

CARLOTTA COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

INTRODUCTION

The Humboldt County Grand Jury received two complaints about the Carlotta Community Service District. The Board of Supervisors on April 6, 1965, passed Resolution No. 2089; at that time, Carlotta Community Service District was formed pursuant to the provisions of Title 6 Division 2 of the California Government Code. Currently the Carlotta Community Services District Board consists of five members elected at large and a secretary: hereinafter known as the board. The Carlotta Volunteer Fire Protection Services was formed in the early 1950s. The Carlotta Volunteer Fire Department at this time has fifteen members: hereinafter known as the fire department. Lawsuits have been filed between the board and the fire department.

PROCEDURE

The grand jury interviewed members of the board and members of the fire department. In addition, the grand jury inspected the two fire halls and equipment.

FINDINGS

- F-1 The board and the fire department have had a poor working relationship for several months.
- F-2 The poor relationship between the board and the fire department escalated when construction began on the new fire hall.
- F-3 It was reported that fifteen firemen resigned en masse this year as a result of this poor working relationship between the board and the fire department.
- F-4 The board originally budgeted \$15,000 for the construction of a new fire hall.
- F-5 The board and fire department assumed that donations of money, materials, and labor would defray the majority of the costs of building the fire hall.
- F-6 The fire department actively solicited donations of money and materials for the new fire hall; as a result, most of the donations were made specifically to the fire department.
- F-7 Neither the board nor the fire department has tax-exempt status, precluding either from receiving tax deductible donations.
- F-8 The board has spent at least \$33,000 on the new fire hall which is not yet completed.
- F-9 For thirty-five years, the board has not purchased any fire prevention vehicles.
- F-10 The board owns the following:
- A. 1964 GMC fire truck
 - B. 1964 Diamond T fire truck
 - C. 1971 International-water tender (capacity: 3500 gallons)
- F-11 The water tender tank leaks half of its capacity each day.
- F-12 The fire department reported it does not have sufficient respirators for the fire trucks; four are required for each truck.

F-13 The board pays the secretary/treasurer \$100 a month and does not withhold taxes.

F-14 The board has not hired/appointed a district general manager, as required by law.

F-15 In 1999, the board reduced the property tax assessment by 40 percent.

F-16 The board reported reserves of approximately \$100,000 as of June 1999.

F-17 As of June 2000, the board budget summary shows a reserve balance of approximately \$66,000.

CONCLUSIONS

C-1 Neither the board nor the fire department effectively managed solicitations for the new fire hall, resulting in a serious shortfall of support for fire hall construction.

C-2 The board has not effectively budgeted funds for maintenance and upgrading of equipment and construction of the new fire hall.

C-3 The water tender tank leak substantially increases response time to a fire.

C-4 The absence of a district general manager appears to invite continuing management problems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

THE HUMBOLDT COUNTY GRAND JURY RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING:

R-1 The board budget more funds for the district to operate effectively.

R-2 A district general manager be hired/appointed.

R-3 Payroll taxes be withheld from the salary of the secretary/treasurer.

RESPONSE

THE FOLLOWING RESPONSE TO REPORT 01-09 ARE REQUIRED PURSUANT TO P.C. 933 AND THE STANDARD FORMAT FOR RESPONSES.

- The Carlotta Community Service District respond to all findings and recommendations.