

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FORM

Report Title: The Scoop on Marin County Sewer Systems: Part II,

Report Date: June 10, 2014

Public Release Date: June 16, 2014

Response by: September 14, 2014

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: _____
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: F12

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R11 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: 9/28/2014 Signed: _____

Number of pages attached 5

**DISTRICT BOARD**

Megan Clark
Rabi Elias
Russ Greenfield
Craig K. Murray
Judy Schriebman

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Mark R. Williams,
General Manager
Michael Cortez,
District Engineer
Mel Liebmann,
Plant Manager
Janice Mandler,
Collection System/Safety Manager
Susan McGuire,
Administrative Services Manager

August 28, 2014

The Honorable Judge Faye D'Opal
Marin County Superior Court
P.O. Box 4988
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988

Nadine A. Muller, Foreperson
Marin County Grand Jury
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room #275
San Rafael, CA 94903

**Re: Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District Response to the Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report:
The Scoop on Marin County Sewer Systems: Part I & II**

Dear Honorable D'Opal and Ms. Muller,

Please find the District's response regarding the Marin County Civil Grand Jury report: The Scoop on
Marin County Sewer Systems: Part I & II.

SCOOP REPORT PART I RESPONSE:

F9. There are many costs that are duplicated among wastewater agencies, particularly with regards to management, administration, overhead and governance.

The District's staffing levels are minimal, lean and working at capacity. Our staff perform many tasks that are atypical in larger agencies and, as a result, duplication is minimized. Examples of these are as follows:

- The General Manager has served as Chief Plant Operator for approximately six of the eight years that he has served as General Manager, and it is only recently that the District appointed the Plant Manager as Chief Plant Operator. The General Manager will continue to serve as a backup to the Plant Manager. In addition, the General Manager is involved heavily in the design of the District's facilities.
- The Administration Services Manager performs finance, human resources and administration duties.
- The Collection System/Safety Manager assists in the management of human resources, safety duties and the operation and maintenance of our collection system.
- The Plant Manager performs electrical and instrumentation maintenance, repair and installation of new equipment, in addition to managing the treatment facilities and pump stations.

August 28, 2014

These are just a few examples of how the District works efficiently. The size of our agency enables it to be more flexible, innovative, efficient and less bureaucratic, which would not exist in a larger government agency.

It is important to point out that the District's Board actions are responsive and effective in their governance responsibilities. For example, the District was the first to install a large photovoltaic system within Marin County, which supplies the majority of the treatment plant's power. Recognizing the importance of sustainable water supply, in 2011 the Board directed the staff to take advantage of \$1,600,000 in state and federal funding to construct a new 700,000 gallon per day recycled water plant. The plant, which currently provides recycled water to the Hamilton area, was designed to be readily expandable to 5,400,000 gallons per day. The new recycled water plant technology was selected with the intent of being the first step toward potable reuse. The District's smaller customer base enables our Board members to be responsive to current customers.

In addition, the Board's support and mandate for effective management of the District's sewer system has resulted in the following 2013 record:

Calendar Year 2013							
Spill Rate Indices (number of spills / 100 miles / year)				Spill Rate Indices (gallons / 100 miles / year)			
	Mainlines				Mainlines		
	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3		Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
LGVSD	1.8	0	0.9	LGVSD	36.82	0	0.21
State Municipal Average	4.5	3.72	7.48	State Municipal Average	1378.43	1223.76	38.58
Regional Municipal Average	9.3	2.47	9.37	Regional Municipal Average	584.78	597.31	55.9

From the chart above, it is clear that our sewer overflow record shows how a small sewer agency can be as, or even more, effective than a larger sewage agency in protecting public health and the environment.

F12. Districts are working together across the County, demonstrating an increasing level of commitment to cooperation and resource sharing. Most districts agree that there is potential for greater collaboration and cost reduction.

The District has a long history of working with other agencies and is always seeking opportunities to collaborate or share information. Examples are as follows:

- The District utilizes the Central Marin Sanitation Agency to manage its pollution prevention program. This utilization provides greater efficiency for both agencies.
- The District is an active member of the North Bay Watershed Association (NBWA), and former Board Member, Leon Eddings, is the founder of the North Bay Water Association. The association

August 28, 2014

includes 16 regional and local public agencies, which are located throughout Marin, Sonoma and Napa counties. The association identifies regional approaches to the problems and issues that are associated with managing our common watershed area.

- The District is also a member of the North Bay Water Reuse Authority (NBWRA). The NBWRA consists of water and wastewater agencies (County of Marin, Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District, Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD), Novato Sanitary District, North Marin Water District (NMWD), the City of Petaluma, Sonoma County Water Agency, Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District, Napa Sanitation District and Napa County) that have pulled together to develop sustainable water supplies in the region. Because of our participation in the NBWRA, the District received \$1,600,000 in federal and state grants, as mentioned previously.
- Since 1975, the District and MMWD have had a recycled water partnership, in which the District supplies treated wastewater to MMWD. MMWD continues to operate a recycled water plant and distribution system that reduces the demand for potable water for irrigation, toilet flushing and other non-potable uses.
- In 2012, the District entered into a recycled water partnership with NMWD. The District continues to supply recycled water to NMWD for distribution in the Hamilton area.
- The District also entered into a Memorandum of Agreement between the County of Marin, Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District for the McInnis Marsh Habitat Restoration Project.
- The District is a partner and supporter of Students and Teachers Restoring A Watershed (STRAW)
- The District is an active member of Marin Association of Sanitation Services (MASS).
- The District is also a member of the California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA) and the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA).
- Over the past six years, the District Board and staff have worked with County Environmental Services, Supervisor Susan Adams and law enforcement on three "Drug Take Back" days and e-waste recycling events to safely dispose of medications, hazardous waste and obsolete electronic devices.
- Board members are active participants in local, state and regional organizations, which bring value to the District and the organizations that they participate in. This networking by Board members brings in additional information that would, under other circumstances, neither flow to the District nor flow from the District to other agencies, while under current circumstances their networking results in greater collaboration.

R1. All districts must work to eliminate spills, through in-depth analysis and investment infrastructure.

The District has an effective sewer system maintenance and repair program and, as a result, has an exceptionally low occurrence of sewer overflows (refer to the statistics shared in response F9).

R3. All agencies adopt an ordinance that will require private laterals to be inspected routinely and repaired as necessary.

The District has an effective sewer lateral assistance replacement program. On July 21, 2005, the District sought to pass an ordinance that would require lateral inspection and replacement, if needed, prior to the

August 28, 2014

point of sale of the property, but the District received considerable resistance from both the Marin Association of Realtors and its customers, which resulted in the ordinance not passing. Since then, the District has worked with other sewage agencies and Marin Association of Realtors to develop a lateral disclosure document for new property purchases. In addition, the District began a voluntary lateral assistance program that advances property owners funds toward the cost of replacing their laterals. The funds can be repaid over 10 years at 2% interest. Since the program's inception in March 2012, 40 property owners have been advanced \$242,036 under the program. The District's newsletter and website also educate our customers about critical issues, such as our lateral assistance program and not flushing medication or noxious chemicals to name a few.

R4. All agencies conduct an analysis to determine the feasibility of using treated waste water for flushing pipes in routine maintenance work.

Since the District has used recycled water to flush our sewer lines for well over 10 years, there is no need for to conduct analysis. As an example, from April through June 2014, the District used 167,595 gallons of recycled water to clean our sewer lines.

R5. All agencies continue to cooperate with each other and find further ways to reduce costs.

As indicated in our previous responses, the District continuously seeks opportunities to partner and share information with public agencies and private parties.

SCOOP REPORT PART II RESPONSES:

F12. Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District and Mill Valley are not reporting their category 1 spills within the time frame required by State Water Resources Control Board Order No. WQ 2013-0058-EXEC.

The District had a single incident where a spill event was not reported within the specified time frame. The incident is summarized here:

The incident happened on Sunday, December 2, 2012, during a significant wet weather event. Due to the intensity of the storm, the General Manager determined that it would be appropriate to assist in monitoring the District facilities and/or staff in the event that there would be an emergency. The Collection System/Safety Manager had already assigned a collection system crew member to monitor the sewer system for sanitary sewer overflows. While monitoring the sewer system, the General Manager found a sanitary sewer overflow at 301 Las Gallinas Avenue (Safeway siphon) at 8:18 a.m. The General Manager took pictures and notified the Collection System/Safety Manager of the spill. Simultaneously, the General Manager received an emergency phone call from the treatment plant staff that a critical issue had developed at the treatment plant and that the Plant Manager/Chief Operator was sick and would not respond to the emergency. Upon which, the General Manager immediately responded to the plant emergency.

The treatment plant staff found that the Safeway siphon was checked earlier at 7:30 a.m. by a collection system crew member. The collection system crew member responded at 8:40 a.m., noting that the siphon was trickling. At that time, the total sanitary sewer overflow volume was estimated to be 200 gallons in total. Level 1 spills, which are required to be reported within 2 hours, are defined as those resulting in the release of 1,000 gallons or more. Since this spill was estimated to be 200 gallons, it was not classified as a Level 1 spill and, therefore, was not reported. In the early afternoon, staff discovered

August 28, 2014

that at the time that the spill was first reported, it was actually flowing at 1200 gallons (or 100 gallons per minute), based on the pictures taken by the General Manager. The spill was immediately upgraded to a Level 1 event and all applicable parties were notified.

Due to the simultaneous nature of both events, communication was affected. Staff determined that the corrective action to prevent this in the future would be to obtain more complete information from all reporting parties. Also, at the time the incidents are reported, the reporting party is asked to describe the amount of the spill, while the treatment plant staff simultaneously dispatches a collection system crew member. It is important to note, that during significant wet weather events, minutes can change the impact of a spill.

With the exception of this event, the District has reported all sewer overflows within the required time periods. Therefore, the District believes that F12 statement incorrectly characterizes the District's overall record for timely reporting of sewer spills, as it is based only on a single event.

R11. Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District and Mill Valley report their Category 1 spills within two hours of becoming aware of the spill, as required by State Water Resources Control Board Order No. WQ 2013-0058-EXEC.

Please see F12 response.

If you require additional clarification, please contact our Board President, Craig K. Murray, and/or myself.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Williams
General Manager

ecc:

Craig K. Murray, Board President
LGVSD Board members
Dave Byers, District Counsel