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AUG 27 2012

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SONOMA
By: *[Signature]* DEPUTY CLERK

Approved: *[Signature]*
Superior Court Judge

Date: ~~AUG 27 2012~~

August 15, 2012

The Honorable Rene Auguste Chouteau
Presiding Superior Court Judge
Foreperson Steve Larsen
Sonoma County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 5109
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Re: The Marin/Sonoma Mosquito & Vector Control District – Under the
Microscope
Grand Jury Report Date: June 27, 2012

Dear Judge Chouteau & Foreperson Larsen:

The Board of Trustees of the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District appreciate the Grand Jury's work on the above-named Grand Jury Report and the opportunity to respond to the Findings and Recommendations 2, 3, 4 & 7.

The enclosed responses were prepared by the Board's Executive Committee and subsequently reviewed and approved by the full Board of Trustees at the regular meeting on August 8, 2012.

Please contact us if we can supply any further information.

Sincerely,

E.R. Schulze
Ed Schulze, President
MSMVCD Board of Trustees

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FORM

Report Title: The Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District – Under the Microscope

Report Date: June 29, 2012

Response by: Ed Schulze on behalf of Board of Trustees. Title: President, MSMVCD Board of Trustees

Agency/Department Name: Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District

FINDINGS:

I/We agree with the findings numbered: F1, F2, and F6

I/We disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: F3, F4, and F5

(See attached statement specifying portions of the findings that are disputed and an explanation of the reasons therefor).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendations numbered R4, R7 have been implemented.

(See attached summary describing the implemented actions.)

Recommendation number R3 has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

Recommendation R2 requires further analysis.

(Attached is 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.)

Date: 8-15-2012 Signed: E.R. Schulze

Number of pages attached: 2

FINDINGS:

F3 MSMVCD puts minimal emphasis on vectors other than mosquitoes and yellowjackets in its educational outreach.

Response:

The Board agrees that at the time of the Grand Jury's investigation, the main emphasis of the educational program was on mosquitoes and yellowjackets. Since the curriculum is science-based and time in the classroom is limited by various factors, there are sound educational reasons for teaching the mosquito life-cycle. It is relatively straightforward and illustrative of the principles of insect reproduction, development and metamorphosis while clearly demonstrating the potential for transmission of diseases to humans and animals.

The educational program has been revised and now includes age-appropriate information on ticks and rodents as well as mosquitoes and yellowjackets. A tick education packet for use by parents and teachers is currently under development. The packet will help the organizers of field and camping trips protect children from tick-borne diseases.

F4. Although MSMVCD appears financially sound, at times transparency is lacking.

Response:

The Board agrees that at the time of the Grand Jury's investigation, there were isolated instances where the transparency of financial information could have been improved.

For Fiscal Year 2012/13, a new budget narrative presents an overview, explanation and analysis of the approved budget, including a review of the District's income, operational expenditures, capital projects, reserves and balances. The approved budget now depicts three years of income and expenditure for comparison purposes. To enhance the clarity and transparency of the annual budget, staff extensively revised the budget format and provided simpler and clearer nomenclature for many of the categories. This format will be continued and expanded upon in future budget years.

F5. There is at times a lack of professionalism in dealing with the public.

Response:

The Board agrees that in the past, there were occasions where there could have been more professionalism in dealing with members of the public during Board meetings. See response to Recommendation 7 for an explanation of the changes that have subsequently been implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R2. *Expand the educational staff.*

Response:

This recommendation requires further analysis. The Board and the Manager agree that, in principle, it would be desirable to enhance the Educational Outreach and Public Relations programs. It is noteworthy that the Marin/Sonoma District is one of only a handful of similar Districts in the state to operate a full-time education program in K-12 school classrooms. Each year, as part of its educational efforts, the District maintains a booth stocked with educational materials and exhibits at dozens of public events such as fairs, festivals and farmer's markets. At these events, staff members provide information and education to tens of thousands of visitors each year.

Additionally, all the District's technicians incorporate an educational approach when providing vector control services to the public, especially in residential settings.

District staff is in the process of examining the feasibility of adding a part-time position to assist the Education Specialist and Public Relations Director.

Factors under examination include the current and forecast demand for classroom presentations, the cost of employing an additional staff member, the level of supervision required of such an employee and the capacity of existing staff to supervise and direct the work of an additional employee. The approved budget for Fiscal Year 2012/13 does not anticipate an excess of income over expenditures sufficient to support a full-time employee. Following analysis, staff will make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees for their consideration. The analysis will be presented to the Board at, or before its scheduled meeting on November 14, 2012.

R3. *Change auditors this fiscal year and consider doing so every five years.*

Response:

This Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future.

Prior to the issuance of the Grand Jury Report, the Board had directed the Manager to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Auditing Services. The draft RFP has now been completed and following its approval by the Board and subsequent issuance, the responses received will be reviewed and a recommendation concerning the selection of new auditor will be made by the Board's Audit Committee and forwarded to the Board. Staff plans to present the RFP to the Board for consideration at or before the regular meeting planned for September 12, 2012.

In keeping with the Grand Jury's recommendation, the Budget Committee and the Board will consider the merits of changing Auditors every five years.

R4. *Provide copies of budgets to anyone who requests them.*

Response:

This recommendation has been implemented. The Board agrees that transparency with respect to the District's financial documents is imperative.

District staff has been instructed to provide a printed or electronic copy of the Budget upon request to anyone. The Approved Budget for FY 2012/13 is posted on the District's enhanced web site and was provided to Board members and the public at meetings of the Board of Trustees. An explanatory Budget Narrative section provides a detailed discussion of the overall budget, including a retrospective look at the accomplishments and spending patterns of the prior Fiscal Year. At the Board President's request, side by side comparisons showing three years of income and expenditure patterns are now provided.

R7. *Foster professionalism in being open and responsive to the public.*

Response:

This recommendation has been implemented. The Board agrees that professionalism, openness to public comment and responsiveness are key tenets of good governance. The Board has formed a Public Outreach Committee, whose charge is to examine new ideas and concepts from the public and interest groups; be attentive to public comment at meetings and to follow-up and make recommendations to the full Board of Trustees.

Additionally, at the beginning of 2012, the Board and staff worked together to retain the services of a General Counsel, who now attends all meetings of the Board. The General Counsel is immediately available to advise on matters of a legal nature, and to ensure compliance with applicable statutes such as the Ralph M. Brown Act.