

2001-2002 GRAND JURY REPORT

Beaumont-Cherry Valley Recreation & Park District

Background

The Beaumont-Cherry Valley Recreation & Park District (District) was formed in 1971 under the Recreation and Park District Law (California Public Resources Code §5780).

Recreation and park services are provided by the District to the communities of Cherry Valley and the City of Beaumont (City). District headquarters are located in the Noble Creek Community Center, 38900 Fourteenth Street, Beaumont, California. Facilities include Noble Creek (a 65-acre regional park), the Cherry Valley Grange Community Center, and the Beaumont Women's Club. Programs include sports, arts and crafts, youth, teen and senior programs, and special events (Cherry Festival, Catfish Derby, Oktoberfest, and Winterfest). In addition, an extended day care program for children from kindergarten through sixth grade is located in the Noble Creek Community Center.

Recreation and Park Districts are sustained through user fees and county property tax allocations. With the adoption of Proposition 13 in 1978, the property tax revenues for the District were substantially restricted. To offset the loss of the property tax revenues, the District has actively pursued grants. Although these grants have helped with a number of needed items, they are specific and cannot be used in the general operating fund.

The District, in 1998, filed a lawsuit to halt the City's plan to detach from the District. It was estimated that the District would lose approximately 52% of its tax funding if this occurred. The City and the District entered into a settlement agreement in April 2000.

Findings

1. District facilities and equipment have been used to repair private vehicles belonging to employees and directors. The District's Employee Handbook (Page 5) states, "The use of district time, materials and /or supplies for the purposes other than district services is absolutely prohibited."
2. Screening and background checks on all employees were not conducted in accordance with the District's Employee Handbook (Pages 3 & 4).
3. The District has been operating without a general manager since August 2001. There is no one on site, on a continuous basis, to manage and oversee the daily operations.

4. With the large amount of development and annexations by the City, it now surrounds Noble Creek Park. Although City services (police and fire) are provided to the annexed areas, the county provides these services to the park.
5. As part of the settlement agreement between the City and the District, an advisory committee was established with both City and District officials as members. The purpose of the committee is to coordinate, resolve current issues and plan for the future. These recommendations are presented to both the City Council and the District Board of Directors for consideration and/or adoption.
6. Due to the City's annexation of the land surrounding the District, developer fees from areas annexed go to the City not the District.

Recommendations

Beaumont-Cherry Valley Recreation & Park District City of Beaumont County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

1. District ensure strict adherence by all employees and directors to its policies and procedures.
2. District immediately hire a general manager with grant writing experience.
3. The Settlement Agreement Advisory Committee consider merging the management of the District and City recreation and parks, eliminating recreation and park programs competition, duplication of service, and lower overall operational expenses.