



NOVATO FIRE DISTRICT

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June 4, 2020

The Honorable Judge Andrew Sweet
Marin County Superior Court
P.O. Box 4988
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988

Re: Marin Civil Grand Jury Report responses:
2019-2020 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report: *Follow-Up Report on Web
Transparency of Agency Compensation Practices.*

Dear Judge Sweet:

Attached is the official response of the Novato Fire Protection District to the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury's report titled, *Follow-Up Report on Web Transparency of Agency Compensation Practices*. The Novato Fire Protection District (District) is required to respond to Findings 3, 4 and 5; and to Recommendations 3, 4, 5 and 6. Our required responses to the report's finding and recommendations were approved by the Novato Fire Protection District Board of Directors at their meeting on June 3, 2020.

The Fire District appreciates the attention that the Grand Jury has given to web transparency and elected officials compensation.

The Novato Fire District responses to the Grand Jury Report are listed with detailed explanations in Attachment 1.

Respectfully submitted,

Louis Jan Silverman
President, Novato Fire Protection District Board of Directors

Cc: Fire Chief Bill Tyler
Marin County Civil Grand Jury Foreperson Lucy Dilworth

Attachments: Agency Response to Grand Jury Report

Response to Grand Jury Report

Report Title: Follow-up Report on Web Transparency of Agency Compensation Practices

Respondent/Agency Name: Novato Fire Protection District

Your Name: William Tyler Title: Fire Chief

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: F3, F4 and F5
- I (we) disagree *partially* with the findings numbered: _____
- I (we) disagree *wholly* with the findings numbered: _____

(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefor.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R3, R4, R5 and R6 have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ require further analysis.
(Attach 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.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: June 6, 2020 Signed: 

Number of pages attached: 3

Findings:

F3. Any link to *publicpay.ca.gov* on an agency's website that fails to go directly to the agency's current compensation data on that website does not satisfy the intent of the Government Code that information be easily located.

Response: Agree.

The Novato Fire Protection District website now has links that go directly to our agency's current compensation data on the *publicpay.ca.gov* website in the following locations:

1. About Us/Transparency in Government/Public Pay Link for Elected Officials
2. About Us/Board of Directors Page/Public Pay Link for Elected Officials
3. About Us/Public pay/contains links for both Novato Fire District members and Elected officials

F4. Regarding compensation policies for elected officials, many public agencies do not provide the public with easy access to information regarding salary, meeting fees or stipends (including compensation for serving as liaison to other advisory committees, councils and forums), reimbursements, health and retirement benefits, and other benefits such as equipment.

Response: Agree.

However, the Novato Fire Protection District website has easy access to Board of Director policies, including details on compensation, meeting fees, and travel reimbursement policies in the following locations:

1. About Us/Transparency in Government/Reimbursements and Compensation Policy
2. About Us/Board of Directors/Board of Directors Policy.

We have also updated the Board of Directors policy as of May 6, 2020, to reflect the District purchase of iPads for Directors' use when conducting District business.

F5. Regarding detailed disclosure of total compensation paid, most public agencies do not break out all components of compensation paid to their elected officials, including salary, meeting fees or stipends (including compensation for serving as liaison to other advisory committees, councils and forums), reimbursements, health and retirement benefits, and other benefits such as equipment.

Response: Agree.

We have updated our Compensation Report to include more detail as noted in Finding #5. This report has been posted on our website in the following locations:

1. About Us/Transparency in Government/Compensation
2. About Us/Board of Directors/Compensation

Recommendations

R3. No later than 90 days after the date of this report, agencies should modify their existing *publicpay.ca.gov* links so that they provide a direct link to their current compensation data on the state site. To eliminate the need for annual updates, the URL used for the link should exclude any parameter specifying a year. Formatted URL examples are shown on Appendix A.

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. We have added direct *publicpay.ca.gov* links to our website in the following locations, excluding any parameter specifying a year.

1. About Us/Public Pay
2. About Us/Board of Directors/*publicpay.ca.gov*
3. About us/Board of Directors/*publicpay.ca.gov* (direct link to elected officials page)
4. About Us/Transparency in Government/ Elected Officials Information at *PublicPay.ca.gov*

R4. No later than 90 days after the date of this report, in addition to any other compensation links, agencies should include a link on their board or council web pages that leads directly to their “Elected Officials” page on the *publicpay.ca.gov* site, conforming to the format suggested on Appendix A.

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. We have added *publicpay.ca.gov* links that go directly to the Elected Officials page in the following locations:

1. About Us/Public Pay
2. About Us/Board of Directors/ Elected Officials Information at *PublicPay.ca.gov*
3. About Us/Transparency in Government/ Elected Officials Information at *PublicPay.ca.gov*

R5. No later than 120 days after the date of this report, agencies should include on their board or council web pages a comprehensive description of their policies regarding all compensation paid to elected officials specifying, at a minimum, salary, meeting fees or stipends (including compensation for serving as liaison to other advisory committees, councils and forums), reimbursements, health and retirement benefits, and other benefits such as equipment.

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. We have updated our website to include a more comprehensive description of policies regarding all forms of compensation paid to elected officials, specifying meeting fees, committee meeting fees, travel reimbursements, and other benefits such as equipment. This information is found at the following multiple locations:

1. About Us/Board of Directors/Board of Directors Policy (includes Travel)
2. About us/Transparency in Government/ Reimbursement and Compensation policy
3. About us/Transparency in Government/Board Policy Including Travel Policy
4. The Novato Fire Board of Directors do not receive a salary or health or retirement benefits as a result of serving as a Director.

R6. No later than 120 days after the date of this report, agencies should adopt a practice to compile and publish each year an annual report detailing the compensation actually paid to their elected officials for the previous calendar year. Compensation disclosures should include, at a minimum, salary, meeting fees or stipends (including compensation for serving as liaison to other advisory committees, councils and forums), reimbursements, health and retirement benefits, and other benefits such as equipment. A link to this report should be posted on the agency’s board or council web page.

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The Administrative Services Manager maintains a diary of annual updates to be published on the Novato Fire District website. Included in the diary is the annual report detailing the compensation actually paid to the elected officials for the previous calendar year. This report has been updated to include a more detailed description of fees and reimbursements paid to the Board of Directors and can be found at the following locations:

1. About Us/Board of Directors/Board of Directors Policy/Compensation
2. About us/Transparency in Government/Compensation

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MARIN COUNTY
COUNSEL'S OFFICE