

STRAWBERRY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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July 19, 2011

Honorable Eleanor Provost, Judge
Superior Court of California
County of Tuolumne
60 N. Washington Street
Sonora, CA 95370

RE: 2010-2011 Grand Jury Report

Dear Judge Provost:

The Strawberry Fire Protection District Board of Directors has reviewed the 2010-2011 Grand Jury report as it pertains to Special District Reports. We wish to thank all of the jury members for their time and effort in the preparation of this report.

We have reviewed the report findings and recommendations carefully and provide the following response:

R2. Special districts should provide orientation to all newly elected board members in a timely manner.

In the 2010 General Election, all positions on the Board were up for re-election - Three for a 4 year term and 2 for a 2 year term. Following the election the newly elected board met prior to being officially installed and discussed in general the direction of the Fire District. At that time, we discussed a mission statement, the general workings of a public board and our responsibilities. In the future an orientation will be held for all newly elected board members prior to installation.

R3. Education on how to meet the requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act is available from the County annually. All district board members would benefit from these classes. Board members require education regarding ethics and conflict of interest to perform well. Newly elected board members should receive information about complying with these laws as part of orientation and be notified of any course offerings. The California Special Districts Association is a source for more information. Special district need to be vigilant regarding adherence to these laws.

All five current board members attended the County sponsored training for both the Brown Act and AB 1234 Ethics education training prior to taking office. Copies of the

Brown Act, Ethics Laws and California Public Records Act are located in the Appendix of our Strawberry Fire Protection District Administrative Handbook. In addition each board member was issued pocket guides for these three laws when installed into office. All new board members will be required to attend these trainings as soon as possible after elected.

R4. Policy and Procedure Manuals (by any title), should be kept available where board members, district personnel, and the public may review them. It is important that districts have a system in place to annually review Manuals and determine if changes are necessary in response to new laws and regulations. Board members should acknowledge receipt of the Manual and agree to act under its guidelines.

The newly elected board reviewed current policies and developed a new Administrative Handbook during the meeting in Dec. 2010 and January 2011. The handbook includes the mission statement, bylaws, board policies as well as procedures covering Administration, Finance, Personnel, Property Management, Protective Clothing, Training, Vehicle & Apparatus and forms. The appendix references copies of the Tuolumne County Fire Department Administrative and Procedures Handbooks. Copies were available to the public for review and comment prior to adoption by the board. Two copies of the approved handbook are kept at the Fire Station office and are available for review at any time. All board members were actively involved in the formulation and adoption of this new handbook. At the time the board adopted the handbook, it was agreed that anyone from the board, personnel or members of the public may ask for review, discussion or changes as they deem necessary.

R5. All special districts should have boundary maps available.

The district has the original boundary map that was included in the paperwork when the district was formed in the 1950's. In addition the 2007 LAFCO Municipal Service Review for Strawberry, Columbia, Jamestown & Mi Wuk/Sugar Pine Fire Districts included a map of the district. There are additional maps of the district available in the files at the Fire Station.

R6. Posting the agendas for special district meetings in areas of high traffic, in at least one consistent location, and in a manner that brings attention to them and will encourage attendance. Boards should schedule meetings at a time and place that makes it easy for the public to attend. Board Chairman should run meetings efficiently and on topic with guidelines for public participation.

Board meetings are held consistently on the third Tuesday of each month. Agendas are posted in compliance with the Brown Act in three locations – Fire Station, community bulletin board and Strawberry U. S. Post Office. In addition the agenda is emailed to an established list of concerned residents and property owners as well as being posted on the website of the Strawberry Property Owners Association. Notice of the meetings is also published in the local newspaper. Prior to each board meeting all board members are provided with an Agenda Notebook which contains the agenda, backup documents and

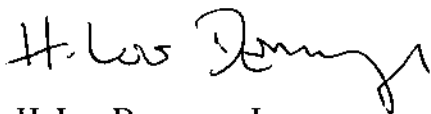
any other pertinent information regarding agenda items. In addition a copy of this same notebook is made available to the public and meeting visitors. The President of the Board presides over the meeting, following the agenda and allowing for public comment at appropriate times. Contents of the Visitors Agenda Notebook are filed in the district records along with a copy of the minutes to provide documentation of the meeting and are available for public review at any time. A recap of the meeting, as well as decisions made, is posted on the Strawberry Property Owners Association's website and also sent to the citizens email list.

R7. An easily understood form of financial report should be presented at least quarterly to every board during public meetings. At a minimum, this report should provide a record of performance-to-date relative to the adopted budget. If there is construction or other projects ongoing the Board and public should be advised as to progress relative to the project's budget.

The Board of Directors designated one member the responsibility for oversight of the budget. This board member along with a committee prepares the budget each year for review and approval. During the year expenditures are tracked in relation to the approved budget and reports are furnished to the entire board and public at least quarterly.

This response is made in compliance with Penal Code 933 and 933.05. If you have any questions, please contact H. Lee Dempsey, Jr. at (209) 965-4146.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Lee Dempsey, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

H. Lee Dempsey, Jr.
President
Board of Directors
Strawberry Fire Protection District