

## Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Independent Special Districts

Report Date: April 26, 2018

Response by: JIM FRIEDL Title: GENERAL MANAGER

### FINDINGS / CONCLUSIONS

- I (we) agree with the findings / conclusions numbered: C-02
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings / Conclusions numbered:  
C-03  
(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the Findings / Conclusions that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons.) - SEE ATTACHED

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R-04 have been implemented.  
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions and date completed.) - SEE ATTACHED
- Recommendations number \_\_\_\_\_ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.  
(Attach a time frame for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered \_\_\_\_\_ require further analysis.
- Recommendations numbered \_\_\_\_\_ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.

Date: JUNE 1<sup>TH</sup>, 2018

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



Number of pages attached: 5

# Response to Grand Jury Report Form – Attachment 1

**Report Title: Independent Special Districts**

**Report Date: April 26, 2018**

**Response By: Conejo Recreation and Park District**

## **FINDINGS / CONCLUSIONS:**

Per the Grand Jury Report on Independent Special District (April 26, 2018), the Conejo Recreation and Park District (CRPD) is required to respond to certain portions of the report, specifically: Conclusions C-02 and C-03 as well as Recommendation R-04. Our response is limited to Conclusion C-02, C-03 and Recommendation R-04.

### **Conclusion C-02**

*The Grand Jury concluded that the absence of publicly available reserve policies and practices does not serve the public interest.*

The Conejo Recreation and Park District wholly agrees with Conclusion C-02.

### **Conclusion C-03**

*The Grand Jury concluded the independent special districts should better articulate the need for and the size of their reserves by adopting explicit policies for reserve funds. These policies should be readily available for public review.*

The Conejo Recreation and Park District partially disagrees with Conclusion C-03 that independent special districts should “better” articulate the need and size of their reserves by adopting explicit policies for reserve funds. We are unaware of the specific practices at all of the other independent special districts. Even without a Financial Reserve Policy, annual audit reports and basic financial statements, including the footnotes therein, typically contain the financial information necessary for a board and staff to understand the financial position of the agency including the reserves.

We certainly agree that transparency regarding public agency finances benefits the public. Our response quibbles with the use of the word “*better*” as it relates specifically to the Conejo Recreation and Park District and how it has treated its Reserves. CRPD is, and has been, both transparent and explicit about its Financial Reserve Policy, the amounts set aside, and the reasoning behind the reserves. The Conejo Recreation and Park District has:

1. Formally adopted a Financial Reserve Policy at its January 9, 2014 publicly-noticed and regularly-scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors.
2. Written a simple and clear Financial Reserves Policy for the general reader.

3. Separated the Reserves into specific, distinct categories including an articulation of the reasons therefore and dollar amounts allocated in each reserve.
4. Linked the Financial Reserve Policy to the Annual Audit Report to facilitate a clear financial picture of the Conejo Recreation and Park District for the Board of Directors and public.
5. Reviewed and readopted the Financial Reserves Policy annually at a publicly-noticed meeting of the Board of Directors.
6. Maintained its Agenda Packets and Board Reports (including the Financial Reserve Policy) on the CRPD website under the Board Meetings Agendas tab: <https://cdlfh025.citiesdigital.com/WebLink/Browse.aspx> which is searchable (akin to a “google” search). The relevant board reports on the CRPD website ([www.crpdpd.org](http://www.crpdpd.org)) are:
  - January 9, 2014 – CRPD Board Report Re: Resolution Establishing Policy for Financial Reserves
  - February 5, 2015 – CRPD Board Report re: Annual Review and Adoption of Financial Reserves Policy
  - March 3, 2016 – CRPD Board Report re: Annual Review and Adoption of Financial Reserves Policy
  - March 28, 2017 – CRPD Board Report re: Annual Review and Adoption of Financial Reserves Policy
  - March 15, 2018 – CRPD Board Report re: Annual Review and Adoption of Financial Reserves Policy
7. Maintained on the CRPD website ([www.crpdpd.org](http://www.crpdpd.org)) under the “About Us” tab, a menu along the left side of the website which allows the browser to select “Finance & Audit”. The direct link is: [http://www.crpdpd.org/about\\_us/finance\\_n\\_audit/default.asp](http://www.crpdpd.org/about_us/finance_n_audit/default.asp). On this webpage, CRPD maintains specific links to the “Financial Reserves Policy” (albeit it was an older policy which is now being updated) as well the District’s past five years of “Adopted Budgets” and eight years of “Audit Reports.”

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Response is limited to Recommendation numbered R-04 which, fully restated provides: R-04. The Grand Jury recommends every independent special district in the County have a website.

Key components should include:

- Name, location, contact information and services provided
- Governance structure of the district, including election information and the process for constituents to run for board positions
- Compensation details including staff salaries, pensions, and benefits, or a link to this information on the State Controllers website
- Annual revenues and the sources of such revenues, including fees, property taxes and other assessments, bond debt, expenditures, and reserve amounts
- Reserve fund policy
- Geographic area served
- Most recent Municipal Service Review, and the most recent annual financial report provided to the State Controller or a link to this information on the State Controller's website
- Link to LAFCO

The Conejo Recreation and Park District agrees that it currently has a website with a great deal of information about the park facilities, recreation programs and services offered including most of the information identified in Final Report and has implemented recommendation R-04 and as more fully described in italics.

R-04. The Grand Jury recommends every independent special district in the County have a website.

Key components should include:

- Name, location, contact information and services provided
  - *This information is, and has, been included throughout the CRPD website: [www.crpd.org](http://www.crpd.org). Generic contact information is found at the bottom of the CRPD homepage. Board of Director contact information is at [http://www.crpd.org/about\\_us/directors/default.asp](http://www.crpd.org/about_us/directors/default.asp). Administrative Staff contact information is found at [http://www.crpd.org/about\\_us/administration/administrative\\_staff.asp](http://www.crpd.org/about_us/administration/administrative_staff.asp) Other staff and community center contact information is located throughout the website.*
- Governance structure of the district, including election information and the process for constituents to run for board positions
  - *Election information is located under the Board of Directors page under the menu option "Elections" [http://www.crpd.org/about\\_us/directors/elections.asp](http://www.crpd.org/about_us/directors/elections.asp) This page includes a link to the County of Ventura elections page.*

- Compensation details including staff salaries, pensions, and benefits, or a link to this information on the State Controllers website
  - *This information is on the website under the “About Us” page under the “Human Resources” link.*  
[http://www.crpdp.org/about\\_us/human\\_resources/default.asp](http://www.crpdp.org/about_us/human_resources/default.asp)
    - *There are links to:*
      - *Benefits for Full-Time Employees*
      - *The Labor Agreement (MOU) between the District and SEIU Local 721*
      - *General Manager’s Employment Agreement*
      - *ConejoRPD Salary Schedule*
      - *Link to Government Compensation in California (State Controller’s website at [www.publicpay.ca.gov](http://www.publicpay.ca.gov))*
  
- Annual revenues and the sources of such revenues, including fees, property taxes and other assessments, bond debt, expenditures, and reserve amounts
  - *This information is included in CRPD budget documents. CRPD adopts a Two-Year Budget at the conclusion of several public meetings during the Spring. The Budget is reviewed at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the 2-Year Budget. CPPD’s fiscal year runs July 1 – June 30th. Budgets adopted since 2013 are maintained on the website under the “About Us” tab with a click on “Finance and Audit” [http://www.crpdp.org/about\\_us/finance\\_n\\_audit/default.asp](http://www.crpdp.org/about_us/finance_n_audit/default.asp)*
  
- Reserve fund policy
  - *The Financial Reserves Policy is maintained under the “About Us” tab with a click on “Finance and Audit”*  
[http://www.crpdp.org/about\\_us/finance\\_n\\_audit/default.asp](http://www.crpdp.org/about_us/finance_n_audit/default.asp)
  
- Geographic area served
  - *The website identifies the CRPD service area as the “Conejo Valley” and under the “Parks” tab includes a link to “Maps” which takes the user to an interactive map of the parks and facilities operated by CRPD.*  
<http://www.crpdp.org/parkfac/parklisting1.asp>
  -
  
- Most recent Municipal Service Review, and the most recent annual financial report provided to the State Controller or a link to this information on the State Controller’s website
  - *This information was not included on the CRPD website and will now be added via a link to the Municipal Service Review maintained by LAFCO and a link the State Controller’s website.*

- Link to LAFCO
  - *This information was not included on the CRPD website and will now be added.*

The Conejo Recreation and Park District believes in transparency at all levels of government and takes seriously, its efforts to make relevant information about the District publicly available on its website. We appreciate the Grand Jury's interest in Special Districts and for providing Conejo Recreation and Park District an opportunity to respond and provide this additional information related to your report on Independent Special Districts.

Please feel free to contact me directly at 805-381-1239 with any additional questions or concerns regarding this matter.

Sincerely and on behalf of the Board of Directors,



Jim Friedl  
General Manager

c: CRPD Board of Directors