

**Idyllwild Fire Protection District**

**PO Box 656**

**Idyllwild, CA 92549**

**(951) 659-2153**

(day, date)

Mark A Cope Presiding Judge

Superior Court of California County of Riverside

4050 Main St

Riverside CA 92501

RE: Response to Riverside County Grand Jury Report, dated Tuesday, June 17, 2014

The following is the Idyllwild Fire Protection District’s response to the 2013-2014 Grand Jury Report, dated Tuesday, June 17, 2014:

**Background:**

While the District is not asked nor required to respond to the Background found in the Grand Jury Report, the District feels compelled to respond due to the number of inaccuracies presented by the Grand Jury in the Background of the Report.

In its “Background”, the Grand Jury reports:

“At the time of this 2013-2014 Grand Jury investigation, the IFPD employed one chief, on administrative captain, two shift captains, two paramedics (that are reserves), eight RMT’s (that are reserves) and one part-time administrative assistant.”

At the time of the Grand Jury Investigation and Report:

* The District employed 1 Administrative Captain; and 2 Shift Captains. 1 additional Shift Captain position is open due to a retirement.
* The District also employs 2 Engineer Paramedics, 2 Firefighter Paramedics, and 1 Firefighter EMT.
* The District does have 2 Paramedics that are Reserves.
* The District does have 8 EMT’s that are Reserves.

The District is concerned that the Grand Jury failed to note the correct staffing after obtaining sworn testimony from “present members of the IFPD; IFPD Fire Chief; IFPD Captain, Paramedic, Training Officer (aka Administrative Captain); and an IFPD Board Commissioner”. Additionally, the District is concerned that the Grand Jury references that it reviewed “Past Grand Jury Reports” but failed to note that the District corrected the incorrect findings with its response to the previous Grand Jury Report.

The Grand Jury goes on to state in the “Background”:

“A Finance Committee was formed by the Board in January, 2014, that includes two Board members and three Idyllwild residents. The Finance Committee meets every two weeks.”

The District states: The Finance Committee was formed with membership of two (2) Board members, two (2) community members and one (1) alternate community member. While the community members and the alternate community member are residents of the greater Idyllwild community, they are not all residents of Idyllwild Fire Protection District. One (1) member is a resident of the Mountain Center area which is outside of IFPD and outside of the contract for IFPD Ambulance Zones. Parts of the Mountain Center area are subject to the Automatic Aid Agreement and they all are subject to the Mutual Aid Agreement. At the time of the Grand Jury investigation the Finance Committee did not have a set meeting schedule.

The District further states that the lack of attention to detail found in the “Background” section of the Grand Jury Report is concerning. Additionally, the lack of attention to detail is demonstrative of the balance of the Report as narrow in scope, lacking in objectivity and fairness, one-sided and prejudiced.

**Methodology:**

The Grand Jury did not interview four of the five Board of Commission members; including the President of the Commission.

The Grand Jury did not interview the two Board of Commission members as members of the Finance Committee, including the Chair of the Committee.

The Grand Jury did not interview the two community members nor the alternate community member of the Finance Committee.

Additional individuals not interviewed and documents not requested or reviewed by the Grand Jury in compiling the Report are noted under the individual areas of this response.

**Findings:**

1. Violation of the Ralph M. Brown Act

Response: The District disagrees partially with the finding.

The District acknowledges that a trip took place for the purposes of collecting information from the Riverside County / Cal Fire Perris Dispatch Center as it relates to the contract for Dispatch Services between the same; in addition to touring the Dispatch Center and witnessing its operation.

The District states without admitting any violation of the Ralph M. Brown Act that:

* Only the Board President and Fire Chief were designated to engage in discussions with the RVC Fire / Cal Fire staff.
* There were no collective discussions, conclusions, decisions, assurances, or promises made [while] traveling to, during, traveling from, or after this trip, relating to this trip.
* The only collective discussion(s) that took place occurred during the properly noticed IFPD Board and Standing Finance Committee meeting(s) that have taken place since the trip.
* During the properly noticed IFPD Board meeting of Tuesday, April 08, 2014, during the Fire Chief’s Report, Board members and Standing Finance Committee members were polled by the Fire Chief as to their thoughts about the trip; no collective discussions, conclusions, decisions, assurances, or promises were made traveling to, during, traveling from, or after this trip, relating to this trip.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Board and Finance Committee shall comply with the provisions of the Ralph M Brown Act as all times to ensure compliance at all future meetings.

Response: The Recommendation has been implemented.

The District states that the District unconditionally commits that it will cease, desist from, and not repeat the challenged past action as described above.

Respectfully,

The Idyllwild Fire Protection District Board of Commissioners:

Jerry Buchanan Larry Donahoo

President Vice President

Nancy Layton Rhonda Andrewson

Treasurer Secretary

Jeannine Charles-Stigall

Commissioner

Respectfully,

The citizen members of the Finance Committee of the Idyllwild Fire Protection District

Susan Weisbart Chris Davis

Calvin Gogerty

CC: Riverside County Grand Jury

Riverside County Clerk-Recorder