

ALLEGED MISUSE OF OF FUNDS BY THE CITY OF OXNARD

INTRODUCTION

A citizen alleged that a former Oxnard City Councilman used his authority to influence the expenditures of City funds to underwrite performances of his family's musical group at the Oxnard Performing Arts Center.

INQUIRY

The 1996/97 Ventura Grand Jury interviewed several of the City of Oxnard's elected officials, former and present councilmen, the City Manager, and a department head. The Committee was provided with documents and sworn testimony.

FINDINGS

- There was a lack of knowledge of accounting, business, auditing and skills at the Oxnard Performing Arts Center by management.
- There was no set procedure in obtaining signed contracts with entertainment groups.
- The City considers the Performing Arts Center Budget in total and did not specifically review or address funding to underwrite the performance of the councilman's family.
- It appears that the councilman's family musical group performed free of charge at various local schools at their own expense.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Oxnard City Council did not exercise its oversight responsibility in regard to management, revenue and the budget at the Center.
2. The former Oxnard councilman did not use his authority to benefit his family in the underwriting of events at the Oxnard Performing Arts Center.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Committee recommends that the Oxnard City Council annually supervise and monitor the budget, management, receipts and contracts with performing groups that are booked.
2. The City Council should establish policies with respect to underwriting artistic groups, or exercise specific oversight of individual agreements.

COMMENDATION

The Grand Jury commends the Oxnard City Council for initiating an audit of the Oxnard Performing Arts Center.

RESPONSE REQUIRED

Mayor, City of Oxnard
Oxnard City Attorney
Oxnard City Council