

AUG 12 2010



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July 28, 2010

*2009-2010 Sonoma County
Civil Grand Jury - FINAL REPORT*

The following is the Forestville Water District (FWD) Required Response to:

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATION #R-3:

R-3: "In cooperation with either the SCWA, the NCRWQCB, and/or one or more local educational institutions, schedule training conferences relating to new industry developments and trends, and cost effective management. Ideally, as there are many small districts such as GCSD in Sonoma County and elsewhere in Northern California, the conferences should be open to any who would benefit from attendance. Small districts such as the GCSD have well intentioned members who do learn from experience, but the lack of training does cause mistakes that can be expensive."

FWD RESPONSE TO R-3:

Training is essential to successful and effective operations. There are several organizations that offer educational opportunities; however, we have learned that the material is often repetitive. Also, because smaller districts have limited staff, it is difficult, if not impossible to send a key staff person long distances to attend these seminars, because the long absences tend to hamper operations. Therefore, FWD recommends that: (1) the smaller Districts in the area, the SCWA and the NCRWQCB all join in coordinating conference(s), locally; and (2) that efforts be made to ensure the material presented is not redundant. Also, to the extent allowable, training conferences scheduled in the evenings or on weekends would allow board members and district engineers to attend as well.

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATION #R-6:

R-6: "Serious consideration should be given to a joint venture with the FWD! The pipeline between the 2 facilities combined with irrigation and frost protection in the areas served by the GCSD and FWD indicate such a venture would be mutually beneficial. A good starting point would be to open negotiations with SCWA to assign the title of the pipeline's valve jointly to the GCSD and FWD."

FWD RESPONSE TO R-6:

Prior to FWD and GCSD taking control of their individual sanitation zones, the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) was planning to use the two districts together. The idea was to treat water in Forestville and store it in Graton, then use common irrigation and frost protection sites to get rid of the water, as well as using the same manpower to operate the two districts. FWD

READ AND CONSIDERED APPROVE!

DATE 8/13/10 BY [Signature]

believes that this idea should be looked at again to see what savings could be accomplished in a more efficient operation of the two districts. FWD is already working with the SCWA to obtain ownership of the pipeline from Forestville to Ross Station Road and has installed a meter to measure water being brought over from Graton. Graton already owns the pipeline from Ross Station Road to the Graton Treatment Plant.

The following is the Forestville Water District (FWD) Requested Response to:

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATION #R-5:

R-5: "Job announcements should include full job descriptions emphasizing experience and the ability to work cooperatively with neighboring districts and agencies. Joint appointments with adjacent districts should be considered as they can both save money and institutionalize cooperative work."

FWD RESPONSE TO R-5:

FWD agrees that when hiring personnel, having experience and the ability to work cooperatively with other agencies and districts is extremely important. Having districts share manpower would help keep costs down and save rate-payers money.

**FWD WOULD LIKE TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING RESPONSE TO
GRAND JURY FINDING #F-8**

F-8: "GCSD was charged a \$25,000 fee for opening the valve controlling the pipeline between their facility and FWD's in order to provide frost protection to vineyards near Forestville. The dissolution agreement with the SCWA called for a \$25,000 per use fee to be charged to both the FWD and GCSD, but at no time was the FWD charged the fee. In May 2009 the SCWA requested that the agreement be amended to waive past fees and institute a fee based on volumetric use and not to exceed a combined fee of \$25,000."

FWD RESPONSE TO F-8:

The implication of F-8 is that Graton gets charged the \$25,000 fee and FWD does not. This is inaccurate. Either District will get charged whenever it uses the pipeline for its primary purposes. GCSD was charged the \$25,000 fee on the occasion in question because it required use in an incident where it needed frost protection for one of its vineyard customers. GCSD was unable to use its own water because it had run out of chlorine and had to hold the water.

Staff of the GCSD called the General Manger of the FWD (George Roberts) and asked if FWD would supply treated water. Mr. Roberts stated that FWD could supply the frost protection, but there was a \$25,000 fee, collected by SCWA, to open the valve between the two systems. Mr. Roberts told the GCSD staff they needed to contact Randy Cullen at SCWA to arrange for the valve to be opened. Randy Cullen (SCWA) later told Mr. Roberts that the GCSD staff had agreed to pay the \$25,000 fee and he (Mr. Cullen) had the valve opened. FWD then supplied frost protection water to the GCSD customer, as well as FWD customers.

The FWD has never been charged the \$25,000 fee by the SCWA because it has never had to use the pipeline to meet its customers' demands. Instead, it has used the pipeline, but only to meet the water conservation goals of the SCWA and the general public.

The pipeline has been used to ship water from Graton to FWD for treatment, and then to irrigate and provide frost protection of FWD customers. Normally, FWD would use its allotment of potable water for these purposes, but because of drought conditions, it agreed to the SCWA's requests to treat Graton water for these purposes instead. Neither FWD nor GCSD were charged the \$25,000 fee for those instances when FWD was using the pipeline.

FWD incurs a cost in treating that effluent, and it did not get reimbursed. The GCSD benefited from such uses because it was not charged for the added cost that FWD incurred in treating to tertiary standards; additionally, GCSD was able to get rid of water without discharging it into streams.

The public and the SCWA benefits from such use because water is conserved for the region. Neither District was and is charged for such use of the pipeline by the SCWA. This is an example of how cooperation between the local agencies serves the public.

Submitted by: George Roberts
George Roberts, General Manager

Dated: 7/29/10



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July 28, 2010

CERTIFIED MAIL: 7008-1830-0002-5305-1690

Board of Directors
Graton Community Services District
P. O. Box 534
Graton, CA 95444

RE: Request for Joint Board Meeting

Dear Graton Board of Directors,

It has been suggested in the Sonoma County Grand Jury for 2009-2010 by *Recommendation R-6: "Serious consideration should be given to a joint venture with FWD!"* Therefore, the Board of Directors for the Forestville Water District would like to extend an invitation to the Board of Directors for the Graton Community Services District to schedule a Joint Board Meeting to start discussing options for how our two agencies can share resources and services.

Some of the following are potential benefits to a Joint Venture:

POTENTIAL COST SAVINGS FROM...

- a.) Sharing Staff
 - One General Manager for both agencies
 - Cross-trained Operators
 - Office Personnel: one Office Manager
- b.) Possible lower/stabilized sewer rates for all customers by creating a larger customer base.
- c.) Less Capital Outlay by sharing Treatment Facilities and existing pipeline(s).
- d.) Sharing Reclaimed Water: long term goal is to get rid of excess water without having to discharge (lessening chances for violations and fines when discharging).

The Forestville Water District would like to start receiving all Board Meeting Agendas for Graton Community Services District meetings. FWD would be happy to reciprocate should Graton be interested in receiving all Board Meeting Agendas from FWD. Agendas can be either e-mailed, faxed or mailed in enough time for any interested Director or Staff member to attend these meetings.

OVER →

Meanwhile in Graton...

By Hollynn D'Lil
gratoncolumn@comcast.net
(707) 829 9440



Potluck in the Community Garden

Traditional Graton Friday night potluckers shared dishes and tomato growing tips in the Graton Community Garden, a new community effort thriving these days in the lot behind Underwood's Restaurant. Headed up by Jane Kurtz, the garden was seeded by Graton Projects. John Rohel, President of Graton Projects, says, "The Community Garden is the most positive thing that I have seen happen while I have lived here. Growing veggies is just plain fun and the wide assortment of people who 'farm' are fun to be around and they seem to like being there too. We really are communing with each other. Jane Kurtz has created a community gathering place by sheer will and muscle power."

Attending the garden potluck were Steve Sheldon, and Orrin and Terry Thiessen. Steve is allowing the community use of the land for a few years until he commences with his plans to build housing there. Orrin and Terry are providing the use of the well water for irrigation. Jane Kurtz (see Sarah Alexandra's photograph below), said the community is very appreciative of the support of the local developers. It's a project she's been wanting to see happen for years since a previous garden in the same location transformed the property in the early '90s. For more information and to participate, call Jane at 823-7550.

Grand Jury's Report on the Sewer

When I moved to Graton in 2004, my city friends asked why I would want to move to such a small town as Graton. I liked to joke that it was because we have such a great sewer! The newly formed Graton Community Service District (GCSD) had developed an environmentally friendly tertiary treatment by pumping the secondary-treated water under a 20-acre plot of redwoods trees. I, like so many others in the area, trusted that

the tree treatment would work. It had to have been well researched and thought out, I thought.

Not so, evidently. Turns out the designers didn't take into account a layer of clay that redwood roots can't penetrate, a conclusion of the Grand Jury. The Grand Jury report states that taxpayers via the Graton Community Service District and FEMA paid a local engineering firm \$1.5 million in the last five years for advice on the redwood treatment, other designs, and flood relief. The problem is that the 652 ratepayers have seen their rates increase from \$826 annually in 2004 to \$1,359 in 2009. Oops!

The report leans heavily on a recommendation that the Graton Service District consolidate with other districts for sewer treatment. Either that they say, or come up with \$7 million for a traditional tertiary treatment plant.

Graton residents in the past have expressed a desire to retain local control over sewer treatment, which keeps Graton water in Graton rather than having it pumped to other parts of the county. Is there an agenda to get recycled Graton water available for development of drier parts of the county? Can we salvage the tree treatment? Would it help to add trees with strong tap roots that would puncture the clay layer? On the other hand, shouldn't we have more to show for the increasing amounts of money expended by the district on consulting fees and operating costs? We should have a report from the GCSD responding to the issues and concerns delineated by the Grand Jury in September.

Gunshot Kitty Recovering

Sue Miller's kitty, Skeeter, is recovering from her gunshot wound, inflicted by an unknown assailant. Thanks to Betty Ann Sutton, owner of Mr. Ryder's Antiques, more than \$700 has been raised for the kitty's medical expenses. Though her leg has to be amputated, Skeeter can know that in spite of one person's insanity, she has a community to lean on.

More People To Thank

A few more people to thank for their contributions to the "Party for a Park!" fund-raiser last spring are Susan Nestor who provided face painting, Catherine Sagan who provided a booth with wares from Guatemala and Auric Blends which also provided a booth. Thank you for helping with our park!



(cc: Aug Bd Mtg)

August 10, 2010

The following items have been mailed from the Forestville Water District (FWD) to the names & addresses below:

- A.) FWD Responses to 2009-2010 Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury Final Report
- B.) FWD Certified Letter to Graton CSD Board of Directors
- C.) Article from the 8/5/10 issue of the Sonoma County Gazette "Meanwhile in Graton" by Hollynn D'Lil

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| 1.) The Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury
P. O. Box 5109
Santa Rosa, CA 95402 | 2.) Superior Court, State of California
ATTN: Gary Nadler, Presiding Judge
600 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403 |
| 3.) Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
575 Administration Drive, Room 100-A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403 | 4.) Sonoma County Administrator
ATTN: Veronica Ferguson
575 Administration Drive, Room 104-A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403 |
| 5.) Graton Community Services District
Board of Directors
P. O. Box 534
Graton, CA 95444-0534 | 6.) Graton CSD Director John Roehl
P. O. Box 365
Graton, CA 95444-0365 |
| 7.) Graton CSD Director Jane Eagle
510 South Edison
Graton, CA 95444 | 8.) Graton CSD Director Rolan Wiebe
2601 South Edison
Graton, CA 95444 |
| 9.) Graton CSD Director Judith Christensen
2882 South Edison
Graton, CA 95444 | 10.) Graton CSD Director David Jeppesen
P. O. Box 308
Graton, CA 95444-0608 |
| 11.) Forestville Water District Board of Directors
P. O. Box 261
Forestville, CA 95436-0261 | -- James Smith, Chair of Board
-- Claudia McDermott, Vice-Chair
-- Steven Bandettini, Director
-- Richard Benyo, Director
-- Edmund Brush, Director |
| 12.) Malcolm Manwell, Legal Counsel for FWD
Perry Law Offices
P. O. Box 1028
Santa Rosa, CA 95402 | |