

It's a Trap! Health Care District holds taxpayers hostage

by Wendy Lack on **June 14, 2012** · [3 comments](#)



Wednesday's Contra Costa LAFCO [meeting](#) made it clear that residents effectively have been taken hostage by the now-infamous [Mt. Diablo Health Care District](#) (aka *That Dumbass Outfit Everyone Wishes Would Just Go Away Already Because We're Sick of Hearing About It*).

By opposing the transition currently underway to place the District under City of Concord authority, the District has triggered a mandatory 70-day wait period. The effect of this delay is to: 1) waste everyone's time; 2) extend the period during which the current District can make mischief and waste more tax dollars; and 3) require an unnecessary November election that will cost taxpayers an estimated \$120,000 in what the local press has dubbed an ["Election to Nowhere."](#)

At the June 13th meeting MDHC District Chairman Jeff Kasper told the Commission that his Board has adopted a [resolution](#) formally opposing the Concord reorganization. Kasper said that, at its [June 7th meeting](#), the District Board resolved to develop an "alternative plan" — though Kasper could not articulate how the District's plan differs from that put forward by Concord.

This most recent District maneuver is consistent with the Board's unofficial motto: *"Don't cooperate – obfuscate and litigate."*

To the evident disappointment of both the Commission and the audience at today's meeting, it's too late for the Commission to revisit the issue of dissolving the District outright. In order to do so the City of Concord would have to withdraw its reorganization plan and the Commission would effectively have to begin a new dissolution process from scratch.

LAFCO Commissioner Mike McGill had it right when he remarked: "We're trapped."

An exasperated County Supervisor Karen Mitchoff – who appointed Kasper to the District Board earlier this year – characterized the District's [resolution](#) as "arrogant" and "condescending." She said that she has yet to hear from *a single resident of her supervisorial district* who favors "saving the healthcare district." Mitchoff urged the Commission to maintain pressure on the

District to expedite its planning process, which she dismissed as merely “a delay tactic.” Mitchoff was particularly peeved at the insulting tone of the District’s resolution that is “a slap to the cities involved and John Muir Health.”

Commissioners Don Blubaugh, Federal Glover and Dwight Meadows all showed impatience with both the District and the delay its actions have created. Glover and Meadows both urged the District to bring the matter to swift resolution stating that “[one way or the other](#)” the District, in its current form, “is going away.”

For over a decade the Mt. Diablo Health Care District has earned its reputation as an infamous poster child for Contra Costa’s dysfunctional government agencies. Commissioners and residents alike appear to have lost patience with a lengthy reorganization plan that is bogged down in process and impeded at every turn by the obstinate District Board and its legal Svengali and Ambulance-Chaser-in-Chief, [Ralph T. Ferguson](#) to whom the District has paid over \$54,000 in legal fees to date.

From Day One the District has stubbornly resisted cooperation with the [reorganization](#). Nonetheless [LAFCO](#), the government body responsible for overseeing the transition, gave the District the benefit of the doubt by pursuing reorganization rather than dissolving the District outright, as many District residents urged at the time – including [County Supervisor Karen Mitchoff](#).

It’s sometimes said that no good deed goes unpunished and perhaps efforts by LAFCO and the City of Concord to rationally, professionally and collaboratively transition District operations are no exception. Health Care District Board members inexplicably have fought reorganization from the get-go and continue to do so (with the exception of Director Frank Manske who has long favored District dissolution). Notably, at the Board’s recent meeting, Mr. Ferguson [characterized](#) the Concord City Council as “naïve” and disparagingly implied the City isn’t up to the task.

Through its actions the District has made it clear that, if they’re going down, they’re surely going to waste lots of taxpayers’ money on the way. On June 6th the District Board [approved \\$231,500 in grants](#), despite the fact the Board isn’t likely to be in existence to oversee the grant process or monitor use of the grant funds during the year ahead. Further, the District’s successor agency, the City of Concord, may have need for these funds to for transition-related expenses.

The public trust and goodwill – as embodied by its representatives, the LAFCO Commissioners – have been abused by these rogue District Board members. Residents currently are held hostage by the District’s actions.

End the hostage crisis! Share your thoughts with the [Mt. Diablo Health Care District](#) board members by sending an e-mail to: info@mtdiablohealthcaredistrict.ca.gov.

And wearing a yellow ribbon couldn’t hurt, either.

Mt. Diablo Health Care District board will go away 'one way or another,' regulators warn

By Lisa Vorderbrueggen Contra Costa Times San Jose Mercury News
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Friday, June 15, 2012
ContraCostaTimes.com

MARTINEZ -- Contra Costa regulators urged the embattled Mt. Diablo Health Care District, whose elected board is targeted for elimination, to quickly cut a deal with the city scheduled to take over the district's small pot of money or face even more unpleasant consequences.

"Do everything you can," said Local Agency Formation Commissioner Dwight Meadows during the agency's Wednesday afternoon meeting. "One way or the other, this district will end. I can guarantee it. Let's get it resolved quickly."

The health care board must rescind within a week its vote to challenge Concord's plan to take on the agency's few duties and dollars in order to maintain a tight procedural timeline and avert a costly -- \$120,000 -- scheduled election for four open health board seats in November.

The commission has jurisdiction over local government boundaries and could still initiate outright dissolution although it would take months. But there are reports of health district board candidates lining up who have vowed to shut the district down as soon as they take office.

In the meantime, the district is scheduled to meet with Concord and has tentatively set an emergency board meeting for next week where it could withdraw its objections in the event it reaches an agreement with the city. If that happens, the commission will restore its timetable and potentially complete the process before the candidate filing period closes in August for the general election.

Mt. Diablo Health Care District Chairman Jeff Kasper assured the commission that he and his colleagues will work diligently but noted that avoiding an "election to nowhere" was not their top priority.

Concord proposes to form a subsidiary district with Pleasant Hill and meld the property tax receipts into its existing community grant cycle with the dollars earmarked for health-related programs.

The Concord City Council would serve as its directors, replacing the existing five-member elected board. Concord and Pleasant Hill would split, 3 and 2 respectively, the health care district's seats on the \$1 million a year community health fund funded by John Muir Health.

The health care district has asked for resolutions from the cities where properties inside the current district will be detached from the new subsidiary zone including Martinez, Lafayette, Clayton and Walnut Creek.

It is also seeking a transitional governance plan, and an explanation of how the city intends to enforce the district's 1996 agreement with John Muir Health to take over and operate the Concord hospital.

Voters in 1996 turned over the financially ailing public hospital to John Muir but left the elected health care board intact as a backstop in case the private nonprofit commission failed to preserve the facility originally built and operated with property tax money.

Critics have for years called for the district's dissolution, calling it a waste of public money.

Until this year when new board members sought to revive the moribund agency, the district spent the bulk of its \$240,000 a year in property tax receipts on overhead, free lifetime medical benefits for one current and one

former board member, legal bills and election costs.

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Contra Costa Times editorial: Voters should replace reckless Mt.

Diablo health care directors

Contra Costa Times editorial San Jose Mercury News

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Directors of the Mt. Diablo Health Care District continue to misrepresent the finances of the wasteful and unnecessary agency as they desperately try to stall its inevitable elimination or takeover.

The district collects taxes even though it hasn't had a hospital to run since 1997. From 2000-09, Mt. Diablo received \$2.2 million in property taxes and \$250,000 in grants. Only about 10 percent actually went for health programs to help people.

Most was spent on overhead, fruitless litigation and health benefits for a current and a former board member and their families under an unconscionable deal providing lifetime coverage to directors who serve at least 12 years.

The Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission wants to transfer control of the district to the city of Concord. We would prefer simply dissolving it. Either way, Mt. Diablo directors' ongoing delaying tactics will probably force the holding of regularly scheduled health care board elections in November at a cost of about \$120,000.

It's an unfortunate waste of tax money. But if that's the way they want to play, we say bring it on.

Concerned community members should field a slate of candidates who recognize the stupidity of perpetuating this charade -- candidates who will cooperate in the district's dissolution. Voters should oust Grace Ellis, Nick Adler and Jeff Kasper, who continue spending irresponsibly, and Frank Manske, who has been ineffectual.

The district is broke with more liabilities than assets. Nevertheless, directors, criticized for failing to previously spend money on community benefits, are now handing out grants they can't afford -- \$244,500 this year.

To justify that, district officials falsely portray the agency's financial obligations. Kasper, the board chairman, last week testified to LAFCO that a new actuarial report shows the district has only a \$218,000 future liability for the health care benefits promised to Ellis and former director Ron Leone, now a Concord councilman.

Kasper failed to disclose that the actuarial calculations assume that Ellis and Leone will permanently continue their recent concessions to only take partial funding from the district. In fact, Ellis and Leone have explicitly preserved their rights to, at any time, demand full benefits. As a result, the district's unfunded liability is probably close to the \$714,000 reported in an actuarial analysis just one year ago.

For months, LAFCO has tried to cajole a friendly transfer of district control to the Concord City Council. But the city wisely insists that the district first pay off the full health care liability. That would have been possible a year ago, when the district had enough money in the bank. Now, thanks to directors' wasteful spending, it doesn't. Consequently, dissolution seems more likely.

Meanwhile, expect more stalling. The longer this goes on, the more money the health care district's attorney and interim executive officer make. And the longer the directors, three of whom take a stipend, retain political power.

It's time to end this, and the ballot box may be the best way to do so.

Contra Costa County to hold fire parcel tax workshop

By Lisa Vorderbrueggen *Contra Costa Times* *Contra Costa Times*

Posted:

Saturday, June 16, 2012 ContraCostaTimes.com

Contra Costa Fire District officials will lay out details of a proposed parcel tax measure for the November ballot at a public workshop June 26.

Double-digit declines in property tax receipts in the wake of the economic downturn, coupled with increases in labor costs have severely cut into the district's operating budget since 2008.

Fire Chief Daryl Louder has said the district must cut services unless it recovers some of the lost dollars. The board of supervisors will hear the chief's recommendations on the tax level and its terms. It will also likely discuss whether to go ahead with the measure in November or wait for voters' moods to improve.

Voters in the East Contra Costa County Fire District earlier this month resoundingly rejected a \$197 annual parcel tax, and the district will close three of six fire stations July 1.

The workshop is informational, and public testimony will be taken. Supervisors won't make a final decision on a November ballot package until July, according to county officials.

The public workshop will be at 1:30 p.m. in the board of supervisors chamber at 651 Pine St. in Martinez. Residents may also view the meeting online via webstreaming at www.contracostaca.gov.

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Antioch to annex infamous neighborhood in northeast region

By Paul Bugarino Contra Costa Times Contra Costa Times

Posted:

Sunday, June 17, 2012
ContraCostaTimes.com

Antioch leaders have agreed to include two additional unincorporated areas -- including a neighborhood that drew international attention for its connection to the Jaycee Dugard kidnapping -- into its annexation plans for the northeast part of the city.

The Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission, the agency that oversees county boundary changes, asked that Antioch include the 197 acres to speed up plans to bring GenOn Energy's 760-megawatt natural gas-fired plant within city limits.

Councilman Gary Agopian said the formation commission doesn't want to leave swaths of unincorporated land as "islands."

"(With the approval) I'm highly confident this will be a dead issue," Agopian said. "The worst-case scenario would be to do nothing."

A May 11 letter from LAFCO executive officer Lou Ann Texeira on behalf of that agency's board encouraged Antioch to include the two swaths of land in its annexation plans quickly, as GenOn promised to give both the city and county \$1 million if the annexation happens by the end of this year.

The additional land includes the neighborhood off Viera Avenue, which Antioch leaders stressed in August 2009 was not part of its jurisdiction when law enforcement discovered that Dugard had been held in sexual captivity at the home of Phillip Garrido for 18 years.

If it is annexed into Antioch, the Viera neighborhood would require about \$6 million worth of road and sewer improvements to bring it up to city standards, said Victor Carniglia, a city-hired consultant. The city and county would split that cost, with the city's portion coming from new revenue generated in the annexation area, he said.

The other sliver of land is mainly used by private marinas and clubs for boating.

Don Wilson and other members of the Sportsman's Yacht Club argued that the land in question is a "perimeter boundary" and should be left out of the annexation. Club members argue that it will be costly to improve the infrastructure and they would prefer the land remain unincorporated.

State law gives property owners and registered voters the right to decide if they want to be annexed, though the "island" determination by LAFCO is an exception to the rule.

About 75 percent of roughly 100 residents in the Viera area surveyed by the city in 2007 were opposed to annexation, Carniglia said.

"The residents that live there should have the opportunity to be involved in the process," Councilwoman Mary Rocha said.

Antioch and the county continue to work on an agreement on how to split property taxes for the \$550 million plant and how needed utility and road improvements in the Viera neighborhood and will be funded.

A typical property split, according to a master tax agreement set in the 1980s, would be about 62 percent for the county and 38 percent for Antioch. However, when a property in question is worth more than \$10 million

in annual property tax, the county can choose to negotiate.

Antioch's portion of taxes in this instance will be less than 38 percent, City Manager Jim Jakel said earlier this year.

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Rodeo-Hercules Fire District eschews November revenue measure

By Tom Lochner *Contra Costa Times Contra Costa Times*

Posted:

Monday, June 18, 2012

ContraCostaTimes.com

June 29, 2012
Special Meeting
Agenda Item 8b

The Rodeo-Hercules Fire District will wait until spring at the earliest to pass the hat to voters.

The district's governing board decided this week not to put a tax measure on the November ballot after its election consultant, Tramutola Advisors of Oakland, warned that a Rodeo-Hercules measure could suffer from competition with statewide tax measures.

Instead, the board is contemplating a parcel tax measure or a benefit assessment measure in the spring, pending the outcome of a California Supreme Court case involving Prop. 218, the 1996 Right to Vote on Taxes Act.

Rodeo-Hercules officials hope the outcome of that case will determine to what extent a new benefit assessment, widely perceived as easier to pass, would be a feasible financing tool.

Taxes generally are defined as revenue levies that benefit the general public. General taxes can be used for an array of government purposes and require majority voter approval. Special taxes are earmarked for specific purposes and require two-thirds voter approval. A recent example is a June 5 parcel tax measure in the East Contra Costa Fire District to preserve emergency services, add paramedics and prevent more layoffs and fire station closures. It fell far short of the needed two-thirds majority; only 43.5 percent of voters approved.

Benefit assessments are levied on property and calculated according to the property's share of the total benefit. In a benefit assessment measure, property owners' votes are weighted in proportion to the amount of the assessment that they would pay.

The benefit assessment needs a simple majority of the weighted vote to pass.

The Rodeo-Hercules Fire District's projected budget of \$4.9 million for fiscal year 2012-13 is nearly balanced, with a deficit of less than \$100,000. But that was accomplished by the closure of one of the district's two stations and the elimination of positions left vacant when firefighters retired.

A Tramutola representative noted that the amount of the tax sought in the East County fire district -- \$197 a year per residential parcel in the first year, climbing to \$257 by year 10 -- was more than twice the amount voters were inclined to approve, according to a survey by that district's consultant.

A phone survey in the Rodeo-Hercules district by Tramutola Advisors last year found that a \$75 parcel tax would fall slightly short of a two-thirds majority, but a campaign to educate voters about the issues could boost that figure. A mail survey conducted by the consultant several months later revealed slightly more than 50 percent of the voters would approve an \$82 benefit assessment.

There were no available projections as to how much money various levies might raise.

The Contra Costa civil grand jury recently recommended that fire districts look to ways other than revenue-raising ballot measures to meet expenses, such as lowering labor costs, developing alternative service models and consolidating smaller districts with larger ones.

Contact Tom Lochner at 510-262-2760.

Barnidge: What happens when a fire district parcel tax goes down in flames?

By Tom Barnidge Contra Costa Times columnist Contra Costa Times
Posted:

Tuesday, June 19, 2012
ContraCostaTimes.com

Last week, residents learned the ramifications of that vote: 15 firefighters laid off, three of the district's six stations closed. Time to cross our fingers and wish for a mild summer fire season.

Several theories have been offered for the preponderance of "no" votes.

Perhaps voters thought the fire department could make do by trimming expenses. Perhaps no one expected such extreme cutbacks as a result of the denied funding. Perhaps this was a symbolic rejection of firefighters' perceived hefty retirement benefits.

One man who opposed the tax -- officially Measure S -- said the outcome might have been different if firefighters had offered to make benefit concessions. Understandable, if slightly flawed logic. According to Vince Wells, president of Local 1230, his union is open to a new benefits tier, but it can't do anything until state lawmakers approve a new pension formula.

More important than how we got here is what it means. Reducing fire protection resources -- this is only the latest of several cutbacks in recent years -- is like knocking over the first in a line of dominoes.

Fewer firefighters mean fewer emergency calls can be handled. Fewer firehouses mean response time will be delayed. Diminished fire protection means homeowner insurance policies could be subject to higher premiums.

When major fires break out -- mutual-aid situations that require help from a neighboring district -- the complications will go two ways. East County will be more reliant than ever on the Contra Costa district and Contra Costa can expect less help from East County.

Fire chiefs from both districts are already discussing this dynamic, according to Contra Costa County Fire Marshall Louis Brochard. "We can't unnecessarily leave our areas uncovered to provide service to their area," he said. "We don't have an overabundance of resources to begin with."

Few of us sit around counting firefighters, but Brochard said the numbers are worrisome. Industry standards dictate one firefighter for every 1,000 residents, which means the Contra Costa district should have about 600. It has 250. The ratio is no better in the East County district, which stretches from Brentwood to Discovery Bay with more than 100,000 residents. Its numbers will now be 32.

It's easy to understand why voters balked at a tax that would have started at \$197 per home and spanned 10 years.

"People are still suffering from the recession," said Measure S opponent Dave Roberts. "It's a bad time to ask for any tax."

It's just as easy to understand the fire district's request for funding help. Since the economy turned sour and property tax revenues collapsed, East County has seen its annual budget trimmed from \$12 million to \$8 million. It's impossible to deliver the same service at two-thirds of the cost.

What heightens interest is that a similar debate will play out on a larger scale in November. That's when

Contra Costa will ask taxpayers to support a parcel tax.

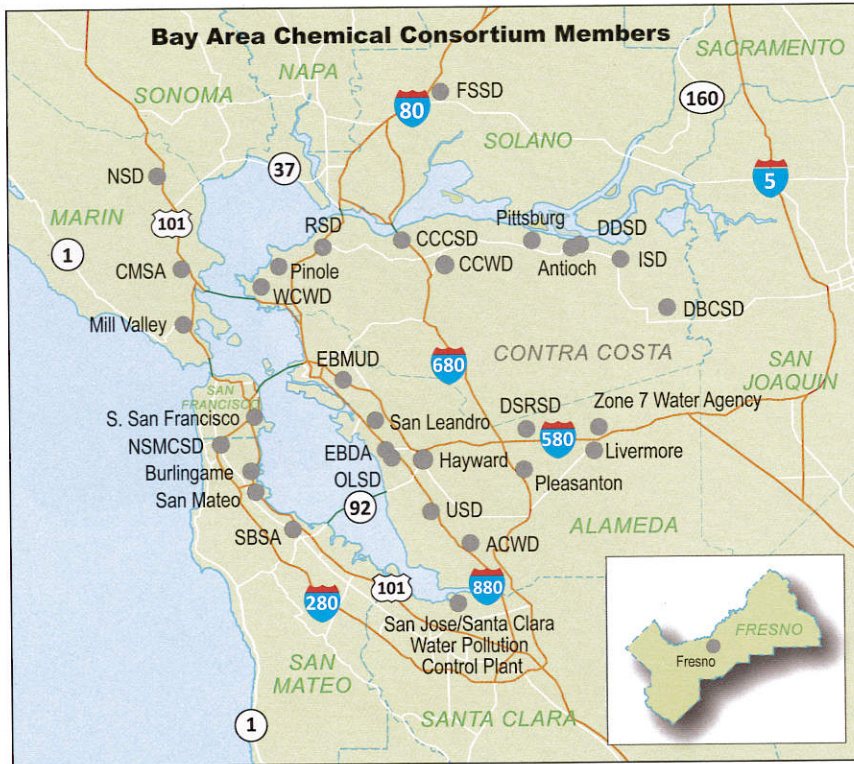
"Anytime you go to the public and ask for money," said Brochard, "there's always concern about whether you are going to get enough support."

There's an old saying about getting what you pay for. Guess what you get when you decide not to pay.

Contact Tom Barnidge at tbarnidge@bayareanewsgroup.com.

Joint chemical bids reduce costs for water and wastewater agencies

By Dan Gallagher, Operations Manager, Dublin San Ramon Services District



Bay Area Chemical Consortium Members

- Alameda County Water District (ACWD)
- Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (CCCSD)
- Central Marin Sanitation Agency (CMSA)
- City of Antioch
- City of Burlingame
- City of Fresno
- City of Hayward
- City of Livermore
- City of Mill Valley
- City of Pinole
- City of Pittsburg
- City of Pleasanton
- City of San Leandro
- City of San Mateo
- City of South San Francisco
- Contra Costa Water District (CCWD)
- Delta Diablo Sanitation District (DDSD)
- Dublin San Ramon Services District (DSRSD)
- East Bay Dischargers Authority (EBDA)
- East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD)
- Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District (FSSD)
- Ironhouse Sanitary District (ISD)
- North San Mateo County Sanitation District - Daly City (NSMCSA)
- Novato Sanitary District (NSD)
- Oro Loma Sanitary District (OLSD)
- Rodeo Sanitary District (RSD)
- San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant
- South Bayside System Authority (SBSA)
- Town of Discovery Bay Community Services District (DBCSD)
- Union Sanitary District (USD)
- West County Wastewater District (WCWD)
- Zone 7 Water Agency

More than 30 water and wastewater agencies have formed a bidding consortium to simplify purchasing and reduce costs on the millions of gallons of chemicals they buy each year. The Bay Area Chemical Consortium (BACC) is an informal cooperative that advertises and opens sealed competitive bids and then prepares bid recommendations. Once bids are opened, the participating agencies complete their own contracts with the lowest responsive bidder.

Dublin San Ramon Services District (DSRSD) took the lead in forming BACC in late 2009. The economic downturn was hitting water and wastewater agencies hard and everyone was looking for creative ways to reduce operating costs. After determining that an existing bidding group was not interested in expanding, DSRSD began

talking to purchasing and operations managers at nearby East Bay agencies about forming a new cooperative.

In April 2010, eight agencies teamed up on BACC's first bid request for 2.5 million gallons of sodium hypochlorite, which is basically industrial strength bleach. Due to the large quantity, participants saw their unit-costs drop by as much as 25 percent. Later that summer, BACC requested bids for ferric/ferrous chloride, and in the spring of 2011 BACC put out bids for polymers. In spring 2012, BACC completed bids for 10 chemicals and its roster had grown to 32 agencies, including special districts, cities, joint powers authorities, and one county agency. Nearly all are located near the San Francisco Bay, but the City of Fresno also has joined and another Central Valley city is considering getting involved.

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Larger Volumes, Lower Costs

Chemical contracts are extremely important to water and wastewater agencies, which must ensure reliable supplies to keep treatment plants running around the clock. Price is also important. The rising cost of transportation has meant steadily increasing chemical costs. For many agencies, chemicals are a significant expense. DSRSD spends more than \$400,000 a year on chemicals.

Multi-agency bids often translate to lower prices because vendors are bidding on larger quantities. For example, DSRSD uses about 276,000 gallons of "hypo" in a year, while BACC's most recent bid was for 4.7 million gallons. As a result of bidding with the group, DSRSD's unit-cost for sodium hypochlorite has dropped 44 percent in three years, from 81 cents a gallon in 2009, the last time DSRSD bid alone, to 45 cents for the coming fiscal year. Over three years, DSRSD savings on this one chemical add up to nearly \$100,000.

Savings vary greatly by agency and by chemical, depending on historical pricing, volume, and delivery distance. Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) participated in consortium bids on its three largest chemical buys but also solicited individual bids for comparison and to have back-up contracts in place. CCWD Purchasing Officer Doug Anderson says that the consortium's price has shaved seven cents a gallon off CCWD's sodium hypochlorite price for the coming fiscal year, saving approximately \$16,000. But in its solo bid, CCWD got a slightly better price for aluminum sulfate, a coagulant used to remove particles during water treatment. Because the vendor's facility is located just a few miles from CCWD's plant, the savings in delivery costs outweighed the volume discount.

BACC also saves money for members by reducing the number of individual bid documents they must produce each year. Zone 7 Water Agency Buyer Karen Bartels currently uses BACC to get bids on six water treatment chemicals. As a result of sharing the administrative work, she estimates that Zone 7's bid cycle is completed at least eight weeks sooner.

Like any networking group, BACC also provides opportunities for purchasing and operations personnel to share ideas and get to know more people in their industry.

How It Works

From the beginning, BACC members agreed on a simple organizational structure that allows each agency to retain control of its contracts and minimizes complexity and cost. BACC is an informal cooperative, not a joint powers authority, so there are no agreements to sign and no cost to join. Members use their own legal counsel if they need to have bid documents reviewed. BACC's role ends once bid recommendations are prepared. Each agency executes its own contracts and coordinates billing and payment directly with the vendors.

BACC also has put a premium on flexibility. Members are not required to participate in every bid, nor must they purchase a minimum or guaranteed quantity from successful bidders. (Bid solicitations list an estimated quantity for each agency, but only to give vendors the information they need to prepare their bids.)

BACC will get bids for any chemical, as long as more than one agency wants to participate. Agencies are grouped into geographic zones for bidding so that transportation costs will be similar. Each zone receives one bid price.

Bids are solicited once a year in the spring, and recommendations are ready by early May. This schedule allows agencies enough time to complete contracts and get board approval before the new fiscal year begins. Bids are solicited for purchases between July 1 and June 30 of each year, but vendors must be willing to extend the price if an agency desires a longer contract.

DSRSD has continued to act as the coordinating agency for BACC, gathering information from members for the annual bids, advertising solicitations, and summarizing results. DSRSD is investing at least as much staff time in coordinating BACC as it would if preparing all its own chemical bids. However, the investment continues to pay off in savings on chemical purchases and productive relationships with other water and wastewater agencies. ■

Dan Gallagher is Operations Manager at Dublin San Ramon Services District, a special district that provides water and wastewater services to 145,000 people in the Tri-Valley area of the East Bay. Previously as general manager of Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority, Dan helped start a consortium that solicited joint bids for biosolids hauling and disposal.

Town of Discovery Bay CSD: Special district perfectly fits the needs of a unique community



The Town of Discovery Bay can be found between Stockton, California and San Francisco. When taking a road trip to the small community, one drives among farmlands and over bridges covering small waterways. Those who have never visited the community before most likely have no idea just how uniquely the area is laid out and how beautiful the town among the delta is.

Discovery Bay was established in the early 1970s as a weekend and summer resort community. The way the community is built into the waterways of the Delta, it allows for all kinds of water recreation and a relaxing atmosphere, away from the larger cities that surround it. Over time, the community grew and fire stations, schools and a marina were constructed. As time went on, residents decided they needed a better level of service delivery. Due to its location and size,

a business park and shopping centers. No longer limited to simply Delta waterfront homes, Discovery Bay has developed into a community that offers gated lakefront homes as well as Country Club homes located on a world-class golf course. The CSD is able to cater to the needs of the community; providing the specific services they need at the level required.

Water and Wastewater Services

The district currently owns five water production wells; two water treatment facilities with water storage capacity of two and a half million gallons of treated water; two wastewater treatment facilities that treat an average of 1.8-million gallons of wastewater per day; fifteen wastewater lift stations that transport/move the raw wastewater to the main wastewater treatment facility; sixty miles of water and wastewater mains; and one state-of-the-art Bio-Solids System, which produces compost that is used in common landscape areas.

During the summer, the district pumps out between four and five million gallons of water per day. The water is all well and groundwater – the CSD has no surface water rights, which benefits the district due to the higher cost of treating surface water. The Bio-Solids System takes the bio-solids that comes from wastewater treatment and dries them in solar dryers. These solar dryers act essentially like greenhouses, drying out the waste and turning it into a dirt-like product that can be scattered over land. It is an innovative way to use green energy and operate using resources as efficiently as possible.

county government wasn't fulfilling its needs the way the town desired and city government obviously wasn't an option. The town needed water treatment and recreation and park services and there was one particular form of government that would fit this need perfectly: a special district. A community services district to be exact.

In 1997, Town of Discovery Bay Community Services District was formed. The district is governed by a five-member elected Board of Directors and oversees water, sewer, landscaping and recreation. In addition, the CSD Board advises the county on other services and issues impacting the community. Now, Discovery Bay boasts a population of 17,000, complete with four schools,

SHARE YOUR COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Is your district interacting with the community in a new and original way? *California Special District* wants to know about it! Contact Nicole Dunn at nicoled@cnda.net or (877) 924-2732.



Parks and Recreation

The district oversees and maintains four public parks. Not only do district residents have access to water recreation – practically in the backyard for some – but the district works hard to ensure the nearby parks are properly up-kept and is constantly working on improving them.

Features at the various parks include a splash pad, wherein children can run through fountains of water without any risk of drowning and a basketball court, which was specifically requested by the community. At the district's Cornell Park, during renovations, the CSD designed a wall on which tiles would be mounted that were designed by members of the community. For a small fee, residents could purchase a tile and they or their children could decorate it. The fee went to help fund the renovation of the park, which included new ground cover and a new playset that meets present day safety standards.

A key project the CSD has been working on is the construction of a new community center. The district is in the planning phases of this project. Presently, some organizations utilize facilities at local schools for after-school recreational programs, including sports activities and club meetings. With the addition of the community center, the district would be able to offer a multitude of activities for residents of all ages in the area.

Growth and Expansion in the Future

It is estimated that between now and the year 2020 another 2,000 homes will be built within the CSD's service area. The district has intimate knowledge of the growth estimations and is already planning ahead on how to meet the needs of the increasing population.

There is much to be said for special districts and how closely they are able to serve the public. Town of Discovery Bay CSD is an excellent example of how a community unlike any other in the state was able to ensure their residents

received the best, safest and most efficient service possible by forming a government designed to fit their unique needs. As the continuously growing community looks into the future, they have a district that is prepared to grow and manage the infrastructure well into the next decade. ■

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