

Jan Lopez

From: Steve Boyd <sdb@shasta.com>
Sent: Saturday, December 13, 2014 7:22 AM
To: Jan Lopez
Subject: CSA #6 MSR

Executive Officer, Jan Lopez;

The following is in response to a request for public comment on Shasta County Supervisors' management of County Service Area #6 - Jones Valley Water - to be included in Shasta LAFCO's Municipal Service Review for the water district.

After two devastating wildfires and an eight year struggle with Shasta County to end the health and safety issues affecting the quality-of-life for our neighborhoods, the Elk Trail community finally acquired relief from failing and contaminated water wells by successfully overcoming County Service Area (CSA) #6 County management challenges and joining the Jones Valley water and fire protection system.

Though being told by County Public Works that there was "no water and funding available" for the CSA #6 improvement and expansion project, a team of community project supporters successfully located and secured a new water right for the County (that the County rejected) along with identifying and negotiating funding opportunities with State and Federal sources.

County Public Works' attempts to discourage, defeat, delay, and punish those actively supporting and advancing the CSA #6 improvement and expansion project to include the Elk Trail neighborhoods, were overcome by cash donations from residents and property owners, political intervention, cooperation from funding sources, contributions from organizations like the Rural Community Assistance Corporation, and uncountable time and expense from the community working team.

Over the course of the Elk Trail project a number of CSA #6 management problems were exposed. To identify a few: Long expired permit (from 2003) for CSA # 6 operations and facilities located on U.S. Forest Service land; non-compliant water treatment, inadequate power to run the Lake pumps; overflowing water tanks in the existing system that made a small stream run at times during the summer; aging infrastructure that required frequent and expensive County Public Works' CSA #6 repairs; etc.

The Elk Trail project required that the Forest Service permits be made current; paid to bring the water system treatment up to current standards; more than doubled the water system pumping capacity (from 2 - 40 hp pumps to 3 - 60 hp pumps for 196 additional potential connections), added substantial water storage to the existing system, and brought adequate power to the lake pumps, along with other system improvements.

Unfortunately, CSA #6 problems did not end with the successful completion of the Elk Trail water and fire protection expansion project. An extremely wasteful and expensive district water loss remains that is billed to the CSA #6 ratepayers. Public Works' staff has been reluctant to identify and justify the location and work that employees are charging to the district. The relationship between the County's water administrators and the Community Advisory Board (CAB) for CSA #6 has deteriorated greatly with Public Works' staff, along with a Supervisor or two, publicly identifying the low-importance of the roll that the Advisory Board members volunteer their time for. Where the County Water Agency staff previously attended monthly CAB meetings as part of their general budgeted duties, County staff now bills the CSA for time attending meetings and even reading emails.

We are not unreasonable people. We greatly appreciate the end to living with unhealthy and unreliable water and fire protection. However, no family living without adequate water in Shasta County should ever have to experience years of County challenges to getting improvements to their quality-of-life as it relates to water.

County Public Works shoulders a vast responsibility for administering a heavy load of County services (roads, landfills, airports, zoning changes, vehicle fleet management, buildings, etc. etc. etc.). The management of the Shasta County Water Agency and the included CSAs should not be one of them. Water needs to be elevated to at least the level of public transportation and should follow the path of the Regional Transportation Planning Agency away from Public Works.

I would like the current LAFCO Municipal Services Review to reflect on problem solving solutions other than that presented by Supervisor/Commissioner Baugh when he suggests that if CSA #6 does not like the County treatment, then the Jones Valley water district should become a Community Service District (CSD) independent of County administration. Transferring the burden resulting from years of system neglect from the County to Jones Valley water ratepayers would not be sensible even if a viable economy-of-scale existed (and it does not). There are other options for improvement benefits to all participants.

The Shasta County Water Agency/County Service Area/Community Advisory Board/ structure is a good one with dedicated and focused management. The structure served the County well in the past when the Water Agency was an independent County Department and only had the development of water resources as its mission. The most recent additions to the CSA structure were CSDs that were struggling and needed the assistance of shared resources that could be provided by the County. These CSDs are the bellwethers.

With water being of such importance to Shasta County's future, it is time to take a serious look at the water management options. There are highly-qualified organizations that could conduct a no-cost-to-the County, in-depth study and issue a report to the County Supervisors for a suggested future path forward. CSA #6 needs this study; the Shasta County Water Agency needs this study. Our team would welcome the opportunity to work with the County to secure a study.

I appreciate the LAFCO work and the opportunity for discussion on CSA #6's Municipal Services Review.

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