



FIRE PROTECTION IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

LOWER SWEETWATER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2711 Granger Avenue, National City, CA 91950

RECEIVED

September 20, 2009

SEP 21 2009

The Honorable Kenneth So
Presiding Judge, San Diego Superior Court
220 West Broadway
San Diego, CA 92101

SAN DIEGO
COUNTY GRAND JURY

Dear Judge So:

On August 20, 2009, the Lower Sweetwater Fire Protection District Board of Directors Approved responses to the 2008-2009 San Diego County Grand Jury report which addressed findings and recommendations to the County of San Diego.

The attached Material represents the District's complete response for 2008-2009. If you have any questions, please contact me at (619) 245-4550.

Sincerely,

KURT D. WORDEN

Director

Attachment

cc: Board of Directors



LOWER SWEETWATER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2711 Granger Avenue, National City, CA 91950

September 20, 2009

To: Board of Directors

Subject: 2008 – 2009 Grand Jury Report Response

SUMMARY

In response to 2008/2009 San Diego County Grand Jury report filed May 21, 2009 - Lincoln Acres Lower Sweetwater Fire Protection District. The board of directors has acted on the recommendations provided by the Grand Jury foreman in May 2009 to provide greater notification of the Lincoln Acres Community. Specifically providing individual mailings to registered property owners with the district boundaries.

Notifications have increased community interest in the Lower Sweetwater Fire Protection District activities and provided valuable feed back to the Board of Directors. Approximately five percent of the community responded they do not desire dissolution of the Fire protection district. There were no community members, which voiced support for dissolution of the district.

The community was made aware that the Lower Sweetwater Fire Protection District Board was not operating efficiently, those community members present expressed a desire for the board to remain intact to develop efficient processes that would allow the Board to efficiently meet the communities needs.

It is under these circumstances that the board approved responses to the San Diego county Grand Jury Findings and Recommendations.

RESPONSES TO FINDINGS

Finding #01: The Board has a difficult time conduction business- The Board agrees with the finding.

Finding #02: The Board in the performance its official duties and the District are dysfunctional- The Board disagrees partially with the finding.

As identified in the Grand Jury report, page 3, paragraph 5, "The sole business of the Board is to negotiate the fire and medical protection services contract with National City and authorize any payment to be made in support of those services and or any other required service such as insurance, clerical support or accounting bills." While not necessarily completed in an efficient manner, the Board has completed the "sole business" in an open and consistent manner and has not allowed services to lapse.

Finding #03: The Lincoln Acres community has shown little interest in the District- The Board agrees with the finding was accurate at the time the report was filed.

The following action has been taken since the publishing of the Grand Jury Report. Public Notice has been improved and is continuing to improve with addition of Spanish translations. Spanish interpretation for the Board meetings is planned. Community participation has increased 20 fold over the last 3 meetings with over 25 people at the August meeting.

Finding #04: The District should be dissolved and all of the administrative, management duties and responsibilities should be assumed by CSA 135- The Board disagrees wholly with the finding.

Community input provided at the July and August Broad meetings indicated that the community did not desire the Lower Sweetwater Fire Protection District to dissolve. Further more the community has not been provided with a formal proposal by either LAFCO or the County Board of Supervisors to ensure that CSA 135 is capable of meeting the community's needs and equitable distribution of the collected tax base.

Finding #05: The County of San Diego Board of Supervisors has the authority to initiate proceedings with LAFCO to dissolve the District- The Board agrees with the finding.

RESPONSES TO GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

The 200812009 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the Lower Sweetwater Fire Protection District: (09-29) Work with the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and LAFCO to dissolve the Lower Sweetwater Fire Protection District and have all its administrative duties and responsibilities assumed by CSA 135- The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted.

The board has taken initial steps to correct the deficiencies identified by the Grand Jury. The board is currently unable to provide a timeline or an action plan as to when it will be able to operate with maximum efficiency. The board on multiple occasions, has requested the County Board of Supervisors, assistance in developing a plan to obtain efficient operations. The requests have been denied. The county has referred the district to the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) for assistance the CSDA is unable to provide the board with the required specialized assistance to allow the board to identify

steps to achieve efficient operation. The Lower Sweetwater Fire Protection District Board is continuing to improve its operation and is meeting the community's needs.

Agenda Item Concurrence:

Director Worden	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain/Absent
Director Martinez	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Abstain/Absent
Director Hunt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain/Absent