directors of finance and SDA certified general managers.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Districts must demonstrate that their operations conform to all statutes and regulations under state law as reflected in a policies and procedures manual. Policies and procedures should focus on governance, ethics, board conduct, district finances, reserves, reimbursement/compensation, etc.

What to submit:

- Copy of your district's current approved policies and procedures manual.
- Copy of your district's Board minute action adopting and/or having reviewed the policies and procedures manual within the past year.

Training

Districts must demonstrate that all directors/trustees, general manager and executive staff (as designated by the district) have received training in governance as well as compliance with AB 1234 Ethics Training and AB 1825 Harassment Prevention Training.

What to submit:

Documentation showing class attendance, such as certificate of completion for each board member, general manager and other executive staff members (as identified by the board) in the following areas:

- Governance Training:** Six hours of basic governance training within the past five years. Governance Foundations, offered by CSDA's Special District Leadership Academy, satisfies this requirement. Other courses may qualify as well, however will need to be submitted for review by SDLF.
- Ethics Training:** Documentation verifying completion of AB 1234 ethics compliance training within the last two years.
- Harassment Prevention Training:** Documentation verifying completion of AB 1825 harassment prevention training within the last two years.

Other

Districts must also include the following items with the accreditation/re-accreditation application:

What to submit:

- Board of Directors roster
- List of executive staff, including titles
- Proof of current compliance with CA State Controller reporting requirements including district financial and compensation data
- Completed application for accreditation/re-accreditation
- Accreditation/re-accreditation application fee
- Completed SDLF District Transparency Certificate of Excellence

Is your district a District of Distinction?



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Who should apply to be a District of Distinction?

Any California special district that wants to demonstrate publicly the effectiveness of its operations. Applying for this designation shows that your district understands and respects the responsibilities inherent to providing essential public services in a fiscally responsible manner.

What does a district receive for completing the program?

Districts of Distinction earn the right to use the program's seal on district materials and a plaque honoring their accomplishment. SDIF will also write and issue press releases and notify legislators on a district's behalf.

How does a district apply?

Districts interested in earning the Districts of Distinction designation must complete the application and submit it along with the required documentation. Applications must also be accompanied by an application fee.

If my district is a member of the Special District Risk Management Authority (SDRMA), will getting a District of Distinction accreditation save me money on my premiums?

Yes. SDRMA offers Credit Incentive Points (CIPs) if your district earns the District of Distinction accreditation which can provide significant premium discounts. For more information, contact SDRMA at 800.537.7790 or visit www.sdrma.org.

RE-ACCREDITATION

For how long is the designation valid?

The Districts of Distinction designation is valid for two years and a district may be re-accredited by submitting the application and all current required documents for review along with the re-accreditation fee.

Fees

The fees are on a sliding scale, based on a district's ability to pay:

INITIAL ACCREDITATION		RE-ACCREDITATION	
Annual operating budget	Fee	Annual operating budget	Fee
\$0-299,999	\$200	\$0-299,999	\$125
\$300,000-749,999	\$400	\$300,000-749,999	\$150
\$750,000-999,999	\$600	\$750,000-999,999	\$175
\$1,000,000-2,999,999	\$800	\$1,000,000-2,999,999	\$200
\$3,000,000 or more	\$1,000	\$3,000,000 or more	\$250



Is your district a District of Distinction?

Submit Application

Submit this application along with all required documentation and payment to:

SPECIAL DISTRICT LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION

1112 I Street, Suite 200

Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 916 231 2939 • Fax: 916 442 7889 • www.sdif.org

DISTRICT:	
MAILING ADDRESS:	
CITY:	STATE: ZIP:
CONTACT NAME:	
CONTACT TITLE:	
PHONE:	FAX:
EMAIL:	WEBSITE:
ASSEMBLY MEMBER(S)*:	
SENATOR*:	
LOCAL NEWSPAPER(S):	
I CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION SUBMITTED IS ACCURATE AND COMPLETE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.	SIGNATURE:
PAYMENT	
TOTAL: \$	<input type="checkbox"/> CHECK <input type="checkbox"/> VISA <input type="checkbox"/> MASTERCARD <input type="checkbox"/> DISCOVER <input type="checkbox"/> AMERICAN EXPRESS
ACCT. NAME:	ACCT. NUMBER:
EXPIRATION DATE:	AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE:

* Include all state legislators representing the district's area of operation.

Is your district a District of Distinction?

APPENDIX D



SHOWCASE YOUR DISTRICT'S COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY

District Transparency Certificate of Excellence

Purpose

To promote transparency in the operations and governance of special districts to the public/constituents and provide special districts with an opportunity to showcase their efforts in transparency.

Duration

2 Years

Application Cost

FREE

District Receives

- Certificate for display (covering 2 years)
- Press release template
- Recognition on the SDLF website
- Letter to legislators within the district's boundaries announcing the achievement
- Recognition in CA Special District magazine and the CSDA eNews

Basic Requirements

CURRENT ETHICS TRAINING FOR ALL BOARD MEMBERS (*Government Code Section 53235*)

- Provide copies of training certificates along with date completed

COMPLIANCE WITH THE RALPH M. BROWN ACT (*Government Code Section 54950 et. al*)

- Provide copy of current policy related to Brown Act compliance
- Provide copy of a current meeting agenda (including opportunity for public comment)

ADOPTION OF POLICY RELATED TO HANDLING PUBLIC RECORDS ACT REQUESTS

- Provide copy of current policy

ADOPTION OF REIMBURSEMENT POLICY, IF DISTRICT PROVIDES ANY REIMBURSEMENT OF ACTUAL AND NECESSARY EXPENSES (*Government Code Section 53232.2 (b)*)

- Provide copy of current policy

ANNUAL DISCLOSURE OF BOARD MEMBER OR EMPLOYEE REIMBURSEMENTS FOR INDIVIDUAL CHARGES OVER \$100 FOR SERVICES OR PRODUCTS. THIS INFORMATION IS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION. "INDIVIDUAL CHARGE" INCLUDES, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO: ONE MEAL, LODGING FOR ONE DAY, OR TRANSPORTATION. (*Government Code Section 53065.5*)

- Provide copy of the most recent document and how it is accessible.

TIMELY FILING OF STATE CONTROLLER'S SPECIAL DISTRICTS FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS REPORT - INCLUDES COMPENSATION DISCLOSURE. (*Government Code Section 53891*)

- Provide copy of most recent filing.
- SDLF staff will verify that district is not listed on the State Controller's 'non-compliance list'*

CONDUCT ANNUAL AUDITS (*Government Code Section 26909 and 12410.6*)

- Provide copy of most recent audit and management letter and a description of how/where documents were made available to the public

OTHER POLICIES - HAVE CURRENT POLICIES ADDRESSING THE FOLLOWING AREAS

Provide copies of each:

- Conflict of Interest
- Code of Ethics/Values/Norms or Board Conduct
- Financial Reserves Policy

Showcase your District's Commitment to Transparency

Website Requirements

MAINTAIN A DISTRICT WEBSITE WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS REQUIRED, (provide website link)

Required items available to the public:

- Names of Board Members and their terms of office
- Name of general manager and key staff along with contact information
- Election procedure and deadlines
- Board meeting schedule (Regular meeting agendas must be posted 72 hours in advance pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2 (a)(1) and Government Code Section 54956 (a))
- District's mission statement
- Description of district's services/functions and service area
- Authorizing statute/Enabling Act (Principle Act or Special Act)
- Current District budget
- Most recent financial audit
- Archive of Board meeting minutes for at least the last 6 months
- List of compensation of Board Members and Staff and/or link to State Controller's webpage with the data

ADDITIONAL ITEMS – website also must include at least 4 of the following items:

- Past Board Member ethics training certificates
- Picture, biography and e-mail address of board members
- Last (3) years of audits
- Reimbursement and Compensation Policy
- Financial Reserves Policy
- Online/downloadable public records act request form
- Audio or video recordings of board meetings
- Map of district boundaries/service area
- Link to California Special Districts Association mapping program
- Most recent Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) studies (full document or link to document on another site)

Outreach/Best Practices Requirements

(Must complete at least 2 of the following items)

REGULAR DISTRICT NEWSLETTER OR COMMUNICATION (PRINTED AND/OR ELECTRONIC) THAT KEEPS THE PUBLIC, CONSTITUENTS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS UP-TO-DATE ON DISTRICT ACTIVITIES (at least twice annually)

- Provide copy of most recent communication and short description on the frequency of the communication, how it's distributed and to whom.

COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION THROUGH PRESS RELEASE TO LOCAL MEDIA OUTLET ANNOUNCING UPCOMING FILING DEADLINE FOR ELECTION AND PROCESS FOR SEEKING A POSITION ON THE DISTRICT BOARD, PRIOR TO THAT ELECTION (OR PRIOR TO THE MOST RECENT DEADLINE FOR CONSIDERATION OF NEW APPOINTMENTS FOR THOSE DISTRICTS WITH BOARD MEMBERS APPOINTED TO FIXED-TERMS).

- Provide copy of the press release (and the printed article if available)

COMPLETE SALARY COMPARISON/BENCHMARKING FOR DISTRICT STAFF POSITIONS USING A REPUTABLE SALARY SURVEY (AT LEAST EVERY 5 YEARS)

- Provide brief description of the survey and process used as well as the general results

SPECIAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Designed and completed a special project promoting community engagement with the district (potential projects may be broad in nature or focus on specific issues such as rate-setting, recycled water, identifying community needs, etc.)

- Submit an overview of the community engagement project reviewing the process undertaken and results achieved

HOLD ANNUAL INFORMATIONAL PUBLIC BUDGET HEARINGS THAT ENGAGE THE PUBLIC (OUTREACH, WORKSHOPS, ETC.) PRIOR TO ADOPTING THE BUDGET

- Provide copy of most recent public budget hearing notice and agenda.

Showcase your District's Commitment to Transparency



COMMUNITY TRANSPARENCY REVIEW

The district would be required to obtain a completed overview checklist from at least 2 of the following individuals (the district may choose to conduct the overview with these individuals simultaneously or separately):

- Chair of the County Civil Grand Jury
- Editor of a reputable local print newspaper (only one may count toward requirement)
- LAFCO Executive Officer
- County Auditor - Controller
- Local Legislator (only one may count toward requirement)
- Executive Director or President of local Chamber of Commerce
- General Manager of a peer agency (special district, city or county)
- Provide proof of completion signed by individuals completing Community Transparency Review



SHOWCASE YOUR DISTRICT'S COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY

District Transparency Certificate of Excellence

Submit Application

Submit this application along with all required documentation to:

SPECIAL DISTRICT LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION
 1112 I Street, Suite 200
 Sacramento, CA 95814
 Phone: 916-231-2939 • Fax: 916-442-7889

DISTRICT:		
MAILING ADDRESS:		
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
CONTACT NAME:		
CONTACT TITLE:		
PHONE:	FAX:	
EMAIL:	WEBSITE:	
ASSEMBLY MEMBER(S)*:		
SENATOR*:		
LOCAL NEWSPAPER(S):		
I CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION SUBMITTED IS ACCURATE AND COMPLETE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.		SIGNATURE:

Showcase your District's Commitment to Transparency

APPENDIX E



FOR DIRECTORS AND TRUSTEES

Recognition in Special District Governance

This recognition is an opportunity for staff, board members and trustees to demonstrate to their constituents and colleagues the extent of their commitment and dedication to providing the best possible service to the communities they serve.

Requirements

- CSDA SPECIAL DISTRICT LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**
Requires completion of all four modules of the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) Special District Leadership Academy within the last two years:
Module 1: Governance Foundations
Module 2: Setting Direction & Community Leadership
Module 3: Board's Role in Finance & Fiscal Accountability
Module 4: Board's Role in Human Resources
- ELECTIVE COURSES**
Requires at least 10 hours of continuing education from the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) or another statewide association specializing in local government.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the Recognition program?

Recognition in Special District Governance was designed to acknowledge special district board members/trustees that have taken the time and made the effort to get core governance training and continuing education. The program is comprised of two distinct parts: the CSDA Special District Leadership Academy, and at least 10 hours of continuing education from the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) or another statewide association specializing in local government.

Who should apply?

This is an individual recognition. Special district board members, trustees and staff are encouraged to apply.

What do you receive?

Upon completion and verification of the application and submission of the one-time fee, you will be recognized by receiving a custom certificate in a beautiful padded folder, along with the recognition at an upcoming event should you be able to attend.

Is there a way for my district to be recognized also?

In addition to recognitions given to individual directors/trustees and staff, there is also a District Recognition. Districts that have a majority of their governing board holding recognitions will receive a Silver Recognition, and districts with their entire board holding recognitions will receive a Gold Recognition. District Recognitions will be presented at an upcoming event should representatives be able to attend.

How long is the recognition good for?

This is recognition for a lifetime. All you need to do is keep SDLF current anytime you change address, jobs, etc.

Fees

Individual Recognition: \$65

District Recognition: free of charge

Prove Your Commitment to Good Governance



Submit Application

Submit this application along with all required documentation and payment of \$65 for individual recognition

(additional District Recognition is free of charge) to:

SPECIAL DISTRICT LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION

1112 I Street, Suite 200

Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 916-231-2939 • Fax: 916-442-7889 • www.sdlf.org

NAME:		
DISTRICT:		
CONTACT NAME:		
CONTACT TITLE:		
MAILING ADDRESS:		
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
PHONE:	FAX:	
EMAIL:	WEBSITE:	

CSDA SPECIAL DISTRICT LEADERSHIP ACADEMY	
MODULE	DATE TAKEN
MODULE 1: GOVERNANCE FOUNDATIONS	
MODULE 2: SETTING DIRECTION / COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP	
MODULE 3: BOARD'S ROLE IN FINANCE & FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY	
MODULE 4: BOARD'S ROLE IN HUMAN RESOURCES	

ELECTIVES* (AT LEAST 10 HOURS REQUIRED WITHIN THE LAST TWO YEARS)		
COURSE TITLE & SPONSORING ORGANIZATION	DATE TAKEN	HOURS
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

*Please attach any verifying documentation. Use additional pages if necessary.

PAYMENT	
TOTAL: \$	<input type="checkbox"/> CHECK <input type="checkbox"/> VISA <input type="checkbox"/> MASTERCARD <input type="checkbox"/> DISCOVER <input type="checkbox"/> AMERICAN EXPRESS
ACCT. NAME:	ACCT. NUMBER:
EXPIRATION DATE:	AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE:

Prove Your Commitment to Good Governance



FOR GENERAL MANAGERS AND TOP MANAGEMENT

Special District Administrator Certification

The SDA Certification is a voluntary designation sought by individuals who strive to be the best in their field. Administrators with various academic and professional backgrounds can be candidates for the program.

Qualifying For The Exam

The certification application in special district administration is built around specific categories. These factors include professional special district and related experience; related continuing education; community service and higher education background.

CURRENT EXPERIENCE

In order to earn the SDA Certification, an individual must have:

- Worked three out of the last five years in a position of management in a California special district. Related work experience with other public agencies or private firms may be considered by application to the Certification and Audit Review Advisory Committee. A current resume is required with your application.

ACCEPTED COURSES

All courses offered by the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) or any statewide association specializing in local government are valid for the certification program and can count as continuing education. Applicants submitting course credits from other organizations, academic institutions or private firms, must include:

- General course descriptions for consideration by the Certification and Audit Review Advisory Committee. A written notification will be provided if course work is not accepted. The applicant then has an opportunity to appeal.
- All continuing education submitted for review must be from within the last five years.

Examination

A total of 400 points is required to qualify for the opportunity to take the examination based on the identified categories. The points listed to the right of each section in the application indicate the minimum/maximum points a candidate must have in each area. You can submit excess points for review, however must have at least 400 qualified points to move forward.

Upon determination of eligibility and qualification, an individual will be scheduled for the examination. Qualified applicants will be notified regarding the annual examination schedule. Applicants will also be notified of examination results within 30 days of taking the exam.

The exam consists of 100 total questions across many areas related to special district management, operations and governance and must be completed within two hours. A score of 70 or more is required to pass the exam. If unsuccessful on the first attempt, the exam may be re-taken once at a different time with no additional charge or application.

Fees

All fees are non-refundable.

ONE-TIME APPLICATION FEE

There is a \$300 application fee for the Certification in Special District Administration Program. This fee includes the SDA study guide and review and evaluation of points earned prior to taking the examination. In the event that an applicant does not initially meet the minimum point requirement for taking the examination, the fee submitted remains valid for three years to allow ample time for accumulation of points.

EXAM FEE

The fee for the certification examination is \$150. The exam may be re-taken once at a different time with no additional charge or application.

RECERTIFICATION FEE

The fee for recertification is \$50 and must be submitted in accordance with the requirements for maintaining SDA certification as listed below.

Maintaining SDA Certification

The SDA Certification is valid for four years from the date of successfully passing the exam. It can be kept current by completion of 75 continuing education points and a nominal recertification fee submitted to SDLF within each additional four-year period.

Become a Certified Leader in Special Districts

Special District Administrator (SDA) Certification Application

Please provide details, dates and appropriate documentation. Use additional pages if necessary.

PROFESSIONAL SPECIAL DISTRICT & RELATED EXPERIENCE				(120 - 200 POINTS)
1. DISTRICT/GENERAL MANAGER EXPERIENCE				
FROM:	TO:	YEARS IN POSITION:	(X) 3 -	
2. ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER/SR. MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE				
FROM:	TO:	YEARS IN POSITION:	(X) 25 -	
3. OTHER RELATED MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE				
FROM:	TO:	YEARS IN POSITION:	(X) 15 -	
HIGHER EDUCATION BACKGROUND (ONLY HIGHEST DEGREE EARNED MAY BE USED TOWARD YOUR TOTAL SCORE)				(0 - 25 POINTS)
DEGREE	INSTITUTION	LOCATION	DATE	
ASSOCIATE (50 POINTS)				
BACHELOR (75 POINTS)				
MASTER (100 POINTS)				
DOCTORATE (125 POINTS)				
COMMUNITY SERVICE (5 POINTS PER ACTIVITY PER YEAR)				(10 - 25 POINTS)
Service to the community in the spirit of maintaining a connection to special districts and local government. This section was designed to account for volunteer activities outside the scope of your everyday job responsibilities, while still relating specifically to your local community. Please describe your contribution, level of involvement from the experience and the relevancy to special districts, local government and/or the community.				
ACTIVITY	DATE	Briefly describe your contribution and the relevancy to districts, local government and/or community.		
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

*attach additional pages as necessary



RELATED CONTINUING EDUCATION (8 POINTS FULL DAY, 4 POINTS HALF DAY, 1 POINT PER HOUR)			(160-240 POINTS)
All courses offered by the California Special Districts Association, any statewide association specializing in local government and/or an organization with a focus in the areas outlined in the SDA Study Guide (public policy, management, administration, governance, etc.) are valid for the certificate program. Example: Attendance at CSDA's Annual Conference would be worth 20 hours. If you are submitting points outside of these guidelines, please provide an extensive overview of the program with the application. Each program will be evaluated by the Certification and Audit Review Advisory Committee.			
REQUIREMENTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least half (50 percent) of continuing education points submitted are in trainings specifically focused on performance in special district operations and governance. • All continuing education needs to have been completed within five years of application submission. • Continuing education must include current AB 1234 Ethics Training (2 hours) and AB 1825 Harassment Prevention Training (2 hours). This applies to recertification also. 			
SPONSOR & TITLE OF PROGRAM	DATE(S)	NUMBER OF HOURS	
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
TOTAL			

Submit Application

Submit this application along with all required documentation and payment to:

SPECIAL DISTRICT LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION
 1112 I Street, Suite 200
 Sacramento, CA 95814
 Phone: 916-231-7939 • Fax: 916-447-7889 • www.sdlf.org

NAME:		
DISTRICT:		
MAILING ADDRESS:		
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
PHONE:	FAX:	
EMAIL:	WEBSITE:	
In making this application, I fully understand that it an application for enrollment purposes only. In order to complete registration I will submit to an examination and supply further information as required by the Certification and Audit Review Advisory Committee. I further understand and, by my signature, acknowledge that any false statement or misrepresentation I may make in the course of these proceedings and application may result in the revocation of this application.		
APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE:		DATE:

PAYMENT	
TOTAL \$	<input type="checkbox"/> CHECK <input type="checkbox"/> VISA <input type="checkbox"/> MASTERCARD <input type="checkbox"/> DISCOVER <input type="checkbox"/> AMERICAN EXPRESS
ACCT. NAME:	ACCT. NUMBER:
EXPIRATION DATE:	AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE:

The Special District Administrator Certification does not discriminate on any basis, including race, sex, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability.

Become a Certified Leader in Special Districts

APPENDIX G

San Mateo County
Independent Special Districts
Property Tax Revenue
FY 2012-13

Special Districts	Secured (a)	Unsecured	Supplemental (c)	Homeowner's			RDA - Residuals (d)	RDA - Pass Through Payments (e)	RDA - Low & Moderate		Total
				Exemption	Excess EB&F	Income Housing Funds (f)			RDA - Other Funds (g)		
Bayshore Sanitary District	\$ 60,918.08	\$ 85,742.22	\$ 4,385.64	\$ 1,543.11	\$ 31,331.00	\$ 131,252.08	\$ 29,627.82	\$ 32,935.65		\$ 304,539.00	
Broadmoor Police Protection District	1,000,068.95	52,422.16	17,507.00	6,174.98	29,049.00					1,337,191.09	
Coastside County Water District	623,001.51	36,933.21	11,899.35	4,170.28	311,572.00					987,386.55	
Coastside Fire District	6,933,526.15	407,506.41	132,336.26	46,440.00	763,044.00					8,282,922.82	
Colma Fire Protection District	646,925.81	34,655.14	11,214.38	3,948.97						695,748.26	
East Palo Alto Sanitary District	298,542.36	13,252.27	105,783.00	3,663.24	143,267.00	58,103.35	143,682.91	119,801.56	95,933.82	887,526.41	
Granada Sanitary District	465,381.95	27,406.32	8,893.21	3,123.22	232,011.00					737,514.70	
Highlands Recreation District	298,217.42	17,267.97	5,662.20	2,001.66	71,893.00					395,338.25	
Ladera Recreation District	178,077.72	6,915.13	2,231.24	787.92	35,867.00					173,899.01	
Los Trancos County Water District	223,622.04	12,147.15	3,931.29	1,384.20	56,481.00					297,566.18	
Menlo Park Fire Protection District	26,313,330.83	1,258,777.81	392,425.55	186,491.13	2,577,891.00	128,403.08	1,046,908.64	913,102.39	1,500,409.88	34,516,983.31	
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District	8,940,217.77	480,440.91	180,412.85	63,627.99		172,700.73	78,153.17	159,438.39	270,263.82	10,380,825.63	
Mid Peninsula Water District	138,886.53	8,961.68	3,100.71	1,189.91	64,226.00	13,483.52	7,889.51	383.61	519.95	233,740.42	
Montara Water and Sanitary District	391,427.95	21,523.65	7,012.70	2,456.46	190,037.00					606,539.77	
Mosquito and Vector Control District	1,540,638.35	86,331.79	31,279.12	11,940.65	236,011.00	29,459.33	35,463.49	42,782.15	29,678.79	2,045,889.67	
North Coast County Water District	46,800.58	24,951.89	4,679.23	2,916.77	21,152.00		587.40	7,483.66	1,031.38	73,562.84	
Penninsula Health Care District	4,039,437.78	242,246.68	82,119.20	28,998.94		136,546.77	30,830.10	138,274.53	42,513.44	4,499,296.44	
Resource Conservation District	47,788.39	2,512.91	873.25	288.46	3,936.00	893.00		1,346.25	6.52	57,405.32	
San Mateo County Harbor District	3,423,139.22	179,173.32	77,462.42	25,520.99	832,021.00	703,987.44	32,891.38	206,807.60	59,465.05	5,040,538.42	
Sequoy Health Care District	8,428,488.15	441,794.61	155,292.02	54,740.66		167,212.44	18,916.62	47,249.02	16,777.63	9,336,401.15	
West Bay Sanitary District ^(h)											
Westborough Water District	238,893.34	12,776.40	4,176.26	1,456.26	110,402.00					367,604.26	
Woodsley Fire Protection District	17,407,773.36	693,344.31	223,498.47	78,997.96	1,627,139.00					15,000,923.09	
Totals	\$ 77,668,695.25	\$ 4,071,725.93	\$ 1,366,068.02	\$ 520,826.26	\$ 2,385,225.00	\$ 1,040,622.86	\$ 1,409,026.03	\$ 1,674,824.81	\$ 1,966,620.28	\$ 97,118,738.22	

NOTES:

- (a) West Bay Sanitary District does not receive property tax revenues. They have special charges which generated \$17,235,961 in revenues for the taxing entity in FY 2012-2013.
- (b) Secured revenues include unitary property tax. All property tax revenues are net of refunds.
- (c) Supplemental revenues represent current secured supplemental revenues only. This does not include unsecured supplemental and redemption supplemental.
- (d) RDA Residual and Pass Through Payments are ongoing until completion of RDA wind down. Amounts may vary from year due to various factors (refunds, revenue amounts, retirement of obligations).
- (e) These are one-time monies taxing entities received as a result of the RDA dissolution.

Bayshore Sanitary District

36 INDUSTRIAL WAY
BRISBANE, CALIFORNIA 94005
(415) 467-1144

RECEIVED

AUG 12 2014

Dept. No. 13

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
IRIS GALLAGHER
WALTER V. QUINTEROS
NORMAN RIZZI
MAE SWANBECK
KENNETH TONNA

August 6, 2014

JOHN BAKKER, ATTORNEY
RICH LANDI, MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR
TOM YEAGER, DISTRICT ENGINEER

Hon. Lisa A. Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Subject: FY 2013-14 Grand Jury Report: "Partly Cloudy with Chance of Information:
Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts' Websites"

Honorable Judge Novak:

At its' July 24, 2014 meeting the Board of Directors approved the following response to the report referenced above.

R1. Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.

Agree

R2. By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above.

Agree

R3. Each district will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.

Agree

R4. Districts will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.

Agree

R5. Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015.

Disagree

The District already follows the requirements of transparency and compliance.



R6. Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015.

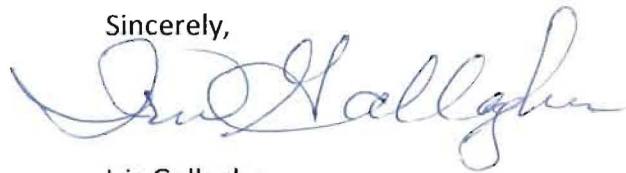
Disagree.

There are a number of webinars (see attached) offered by the California Special Districts Association which provide a very cost effective way for districts to encourage ongoing learning for directors. Those opportunities would not incur additional costs for travel, hotel accommodations, program fees, etc. The District is considering conducting a workshop on, but not limited to, strategic and succession planning. There are a number of consulting firms who have the ability to tailor such a workshop for our Board, including BHI Consulting, a firm used by the California Special Districts Association for in-house training.

R7. District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.

Not applicable to our District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Iris Gallagher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "I" and "G".

Iris Gallagher
President of the Board



California Special Districts Association

EDUCATION SCHEDULE

- Webinars
- Workshops
- Academy
- Conferences
- ** Free to SDRMA

Event	Event	Location	Webinar	Workshop
9	The Clock is Ticking: Public Records Act Reimbursement			
14	SDLA: Board's Role in Finance & Fiscal	Bakersfield		YES
15	Required Sexual Harassment Prevention Training**			YES
16	How To Be An Effective Board Member	Templeton		YES
22	Finding Balance: Special District Reserve Guidelines			
23	How To Be An Effective Board Member	Fountain Valley		YES
28	Report the Right Way! GASB 2014 Update			
29	Rules of Order Made Easy!		YES	YES
30	How To Be An Effective Board Member	Sacramento		YES
Event				
4	Must Have Communication Protocols for District Board Members & Staff**			YES
6	SDLA: Board's Role in Human Resources	Sacramento		YES
7	SDLA: Board's Role in Finance & Fiscal	Sacramento		YES
11	Spot the Fraud: Fraud Detection/Prevention for Special Districts**			YES
13	The Essential Guide to the Brown Act**			YES
19	Understanding Board Member & Dist. Liability Issues**		YES	YES
25	Maximize Your Membership - Website Resources			
27-28	Board Secretary Clerk Conference	Napa		YES
Event				
5	Required Ethics Compliance Training - AB1234**			YES
7	SDLA: Board's Role in Human Resources	Bakersfield		YES
11	What's a Public Record? How to Comply with the PRA			YES
13	New Developments Under PEPRA			
18	SDLA: Governance Foundations	Sacramento		YES
20	Affordable Care Act: Present and Future			
25	Building Your Workforce in the 21st Century			
27	Legislative Round-Up			
Event				
2	Ask the Experts: CSDA Finance Corporation			
8	Incident Writing: Just the Facts**			YES
10	Best Practices in Agenda Prep/Minutes		YES	YES
23	Records Retention & Management		YES	YES
25	SDLA: Setting Direction/Community Leadership	Bakersfield		YES
29	Proposition 218, Proposition 26 and Rate Setting			

Event	Event	Location	Webinar	Workshop
1	R.A.P.I.D. Innovation: Converting Ideas into Results			
13	Maximize Your Membership - Cost Saving Programs			
19	SDLA: Setting Direction/Community Leadership	Sacramento		YES
20-21	Special Districts Legislative Days			
Event				
4	Top 10 Tips for Trouble Free Construction Projects			
11	Best Practices in Managing Special District Investments			
22-24	General Manager Leadership Summit	Lake Tahoe		YES
Event				
16	Required Sexual Harassment Prevention Training**			YES
17	Staying in Compliance	San Diego	YES	YES
18	Board Secretary/Clerk Foundations	San Diego	YES	YES
30	Legislative Round-Up			
Event				
6	Improve Your Outreach Skills and Build Bridges to Your Community			
13	Understanding Board Member & Dist. Liability Issues**		YES	YES
19	The New Transparent District: Building the Public's Trust			
21	Understanding the Brown Act: Beyond the Basics**			YES
27	Do's and Don'ts for Employee Performance Evaluations**			YES
Event				
9/29	SDLA: Pre-Conference Workshop: Governance Foundations	Palm Springs		YES
9/29	Annual Conference	Palm Springs		YES
Event				
22	Now is Not the Time to Panic: Emergency Preparedness**			YES
Event				
13	Required Ethics Compliance Training - AB1234**			YES
TBD	Special District Leadership Academy Conference			YES
Event				
10	Must Have Communication Protocols for District Board Members and Staff**			YES



BROADMOOR POLICE DEPARTMENT

388 Eighty Eighth Street
Broadmoor, CA 94015-1717
(650) 755-3838 • Fax (650) 755-9732



David Parenti
Chief of Police

Board of Police Commissioners
Hon. J. Wayne Johnson
Hon. Ralph Hutchens
Hon. Joseph P. Sheridan

Hon. Lisa A. Novak
Appellate Presiding Judge
San Mateo County Superior Court
Southern Court – Dept. 13, Courtroom 2C
400 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

September 8, 2014

Judge Novak,

The transparency of the Broadmoor Police Department website as set forth by the Grand Jury of San Mateo County, has been addressed.

The following updates have been made to our website to conform to the standards set forth by the Grand Jury of San Mateo County. Each update is marked as Completed and can be found on our website www.broadmoorpolice.com.

For true transparency all of the following items should be readily apparent:

- Names of Board or Commission members and their terms of office (Completed)
- Names of general manager, fire or police chief, and key staff along with contact information for each (Completed)
- Election procedure and deadlines (Completed)
- Board meeting schedule (regular meeting agendas must be posted 72 hours in advance) (Completed)
- District's mission statement (Completed)
- Description of district's services/functions and service area (Completed)
- Archive of Board meeting minutes for at least the last 6 months (Completed)
- List of compensation of Board or Commission members and staff and/or link to State Controller's webpage with the data (Completed)

In addition, the website of each district should include at least 4 of the following: (We hit 4 of these points)

- Picture, biography and email address of Board or Commission members (Completed)
- Downloadable Public Records Act request form (Completed)
- Map of district boundaries/service area (Completed)
- Most recent Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) studies or link to LAFCo's site8 (Completed)

You will find these updates located on our department homepage as well as the page marked Commission.

Here are the web addresses to each:

<http://www.broadmoorpolice.com/>

RECEIVED
SEP 11 2014
Dept. No. 13

<http://www.broadmoorpolice.com/commission.html>

If there are any questions or further updates to our website are needed, please do contact us.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Parenti', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dave Parenti
Chief of Police
Broadmoor Police Department
388 88th Street
Broadmoor, CA 94015
(650) 755-0321



July 11, 2014

Hon. Lisa A. Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

**Re: Coastside County Water District Response to 2013-2014 Grand Jury Report
Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency
of Independent Special Districts' Websites**

Honorable Judge Novak:

This letter transmits the response of Coastside County Water District (District) to the 2013-2014 Grand Jury Report referenced above. The District is committed to transparency and appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury Report. The District's Board of Directors approved the response at their regularly scheduled Board meeting on July 8, 2014.

Response to Findings

F1. Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.

The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding as stated. Coastside County Water District has a professionally created website.

F2. Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.

The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding as stated. The District employs a qualified firm to update information on its website.

F3. Privacy concerns of Boards of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contact information.

The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding as stated. The District does not agree with this finding as it applies to the District. The District's website contains contact information for all directors.

F4. Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.

The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding as stated. The District is committed to transparency delivered through its website.

F5. No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction program offered by Special Districts Leadership Foundation (SDLF).

The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding as stated. The District has not completed this voluntary program.

F6. No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding as stated. The District has not earned the voluntary SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

F7. Only 2 of 23 independent special districts in the County have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.

The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding as stated. The District has not achieved the voluntary SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.

F8. No general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification.

The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding as stated. The District's General Manager has not achieved the voluntary SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.

Response to Recommendations

R1. Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.

The District will implement this recommendation no later than May 15, 2015.

R2. By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above.

The District has implemented this recommendation, as it already employs professional website developers to manage its website.

R3. Each district will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.

The District has implemented this recommendation and will keep its website current on a continuing basis.

R4. Districts will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.

This recommendation requires further analysis, and consideration of the need to balance the time, effort, and resources required to complete the recommended program with the other important priorities and demands on the District's relatively small staff, particularly in this time of drought. This further analysis will be undertaken within six months from the date of the Grand Jury report. Although the District may elect to pursue this program in the future, the District asserts that it is in compliance with all laws and regulations and that the District's operations are well managed without regard to participation in the voluntary recognition programs offered by SDLF.

R5. Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015.

The District will implement this recommendation by the stated date.

R6. Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015.

This recommendation requires further analysis, and consideration of the need to balance the time, effort, and resources required to complete the recommended program with the other important priorities and demands on the District's relatively small staff, particularly in this time of drought. This further analysis will be undertaken within six months from the date of the Grand Jury report. Although the District may elect to pursue this program in the future, the District asserts that it is in compliance with all laws and regulations and that the District's operations are well managed without regard to participation in the voluntary recognition programs offered by SDLF.

R7. District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.

This recommendation requires further analysis, and consideration of the need to balance the time, effort, and resources required to complete the recommended program with the other important priorities and demands on the District's relatively small staff, particularly in this time of drought. This further analysis will be undertaken within six months from the date of the Grand Jury report. Although the District may elect to pursue this program in the future, the District asserts that it is in compliance with all laws and regulations and that the District's operations are well managed without regard to participation in the voluntary recognition programs offered by SDLF.

Hon. Lisa A. Novak
Coastside County Water District Response to 2013-2014 Grand Jury Report
Page 4

Thank you for the opportunity to respond. If you have any questions about the District's response to the Grand Jury Report, please call me at 650.726.4405 or email me at ddickson@coastsidewater.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David R. Dickson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David R. Dickson
General Manager



COASTSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

1191 MAIN STREET ■ HALF MOON BAY, CA 94019

TELEPHONE (650) 726-5213

FAX (650) 726-0132

August 11, 2014

Honorable Lisa A. Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Judge Novak:

The Coastside Fire Protection District Board has had an opportunity to review the 2013-2014 Grand Jury report entitled "Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts' Websites." The District Board after reviewing the report and allowing for public comment at its regular Board meeting on July 23, 2014 offers the following responses:

Responses to Findings

Finding F1. Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.

Response: The Respondent agrees that some districts may be misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.

Finding F2. Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.

Response: The Respondent agrees that some special districts may lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.

Finding F3. Privacy concerns of Boards of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contact information.

Response: The Respondent agrees that privacy concerns of some Boards of Directors or Commissioners may result in a lack of readily accessible contact information.

Finding F4. Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.

Response: The Respondent agrees that not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.

Finding F5. No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction program offered by Special Districts Leadership Foundation (SDLF).

Response: The Respondent agrees, to the best of its knowledge, that no County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction program offered by Special Districts Leadership Foundation (SDLF).

Finding F6. No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

Response: The Respondent agrees, to the best of its knowledge, that no independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

Finding F7. Only 2 of 23 independent special districts in the County have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.

Response: The Respondent agrees, to the best of its knowledge, that only 2 of 23 independent special districts in the County have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.

Finding F8. No general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification.

Response: The Respondent agrees, to the best of its knowledge, that no general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification.

Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation R1. Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. The District's website currently includes:

- **Names of Board or Commission members and their terms of office:** Names and photos of Board members along with their terms of office can be found on the "Board of Directors" page.
- **Names of general manager, fire or police chief, and key staff along with contact information for each:** Names of Fire/Battalion Chiefs and key staff can be found on the "About Us/District Staff" page. Contact information for Fire Chiefs and District staff can be found on the "Contact Us" page.
- **Election procedure and deadlines:** A link to the San Mateo County Elections Office (<https://www.shapethefuture.org>) can be found on the "Quick Links/Phone Numbers & Websites" page.
- **Board meeting schedule (regular meeting agendas must be posted 72 hours in advance):** The next scheduled Board meeting can be found in the "upcoming events" section on the "Homepage". The Board meeting schedule with regular meetings posted 72 hours in advance of meetings can be found on the "Board of Directors/Agendas, Minutes & Video" page.
- **District's mission statement:** The District's mission statement can be found in the "our mission" section on the "Homepage" and on the "About Us" page.
- **Description of district's services/functions and service area:** The District's service area is listed in the "Welcome" section on the "Homepage". A description of the District's services/functions and service area can be found on the "About Us" page. A map of the District's response area can be found on the "About Us/Response Area" page.
- **Authorizing statute/enabling act:** A link to the Fire Protection District Law Act of 1987 (<http://sgf.senate.ca.gov/thefireprotectiondistrictlawof1987>) can be found on the "Quick Links/Phone Numbers & Websites" page.
- **Current District budget:** – Budgets from the last seven (7) years are published on the "Documents & Forms" page.

- **Most recent financial audit:** – Audit reports from 2007-2012 are published on the “Documents & Forms” page.
- **Archive of Board meeting minutes for at least the last six (6) months:** Board meeting minutes from December 10, 2008 – present are published on the “Board of Directors/Agendas, Minutes & Video” page.
- **List of compensation of Board or Commission members and staff and/or link to State Controller’s website:** Director’s payroll checks are published each month, found in Board Packet in consent calendar on the “Board of Directors/Agendas, Minutes & Video” page. For staff compensation information, a link to the State Worker Salary Database (<http://www.sacbee.com/statepay/#req=employee%2Ftop%2Fyear%3D2013>) can be found on the “Quick Links/Phone Numbers & Websites” page. Additionally, a link to the Board policy regarding reimbursement and compensation can be found on the “Board of Directors/Additional Information” page.

The website also contains:

- Pictures, biographies and email addresses of the Board of Directors on the “Board of Directors” page.
- A link to the Board policy regarding reimbursement and compensation on the “Board of Directors/Additional Information” page.
- A downloadable Public Records Act request form on the “Documents & Forms” page.
- A link to video recordings of Board meetings (<http://www.montarafog.com>) on the “Board of Directors/Agenda, Minutes & Video” page.
- Map of service area on the “About Us/Response Area” page.
- A link to the San Mateo County LAFCo Municipal Services and Sphere of Influence Reviews (<http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/portal/site/lafco/menuitem.1935d6d126efab1874452b31d17332a0/?vgnnexto id=3fa10f68ed180210VgnVCM1000001d37230aRCRD>) on the “Quick Links/Phone Numbers & Websites” page.

The District will now begin posting the Director’s ethics training certificates as well.

Recommendation R2. By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. The District's website was originally developed using the professional services of Wired Moon. Michele Ortiz currently serves as the District's in-house website manager. Wired Moon services continue to be available to the District upon request.

Recommendation R3. Each district will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. See response to Recommendation R2.

Recommendation R4. Districts will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis for the District to determine the procedure and requirements necessary to implement this Recommendation. The timeframe for said analysis shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury Report.

Recommendation R5. Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015.

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis for the District to determine the procedure and requirements necessary to implement this Recommendation. The timeframe for said analysis shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury Report.

Recommendation R6. Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015.

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis for the District to determine the procedure and requirements necessary to implement this Recommendation. The timeframe for said analysis shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury Report.

Honorable Lisa A. Novak
August 4, 2014
Page 6

Recommendation R7. District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.

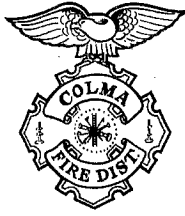
Response: The recommendation requires further analysis for the District to determine the procedure and requirements necessary to implement this Recommendation. The timeframe for said analysis shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury Report.

Respectfully submitted,



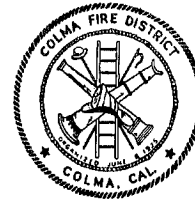
Gary Burke
President, Coastside Fire Protection District

*Board of Fire
Commissioners*
Maryanne Hazard
Gina Sheridan
Peter Dabai



COLMA FIRE DISTRICT

50 REINER STREET
COLMA, CALIFORNIA 94014
Phone (650) Plaza 5-5666
Fax (650) 755-5691



Fire Chief
Geoffrey C. Balton

August 19th, 2014

Honorable Lisa A. Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
C/O Charlene Kresevich
Hall Of Justice
400 County Center, 4th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

SUBJECT: District response to Grand Jury Report: “ Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts Websites”

Dear Honorable Judge Novak,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above mentioned Grand Jury Report. On behalf of Colma Fire District and the Board of Directors we thank you for the information related to this topic.

The Grand Jury report was on the agenda for the August 17th Board of Directors meeting. And we will revisit this subject at future meeting.

The Colma Fire District was disappointed, once again, that our Fire Chief was not contacted by the Grand Jury and therefore we were not able to directly respond to the inquiries of the Grand Jury.

Findings:

F1. The Fire District disagrees with the finding. We looked at having a third party web design and found the cost for us to be about \$10,000.00.

Serving the Unincorporated Areas of:
Broadmoor Village, Garden Village, Sterling Park and the Incorporated Town of Colma
Organized June 8, 1925

Page 2.

F2. We agree with this finding.

F3. We agree with this finding.

F4. We cannot speak for other Special District; however we do recognize the benefit of transparency and have always worked to provide that.

F5. We agree with this finding as far as the Colma Fire District is concerned.

F6. We agree with this finding.

F7. We agree with this finding.

F8. We agree with this finding.

Recommendations:

R1. The Fire District will evaluate the SDLF's transparency criteria and adopt items deemed prudent by the Fire District Board of Directors.

R2. We have been doing this since prior to the Grand Jury Report.

R3. We agree with this recommendation and have been working to identify ways to do this.

R4. We will not be spending the time or funds to complete this program in the current fiscal year.

R5. We will not be spending the time to obtain this certificate in the current fiscal year.

R6. We will not be spending the time or funds required for this recognition in the current fiscal year.

R7. We will not be spending the time or funds required to obtain this certificate in the current fiscal year.

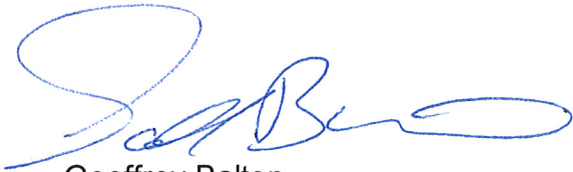
Page 3

The Colma Fire District has one part time Executive Officer (fire Chief) and no full time administrative staff. The Fire Chief is well aware of the time commitment required to accomplish findings five thru eight, along with recommendations four thru seven and has chosen with concurrence of the Board , to instead focus on efforts and funding of the District to the provision of services it was established to provide. All of the staff of the district has collateral duties already.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Dabai", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter Dabai,
Chair, Colma Fire Protection District
Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Geoffrey Balton", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Geoffrey Balton
Fire Chief



EAST PALO ALTO SANITARY DISTRICT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Goro Mitchell, President
Bethzabe Yañez, Vice President
Joan Sykes-Miessi, Secretary
Glenda Savage, Director
Dennis Scherzer, Director

901 Weeks Street
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
Phone: (650) 325-9021
Fax: (650) 325-5173
www.epasd.com
Kenneth C. Jones, General Manager

August 14, 2014

Honorable Lisa A. Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA. 94063-1655

Re: East Palo Alto Sanitary District Response to 2013-2014 Grand Jury Report: Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special District's Websites

Honorable Judge Novak:

This letter transmits the response of the East Palo Alto Sanitary District (EPASD) to the 2013-2014 Grand Jury Report referenced above. EPASD is committed to transparency and the EPASD Board of Directors approved this response at a Special Board Meeting on August 14, 2014.

Response to Grand Jury Findings

F1. Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.

EPASD does not have information about other special district websites and therefore cannot agree or disagree with this finding. EPASD is currently working with a professional consulting firm to develop a new website.

F2. Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.

EPASD has retained and is currently working with a professional consulting firm that has in its scope of work assisting our staff members to become proficient in updating the new website.

F3. Privacy concerns of Boards of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contract information.

EPASD does not have information about other Board of Directors or Commissioners outside of the EPASD and therefore cannot agree or disagree with this finding. The Board member's name, picture, term length, next election date and email address is included on the District's website.

F4. Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.

EPASD does not have information about other special districts and therefore cannot agree or disagree with this finding. EPASD is committed to transparency and a large portion is intended to be delivered through our new website.

F5. No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction program offered by Special Districts Leadership Foundation (SDLF).

EPASD does not have information about other special districts and therefore cannot agree or disagree with this finding. EPASD has not completed this voluntary program but intends to complete this program.

F6. No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

EPASD does not have information about other special districts and therefore cannot agree or disagree with this finding. EPASD has not yet earned this voluntary SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

F7. Only 2 of 23 independent special districts in the County have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.

EPASD does not have information about other special districts and therefore cannot agree or disagree with this finding. EPASD has not yet earned this voluntary SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

F8. No general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification.

EPASD does not have information about other special district management officials and therefore cannot agree or disagree with this finding. EPASD's General Manager has not achieved this voluntary SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.

Response to Recommendations

R1. Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.

EPASD is currently working on a new formatted website and fully intends to conform to the SDLF transparency checklist.

R2. By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above.

EPASD has retained a website development firm that is currently working with our staff on a new website. The website will be maintained by our existing staff.

R3. Each district will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.

EPASD intends to comply with this recommendation with its current staff.

Honorable Lisa A. Novak
August 15, 2014
Page 3

R4. District will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.

EPASD will review the requirements to become a District of Distinction and will consider the time and effort to meet these requirements along with the ongoing requirements of maintaining the current District operations before making a final commitment to this recommendation.

R5. Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015.

EPASD will review the requirements for this certification prior to making a final commitment to this recommendation.

R6. Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015.

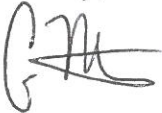
EPASD will review the requirements of this training and will consider the time and effort to meet these requirements along with the ongoing requirements of maintaining the current District operations before making a final commitment to this recommendation.

R7. District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administration Certification.

EPASD will review the requirements of this certification and will consider the time and effort to meet the requirements of the certification along with the ongoing requirements of maintaining the current District operations before making a final commitment to this recommendation.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this matter and if I can be of further service, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Goro Mitchell', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Goro Mitchell
President,
Board of Directors



GRANADA SANITARY DISTRICT
OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

Board of Directors

Matthew Clark, President

Leonard Woren, Vice-President

Jim Blanchard, Secretary

David Seaton, Treasurer

Ric Lohman, Board Member

July 20, 2014

Honorable Lisa A. Novack, Judge of the Superior Court
San Mateo County Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655



Re: Grand Jury Report Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts' Websites

Dear Ms. Novack:

This letter is in response to the above referenced report, and was approved as such by the Granada Sanitary District Board of Directors (GSD) at its Regular Meeting held on July 19, 2014. Copied below are the Report Findings and Recommendations followed by a response to each.

FINDINGS

- F1. Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.
GSD agrees with the finding.
- F2. Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.
GSD disagrees partially with the finding. Some (not all) special districts may lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.
- F3. Privacy concerns of Board of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contact information.
GSD agrees with the finding.
- F4. Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.
GSD agrees with the finding.
- F5. No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction program offered by Special Districts Leadership Foundation.
GSD agrees with the finding.

- F6. No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.
GSD agrees with the finding.
- F7. No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.
GSD agrees with the finding.
- F8. No general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification.
GSD agrees with the finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

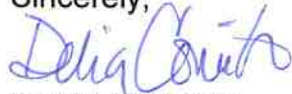
- R1. Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.
This recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented on or before May 15, 2015.
- R2. By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above.
This recommendation has been implemented. The District has previously consulted with a professional website developer to create and manage the District's website. This recommendation is currently in effect.
- R3. Each district will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.
This recommendation has been implemented. The District has previously consulted with a professional website developer to create and manage the District's website. The recommendation is currently in effect.
- R4. Districts will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.
This recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented on or before May 15, 2015.
- R5. Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015.
This recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented on or before May 15, 2015.
- R6. Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015.
This recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented on or before May 15, 2015.

R7. Districts administrators will seek the SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification.

This recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented on or before May 15, 2015.

We appreciate the opportunity to improve our district website transparency for the benefit of the public we serve. Should you have any questions, please contact us at (650) 726-7093.

Sincerely,



DELIA COMITO
District Administrator



Highlands Recreation District

1851 Lexington Avenue • San Mateo, CA 94402

(650) 341-4251 • Fax (650) 349-9627

www.highlandsrec.ca.gov

"Where Family Traditions Begin"

RECEIVED

JUL 14 2014

Dept. No. 13

July 9, 2014

Hon. Lisa Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Honorable Ms. Novak:

In response to the May 19, 2014 Grand Jury Report, the Highlands Recreation District (HRD) hereby submits the following. This response was approved by the HRD Board of Directors at its July 8, 2014 board meeting.

General Comment: The HRD generally agrees with the findings and recommendations made in the report. In fact, the HRD engaged the services of a professional web development firm to revise our website in the latter half of 2013, possibly during the time the investigation was occurring. The HRD's new site launched October 2013 and has been continually upgraded and updated since that time. Mitigation of deficiencies identified or potentially identified in the Grand Jury report has been addressed.

FINDINGS

F1: Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.

Response: The HRD Board was not misinformed. The HRD has engaged professional services to revamp its website and to assist with regular updates as needed.

F2: Special Districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.

Response: Agreed. The HRD website was designed specifically to address this issue. Certain portions of the website are easily and promptly updated 'in house,' (e.g., home page, calendar, board meeting documents), while areas which require less-frequent, less time-sensitive or more complex changes are only updated by professional developers.

F3: Privacy concerns of Board of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily available contact information.

Response: The HRD Board did not share these concerns. The HRD website includes photos and email addresses for all Board Members

F4: Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.

Response: As websites replace brochures, reports and other sources as the primary repository and source of information for the public, the HRD and its Board Members fully recognize and appreciate the need for and benefits of transparency of its website content.

F5: No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction program offered by the SDLF.

Response: Agreed. The HRD will submit an application for the District of Distinction accreditation by December 31, 2014.

F6: No independent special district has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

Response: Agreed. The HRD will submit an application for the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by July 31, 2014.

F7: Only 2 independent special districts in the County have achieved the SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.

Response: Agreed. The HRD's General Manager, Brigitte Shearer, has, to date, completed the courses required for CSDA Special District Leadership Academy. The Board and staff will continue to seek opportunities to further their training and education.

F8: No General Manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification

Response: Agreed. This certification requires a minimum of three years' experience in a position of management in a California special district. Ms. Shearer has only held such a position for just over two years and is therefore not yet eligible to pursue this certification.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1: Each independent special district's website shall conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.

Response: With changes implemented on or before June 30, 2014, we believe the HRD's website now complies with the SDLF Transparency criteria.

R2: By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/ or managing their website as described above.

Response: The HRD is already doing so and will continue to do so. See response to F2.

R3: Each district will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.

Response: The HRD is already doing so and will continue to do so. See response to F2.

R4: District will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.

Response: The HRD submit its application by December 31, 2014.

R5: Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2105.

Response: The HRD will submit its application by July 31, 2014.

R6: Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015.

Response: The HRD will do so.

R7: District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.

Response: The General Manager, Ms. Shearer, will seek this certification once she has become eligible to do so.

The Highlands Recreation District will continue to strive to meet the needs of its constituents and community in the most transparent and user-friendly way possible, on our website and at our facility. We welcome any further commentary on our website, its content and its ease of use. It is an honor to serve our patrons.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michelle McNeil".

Michelle McNeil, President,
Board of Directors
Highlands Recreation District

cc: Portor Goltz, Counsel
Supervisor Dave Pine
HRD Board of Directors



Ladera Recreation District
150 Andeta Way
Portola Valley, CA 94028

(650) 854-3242
Fax: (650) 854-3413
Email: mail@lrdrec.com
www.lrdrec.com

November 12, 2014

Honorable Lisa A. Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Ladera Recreation District Response to 2013-2014 Grand Jury Report: Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special District's Websites

Honorable Judge Novak:

This letter transmits the response of the Ladera Recreation District (LRD) to the 2013-2014 Grand Jury Report referenced above. LRD is committed to transparency and the LRD Board of Directors unanimously approved this response at a Board Meeting on November 11, 2014.

Response to Grand Jury Findings

F1. Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.

LRD does not have information about other special district websites and therefore cannot agree or disagree with the finding. The LRD website was created by a professional website developer, Vinosys Strategic Consulting – Website Development.

F2. Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.

LRD does not have information about the training of other special district staff and therefore cannot agree or disagree with this finding. LRD management is trained to regularly update website information on an ongoing basis. However, some aspects of the website that need updating occasionally, are more complex and require the assistance of our professional website developer.

F3. Privacy concerns of Boards of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contact information.

LRD does not have information about other Board of Directors or Commissioners outside of the LRD and therefore cannot agree or disagree with this finding. The LRD has each Board member's name, term length, next election date and e-mail address on the LRD website.

F4 Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.

LRD does not have information about other special districts and therefore cannot agree or disagree with this finding. LRD is committed to transparency and is currently working to meet all the requirements as outlined by the Grand Jury. The LRD is committed to be fully compliant by May 15, 2015.

F5 No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction offered by Special Districts Leadership Foundation (SDLF).

LRD does not have information about other special districts and therefore cannot agree or disagree with this finding. LRD has not completed this voluntary program but intends to do so.

LRD Co-General Managers both attended the Special District Leadership Academy Conference in November 2013, and consistently seek opportunities for further training and education.

F6 No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

LRD does not have information about other special districts and therefore cannot agree or disagree with this finding. LRD has not yet earned this voluntary SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

F7 Only 2 of 23 independent special districts in the County have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.

LRD does not have information about other special districts and therefore cannot agree or disagree with this finding. LRD has not yet earned this voluntary SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

F8 No general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification.

LRD does not have information about other special district management officials and therefore cannot agree or disagree with this finding. LRD's General Managers have not achieved this voluntary SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.

Response to Recommendations

R1 Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.

For true transparency all of the following items should be readily apparent:

- **Names of Board or Commission members and their terms of office**
The LRD Board Members are listed on the web-site under 'Board of Directors'.
- **Names of general manager, fire or police chief, and key staff along with contact information for each**
The names of the Co-General Managers and their contact information is on the website under 'Management'.

- **Election procedures and deadlines**
A link to the San Mateo County Elections Office can be found on the website under 'Bylaws', Section A3. It is also posted on the 'Board of Directors' page.
- **Board Meeting Schedule (regular meeting agendas must be posted 72 hours in advance)**
The Board Meeting schedule can be found on the website under 'Board Meetings'. Agendas are posted 72 hours before the meetings.
- **District's mission statement**
The District mission statement can be found on the website under 'About Us' – Mission Statement
- **Description of district's services/functions and service area**
This may be found on the web-site under 'LRD Overview'.
- **Authorization statute/enabling act**
This may be found on the website under Governance. Section A1 of the Bylaws
- **Current District Budget**
The last 3 years of Budgets may be found on the website under 'About Us - Financial'.
- **Most recent financial audit**
The last 3 years of Audits are on the website under 'About Us – Financial'.
- **Archive of Board meeting minutes for at least the last 6 months**
All minutes of 2014 meetings are on the website under Board of Directors – Minutes.
- **List of compensation of Board or Commission members and staff and/or link to State Controller's webpage with the data.**
We are in the process of submitting this information to the State Controller and will post a link as soon as it is complete. This will be completed before May 15, 2015

In addition, the website of each district should include at least 4 of the following:

- **Board or Commission member ethics training certificates**
- **Picture, biography and e-mail address of Board or Commission members**
- **Last 3 years of audits – On LRD website**
- **Reimbursement and compensation policy**
- **Financial Reserves Policy**
- **Downloadable Public Records Act request form – On LRD website**
- **Audio or video recordings of Board meetings**
- **Map of district boundaries/service area**
- **Most recent Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) studies or link to LAFCo's site – On LRD website**

LRD will add at least 1 more of the above requirements before May 15, 2015.

R2 *By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above.*

LRD currently works with a professional website development firm and the website is maintained by our existing staff in conjunction with the professional developer.

R3 *Each district will take necessary steps to keep its website current.*

LRD intends to comply with this recommendation with its current staff.

R4 *District will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.*

LRD will review the requirements to become a District of Distinction and will consider the time, effort and resources to meet these requirements along with the ongoing requirements of maintaining the current District operations before making a final commitment to this recommendation.

R5 *Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015.*

LRD will review the requirements for this certification and consider the time, effort and resources before making a final commitment to this recommendation.

R6 *Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015.*

LRD will review the requirements of this training and will consider the time, effort and resources to meet these requirements along with the ongoing requirements of maintaining the current District operations before making a final commitment to this recommendation.

R7 *District administrators will seek the SDLF Special Administration Certification.*

LRD will review the requirements for this certification and will consider the time, effort and resources to meet these requirements along with the ongoing requirements of maintaining the current District operations before making a final commitment to this recommendation.

Ladera Recreation District will continue to provide the highest level of services demonstrating transparency of all operations of the District to our constituents and community.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Fryling
Board President



July 2, 2014

Hon. Lisa A. Novak, Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Hon. Novak:

This letter documents Los Trancos County Water District's response to the Civil Grand Jury's report: "Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts' Websites". We also have reviewed the Civil Grand Jury's *basic requirements* and note that of those ten items, this District has fulfilled nine. (See subsequent pages) However, for those nine *additional requirements* items, we have fulfilled only two items. (See Appendix) This District will implement three more suggested items over the summer months of 2014 to meet the SDLF standard.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Claudia C. Mazzetti
President
(650) 851-8347
Claudia.mazzetti@gmail.com

Civil Grand Jury's FINDINGS	LTCWD RESPONSE
F1. Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.	Disagree with finding because the District has no knowledge of other districts' websites.
F2. Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.	Disagree with finding because most recording secretaries should have those web maintenance skills
F3. Privacy concerns of Boards of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contact information.	Disagree with finding because anyone who runs for office should know that the public should be able to contact them with their concerns.
F4. Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.	Disagree with this finding. This district has little knowledge about other district websites' content.
F5. No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction program offered by Special Districts Leadership Foundation (SDLF).	Disagree with finding. It is better that each special district incorporate the 19 SDLF transparency action items into its Policies and Procedures so that those 19 action items are embedded into the district's operations.
F6. No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.¹²	Disagree with finding. It is better that each special district incorporate the 19 SDLF transparency action items into its Policies and Procedures so that those 19 transparency items are embedded into the district's operations.
F7. Only 2 of 23 independent special districts in the County have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.	Agree with finding.
F8. No general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification. ¹⁴	Disagree with your finding because our district does not have a GM.

RECOMMENDATIONS	LTCWD RESPONSE
<p>R1. Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.</p>	<p>LTCWD agrees with the finding as appropriate to our District.</p>
<p>R2. By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above.</p>	<p>LTCWD agrees with the finding as appropriate to our district. LTCWD has internal capabilities to manage its website.</p>
<p>R3. Each district will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.</p>	<p>LTCWD agrees with the finding as appropriate to our District.</p> <p>LTCWD Recording Secretary is responsible for the maintenance of the website with a Board member.</p>
<p>R4. Districts will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.</p>	<p>The Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.</p> <p>Because the transiency of Board and Staff member, this District will incorporate the 19 SDLF transparency items into its Policies and Procedures.</p>
<p>R5. Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015.</p>	<p>The Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.</p> <p>Because the transiency of Board and Staff member, this District will incorporate the 19 SDLF transparency items into its Policies and Procedures.</p>
<p>R6. Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015.</p>	<p>The Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.</p> <p>Because of the transiency of Board and Staff members, these 19 SDLF transparency items will be incorporated into the District's Policies and Procedures Manual.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS	LTCWD RESPONSE
R7. District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.	<p>The Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.</p> <p>Because of the transiency of Board and Staff members, these 19 SDLF transparency items will be incorporated into the District's Policies and Procedures Manual.</p>

APPENDIX

Civil Grand Jury -SDFL Items	LTCWD Response	Comment
Names of Board or Commission members and their terms of office	Yes	
Names of general manager, fire or police chief, and key staff along with contact information for each	yes	LTCWD does not have General Manager but it include the names of its Recording Secretary and Finance Manager.
Election procedure and deadlines	no	
Board meeting schedule (regular meeting agendas must be posted 72 hours in advance)	yes	
District's mission statement	yes	
Description of district's services/functions and service area	yes	
Authorizing statute/enabling act	yes	
Current district budget Most recent financial audit	yes	In Agenda & Minutes section
Archive of Board meeting minutes for at least the last 6 months	yes	

In addition, the website of each district should include at least 4 of the following:

Post Board or Commission member ethics training certificates	No	
Last 3 years of audits	No	embedded in Minutes
Reimbursement and compensation policy	Yes	In Policies & Procedures Manual
Financial reserves policy	No	Don't have a policy
Picture, biography and email address of Board or Commission members	No	
Downloadable Public Records Act request form	No	
Audio or video recordings of Board meetings	Yes	
Map of district boundaries/service area	No	
Most recent Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) studies or link to LAFCo's site	No	



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Steven R. Meyers
Attorney at Law
Direct Dial: (510) 808-2000
smeyers@meyersnave.com

VIA EMAIL TO grandjury@sanmateocourt.org

October 15, 2014

San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury
c/o Court Executive Office
400 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report Entitled “Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts’ Websites”

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the General Counsel of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District (“MPFPD” or the “District”). On behalf of the MPFPD Board of Directors, the District provides the following responses to Findings F1 through F8 and Recommendation R1 through R7 of San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury Report entitled “Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts’ Websites,” dated May 19, 2014.

Findings:

F1. *“Some Districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.”*

MPFPD Response: Disagree. The District is aware of the “relative affordability” of professionally created websites.

F2. *“Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.”*

MPFPD Response: Disagree. The District has in house staff that is capable of updating, and regularly does update the District’s website.

F3. *“Privacy concerns of Boards of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contact information.”*

MPFPD Response: **Disagree.** Transparency of information is a facet of the District’s Board of Directors Policy Manual, and the District strives to achieve transparency throughout its operations, in part by posting information to the District’s website. Additionally, email addresses and telephone numbers for the members of the Board of Directors are clearly listed, with corresponding photographs of each director, on the District’s website.

F4. *“Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.”*

MPFPD Response: **Disagree.** The District recognizes the benefits of transparency delivered to the public in various ways, including through its website. .

F5. *“No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction program offered by Special Districts Leadership Foundation (SDLF).”*

MPFPD Response: **Agree.** The District has not completed the SDLF District of Distinction program.

F6. *“No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.”*

MPFPD Response: **Agree.** The District has not earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

F7. *“Only 2 of the 23 independent special districts in the County have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.”*

MPFPD Response: **Agree.** The District has not achieved the SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.

F8. *“No general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF’s Special District Administrative Certification.”*

MPFPD Response: **Agree.** No management official of the District has received SDLF’s Special District Administrative Certification.

Recommendations:

- R1. *“Each independent special district’s website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF’s transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.”***

MPFPD Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted and not reasonable. The District strives to achieve transparency, and will continue its efforts to improve the public’s access to information about the District and its Board of Directors. The District will review its website and strive to update and improve it as necessary, while taking into account best practices in transparency and good government, including but not limited to the transparency checklist and other resources provided by SDLF.

- R2. *“By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above.”***

MPFPD Response: The recommendation requires further analysis, which the District will complete within the next six months. The District will consult with professional website developers should in-house staff be incapable of creating/managing the website.

- R3. *“Each district will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.”***

MPFPD Response: The recommendation has been implemented. The District regularly updates its website to ensure all information is kept current.

- R4. *“Districts will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.”***

MPFPD Response: The recommendation requires further analysis, which the District will complete within the next six months. The District will make an effort to complete the District of Distinction Program offered by SDLF.

- R5. *“Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015.”***

MPFPD Response: The recommendation requires further analysis, which the District will complete within the next six months. The District will make an effort to complete the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence

- R6. *“Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF’s Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015.”***

MPFPD Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted and not reasonable. The District may consider SDLF training at some point in

the future, but cannot commit to seeking and providing this training to staff prior to June 30, 2015.

R7. “District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.”

MPFPD Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted and not reasonable. The District may consider SDLF training at some point in the future, but cannot commit to seeking and providing this training to staff prior to June 30, 2015.

Very truly yours,



Steven R. Meyers
Attorney at Law

SM:MCL
c: Fire Chief Harold Schapelhouman
2288406.1



August 13, 2014

Hon. Lisa A. Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Judge Novak,

We are in receipt of the Civil Grand Jury's final report entitled, "*Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts' Websites.*" Pursuant to your May 19, 2014, request for response, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's Board of Directors held a public meeting on August 13, 2014 and approved this response. The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) responds to the Grand Jury's findings, conclusions and recommendations as follows:

Findings

F1. Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.

The District lacks sufficient information regarding the websites of other special districts and is unable to agree or disagree with this finding. The District's website was professionally created, and the District employs a full time website administrator who maintains and updates its website.

F2. Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.

The District lacks sufficient information regarding the websites of other special districts and is unable to agree or disagree with this finding. The District currently employs a full time website administrator who maintains and updates its website.

F3. Privacy concerns of Boards of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contact information.

The District lacks sufficient information regarding other special districts and is unable to agree or disagree with this finding. As it pertains to the District, it disagrees with this finding. The contact information for the members of the District's Board of Directors is on its website.

F4. Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.

The District lacks sufficient information regarding the websites of other special districts and is unable to agree or disagree with this finding. The District is committed to promoting transparency through its website posting all meeting agendas, contact information, Board policies, public records access, and other matters of general public interest, consistent with the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence checklist.

F5. No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction program offered by Special Districts Leadership Foundation (SDLF).

The District lacks sufficient information regarding other special districts and is unable to agree or disagree with this finding. The District has not completed the requirements for the voluntary District of Distinction program.

F6. No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

The District lacks sufficient information regarding other special districts and is unable to agree or disagree with this finding. The District has not completed the requirements for the voluntary SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence program. However, the District has been pursuing this certification since October 2013 and has completed 20 of the 22 required elements and 11 of the 15 additional items of which only six are required. The District anticipates completing remaining two required elements prior to the end of its fiscal year.

F7. Only 2 of 23 independent special districts in the County have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.

The District lacks sufficient information regarding other special districts and is unable to agree or disagree with this finding. The District has not completed the requirements for the voluntary SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance program.

F8. No general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification.

The District lacks sufficient information regarding other special districts and is unable to agree or disagree with this finding. The District's general manager has not completed the requirements for the voluntary SDLF Special District Administrator Certification; however, the General Manager regularly attends conferences and trainings offered by the California Special District's Association, which are included in the requirements for the voluntary program.

Recommendations

R1. Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.

This recommendation was implemented prior to the issuance of the Grand Jury's report.

R2. By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above.

This recommendation was implemented prior to the issuance of the Grand Jury's report. The District employs a full time website administrator.

R3. Each district will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.

This recommendation was implemented prior to the issuance of the Grand Jury's report. The District employs a full time website administrator who updates the website regularly.

R4. Districts will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.

The District is in full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations related to its operations and transparency. This recommendation requires further analysis by District staff to determine if it can balance staff time, effort and resources as well as reallocating budgetary funds to complete the requirements of this voluntary program within the timeframe recommended. The District anticipates completing this additional research prior to the end of its fiscal year.

R5. Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015.

The District is currently in the process of completing all of the requirements for the voluntary SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence program and prior to the issuance of the Grand Jury's report has implemented 20 of the 22 required elements and 11 of the 15 additional requirements of which only 6 are required for certification. The District anticipates completing the remaining two requirements before the end of its current fiscal year.

R6. Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015.

The District is in full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations related to its operations and transparency. This recommendation requires further analysis by District staff to determine if it can balance staff time, effort and resources as well as reallocating budgetary funds to complete the requirements of this voluntary program within the timeframe recommended. The District anticipates completing this additional research prior to the end of its fiscal year.

R7. District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.

The District is in full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations related to its operations and transparency. This recommendation requires further analysis by District staff to determine if it can balance staff time, effort and resources as well as reallocating budgetary funds to complete the requirements of this voluntary program within the timeframe recommended. The District anticipates completing this additional research prior to the end of its fiscal year.

Hon. Lisa A. Novak

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Response to 2013-14 San Mateo Civil Grand Jury Report "*Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts' Websites*"

July 15, 2014

Page 4 of 4

Very truly yours,



Cecily Harris, Board President
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Cc: Board of Directors, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

August 11, 2014

Honorable Lisa A. Novak
 Judge of the Superior Court
 c/o Charlene Kresevich
 Hall of Justice
 400 County Center, 2nd Floor
 Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report on Special Districts' Websites
 filed on May 19, 2014

Dear Judge Novak:

The Mid-Peninsula Water District (MPWD) has reviewed and considered the referenced Grand Jury report, and responds to the report's findings and recommendations as follows:

FINDINGS

FINDING	MPWD RESPONSE
F1. Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.	<p><i>The MPWD has had a website for more than 10 years. A redesign of the MPWD website is currently being finalized through a professional consultant.</i></p> <p><i>Once completed, the MPWD will expend \$30,000 for its new website.</i></p> <p><i>Otherwise, the MPWD cannot agree or disagree with the finding without undertaking independent research and analysis.</i></p>
F2. Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.	<p><i>MPWD staff is trained in updating the website and makes it a priority to maintain current information.</i></p> <p><i>For other districts, the MPWD cannot</i></p>

	<i>agree or disagree with the finding without undertaking independent research and analysis.</i>
F3. Privacy concerns of Boards of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contact information.	<p><i>Contact information for Directors is accessible on the MPWD website.</i></p> <p><i>For other districts, the MPWD cannot agree or disagree with the finding without undertaking independent research and analysis.</i></p>
F4. Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.	<p><i>The MPWD website contains the majority of the items listed for true transparency (7 out of 11), including the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Names of Board members and their terms of office.</i> ▪ <i>Names of general manager and key staff, along with contact information.</i> ▪ <i>Board meeting schedule.</i> ▪ <i>Description of district's services/functions and service area.</i> ▪ <i>Current district budget.</i> ▪ <i>Most recent financial audit.</i> ▪ <i>Archive of Board meeting minutes for at least the last 6 months.</i> <p><i>For other districts, the MPWD cannot agree or disagree with the finding without undertaking independent research and analysis.</i></p>
F5. No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction program offered by Special Districts Leadership Foundation (SDLF).	<p><i>The MPWD can agree with the attached CSDA SDLF listing of current certificate holders of District of Distinction Accreditation.</i></p> <p><i>Otherwise, the MPWD cannot agree or disagree with the finding without undertaking further research and analysis.</i></p>
F6. No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.	<i>The MPWD can agree with the attached CSDA SDLF listing of current certificate holders of the District Transparency Certificate of Excellence.</i>

	<i>Otherwise, the MPWD cannot agree or disagree with the finding without undertaking further research and analysis.</i>
F7. Only 2 of 23 independent special districts in the County have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.	<p><i>The MPWD can agree with the attached CSDA SDLF listing of current certificate holders of the Recognition in Special District Governance.</i></p> <p><i>MPWD's General Manager, Tammy Rudock, has been recognized with this distinction.</i></p> <p><i>Otherwise, the MPWD cannot agree or disagree with the finding without undertaking further research and analysis.</i></p>
F8. No general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification.	<p><i>The MPWD can agree with the attached CSDA SDLF listing of current certificate holders of the Special District Administrator Certification.</i></p> <p><i>Otherwise, the MPWD cannot agree or disagree with the finding without undertaking further research and analysis.</i></p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION	MPWD RESPONSE
R1. Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.	<i>The MPWD will evaluate and consider the recommendation for implementation.</i>
R2. By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above.	<i>MPWD staff is trained in management of the current website and will be further trained once the new website is launched.</i>
R3. Each district will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.	<i>The MPWD regularly updates and maintains its website with current information.</i>

<p>R4. Districts will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.</p>	<p><i>Some but not all of the requirements have been achieved by the MPWD.</i></p> <p><i>Because the SDLF District Transparency Certification of Excellence is a requirement for the District of Distinction, it is not practical to achieve by the same deadline.</i></p> <p><i>The MPWD will evaluate and consider the recommendation for implementation.</i></p>
<p>R5. Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015.</p>	<p><i>Some but not all of the requirements have been achieved by the MPWD.</i></p> <p><i>The MPWD will evaluate and consider the recommendation for implementation.</i></p>
<p>R6. Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015.</p>	<p><i>MPWD's General Manager, Tammy Rudock, has achieved the recognition.</i></p> <p><i>The MPWD will evaluate and consider the recommendation for implementation for MPWD Directors and other key staff.</i></p>
<p>R7. District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.</p>	<p><i>In progress.</i></p>

This response was considered and approved by the MPWD Board of Directors at its regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, July 24, 2014.

Sincerely,



Tammy A. Rudock
General Manager

Attachments

Current Certificate Holders and Recognitions

Below are a list of current Certificate Holders and Recognitions for the SDLF Programs.

Special District Administrator Certification

- David Aranda
North of the River Municipal
Water District
- Dewey Ausmus
Retired (but SDA is still current)
- Michael Bardin
Santa Fe Irrigation District
- Joe Barget
Vandenberg Village Community
Services District
- Tim Barry
Livermore Area Recreation &
Park District
- Tish Berge
Rincon del Diablo Municipal
Water District
- Bob Berggren
Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park
District
- Rick Bower
Goleta Cemetery District
- Jean Bracy
Mojave Desert Air Quality
Management District
- Paul Bushee
Leucadia Wastewater District
- Gilbert Cabrera
Atascadero Cemetery District
- Scott Carroll
Costa Mesa Sanitary District
- Steve Cole
Newhall County Water District
- Richard Currie
Union Sanitary District
- Mark Dellinger
Lake County Special Districts
Administration
- Chris DeGabriele
North Marin Water District
- Tim Deutsch
Orange County Cemetery
District
- Karl Drexel
Tomales Village Community
Services District
- Harry Ehrlich
Project Resource Specialists
- Jim Friedl
Conejo Recreation & Park
District
- Gay Giles
Mountain House Community
Services District
- Tom Gray
Fair Oaks Water District
- Scott Heule
Big Bear Municipal Water
District
- Michael Houlemard
Fort Ord Reuse Authority
- Kathleen Jurasky
Palm Springs Cemetery District
- Pete Kampa
Kampa Community Solutions,
LLC
- Dennis LaMoreaux
Palmdale Water District
- Shauna Lorange
San Juan Water District
- Shane McAfee
Greater Vallejo Recreation
District
- Steve McGrath
Port San Luis Harbor District
- William Merry
Monterey Regional Waste
Management District
- Sandi Miller
Selma Cemetery District
- Scot Moody
Stockton East Water District
- Jerry Oser
- Edwin Pattison

- Sue Potter
Auburn Public Cemetery District
- Kara Patridge Ralston
Camarillo Health Care District
- Steve Perez
Rosamond Community Services
District
- William Rodriguez
Burney Water District
- Jamesina Scott
Lake County Vector Control
District
- Robert Shaver
Alameda County Water District
- Kimberly Thorner
Olivenhain Municipal Water
District

District of Distinction Accredittion

- Chico Area Recreation & Park
District (2010)(2013)
- Chino Valley Independent Fire
District (2008)(2010)(2013)
- Costa Mesa Sanitary District
(2009)(2012)(2014)
- Cucamonga Valley Water
District (2012)
- El Toro Water District (2007)
(2009)(2012)(2014)
- Kern County Cemetery District
(2009)(2011)(2013)
- Kensington Fire Protection
District (2009)(2011)(2013)
- Leucadia Wastewater District
(2010)(2012)
- Mesa Consolidated Water
District (2007)(2009)(2011)
(2013)
- Olivenhain Municipal Water
District (2009)(2011)(2013)
- Orange County Cemetery
District (2013)
- Otay Water District (2013)
- Palm Springs Cemetery
District (2013)
- San Bernardino Valley Water
Conservation District (2014)
- San Jacinto Valley Cemetery
District (2011)(2013)
- Southgate Recreation & Park
District (2012)
- Special District Risk
Management Authority (2013)
- Stege Sanitary District (2009)
(2012)
- Three Valleys Municipal
Water District (2014)
- Town of Discovery Bay
Community Services District
(2014)
- Vista Irrigation District (2009)
(2011)(2013)

**District Transparency
Certificate of Excellence**

- Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (2013)
- Apple Valley Fire Protection District (2013)
- Aromas Water District (2014)
- Bighorn-Desert View Water Agency (2013)
- Butte County Mosquito & Vector Control District (2014)
- Castaic Lake Water Agency (2013)
- Castro Valley Sanitary District (2013)
- Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (2013)
- Chico Area Recreation & Park District (2013)
- Chino Valley Independent Fire District (2013)
- Coachella Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (2014)
- Coachella Valley Water District (2014)
- Contra Costa Water District (2013)
- Costa Mesa Sanitary District (2013)
- Cucamonga Valley Water District (2013)
- Dublin San Ramon Services District (2014)
- Eastern Municipal Water District (2013)
- El Camino Healthcare District (2013)
- El Dorado Hills Community Services District (2013)
- El Toro Water District (2013)
- Elk Grove Water District (2013)
- Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (2014)
- Fulton-El Camino Recreation & Park District (2013)
- Goleta West Sanitary District (2013)
- Greater Vallejo Recreation District (2014)
- Grizzly Flats Community Services District (2014)
- Herlong Public Utility District (2014)
- Hi-Desert Water District (2014)
- Heritage Ranch Community Services District (2013)
- Ironhouse Sanitary District (2014)
- Kensington Fire Protection District (2013)
- Kern County Cemetery District (2013)
- Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District (2013)
- Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (2013)
- Leucadia Wastewater District (2014)
- Indian Wells Valley Water District (2013)
- McKinleyville Community Services District (2013)
- Mesa Water District (2013)
- Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (2013)
- Mt. View Sanitary District (2013)
- Municipal Water District of Orange County (2014)
- Nevada Irrigation District (2013)
- North Coast County Water District (2014)
- Olivenhain Municipal Water District (2013)
- Orange County Cemetery District (2013)
- Olay Water District (2013)
- Padre Dam Municipal Water District (2014)
- Palm Springs Cemetery District (2013)
- Pine Cove Water District (2013)
- Rancho California Water District (2013)
- Rancho Murieta Community Services District (2013)
- Rincon del Diablo Municipal Water District (2013)
- Sacramento Suburban Water District (2013)
- San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District (2014)
- San Jacinto Valley Cemetery District (2013)
- Santa Margarita Water District (2013)
- Santa Clara Valley Water District (2013)
- Saratoga Fire Protection District (2014)
- Special District Risk Management Authority (2013)
- Spalding Community Services District (2013)
- Stege Sanitary District (2013)
- Sweetwater Authority (2014)
- Three Valleys Municipal Water District (2014)
- Town of Discovery Bay Community Services District (2014)
- Vallecitos Water District (2014)
- Vista Irrigation District (2013)
- Western Municipal Water District (2013)

Recognition in Special District Governance

- Dewey Ausmus
- Michael Baffone
- Matthew C. Ball
- Victoria Beasley
- Cindi Beaudet
- Robert M. Behee
- Marilyn Blansett
- Bette Boatman
- Joseph Bowman
- Jean Bracy
- Terry Burkhart
- Paul Bushee
- Gilbert Cabrera
- Len Caudle
- Luis Cetina
- Muril Clift
- Dawn E. Cole
- David Contreras
- Patricia Conway
- Judy Cori-Lorono
- Phil Darling
- Kevin Davis
- John DeMonaco
- Tim Deutsch
- Sharon Disney
- Paul Dorey
- Leif Dreizler
- James Espinosa
- Steven Esselman
- Jim Estomo
- Sarah Evinger
- Primo Facchini
- Maryalice Faltings
- Margaret Ferguson
- James Ferryman
- Raul Figueroa
- Felix Flores
- Terry Freeman
- Paul Freestone
- Darrell Gentry
- Dave Giblin
- Joe Gibson
- Darlene Gillum
- Jerry Gladbach
- Byron Glennan
- Linda J. Godin
- David T. Gomez
- Kevin Graves
- Ed Gray
- Gary Grenfell
- Carol Griese
- Lizette Guerrero
- Greg Hall
- Trish Hannan
- Judy Hanson
- Gregory Harman
- David Harrold
- Richard Howard
- Kirk Howie
- Doug Hudson
- Richard Hyde
- Sandy Janzen
- Charlie Johnson
- Allan Juliussen
- Kathleen Jurasky
- Angela Kamm
- Pete Kampa
- Leslie Keane
- R. J. Kelly
- James Kohnen
- Don Kordes
- David Kulchin
- Dennis Lamb
- Anjali Lathi
- Pete Le
- Charles A. LeMay
- Jim Lieberman
- Suzanne Lindenfeld
- Glynis Litvak
- Jo MacKenzie
- Ray Marquez
- John Martin
- Dale Mason
- Lee Mason
- Dennis Mayo
- Steve McGrath
- Gary Melton
- Maria Mercardante
- Ruby Messersmith
- Steve Metcho
- Alan Miller
- Sandi Miller
- Judy Mirbegian
- Al Morrisette

- Brian Murphy
- Gil Navarro
- Bill Nelson
- Robert Northcutt
- Emmanuel Ogunleye
- Donald Ormsted
- Bob Ooten
- Edward Oyama
- Curtis D. Paxton
- Jerry W. Pearson
- Chindi Peavey
- Steve Perez
- Arthur Perry
- Tawnia Pelt
- Sue Potter
- Steve Pressley
- Sandy Raffelson
- Dr. James Ridgeway
- William Rodriguez
- Alfonso Romano
- Ginger Root
- Sandra Rose
- William Rucker
- Tammy Rudock
- Jan Rustenhoven
- Ron Samuels
- Tom Scaglione
- Paul Schaden
- Arlene Schafer
- Michael Scheafer
- Jack Scoles
- Timothy Shell
- Bob Sheppard
- Dennis Shepard
- Norman Shopay
- Duffy Shropshire
- LJ Silverman
- Dale Skiles
- Dona Shores
- Ken Smith
- Wayne Spencer
- Ed Sprague
- Chris Steele
- Sherry Sterrett
- Clint Stewart
- Kip Sturgeon
- Elaine Sullivan
- Paul Terry
- Teresa Thomas
- Jennifer Toy
- Gilbert Turrentine
- Richard Vasquez
- Richard Verbanec
- W. James Wagoner
- Karl Wandry
- Cynthia Ward
- Donald Webber
- Richard S. Wells
- Cindy Wheeler
- Marianne Wiesen
- Pat Williams
- Lindsay Woods
- Dan Worthington
- Catherine Young

Gold Recognition

- Leucadia Wastewater District
- Costa Mesa Sanitary District

Silver Recognition

- Chino Valley Independent Fire District
- North County Cemetery District
- Orange County Cemetery District
- Town of Discovery Bay Community Services District
- Vista Irrigation Water District

RECEIVED

AUG 01 2014

Dept. No. 13



Montara Water & Sanitary District

Serving the Communities of Montara and Moss Beach

P.O. Box 370131

Tel: (650) 728-3545

8888 Cabrillo Highway

Fax: (650) 728-8556

Montara, CA 94037-0131

E-mail: mwsd@coastside.net

Visit Our Web Site: <http://www.mwsd.montara.com>

7/30/14

Hon. Lisa A. Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall Of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

RE: Grand Jury Report: "Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts Websites".

Dear Honorable Judge Novak,

The Montara Water & Sanitary District Board of Directors received the above mentioned report at the Board meeting of June 5, 2014, and approved this response at the July 17, 2014 meeting.

The Board of Directors generally agrees with the findings listed on page 4 of the report.

Recommendations 1 through 3: Independent of the Grand Jury Report, the District has engaged a consultant to redesign the District website under consideration of the SDLF transparency checklist. The new website is planned to be online very soon, or before May 15, 2015. The District also budgeted funds for outside help to maintain and update the District website.

Recommendation 5:

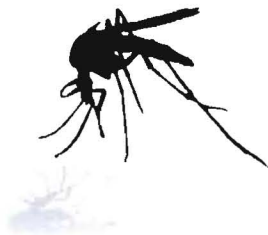
The District is working closely with the California Special District Association. We are striving to receive the SDLF Transparency Certificate. In fact the District is meeting most of the criteria already today. The SDLF Transparency is a voluntary program that has received widespread recognition. No timeline has been approved for application submittal to CSDA.

Recommendation 4, 6 and 7: The voluntary programs require a significant amount of resources, staff and Directors time, and are costly. In fact only a very limited amount of Special Districts and General Managers completed the programs since they were established by CSDA. We are currently not planning to submit applications for those SDLF Programs.

Sincerely,



Clemens Heldmaier
General Manger
MWSD



San Mateo County
Mosquito and Vector Control District
1351 Rollins Rd
Burlingame CA 94010
(650) 344-8592 Fax (650) 344-3843
www.smcmad.org

Hon. Lisa A. Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Date: July 10, 2014
Board Meeting Date: July 9, 2014
Vote Required: Majority

Subject: 2013-2014 Grand Jury Response – “Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts’ Websites”

BACKGROUND:

On May 19, 2014, the Grand Jury filed a report titled: “Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts’ Websites.” The District Board of Trustees is required to submit comments on the findings and recommendations pertaining to the matters under control of the District within ninety days. The District’s response to the report is due to Hon. Lisa A. Novak no later than August 18, 2014.

Acceptance of this report contributes to the District’s Governance, Public Outreach and Education, Strategic Planning, and Financial Transparency by ensuring that all Grand Jury findings and recommendations are thoroughly reviewed by the appropriate District Trustees and Staff and that, when appropriate, website process improvements are made to improve the quality and efficiency of services provided to the public and other agencies.

DISCUSSION:

Findings:

F1. Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.

Response to F1: Disagrees partially with the finding.

- (i) Our District has no direct knowledge on the information or misinformation of other special districts on this subject to determine whether this statement is true or not. Therefore, the District cannot agree with this finding.

F2. Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.

Response to F2: Disagrees partially with the finding.

- (i) Our District has no direct knowledge on the training of in-house staff of other special districts on this subject and cannot therefore determine whether this statement is true or not.

F3. Privacy concerns of Boards of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contact information.

Response to F3: Disagree partially with the finding.

- (i) Our District has no direct knowledge on the privacy concerns or lack thereof of other special districts on this subject and cannot therefore determine whether this statement is true or not.

F4. Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.

Response to F4: Disagree partially with the finding.

- (i) Our District has no direct knowledge on whether other special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites and cannot therefore determine whether this statement is true or not.

F5. No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction program offered by Special Districts Leadership Foundation (SDLF).

Response to F5: Disagree partially with the finding.

- (i) Our District has no direct knowledge on whether any of the independent special districts completed the District of Distinction program and therefore cannot determine whether this statement is true or not. As for our District, we have not completed this program.

F6. No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

Response to F6: Disagree partially with the finding.

- (i) Our District has no direct knowledge on whether any of the other independent special districts completed the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence

program and therefore cannot determine whether this statement is true or not. As for our District, we have not completed this program.

F7. Only 2 of 23 independent special districts in the County have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.

Response to F7: Disagree partially with the finding.

- (i) Our District has no direct knowledge on whether any of the other independent special districts completed the SDLF Recognition in Special Governance program and therefore cannot determine whether this statement is true or not. As for our District, we had a trustee complete the program but that was over two years ago and as a result we have not currently completed the program.

F8. No general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification.

Response to F8: Disagree partially with the finding.

- (i) Our District has no direct knowledge on whether any of the other independent special districts completed the SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification program and therefore cannot determine whether this statement is true or not. As for our District, we have not completed the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Detailed responses to each of the recommendations are provided below.

R1. Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.

Response to R1: The recommendation should be implemented by our District by May 15, 2015.

R2. By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above.

Response to R2: The recommendation should be implemented by our District by December 31, 2014.

R3. Each District will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.

Response to R3: The District will take steps to keep the website current.

R4. Districts will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.

Response to R4: The recommendation should be implemented by our District by June 30, 2015.

R5. Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015.

Response to R5: The recommendation should be implemented by our District by June 30, 2015.

R6. Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015.

Response to R6: The District will consider how to implement this request.

R7. District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.

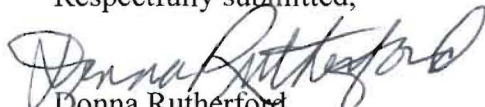
Response to R7: The District will consider how to implement this request.

In summary, our District has budgeted \$15,000 to revise and update our District website in Fiscal Year 2014-15. In addition, our District plans to implement an expanded Public Health Education and Outreach Program with the addition of a new full-time staff member.

To provide a successful mosquito and vector control program, a community-wide public outreach education platform where residents become active in their support of reducing mosquitoes and other vectors is required. Our District agrees that our website is a critical tool for educating the public and for providing outreach for specific programs where necessary and appropriate. Our District is taking the Grand Jury's recommendations to update and revise our website very serious and consciously with the allocation of funding, pursuing the help of professional website designers, and the hiring of new staff to develop the Public Health Education and Outreach Program.

Our District will continue to provide the highest level of services and demonstrate transparency of all financial, operational, administrative and governance programs to the residents of San Mateo County.

Respectfully submitted,


Donna Rutherford
Board President

The action on the Grand Jury Response was duly passed by the Board of Trustees of the San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District at a regular meeting by the following vote on a roll call:

	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Rick Wykoff	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Valentina Cogoni	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Peter DeJarnatt	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steve Hedlund	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Christine Fuller	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christopher Cairo	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mason Brutschy	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kati Martin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kat Lion	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Robert Maynard	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joe Galligan	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jason Seifer	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leon Nickolas	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wade Leschyn	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dr. D. Scott Smith	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dr. James Ridgeway	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Robert Riechel	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Donna Rutherford	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Betsey Schneider	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Richard Tagg	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Louis Gotelli	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vote Totals:	19	0	1	1

APPROVED AND DATED this 9th day of July, 2014 after its passage.

ATTEST:


Secretary

APPROVED:

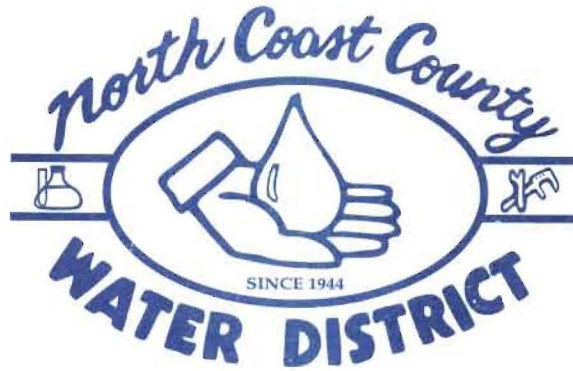

President

DIRECTORS

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RUSSELL CONROY
Director Emeritus

2400 Francisco Blvd.
P.O. Box 1039, Pacifica, CA 94044
www.nccwd.com



STAFF

CARI C. LEMKE
GENERAL MANAGER

Phone (650) 355-3462
Fax (650) 355-0735

RECEIVED

JUL 10 2014

Dept. No. 13

July 10, 2014

Honorable Lisa A. Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Special District Report "Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts' Websites"

Honorable Lisa A. Novak:

The North Coast County Water District (District) hereby submits its responses to the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury regarding its review of the transparency of Independent Districts' Websites. The Grand Jury made eight (8) findings and seven (7) recommendations; each finding and recommendation will be addressed separately.

Findings

F1. "Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites".

The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding.

The North Coast County Water District hired a website consultant to create and update the District's website.

F2. "Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information".

The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding.

The North Coast County Water District employs a highly trained Management Analyst who regularly updates the District's website.

F3. "Privacy concerns of Boards of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contact information".

The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding.

The email of each member of the District Board of Directors is available on the District's website.

F4. "Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites".

The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding.

The North Coast County Water District recognizes the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites and is the first special district in San Mateo County to receive the SDLF District Transparency Certificate of Excellence on March 21, 2014.

F5. "No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction program offered by Special Districts Leadership Foundation (SDLF)".

The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding.

The District will strive to complete the District of Distinction program by June 30, 2015.

F6. "No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence."

The North Coast County Water District disagrees with this finding as the District received the SDLF District Transparency Certificate of Excellence on March 21, 2014.

F7. "Only 2 of 23 independent special districts in the County have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance."

The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding.

The District will strive to achieve the SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance training by June 30, 2015.

F8. "No general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification."

The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding.

The General Manager of the North Coast County Water District will strive to seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification by June 30, 2015.

Recommendations

R1. "Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015."

The recommendation has been implemented and the North Coast County Water District received the SDLF District Transparency Certificate of Excellence on March 21, 2014.

R2. "By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above."

The recommendation has been implemented and the North Coast County Water District received the SDLF District Transparency Certificate of Excellence on March 21, 2014.

R3. "Each district will take the necessary steps to keep its website current."

This recommendation has been implemented and the North Coast County Water District received the SDLF District Transparency Certificate of Excellence on March 21, 2014.

R4. "Districts will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015."

The District will implement this recommendation and will strive to complete the District of Distinction program by June 30, 2015.

R5. "Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015."

The recommendation has been implemented and the North Coast County Water District received the SDLF District Transparency Certificate of Excellence on March 21, 2014.

R6. "Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015".

The District will implement this recommendation and will strive to have its staff or board members obtain the SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance training by June 30, 2015.

R7. "District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification."

The District will implement this recommendation and will strive to have the District General Manager seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification by June 30, 2015.

The District appreciates this opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury report on the Transparency of Independent Special Districts. Should you require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact Cari Lemke, General Manager at (650) 355-3462 or at cleemke@nccwd.com.

Sincerely,



Thomas Piccolotti
President
Board of Directors
North Coast County Water District



July 1, 2014

Honorable Lisa A. Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Subject: Response to Grand Jury Report: "Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information:
Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts' Websites"

Dear Honorable Judge Novak:

Enclosed please find the Peninsula Health Care District's (PCHD) response to the recent Civil Grand Jury's May 2014 report. This response was approved at our Board of Directors meeting on June 26, 2014.

If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lawrence Cappel", is written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

Lawrence W. Cappel, PhD., Board Chair, Peninsula Health Care District

Cc: Board of Directors, Peninsula Health Care District
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lawrence W. Cappel, Ph.D.
Chair

Rick Navarro, M.D.
Vice Chair

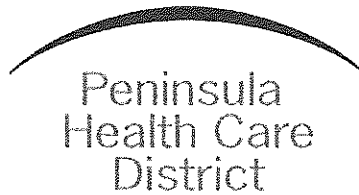
Helen C. Galligan, R.N.
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Dennis Zell, Esq.
Treasurer

Daniel J. Ulyot, M.D.
Director

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Cheryl A. Fama, MPA, BSN



BOARD OF DIRECTORS
RESPONSE TO THE 2013-2014 CIVIL GRAND JURY REPORT
**"PARTLY CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF INFORMATION:
INVESTIGATING THE TRANSPARENCY OF INDEPENDENT SPECIAL DISTRICTS'
WEBSITES"**

Grand Jury Report Filed: May 19, 2014
District Response Filed: July 1, 2014

The Board of Directors of the Peninsula Health Care District (PHCD) appreciates the Civil Grand Jury's recognition of the critical role websites play in carrying out Special Districts' obligations to be fully transparent in all of their activities. The Board also appreciates the Grand Jury's decision to use as its "yardstick" of compliance, tools and checklists developed by our State associations.

We are pleased to report that the PHCD website is in full compliance with the ten bullet points listed to be "fully compliant" noted on page 2 of the Grand Jury report, and the "required" four items listed on page 3 of the report. (Checklist attached)

Below, please find our specific responses to the seven recommendations made to all twenty three (23) independent Special Districts.

GRAND JURY FINDINGS AND PHCD RESPONSE

F1. Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.

PHCD cannot agree or disagree as it has no basis for determining what information other special districts have about website affordability. PHCD is knowledgeable about the start-up and maintenance costs to support a robust website.

F. 2. Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.

PHCD cannot agree or disagree as it has no knowledge about the in-house staff competencies for all the other 22 special districts. PHCD has trained staff to manage updates to the website.

F.3. Privacy concerns of Boards of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contact information.

PHCD cannot agree or disagree as it has no basis for determining the concerns of other elected officials. PHCD Director contact information for all members of the Board is included on our website.

F.4. Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.

PHCD cannot agree or disagree as it has no basis for knowing such information.

F5. No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF.

PHCD cannot agree or disagree as it does not and is not required to monitor the implementation rate of this recently released certification program.

F6. No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF transparency Certificate of Excellence.

PHCD cannot agree or disagree as it does not and is not required to monitor this activity.

F7. Only 2 of 23 independent special districts in the County have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.

PHCD cannot agree or disagree as it does not and is not required to monitor this activity.

F8. No general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification.

PHCD cannot agree or disagree as it has no requirement for monitoring such information.

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS AND PHCD RESPONSES

R1. Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the Special District Leadership Foundation's (SDLF) transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.

The PHCD website is currently in full compliance.

R2. By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above.

PHCD fully implemented this recommendation years ago and it has been continuously addressed since. A resource search was conducted in 2007 to identify local, low cost, responsive experts to back up District staff on matters related to IT and the website. We selected Scott Weiss, SomeThumb Company and David Fish, Tech consultant; both are currently available for website consultation, staff training, and troubleshooting IT issues. The Executive Assistant's Job Description's 'essential duties' include maintaining the website. And in late 2012, Perceptive Path Studios was engaged to review, refresh, and improve the look and functionality of the site. Their recommendations were implemented in early 2013.

R3. Each district will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.

PHCD fully implemented this recommendation as noted above in response to R2.

R4. Districts will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.

PHCD will fully implement this recommendation within the timeframe.

R5. Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015.

PHCD will fully implement this recommendation within the timeframe.

R6. Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 20, 2015.

This recommendation will not be implemented as a requirement. It will be highly recommended for all newly elected Directors and the District administrator. Of note, our current CEO did complete the Special District and Local Government Institute's Special District Leadership & Management Program October 23, 2009. [Certificate attached]

R7. District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.

This recommendation will not be implemented as it oversteps a fundamental responsibility of any board - to define the professional skills and experience required for its senior executive. By "not implementing" we mean it will not be a requirement; however, it will be encouraged and financially supported should the administrator wish to pursue this additional credential.

Website Requirements

MAINTAIN A DISTRICT WEBSITE WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS REQUIRED. (*provide website link*)

Required items available to the public:

- Names of Board Members and their terms of office
- Name of general manager and key staff along with contact information
- Election procedure and deadlines
- Board meeting schedule (Regular meeting agendas must be posted 72 hours in advance pursuant to *Government Code Section 54954.2 (a)(1) and Government Code Section 54956 (a)*)
- District's mission statement
- Description of district's services/functions and service area
- Authorizing statute/Enabling Act (Principle Act or Special Act)
- Current District budget
- Most recent financial audit
- Archive of Board meeting minutes for at least the last 6 months
- List of compensation of Board Members and Staff and/or link to State Controller's webpage with the data

ADDITIONAL ITEMS – *website also must include at least 4 of the following items:*

- Post Board Member ethics training certificates
- Picture, biography and e-mail address of board members
- Last (3) years of audits
- Reimbursement and Compensation Policy
- Financial Reserves Policy
- Online/downloadable public records act request form
- Audio or video recordings of board meetings
- Map of district boundaries/service area
- Link to California Special Districts Association mapping program
- Most recent Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) studies (full document or link to document on another site)



**SPECIAL DISTRICT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
INSTITUTE**

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

Cheryl Fama

with

Peninsula Health Care District

IS HEREBY AWARDED THIS

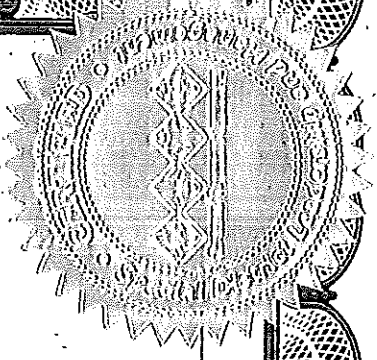
CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

IN

SPECIAL DISTRICT LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

IN RECOGNITION OF SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF A COURSE OF STUDIES CONSISTING OF:

- SPECIAL DISTRICT GOVERNANCE
- SPECIAL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, AND
- SPECIAL DISTRICT FINANCE



Trish Ansell, Seminar Manager

Awarded this 23rd day of October, 2009



San Mateo County Harbor District

Board of Harbor Commissioners

Pietro Parravano, President
James Tucker, Vice President
William Holsinger, Treasurer & Secretary
Sabrina Brennan, Commissioner
Robert Bernardo, Commissioner

Peter Grenell, General Manager

August 11, 2014

Honorable Lisa A. Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

RE: Response to the 2013-2014 Civil Grand Jury Report Titled: "Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts' Websites."

Dear Honorable Ms. Novak:

At the Public meeting held on August 6, 2014, the San Mateo County Harbor District approved this response on behalf of the San Mateo County Harbor District Commissioners; I have been directed to submit the following District response to the Civil Grand Jury findings and recommendations pertaining to the above-referenced report:

Response to Findings:

F1. Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.

Response: The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding as stated. San Mateo County Harbor District has a professional created website.

F2. Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.

Response: The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding as stated. The District employs a qualified firm to update information on its website.

F3. Privacy concerns of Boards of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contact information.

Response: The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding as stated. The District does not agree with this



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finding as it applies to the District. The District's website contains contact information for all commissioners.

- F4. Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.*

Response: The District does not have sufficient information about their districts to agree or disagree with this finding as stated. The District is committed to transparency delivered through its website.

- F5. No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction program offered by Special District Leadership Foundation. (SDLF).*

Response: The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding as stated. The District has not completed this program.

- F6. No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.*

Response: The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding as stated. The District has not earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

- F7. Only 2 of the 23 independent special districts in the County have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.*

Response: The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding as stated. The District has not achieved the SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.

- F8. No general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification.*

Response: The District does not have sufficient information about other districts to agree or disagree with this finding as stated. The District's General Manager has not achieved the SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.



San Mateo County Harbor District

Board of Harbor Commissioners

Pietro Parravano, President
James Tucker, Vice President
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Sabrina Brennan, Commissioner
Robert Bernardo, Commissioner

Peter Grenell, General Manager

Response to Recommendations:

- R1. *Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.*

The District will implement this recommendation no later than May 15, 2015.

- R2. *By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and or managing their website as described above.*

The District has implemented this recommendation, as it already employs professional website developers to manage the website.

- R3. *Each district will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.*

The District has implemented this recommendation and will continue to keep its website current on a continuing basis.

- R4. *Districts will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.*

The District will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.

- R5. *Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015.*

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but the District is already in the process of gathering the required materials to complete this certificate. The District has completed all of the initial website requirements and the following items:

- Last three years of audits.
- Online/downloadable Public Records Act Form.
- Audio or video recordings of board meetings.
- Map of district boundaries/service area.



San Mateo County Harbor District

Board of Harbor Commissioners

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Robert Bernardo, Commissioner

Peter Grenell, General Manager

- R6. *Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015.*

The District's staff and Board Members will complete the Recognition in Special District Governance training program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.

- R7. *District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.*

District administrators will complete the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification by June 30, 2015.

The San Mateo County Harbor District will continue to strive to meet the needs of our constituents and community in the most transparent and user-friendly way possible. It is an honor to serve our patrons.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Pietro Parravano

Pietro Parravano, President,
Board of Harbor Commissioners
San Mateo County Harbor District

cc: Board of Harbor Commissioners



San Mateo County Resource Conservation District

625 Miramontes Street, Suite 103, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019, 650.712.7765

July 17, 2014

Honorable Lisa A. Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Grand Jury Report: "Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts' Websites"

Dear Honorable Lisa A. Novak,

Attached please find the response from the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District to the 2014 Grand Jury report referenced above. The enclosed reply was approved by the Board of Directors at its July 17, 2014 meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kellyx Nelson".

Kellyx Nelson

Executive Director

Responses to Civil Grand Jury Report: “Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information”
Approved by San Mateo County Resource Conservation District Board of Directors
July 17, 2014

Background

On May 19, 2014 the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) investigated the utility and transparency of the county’s 23 independent special districts’ websites. The Grand Jury found no violation of laws and no attempt to intentionally obfuscate beneficial information. The Grand Jury did make recommendations for 15 of the 23 districts to improve website access to information regarding finances, staff and Board of Directors’ or Commissioners’ contacts, and Board or Commission minutes. Each of the identified 15 districts, including the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District (RCD), is required to submit comments within 90 days for each finding and recommendation, due no later than August 18, 2014.

General Comments

The Grand Jury’s findings and recommendations are aggregated across the 15 districts and do not indicate to which district(s) any particular finding or recommendation pertains. The Grand Jury also makes recommendations irrespective of districts’ budget, size, or capacity. Appendix G of the report includes a table of San Mateo County property tax revenue earned by each independent special district in FY 2012-13. It is clear that the RCD is in a different financial category from the other districts identified, serving over 157,000 acres of the county with .06% of the property tax revenues, about 67% less than the next highest earning district.

Menlo Park Fire Protection District	\$	34,506,948
Woodside Fire Protection District	\$	15,000,923
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District	\$	10,303,826
Sequoia Health Care District	\$	9,326,441
Coastside Fire District	\$	8,282,923
San Mateo County Harbor District	\$	5,041,508
Peninsula Health Care District	\$	4,799,396
Mosquito and Vector Control District	\$	2,043,690
Broadmoor Police Protection District	\$	1,331,942
Coastside County Water District	\$	987,307
East Palo Alto Sanitary District	\$	887,826
Granada Sanitary District	\$	737,915
North Coast County Water District	\$	735,563
Colma Fire Protection District	\$	695,774
Montara Water and Sanitary District	\$	606,538
Highlands Recreation District	\$	395,378
Westborough Water District	\$	367,684

Bayshore Sanitary District	\$	304,559
Los Trancos County Water District	\$	297,566
Mid-Peninsula Water District	\$	233,741
Ladera Recreation District	\$	173,879
Resource Conservation District	\$	57,405
West Bay Sanitary District	\$	-
Total	\$	97,118,733

Our operating base of approximately \$57,000 per year is not sufficient to pay rent, insurance, phones, and a full time staff person. For this reason we are dependent on grants to fund our work. Grants for public entities like RCDs are typically limited to very specific tasks with extreme constraints on the ability to bill overhead. It is not unusual for the RCD to be awarded more than \$500,000 for a restoration project while struggling to pay for simple overhead and items such as web design. Grant-funded staff members must bill their time to specific grant-funded projects. It can be challenging to fund staff time for work that is not directly attributable to a specific grant-funded project.

An additional financial hardship is cash flow. It is not unusual for the RCD to wait up to 9 months to be reimbursed for completed work and expenses funded through State grant programs. Although the RCD's net profit and loss is adequate to cover all expenses approved in the budget, it is often not possible to purchase budgeted services (such as web design) because of the nearly perpetual state of arrears and cash flow problems posed by delayed grant payments. While we may secure millions of dollars for habitat restoration or drought relief for the communities we serve, we have been unable to secure funds to revamp our website, develop a brochure about the RCD and our services, or develop a logo for our 75th anniversary, for example. Our office furniture has been donated, found on Freecycle, or purchased used from Craigslist. Several of our office computers were donated used. As lean as we are, we deliver high quality services to our constituents and have been recognized as District of the Year by the California Association of RCDs.

It is our hope that our response to the Grand Jury report is an opportunity to highlight the financial need of RCDs statewide that are delivering high value programs and essential services in communities throughout California with incredible cost efficiency.

Recommendation to Grand Jury

The Grand Jury report inspired us to consider a searchable database hosted on the website of the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) or SDFL to which districts could upload all of the documents recommended by this Grand Jury as a single portal for public access to information about all districts in the state. It is our recommendation that the Grand Jury make this request of the CSDA and SDFL.

Responses to Findings

In its report, the grand jury aggregates its findings for the 15 districts into a set of seven findings but does not indicate which finding(s) applies to which district(s). It is difficult to discern which findings pertain specifically to the RCD. The following responses assume that each finding is specific to the RCD.

Grand Jury Finding 1. *Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.*

Response: Disagree. The report suggests that a website could cost as little as \$1,000 to \$9,000. It is noteworthy that \$9,000 is suggested to be affordable when that amount constitutes approximately 16% of the RCD's annual operating base, an amount that is already insufficient for operating needs. RCD staff has done a great deal of research about affordable web design options. Some of the most inexpensive options would enable the RCD to provide the list of documents recommended in the report but would not accomplish other needs and goals of the district for the website, including providing program information, products, and services to our constituents; communicating our vision, and sharing spatial and other data in a user-friendly format. The report does not fully consider the true cost of revamping the web page, including the cost of staff time to develop messages and content, securing images, maintenance, etcetera. Suggesting a website costs as low as \$1,000 is akin to claiming that housing in the Bay Area is affordable because a supplier will sell the lumber for \$10,000. In reality, there are many more costs to building and owning a home as there are with developing and maintaining a website.

Grand Jury Finding 2. *Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.*

Response: Disagree. The RCD has in-house staff who update website information for monthly meetings of the Board of Directors and as needed periodically.

Grand Jury Finding 3. *Privacy concerns of Board of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contact information.*

Response: Disagree. This is not a concern of the RCD.

Grand Jury Finding 4. *Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.*

Response: Disagree. The RCD values transparency.

Grand Jury Findings 5-8. *No County [sic] independent special district has completed the District of Distinction program offered by the Special Districts Leadership Foundation (SDLF); No independent special district in the County [sic] has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence; Only 2 of 23 independent special districts in the County [sic] have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance; and No general manager or top management official of any County [sic] independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification.*

Response: Do not know. RCD staff and directors have not applied for an SDLF program, certificate, recognition, or certification but cannot comment on whether or not the other districts have.

Responses to Recommendations

Similar to its findings, the Grand Jury aggregates its recommendations for the 15 districts but does not indicate which recommendation(s) applies to which district(s).

Grand Jury Recommendation 1. *Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.*

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented. The Grand Jury's recommendation uses standards that were established to recognize excellence and distinction as its baseline. The report does not recognize when districts, including the RCD, meet or exceed legal requirements and include many or most of the items on the checklist. It was not the intent of the SDLF that their meritorious honor of distinction be used to indict districts that are otherwise meeting all legal requirements. The RCD will prioritize our limited resources on delivering cost-effective, high quality programs to our constituents.

Grand Jury Recommendation 2. *By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above.*

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented. Although website development has been in the approved budget for several years, cash flow challenges due to delayed grant payments (described above) have made it impossible. We cannot be certain that funds will be available by December 31, 2014. The RCD will prioritize our limited resources on delivering cost-effective, high quality programs to our constituents.

Grand Jury Recommendation 3. *Each district will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.*

Response: The recommendation will be partially implemented. We keep our website as current as reasonably possible and will continue to do so.

Grand Jury Recommendations 4-7. *Districts will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015; Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015; Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015; and District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.*

Response: These recommendations will not be implemented. The staff time, travel costs, ongoing training requirements, preparation of required documents, and application fees cost thousands of dollars and were not affordable even when RCD staff sought scholarships in previous years. With our limited financial resources, the RCD will prioritize delivering cost-effective, high quality services to our constituents.



**Sequoia
Healthcare
District**

525 Veterans Blvd.
Redwood City, CA 94063

650-421-2155 Phone
650-421-2159 Fax

www.sequoiahealthcaredistrict.com

**SEQUOIA HEALTHCARE DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS RESPONSE TO
2014 SAN MATEO COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY APPROVED BY SEQUOIA HEALTHCARE
DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON AUGUST 6, 2014**

GRAND JURY FINDINGS/DISTRICT RESPONSES

- F1. Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.
Response: Sequoia Healthcare District is well-informed of the affordability and has utilized the services of professionals to design the District's website. We have no knowledge whether or not other special districts are informed or misinformed.
- F2. Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.
Response: Sequoia Healthcare District contracts with a professional consultant who is responsible for updating our website. She is supervised by the District CEO who reviews the website daily.
- F.3. Privacy concerns of Boards of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contact information.
Response: The Sequoia Healthcare District Board embraces transparency and contact information for each Board member is featured on our website.
- F4. Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.
Response: Sequoia Healthcare District embraces this concept and our website reflects that position.
- F5. No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction Program offered by Special Districts Leadership Foundation (SDLF).
Response: Sequoia Healthcare District has not completed this program nor have we been asked to complete this program. However, Sequoia Healthcare District is working to obtain certification through the Association of California Healthcare Districts, which includes several requirements for transparency.

- F6. No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF transparency Certificate of Excellence.
Response: Sequoia Healthcare District has not earned this certificate nor have we been informed of this opportunity.
- F7. Only 2 of 23 independent special districts in the County have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.
Response: Sequoia Healthcare District has not achieved this recognition nor have we ever been informed of the process for achieving such recognition.
- F8. No general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification.
Response: No Sequoia Healthcare District executive has achieved this certificate nor has anyone been invited to participate in a program that might lead to such certification.

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS/DISTRICT RESPONSES

- R1. Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's Transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.
Response: Sequoia Healthcare District agrees with this recommendation and will comply by that date.
- R2. By December 31, 2014 independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above.
Response: Sequoia Healthcare District is in compliance. The District's website consultant has the capability to perform these tasks.
- R3. Each District will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.
Response: Sequoia Healthcare District is in compliance with this recommendation. Sequoia Healthcare District's website is current and kept current at all times.
- R4. Districts will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.
Response: Sequoia Healthcare District agrees with this recommendation and will complete this program by June 30, 2015.

R5. Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015.

Response: Sequoia Healthcare District agrees with this recommendation and will seek to attain this certificate by June 30, 2015.

R6. Districts currently lacking staff or Board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015.

Response: Sequoia Healthcare District agrees with this recommendation and staff and/or Board will complete the training offered through this program by June 30, 2015.

R7. District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.

Response: Sequoia Healthcare District agrees with this recommendation and the CEO will seek certification.



In reply, please refer to our
File No.

July 10, 2014

Honorable Lisa A. Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Grand Jury Report: "Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts' Websites"

Dear Judge Novak,

Thank you for your service and efforts to examine the utility and transparency of the County's independent special districts' websites. The District agrees with the Grand Jury "that taxpayers are best served when they understand who administers their special districts, how each special district is spending their property tax monies and/or the fees for services received for its enterprise activities, and how constituents can make their voices heard."

The West Bay Sanitary District has established a 5 year Strategic Plan including Strategic Elements derived from the foundational Mission and Vision statements of the District. They are linked to action through Strategic Goals within the five-year period that serve to assure that important areas of the District are well supported and moved forward per Board direction. One important Strategic Element in the District's Strategic Plan clarifies the Board's commitment to the concepts of openness and transparency. *"...We will also proactively communicate the District's business and plans to our public while being open and transparent in all that we do."* Objectives designed to achieve that goal include *"effectively communicating using our website – to provide this transparency and maintain the public trust."*

The West Bay Sanitary District invested over \$12,000 just over two years ago to revamp our website and budgets sufficient operating expenses to maintain the website annually. These expenses include modifications to the website, server maintenance and replacement, salary for IT staff and ongoing website training for IT and Administrative staff.

The District believes it maintains a very open and easy to use website which includes all but one of the items in the eleven (11) bullet list titled *"For true transparency all of the following items should be readily apparent:"* This item - *Election procedure and deadlines* has already been added to our website on the Board of Directors page.

The Grand Jury report includes another list "In addition, the website of each district should include at least 4 of the following:" The District website includes the following four items to meet

this requirement:

- Picture, biography and email address of Board or Commission members
- Last 3 years of audits
- Map of district boundaries/service area
- Most recent Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) studies or link to LAFCo's site

In addition to these four items a fifth criteria can be considered to be met in that our Code of General Regulations is available on the website and this Code outlines the Board's compensation policy.

The District has in many ways exceeded the Grand Jury's recommendations for a useful and transparent website. In addition to the Grand Jury listed criteria the District has included the following:

- Current rate information and rate studies for the last few years
- Step by Step guide to rehabilitating your private sewer lateral including Videos on obtaining permits, replacing sewer laterals, calling before you dig and construction specifications
- Educational material and links
- RFP and Bid information
- Capital Improvement Project information
- Sewer clearing and operations information
- A special page for kids
- Information on What 2 Flush
- Documents page
- Employment page
- What's new page with recent articles and District announcements
- Link to our partnership with HomeServe Lateral Insurance
- Link to OpenGov an interactive website where users can graph District revenues and expenses
- Links to many other partner agencies, associations and affiliations

While the District agrees with and complies with the listed criteria for a transparent special district website it finds no compelling reason to spend valuable resources on the CSDA or SDLF training and certification programs and has no plans to participate in these plans at this point.

The District responses to the Grand Jury specific Findings and Recommendations are as follows:

2013-2014 Grand Jury Report Findings
The 2013-2014 San Mateo County Grand Jury Found that:

FINDINGS

FI. Some districts are misinformed about the relative affordability of professionally created websites.

While some districts may be misinformed about the relative affordability of websites, the District has invested substantial resources in funds and manpower to maintain a functional and transparent website that is updated by Administrative and IT staff on a

continual basis.

F2. Special districts lack trained in-house staff to regularly update website information.

The District has well trained in-house IT staff which have in turn trained the administrative staff in order to keep the website up to date and constantly monitor documents on the website for shelf life, applicability, and value.

F3. Privacy concerns of Boards of Directors or Commissioners result in a lack of readily accessible contact information.

The District disagrees with this assessment in part. While the Board takes great pains to be accessible every individual deserves some degree of privacy. To address this concern yet provide the accessibility of the Board to the ratepayers the District's website lists a community email address whereby ratepayers can send Board members messages. These messages are then forwarded to the Board members for replies by either the Board member or staff as appropriate.

F4. Not all special districts recognize the benefits of transparency delivered through district websites.

West Bay Sanitary District does recognize the benefits of transparency through the website. This is the reason the District subscribes to OpenGov, a website that allows users to easily chart graphs of the District's revenues and expenses. Transparency is also the reason we provide budget, rate, audit information as well as a What's New page for District announcements and Public Hearings.

F5. No County independent special district has completed the District of Distinction 11 program offered by Special Districts Leadership Foundation (SDLF).

The District has received the CSRMA Shell Safety Award in 2012, the small agency Collection System of the Year Award in 2013 from California Water Environment Association and several District employees have been recognized locally and at the State level for the excellent work performance and expertise. The District believes it is actively developing leaders for the future of the District and participation in SDLF is not required.

F6. No independent special district in the County has yet earned the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

The District believes it has met or exceeded all the transparency requirements as listed by the SDLF and therefore finds no additional value in the certification.

F7. Only 2 of 23 independent special districts in the County have achieved SDLF Recognition in Special District Governance.

The District is governed by 5 community conscious leaders with many years of experience in Special District Governance and may find no added benefit to achieving the SDLF recognition.

F8. No general manager or top management official of any County independent special district has received SDLF's Special District Administrator Certification.

Some managers within the District have attended some of the CSDA educational courses such as Board Secretary/Clerk foundations, Brown Act training, Strategies for excellent customer service etc. While continued education is beneficial, taking courses simply for a certificate may not provide value for the District.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. Each independent special district's website will conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist on or before May 15, 2015.

Implemented: The District's website does conform to the accepted criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist as of the writing of this letter.

R2. By December 31, 2014, independent special districts will consult with professional website developers if in-house staff is incapable of creating and/or managing their website as described above.

Implemented: The District has an adequate website and In-house staff continues to be capable of managing the website and keeping it up to date.

R3. Each district will take the necessary steps to keep its website current.

Implemented: The District has multiple staff members review sections of the website to ensure its shelf life, applicability and value. Updates are completed regularly by IT and Administrative staff.

R4. Districts will complete the District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.

Not to be Implemented: The District believes it meets the SDLF criteria of a District of Distinction. The District:

- Does undergo regular financial audits, have no major deficiencies and apply any recommendations to future years.
- District operations conform to all statutes and regulations under state law as reflected in a policies and procedures manual.
- All directors/trustees, general manager and executive staff (as designated by the district) have received training in governance as well as compliance with AB 1234 Ethics Training

R5. Districts will seek to attain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellence by June 30, 2015.

Not to be Implemented: As the District has met all the transparency criteria the District believes there is no need for this certification.

R6. Districts currently lacking staff or board members who have achieved the SDLF's Recognition in Special District Governance will seek the training available under this program by June 30, 2015.

Not to be Implemented: The District sees no significant benefit to this training.

R7. District administrators will seek the SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.

Not to be Implemented: While the District values continued education it finds no significant benefit in the certification program.

Thank you again for your efforts in this matter and allowing the District to respond to the Grand Jury report and share the District's thoughts and opinions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ronald Shepherd', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ronald Shepherd

President of the District Board of the
West Bay Sanitary District

CC: West Bay Sanitary District Board
Phil Scott, District Manager

June 19, 2014

Hon. Lisa A. Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

RECEIVED
JUN 20 2014
Dept. No. 13

Re: Grand Jury Report – Investigating the Transparency
of Independent Special Districts' Website

Dear Judge Novak:

On Thursday, June 12, 2014, the Board of Directors of the Westborough Water District (District) reviewed the above titled report addressed to the District dated May 19, 2014, unanimously agreed to support all recommendations and have me respond to the report. The District believes that all governmental agencies should strive to provide true transparency and make it readily available to its constituents. With this in mind, the District will comply with your requests as stated below:

The District's website already includes the following transparency items stated on page 2:

- Name of Board of Directors and their terms of office
- Name of General Manager along with contact information
- Board meetings schedule (posted 72 hours in advance)
- District's mission statement
- Description of district's service/functions and service area
- Authorizing statute/enabling act
- Current district budget
- Most recent financial audit
- Archive of 3 years or more of Board meeting minutes

Within the 90 days from the date of this letter, the District's website will include 4 of the minimum recommendations listed on page 3 as follows:

- Post Board member ethics training certificates
- Post reimbursement and compensation policy
- Post map of district boundaries/service area
- Post link to LAFCo's site

In regards to recommendations R1-R7, response as follows:

- R1 – District shall comply with SDLF's transparency checklist by May 15, 2015.
- R2 – Assistant General Manager has received professional website training and is capable of managing website as required.
- R3 – District will make every effort to keep its website current.
- R4 – District shall complete District of Distinction program offered by SDLF by June 30, 2015.
- R5 – District will seek to obtain the SDLF Transparency Certificate of Excellency by June 30, 2015.
- R6 – In November 2013, two Board members completed a two and a half day course offered by SDLF.
- R7 – General Manager will seek to obtain SDLF Special District Administrator Certification.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Darryl Barrow, General Manager at (650) 589-1435.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Chambers', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Tom Chambers
Board President

June 20, 2014

Hon. Lisa A. Novak
Judge of the Superior Court
C/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Subject: Response to the Grand Jury Report: "Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts' Websites"

Dear Judge Novak:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury report "Partly Cloudy with a Chance of Information: Investigating the Transparency of Independent Special Districts' Websites". The Woodside Fire Protection District and the Board of Directors provide our thanks for the information related to this topic.

The Grand Jury report was addressed as part of the agenda at our June 2nd and June 30th 2014 Board of Directors meetings. The following information was developed through active discussion of this agenda item.

1. The Woodside Fire Protection District was disappointed in the Grand Jury's Title of this report as it appeared it was trivializing Special Districts and the good people who make up these Districts. A simple "Investigating the Transparency of Special Districts' Websites" would have been very appropriate.

- F1. The District disagrees with the "relative affordability" of professionally created websites. This District at the time of this investigation had looked into professional websites and the cost. The verbal quotes were anywhere from \$4,000 to \$35,000.

- F2. The District agrees with this finding.

- F3. The District agrees with this finding.

- F4. The District cannot speak for other Districts, but it does recognize this benefit and thus has been building its website with in house staff and support from a professional web designer, The Districts way of trying to be a responsible steward of public funds.
- F5. This District agrees with this finding as far as our District is concerned. It is unfortunate that this is believed to be the Standard that the Grand Jury has accepted in that this Foundation does not even meet the transparency the Grand Jury is seeking.
- F6. The District agrees with this finding.
- F7. The District agrees with this finding.
- F8. The District agrees with this finding.

In Regards to the recommendations by the Grand Jury for Special Districts.

- R1. This District will evaluate the criteria listed in the SDLF's transparency checklist and adopt prudent items as the Board of Directors see appropriate.
- R2. The District had already been doing this at the time of this report.
- R3. The District agrees with this recommendation and has been training in house personnel prior to this report.
- R4. The District will not be spending the time and or funds to complete this program in this next fiscal year.
- R5. The District will not be spending the time to obtain this Certification in this next fiscal year.
- R6. The District will not be spending the time and or funds to obtain this Recognition in this next fiscal year.
- R7. The District will not be spending the time and or funds to obtain this Certification in the next fiscal year.

This District has one Executive Officer, by design of the Board of Directors. This Executive is well aware of the time commitment it would take to accomplish Findings 5 thru 8 along with recommendations 4 thru 7 and has chosen to instead focus the Time, Funding and Effort on the services it was established to do so (Prevention, Emergency Response, Public Education, etc...). All other Chief Officers and or staff are already providing dual role services.

Thank you in advance,



Board of Directors
Woodside Fire Protection District



Daniel J. Ghiorso
WFPD Fire Chief