



South Placer Fire District

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www.southplacerfire.org

Board of Directors

Mike DeLaurentis
David Giblin
Gregary Grenfell
Madelaine Kiliany
Craig Powell

Fire Chief
Tony Corado

An Organization Committed To The Wellbeing Of The South Placer Community

Community Survey Q&A Facts:

The regularly scheduled South Placer Fire District Board meetings are held every third Wednesday of each month 7 p.m. at South Placer station 17, 6900 Eureka Rd. Granite Bay. The public is encouraged to attend.

Below are the dates of the board meetings that pertain to the community survey. Past and future board meeting dates, agendas and minutes can be viewed here: <http://www.southplacerfire.org/Directors.html>

- **July 21, 2010:** The Board established the following goal: *GOAL: The Board of Directors to assign an ad-hoc committee of two board members to meet with staff and evaluate a future voter approved assessment.*

- **January 19, 2011:** The Board assigned Directors DeLaurentis and Kiliany to work with staff on the feasibility of a voter approved assessment. The Ad-Hoc Committee requested and reviewed proposals from consulting firms that provide comprehensive community survey services. The firms of Willdan & Assoc, NBS, Harris & Assoc and SCI Consulting Group were contacted.

- **March 16, 2011:** At the recommendation of the Ad-Hoc Committee the Board authorized an agreement with SCI Consulting Group. The general scope and cost of the community survey agreement is as follows:
 - Phase 1: In consideration for the work accomplished on this project related to the analysis, assessment engineering and planning, SCI shall be compensated in the amount of \$4,500 as a fixed fee amount.

 - Phase 2: The fee for the design, preparation and mailing of approximately 8,000 surveys, the tabulation of returned surveys and analysis of data, presentation of results and the other revenue measure consulting services described in this proposal is \$19,500 as a fixed fee amount.

 - Other Provisions: Additional meetings \$400 per staff member and not to exceed a \$600 charge for incidental costs.

- **March 16, 2011:** Approximately 20 community members attended the board meeting and several spoke during the public comment period regarding the survey.

- **April 15, 2011**, articles appeared in several local papers and the *Granite Bay Alert* online newsletter regarding the survey.
- **April 2011**, the Ad-Hoc Committee began working with SCI on the development of the community survey.
- **July 20, 2011**, funds for the community survey were allocated by the Board in the adoption of the 2011/2012 Budget.
- **October 24, 2011**, staff forwarded the following memo to all employees of the Fire District:

To all,

As each of you are aware the District is exploring the possibility of a voter approved assessment. This action is due to the extraordinary rate and amount that the District's revenue has been reduced as a result of declining property values.

In March of 2011, we elected to utilize the services of the SCI Consulting Group. One of the initial steps in exploring a voter approved assessment is to conduct a community survey. An ad-hoc committee of several board members and staff has worked with SCI on the development of the survey. Starting tomorrow surveys will be mailed to community members.

I anticipate a considerable amount of interaction between District employees and community members. When approached by community members while on duty or representing the District, do not attempt to influence any community member's response.

Several general facts are stated in a cover letter that will accompany the surveys.

The District's primary revenue source is a share of local property taxes. Over the last four years its revenues have decreased as a result of declining property values.

In response to its revenue decreases, the District has been working to become more efficient and has already reduced expenditures by over \$700,000 per year. To achieve these savings, the District has:

- * *Eliminated 15 front line firefighting positions and 2 operational support positions.*
- * *Removed a fire engine (staffed with fire/emergency personnel) from service.*
- * *Reduced staffing on the remaining engines from 3 to 2 firefighters, which reduces firefighting ability.*
- * *Postponed needed fire equipment replacement.*
- * *Reduced retirement contributions for firefighters.*
- * *Negotiated firefighter and administrative salaries so they are now lower than similar fire agencies in the area.*

Under no circumstances should employees enter into dialogue with community members regarding the future of district services based on their response to the survey. The best response is to encourage them to respond to the survey. Please forward all questions to the Fire Chief.

Chief Corado

- **October 25, 2011**, the first surveys were mailed to community members.
- **November 16, 2011**, at the board meeting staff reported that the surveys had been mailed and that the results would be presented to the board during a regularly scheduled board meeting after the first of the year. Also staff made available to the public a detailed community survey Q&A fact document.

Questions We Have Encountered:

Question: Why a survey and why are some surveys different than others?

Answer: The survey method is a means to gain the community's input. The surveys we have distributed will help the District determine whether to (1) proceed with further cuts, (2) restore reduced services or (3) restore services to the level previous to the property tax decline. The different surveys are to seek community input on those scenarios.

Question: Why did we send surveys to only half of the residents?

Answer: This is misinformation. There are approximately 7,588 homes in Granite Bay, a total of 8,600 parcels district wide. The 8,000 surveys sent out account for well over half of these figures.

Question: Are we by-passing Proposition 13 and what is the difference between an engineered assessment vs. a special tax?

Answer: No, both parcel taxes and assessments are legal and common methods of funding fire protection and emergency services. Both parcel tax and assessment procedures were developed by the Jarvis Tax Payer Associations. A special tax requires over 66.6% voter approval with fees and votes calculated equally. An engineered assessment requires over 50% voter approval with fees and votes weighted differently according to parcel type.

Question: Is the District using funds to pay for the survey and how much money is the survey costing?

Answer: Yes, funds for the community survey were allocated by the Board in the adoption of the 2011/2012 Budget at the July 20, 2011 board meeting. The costs for the design, preparation and mailing of approximately 8,000 surveys, the tabulation of returned surveys and analysis of data, presentation of results and the other revenue measure consulting services is \$19,500 (see items dated March 16, and July 20, 2011 above).

Question: Has the District already decided to proceed with a voter approved increase?

Answer: No, we anticipate the results of the survey to be discussed during an open board meeting after the first of the year (2012).

Question: Has the District been audited by an independent party?

Answer: Yes, each year the District is audited by an independent party.

Question: Does the District have a higher tax rate than surrounding areas?

Answer: The District's portion of the property taxes is higher than those in Loomis, Penryn, Newcastle, Placer Hills and Foresthill. The District's portion of the property taxes is lower than most areas of Sacramento County and the District's assessed charges (special tax or assessments) are lower than those in Loomis, Penryn, Placer Hills and Foresthill. The funding for city fire departments is considerably different than special districts. The District receives no sales tax funding.

Question: Does the District charge extra for other services?

Answer: Yes, the District has an at-fault, non resident fee for vehicle accidents, an ambulance transport fee and fees for construction plan checking and inspection.

Question: Is the District's budget over \$9,000,000?

Answer: Current Budget Information:
Current Revenues \$7,160,639
Current Expenditures \$7,273,449
Current Reserves \$1,714,843
Currently No Outstanding Debt

Question: Is the Union behind this survey?

Answer: No, the Board initiated the survey over one year ago.

Question: How do District salaries/benefits compare to others?

Answer: The Board and Fire Chief have negotiated firefighter and administrative salaries/benefits so they are now lower than similar fire agencies in the area. The following salary comparisons are taken from 2009 (these and future comparisons can be found on the State Controllers website www.sco.ca.gov):

Entry level salaries:

2009 Annual Salary	South Placer	North Tahoe	Eldorado Hills	Elk Grove	Lincoln	Auburn	Roseville	Rocklin
Captain	\$63,300	\$66,900	\$86,496	\$80,796	\$62,590	\$54,480	\$70,022	\$73,933
Engineer	\$54,672	\$51,362	\$75,432	\$73,296	*	\$45,840	\$60,239	\$64,675
Paramedic	\$53,232	*	\$65,772	\$66,480	**	**	\$60,239	**
Retirement	3% /55	3% /50	3% /50	3% /50	3% /50	3% /50	3% /50	3% /50

*No comparable classification **Agencies do not provide paramedic services

Question: Do employees share in the cost of health benefits?

Answer: Yes, the Board and Fire Chief have negotiated a cap on health benefits that requires all employees to share in the cost of health insurance.

Question: Have employees taken cuts in benefits?

Answer: Yes, the Board and Fire Chief have negotiated reductions in pension benefits on two occasions in the past 24 months.

Question: Does the District have a Charter?

Answer: To our knowledge special districts are not chartered. The District was originally formed under the Fire Protection District Law of 1961 and is now governed by the Health and Safety Code under the Fire District Law of 1987. The Fire District Law can be viewed at:
<http://codes.lp.findlaw.com/cacode/HSC/1/d12/2.7>

Question: What governs the Board of Directors what is the Board supposed to do?

Answer: Secondary to the detailed laws that regulate fire district boards under the Health and Safety Code, district boards are also governed by the California Government Code specifically the Brown Act, the Myers-Millias-Brown Act and the Political Reform Act. Also the District has adopted extensive internal policies. "Section 2000 Board of Directors" of the Districts policy manual contains detailed policies and procedures. Those policies are available for review in the District's administration office during normal business hours.

Question: When is the next Board of Director Election?

Answer: November of 2012 three seats are up for election.

Question: How can the consultant be contacted?

Answer: SCI's phone number for information is (800) 273-5167.

You may contact Chief Corado by e-mail through our website:
<http://www.southplacerfire.org/AdminStaff.html> or

Phone: (916) 791-7059

Fax: (916) 791-2199

Business Hours: Monday thru Friday (except holidays) 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

