

Tuolumne Fire District

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Superior Court of California
County of Tuolumne
BY Jayne Barnes
Clerk

August 11, 2011

Superior Court of California
County of Tuolumne
60 North Washington Street
Sonora, CA 95370

Honorable Eric I. Du Temple
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court

Re: 2010-2011 Grand Jury Report

The following are the responses from the Tuolumne Fire District to the Grand Jury's findings.

FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS

F1.-R1. Difficulty getting qualified candidates to run for the Board.

Disagree – We have not had this problem. In the 2010 election there were 10 candidates who ran for the 5 open seats. The Tuolumne Fire has an open door policy and is always available to the community, schools and the library. A Community Service Educational Day, open to the public, is being explored.

F2.-R2. New Board members have difficulty participating in board business due to lack of background on issues.

Disagree - Newly elected members are given all information of previous/current agenda items and are given every opportunity to examine any documentation necessary to understand topics to be discussed prior to the board meetings. Minutes from all previous meetings, which are kept in a secure location at the station, are always available for board members to review. The Minutes may also be reviewed by the public at any time.

F3.-R3. Board members have limited understanding of the Brown Act and conflicts of interest.

Disagree: Each board member has taken AB1234 Compliance Training for Special Districts/Ethics & the Brown Act. The Chairman, Kenneth Hockett, took a Brown Act class conducted by County Counsel Gregory Oliver's office and brought back informational packets for all board members to study.

F4.-R4. Policy and Procedures Manual not updated.

Disagree: The Tuolumne Fire District has a complete Policy and Procedures Manual. The manual is continually being reviewed and updated. When changes need to be made they are discussed at board meetings and revisions are made to the manual and all employees are made of aware of any changes. The manual is kept in a place easily accessible to anyone for them to review.

F5.-R5. Districts do not have updated boundary maps readily available.

Disagree: The Tuolumne Fire District has a current boundary/sphere of influence map posted at the station.

F6.-R6. Sporadic community attendance at meetings, poor management of meetings and posting of district meeting agendas.

Agree: Community attendance at meetings is usually low when there are no high interest topics on the agenda. Considerable improvement has taken place at meetings to keep them well organized and to stay on topics listed. Agendas are posted in three conspicuous locations throughout the community, seventy-two hours prior to each meeting as required by the law.

F7.-R7. Budgets and other financial details are becoming more complicated. Poor fiscal management has negatively affected several special districts.

Agree: The financial reports for the Tuolumne Fire District are prepared by the County of Tuolumne Auditor/Controller's Office. These reports are complicated and not always easy to understand. In the past the financial statements were not understood but our current Board Chairman and Board Treasurer have met with Debi Russell, Auditor/Controller to review the reports for a better understanding of the our financial situation. That information has been brought back to the board so they can make better informed financial decisions.

F8.-R8. Special Districts and Community Service Districts use of individual websites.

Agree: A website is a good informational tool but, due to our severe budgetary constraints at this time, we are unable to create a website. If conditions improve we will look into creating a website in the future.

F9.-R9.-Special Districts usually acting as managers of personnel and operations. If there was a Community Service District the General Manager of that organization would provide advice to the board.

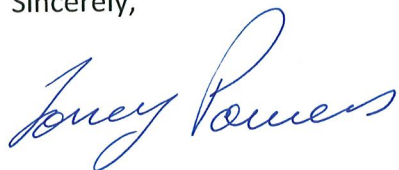
Agree: It might be helpful to have the advice of a General Manager. To avoid any personnel and operational problems we currently have membership in the California Association of Employers. This membership provides us with legal advice in human resources management. The CEA also provides us with extensive training in all personnel related areas. We have already used their expertise to have them review our policies and procedures and in several other personnel related matters.

F10.-R10.-Consolidating into a Community Service District.

Neutral: The Tuolumne Fire District would not be opposed to exploring the possibility of a Community Service District but we would be cautious of the risks versus the gains

The Tuolumne Fire District has tried to answer all the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury report. If you require any additional information we will provide it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Toney Powers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Toney" and last name "Powers" clearly distinguishable.

Toney Powers
Acting Chief
Tuolumne Fire District

TP:mw