

SANITARY DISTRICT NO. 5 OF MARIN COUNTY

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Date: May 21, 2020

To: Lucy Dilworth, Foreperson
Marin County Civil Grand Jury
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room #275
San Rafael, CA 94903

From: Catharine Benediktsson, Board President

Subject: Grand Jury Report Findings Response to “Follow-Up on Web Transparency of Agency Compensation Practices”

This letter, along with the attached “Response to Grand Jury Report Form”, represents Sanitary District No.5 of Marin County’s response to the recent Grand Jury report titled *Follow-Up on Web Transparency of Agency Compensation Practices*: dated April 28, 2020. Comments or Explanations associated with specific Findings and Recommendations are included below.

FINDINGS

F4 – Regarding compensation policies for elected officials, many public agencies do not provide the public with easy access to information regarding salary, meeting fees or stipends (including compensation for serving as liaison to other advisory committees, councils and forums), reimbursements, health and retirement benefits, and other benefits such as equipment.

WE DISAGREE WITH THIS FINDING

Under the District’s “About Us” tab you can easily access the District’s compensation policies for elected officials. (For quick reference, please see: <http://www.sani5.org/about/board/board-information>)

F5- Regarding detailed disclosure of total compensation paid, most public agencies do not break out all components of compensation paid to their elected officials, including salary, meeting fees or stipends (including compensation for serving as liaison to other advisory committees, councils and forums), reimbursements, health and retirement benefits, and other benefits such as equipment.

WE DISAGREE WITH THIS FINDING

The District Rules of Procedure are available on the District’s website. The Districts “Directors shall receive compensation in an amount not to exceed \$100.00 per day for each day’s attendance at meetings of the Board.” (For quick reference, please see: <https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/MarinCSD5/#!/MarinCSD502/MarinCSD50205.html>)

RECOMENDATIONS

R5- No later than 90 days after the date of this report, in addition to any other compensation links, agencies should include a link on their board or council web pages that leads directly to their “Elected Officials” page on the publicpay.ca.gov site, conforming to the format suggested on Appendix A.

IMPLEMENTED

The District provided a link shortcut as recommended on Appendix A of the grand jury report on the District’s website (www.sani5.org) on May 15, 2020. (For quick reference, please see: <http://www.sani5.org/about/board/board-information>)

R6- No later than 120 days after the date of this report, agencies should include on their board or council web pages a comprehensive description of their policies regarding all compensation paid to elected officials specifying, at a minimum, salary, meeting fees or stipends (including compensation for serving as liaison to other advisory committees, councils and forums), reimbursements, health and retirement benefits, and other benefits such as equipment.

IMPLEMENTED

The District’s Rules of Procedure policy contains the information above and it is available on the District’s website (www.sani5.org) and has been available since December 1, 2019. (For quick reference, please see: <https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/MarinCSD5/#!/MarinCSD502/MarinCSD50205.html>)

R6- No later than 120 days after the date of this report, agencies should adopt a practice to compile and publish each year an annual report detailing the compensation actually paid to their elected officials for the previous calendar year. Compensation disclosures should include, at a minimum, salary, meeting fees or stipends (including compensation for serving as liaison to other advisory committees, councils and forums), reimbursements, health and retirement benefits, and other benefits such as equipment. A link to this report should be posted on the agency’s board or council web page.

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED, because they are not warranted or are not feasible.

The District’s Board of Directors make \$100 dollars per Board Meeting. The annual estimated cost for our Directors is budgeted in our annual budget as a single line item. The District also has monthly financial statements which track and account for actual payments to Directors throughout the course of the Fiscal Year. The District is very transparent in all of its financial obligations.

Sanitary District No.5 of Marin County appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury's report and to explain to the Grand Jury the District's continued transparency regarding Directors pay and benefits on our website in the Districts continuing effort to keep our members of the public well informed on all matters relating to our Sanitary District.

NOTE: The Board of Directors of Sanitary District No. 5 of Marin County would like to point out that while the while the Grand Jury's search for transparency of the boards of the various Special Districts is commendable, it is disheartening that the Grand Jury is thus apparently concerned with FORM, while it does not seem to concern itself with matters of SUBSTANCE, such as why some districts provide extravagant compensation to their directors, including some boards whose members receive such compensation as medical and dental insurance, as well some boards, such as the Marin Municipal Water District, some of whose board members receive compensation in excess of \$20,000 per year. We suggest that the Grand Jury concern itself with requiring that each district justify its ranges of board compensation.

Response to Grand Jury Report

Report Title: Follow-Up Report on Web Transparency of Agency Compensation Practices

Respondent/Agency Name: Sanitary District No. 5 of Marin County

Your Name: Robin Dohrmann Title: Office Manager

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: N/A
- I (we) disagree *partially* with the findings numbered: N/A
- I (we) disagree *wholly* with the findings numbered: F4 & F5

(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefor.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R5 & R6 have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered N/A have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered N/A require further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.)
- Recommendations numbered R6 will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: May 21, 2020 Signed: 

Number of pages attached: 4

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MARIN COUNTY
COUNSEL'S OFFICE