

FILE

CHIRIACO SUMMIT WATER DISTRICT

62450A CHIRIACO ROAD #C
CHIRIACO SUMMIT, CALIFORNIA 92201
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November 18, 2013

Honorable Mark Cope, Presiding Judge
Riverside County Superior Court
4050 Main Street
P.O. Box 431
Riverside, CA 92501

Subject: Response to 2012-2013 Riverside County Grand Jury Report: Riverside County Water and Sanitation Districts, Compensation and Transparency

Honorable Judge Cope,

Chiriaco Summit Water District (CSWD) has received the subject report titled "Riverside County Water and Sanitation Districts, Compensation and Transparency", and in accordance with the requirements of the California Penal Code Section 933.05 and the instructions included in such report, we respectfully submit the following responses to the findings and recommendations:

Response to Finding One: Agree

Response to Finding Two: Agree

The Board agrees on the need for prompt, and easy public access to information and records of the CSWD, as a way of promoting transparency and accountability, as coded in the California Government Codes §6250 thru §6276.48 (California Public Records Act, CPRA, passed in 1968). While we completely agree that a website is necessary to serve such purpose, our district doesn't currently have any available funding to pay for such project, or the maintenance of the website after the initial implementation. Several options had been considered, even including social media, but are limited in one way or another, and the only viable option is a dedicated website.

Response to Finding Three: Partially Disagree

The Grand Jury's finding that meetings are held during the day rather than in the late afternoon/evening, thus preventing "working rate payers" from attending, while it may apply to urban, more populated water districts, it does not recognize the unique situation of our service area. We used to have the meetings in the mornings, at 9 or 10am, but we noticed no residents attended, so we moved the meetings to 6pm on August 13, 2013, advertised & reminded account holders, and except for one resident, nobody else showed up.

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A possible cause is that most of our customers are employed here in Chiriaco Summit, in one (or more) of the business we service, and the shifts usually run from 7:00am to 3:00pm and from 3:00pm to 10:00pm. Other customers we have, work in the surrounding construction or solar projects and they have changing shifts that prevent them from attending.

Grand Jury Recommendation One:

Response - Our board serves without any compensation, nor benefits, so the recommendation does not apply to our board members, but we fully agree in the recommended action of reducing or eliminating the benefits of non full-time directors when a raise in water or sewer rates is to be considered.


Grand Jury Recommendation Two:

Response - Given the lack of funding for the project, an alternative project is being reviewed by the board of directors. The project involves an initial deployment of a website in a very basic state, and the training of one of the employees to update the site with agendas, minutes and financial reports as they become available, thus following the recommended action to this finding. The issue is going to be decided in the next meeting, which will take place on December 10, 2013. The recommendation is going to be implemented in the near future, most likely before the end of this year.

Grand Jury Recommendation Three:

Response - So far, any of the changes in the hours the meetings are conducted had not had significant difference in attendance rates. The CSWD will further analyze this issue, and it will be addressed as an agenda item on future meetings.

Sincerely,


Margit Rusche
Board President

MR/cg

Cc: Riverside County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors