



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

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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/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Special-Districts-Compensation-for-Directors-and-Trusteesa.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. SDLF 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.sdlf.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: 916-231-2939 • Fax: 916-442-7889 • 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 EBMF	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		\$ 304,559.00	
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	11,899.25	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					395,348.25	
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	392,425.25	186,491.13	2,577,891.00	128,403.08	1,046,908.64	913,102.39	1,500,409.88	34,516,980.31	
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	29,469.33	35,468.49	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	30,820.10	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					19,038,933.09	
Totals	\$ 77,668,695.25	\$ 4,071,725.93	\$ 1,366,068.02	\$ 530,896.76	\$ 7,385,225.00	\$ 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 \$17,225,961 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.



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,



David R. Dickson
General Manager



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 SDFL 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	



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 W. Cappel".

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

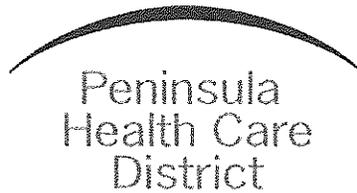
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Director

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

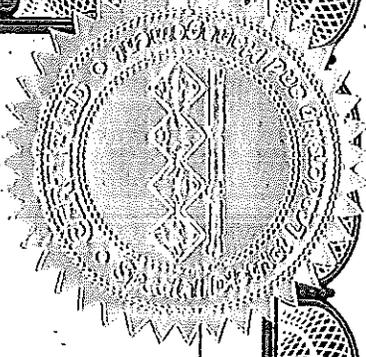
CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

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



e-mail: wwd@westboroughwater.com

2263 westborough boulevard . p.o. box 2747 . south san francisco, ca 94083-2747 - 650-589-1435 - fax: 650-589-5167

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