Subj: **Minor Corrections to Searle Receives Award, Fire District Approves $9,000 Error**
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KEEPING THE NEIGHBORHOOD INFORMED!

TRI-NEWS CENTRAL
J-6 Mescal Skyline

Fire District Board Approves Financial Report with $9,000 Error

At the September 8, 2015, Regular Meeting of the Mescal-J6 Fire District Board, Treasurer Mary Bowen strongly criticized the CDO for requesting financial and open meeting law public records as allowed by state statute. During Item 10 on the Agenda, Ms. Bowen told the public in attendance that in her opinion, "The CDO is kinda out there just trying to cause problems. ….She (CDO Chair) is asking for metadata… if you are looking for metadata, you haven't found anything by now".

Just earlier for Item 3, the F.D. Board provided the community with yet another public document with financial errors. Treasurer Mary Bowen presented a HB2572 Financial Review and Cash Flow Projected and Actual Income and Expenses Report for July 2015. The written cash flow projection for the month indicates the Projected Income being $7,424.00 with the Actual being $4,827.19. The Projected Expenses totaled $28,947.00 and total for the Actuals was $35,855.02. Click Here.

There was no Board discussion regarding the cash flow projection portion of this report. A motion for approval was passed by the 3 Board Members present: Chair Mark Lee, Treasurer Mary Bowen, and Member Jerry Conrad.

When the CDO Board reviewed this report, they noted the Actual Expenses totaled $ 26,778.45 or $ 9,076.57 less than the expenses reported and approved. It is unclear if this report was provided to all four F.D. Board Members, the Fire Chief, and the Administrative Assistant to review prior to the Tuesday night meeting.

Since July 2014, the CDO Board has expressed their concerns multiple times in emails to the Board, during Public Hearings, and at the Call to the Public as to how HB2572 (ARS 48-807 Paragraph O) has been implemented by this Fire District Board. On Aug. 5th, CDO shared the importance of this financial state statute and one other in a community newsletter. Click Here.

The F.D. Board missed an opportunity to provide the attending public an accurate financial report reviewed independently by four Board Members and a written statement capturing the big picture. An example of a written missed opportunity: "The F.D. received $2,300 less in Tax Revenue than expected for the month of July; however, the F.D. Actual Expenses (if using the correct numbers) were approximately $2,100 less than was anticipated. As can be

"Supervisor Searle named state supervisor of the year"

In the September 9, 2015, San Pedro Valley News-Sun, Reporter Derek Jordan reports that the Arizona/ New Mexico Coalition of Counties has named Cochise County Supervisor Richard Searle as Arizona's Supervisor of the Year.

The Coalition made up of five counties in Arizona and 10 in New Mexico recognized Searle for his "leadership in coordinating efforts among the counties in opposition to the expansion of the Mexican Wolf's habitat into Southern Arizona."

The news article quotes Searle as saying, "There is no prey base in Cochise County for wolves...The only prey that's going to be out there for these wolves will be livestock and pets, and that's not right."

Public Hearing for SunZia

Public Hearings for SunZia Transmissions to begin October 19, 2015, in Willcox before the Arizona Power

seen by the 12-month adjusted cash flow projection (if one existed), the F.D. remains on target (possibly) with financial projections due to _____% of the tax revenue for the year arriving in November"...drafted by CDO.

As mentioned earlier, the above error is not the first public document containing incorrect financial information prepared by the Fire District. Since August 2014, the CDO has shared multiple concerns related to financial records/matters. The third attached document is yet another example. (Click Here). The previous Fire Chief requested CDO publish a news article on how fire district taxation works – similar information was subsequently presented to the Fire District Board on Nov. 24th, 2014, in preparation for a public hearing that evening to revise the FY 2014-2015 budget. No F.D. Board Member corrected the information for the attending public. CDO was unable to publish the requested article attached due to inaccuracies:

1) State Regulated Fire District rate is not to exceed $ 3.25 per $100 assessed value – not $1,000 assessed value.

2) Contrary to information provided, the Fire District Board is responsible for determining if the tax rate needs to increase to meet their projected financial commitments…..the County Board of Supervisors only approves the rate proposed by the District.

3) The tax rate for 2014-2015 was $1.22, not $1.09. The Tax Rate was established in June 2014 by the F.D. Board adopting the proposed amount of expenses. Public Notices and Minutes did not indicate that an increase tax rate was being considered at the time of the FY 2014-2015 budget adoption in June 2014. The F.D. did not submit a property tax calculation worksheet to Cochise County at the beginning of August 2014. The first mention of the increased tax rate of $1.22 in the Minutes was August 18, 2014, – basically two months after when the public should have been aware.

The CDO Board disagrees with Treasurer Bowen's opinion expressed Tuesday evening regarding our request for documents related to financial disclosures and open meeting laws. CDO is having to request public records since it is not evident that the Governing Board is reviewing important financial records at public meetings. CDO has also had to request the services of the State Ombudsman Office to help navigate through the confusion of email communication with the F.D. designated public record's officer, Lauri Owen, from the County Attorney's Office.

Corrections: spacing, meeting day changed to Tuesday, and typo for county.

If difficulty with spacing due to server, can be read at www.cdonewsletter.com.

Plant and Transmission Line Siting Committee. The Sunzia Powerline is slated to follow the San Pedro River from the Benson area north before turning west toward Marana and then on to the Pinal Central Substation near Eloy.

Click here to go to the Sunzia website for more information.

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