

Mountain View Fire Protection District

9633 Crowslanding Rd., Crowslanding, CA 95313

October 08, 2018

Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury

Re: 2017-2018 Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury Independent Special Districts Relics of the Past or Resources for the Future? Case#18-15GJ

Mountain View Fire Protection District has received the recommendations from the Civil Grand Jury . We have reviewed the findings and have given our responses.

F1. Few districts are in full compliance with state laws in transparency, accountability, and governance. Mountain View Fire Board Partially Agrees with this finding

F2. Many board members are not adequately prepared to assume office. Stanislaus County lacks a standardized governance training program. Mountain View Fire Board Partially agrees

F3. Most district board members are appointed by the SCBOS. Mountain View Fire Board Partially agrees . It has become increasingly hard to replace outgoing Board members . Current Board members are left seeking replacements and reach out to community members to fill vacant spots on the board .

F4. The SCCGJ observed that some fire districts perceive that they are accountable to the SCBOS. Conversely the SCBOS has no responsibility beyond appointment of board members.

Mountain View Fire Board agrees with this finding .

F5. Citizen participation is lacking at board meetings.

Mountain View Fire Board agrees with this finding and is currently working on a sign to post in front of station to announce mtg time and date and will also post it on website

Judge approved 11/18/18

F6. Most board meetings are not welcoming to citizens. Mountain View Fire Board Disagrees with this finding . Mountain View fire Board meetings are always open to the public . Mountain View Fire is transparent with all business and visitors are welcome and seating available.

F7. Many of the district websites lack required information about governance and finances.
Mountain View Fire Board agrees with findings . And is working towards updating current website and maintain it on a monthly basis.

F8. No apparent effort exists to increase citizen participation and involvement.
Mountain View Fire Board agrees . Mountain View Fire is cuurently working towards posting sign out and other options to increase citizen participation .

F9. The fire districts spend \$26 million yearly with little public scrutiny.
Mountain View Fire Board Partially agrees with the finding .

F10. While the SCCGJ focused its investigation on independent special fire districts, our findings and recommendations should be of interest to all special districts in Stanislaus County.
Mountain View Fire Board agrees with the finding .

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. All Stanislaus County fire districts boards should adhere to California law. All districts should have a written manual of generally accepted governance policies and procedures. The manual should include policies for nepotism, credit card control, and check signing. The manual should be completed by December 31, 2018 (see appendix).
Mountain View Fire Board agrees with recommendation. And is working towards updating current policies and procedures. And are currently working on writing a nepotism policy.

R2. All fire districts should establish a training requirement for board members in addition to that required by law. The curriculum is to be established no later than December 31, 2018 and shall include at least good governance, parliamentary procedure, Brown Act, nepotism, and conflict of interest (see appendix).
Mountain View Fire Board Partially agrees with recommendation. Current board members are adequately prepared hold there positions . But will look to find a possible training program that will benefit future board members .

R3. Certificates of ethics training and Financial Disclosure Form 700 must be on file in each fire district office for five years and at the Stanislaus County Elections Office. Mountain View Fire Board agrees with recommendation and is currently in compliance with this recommendation

R4. Fire districts are to ensure that meeting times and locations are posted consistently and accurately on district websites and with LAFCO. Mountain View Fire Board agrees with recommendation. And is working towards updating this information .

R5. The fire districts and the community at large would benefit if the SCBOS would exert oversight of governance training. Mountain View Fire Board agrees with recommendation.

R6. The SCBOS should advise the forty-two specials districts in Stanislaus County to obtain a copy of this report from the SCCGJ website for informational purposes. Mountain View Fire Board agrees with recommendation.

R7. All fire district boards must comply immediately with the requirements for meeting notices, posting of meeting agendas, publishing of minutes, and financial statements as required by California law. Mountain View Fire Board agrees with recommendation.

R8. Websites should be effectively maintained to abide by California law. The priority of websites should be to provide information and transparency about governance and finances. Current and prior agendas, minutes, financial statements, and audits should be posted (see appendix). Mountain View Fire Board agrees with recommendation. And is currently working towards updating its website .

R9. Board meeting locations and times should be boldly identified. Signage visible from the street should announce meeting dates and times. Signage should be in place to direct citizens to the meeting room. Meeting rooms should be well-lighted, provide adequate seating, and free of exhaust fumes. Mountain View Fire Board agrees with recommendation. And is having a sign made that will be placed outside of fire station announcing mtg date and time .

R10. Board meeting structure should routinely reflect the basic elements of accepted rules of order while conducting the people's business. They should start on time with a gavel or announcement. Board members and officers should be identified by roll call. Names of board members should be visible. Topics and guest speakers should be clearly identified, and sidebars eliminated.

Mountain View Fire Board agrees with recommendation and have made these necessary improvements

R11. The districts should utilize local print media to seek candidates for the boards of directors. For example, the Modesto Bee's "Lend a Hand" section announces volunteer opportunities

Mountain View Fire Board agrees with recommendation.

Sincerely,

Mike Lucas
Board Chairman