

City of Ripon

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DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

Ted Johnston

RECREATION DIRECTOR

Kye Stevens

December 21, 2010

Honorable George J. Abdallah, Jr.
Judge of the Superior Court
Advisor to the San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury
San Joaquin County Superior Court
222 E. Weber Avenue, Room 303
Stockton, California 95202

Honorable Robin Appel
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
San Joaquin County Superior Court
222 E. Weber Avenue, Room 303
Stockton, California 95202

San Joaquin County Grand Jury
Attn: Chet Somera, Foreman
222 E. Weber Avenue, Room 605
Stockton, California 95202

Re: San Joaquin County Grand Jury 2009/10 Case No. 0609 – Information Services

Honorable Judges Abdallah and Appel and Foreman Somera:

In response to San Joaquin County Grand Jury Case No. 0609, the City Council of the City of Ripon responds as follows.

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY CASE No. 0609 Information Services

The City of Ripon appreciates the time and effort spent while objectively and thoroughly evaluating the City of Ripon website. The feedback provided will undoubtedly lead to a more efficient and useful website. Please find below our responses to each of the four recommendations outlined in your report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R1: Cities implement analytical software for their websites and monitor the reports generated.

Response to R1: The City of Ripon webmaster currently uses analytical software which provides information and statistics including page-views and frequently-accessed pages. The information provided by this software has proven valuable for evaluating which information is most frequently used, and to evaluate the ease-of-use of the City of Ripon website.

R2: Cities draft and institute a policy to govern the city website's external content. This policy must be revisited annually to make changes due to market conditions.

Response to R2: The City of Ripon currently has an external-link policy in place. Before being placed on the City of Ripon website, external links are first reviewed by the webmaster, and secondarily by the City Administrator.

R3: Cities implement a specific line-item in the annual budget proposal that addresses maintenance, upkeep and future upgrades of city website.

Response to R3: The City of Ripon currently monitors website-related expenses closely. The duties of webmaster are performed by a salaried-employee who is also assigned to several other job functions making detailed evaluation of personnel costs difficult. Any software or hardware capital expenses or maintenance costs must be approved by the City Administrator.

R4: Cities implement an annual review of each department represented on the city website that includes a departmental evaluation of their documents and the relevance to the users of the city government website.

Response to R4: The City has implemented a policy (set forth in Attachment "A") by which the webmaster will produce a listing of all information and documents pertaining to each specific department and deliver that list to each respective department-head. Upon reviewing the body of information, the department-head will notify the webmaster of information or documents that are no-longer relevant and should be removed, as well as new information that should be included.

**RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY CASE No. 1009
Public Appointment Process**

The Grand Jury's Report does not indicate specifically, as to the City of Ripon, whether Ripon Municipal Code Chapter 2.15 was reviewed. That chapter, entitled "Commissions", provides for the creation and operation of five commissions within the City; specifically, a Historical Museum Commission, a Parks/Recreation Commission, a Senior Center Commission, a Planning Commission and a Community and Youth Commission. Chapter 2.15 codifies the application process and selection procedure for commissioners, residency requirements, terms in office, procedures for filling vacancies, and the specific powers and duties of each commission. Nonetheless, many of the Grand Jury's recommendations, if implemented, will improve the operations and accountability of the City's commissions. Based upon the existing provisions of Chapter 2.15, and the City's existing practices with respect to the above-referenced commissions, the City of Ripon responds as follows:

R1: Develop or update policies and procedures for appointment of BCC members.

Response to R1: The City of Ripon believes that the current provisions of Chapter 2.15 of the Ripon Municipal Code are adequate with regard to the appointment of BCC members.

R2: Provide and document Brown Act and fiduciary responsibility training to all appointees.

Response to R2: The City of Ripon will continue and strengthen its practice of providing Brown Act training to all appointees by regularly providing new members with a Brown Act training publication and by providing training from the City Attorney's office on an annual basis.

R3: Utilize alternative sources to advertise vacant positions; i.e. Twitter, movie theaters, television, radio, announcements at public events.

Response to R3: The City of Ripon will continue to utilize its website to advertise BCC vacancies, and will use alternative sources such as Twitter, and announcements at public events to foster more interest in vacant positions. However, we would note that unlike other entities in the County, vacancies on BCC's are not a significant issue in Ripon.

R4: Annually review appointee performance and take appropriate action.

Response to R4: The City of Ripon will institute a policy requiring a review once annually of the performance and achievements of each BCC, to occur during a regularly noticed City Council meeting. This annual review, if warranted, could result in individual appointee performance evaluations. The City

Council notes, however, that BCC appointees are serving without compensation, and thus, unnecessary or burdensome "performance expectations", or the appearance that BCC members are being "micromanaged" should be avoided.

R5: Develop policy and procedures defining the processes for appointee removal.

Response to R5: The policy for resolving appointee vacancies, as well as a provision allowing for the removal of any BCC commissioner, is set forth in Chapter 2.15 (Section 2.15.030(C)) of the Ripon Municipal Code.

R6A: Develop criminal and credit check standards for appointees.

Response to R6A: The City Administrator will work with the Ripon Police Department to develop a standard for criminal background checks for BCC appointees. To the extent any BCC appointee, or his/her commission, handles public funds, a credit check may also be required, at the discretion of the City Administrator.


R6B: Perform criminal and credit background checks on all appointees prior to appointment.

Response to R6B: The Ripon Police Department will conduct criminal background checks for all future BCC appointees prior to their appointment. To the extent a credit check is necessary per R6A, above, the credit check will be performed by the City Clerk/Finance Director or his/her designee.

Finally, with respect to the Grand Jury's Follow-Up Final Report on Information and Technology Security (Case No. 0909A), the City would simply note that per Finding F21, the City has fully complied with the recommendations of the Grand Jury, and no further response appears to be required.

If there are questions or concerns regarding any aspect of this Response, please feel free to contact City Attorney Thomas H. Terpstra, or send correspondence to the City Council at 259 N. Wilma Avenue, Ripon, California, 95366.

Very truly yours,


Elden R. Nutt
Mayor

ATTACHMENT "A"

CITY OF RIPON WEBSITE ANNUAL REVIEW POLICY

In an ongoing effort to ensure that only the most timely, relevant and accurate information is presented on the City of Ripon website, the following outlines a policy establishing an annual review of each department's website content.

The City of Ripon webmaster will, during the month of July, provide to each department-head, a list of the information and documents (web-pages, linked documents, external links, etc.) contained on that department's section of the City of Ripon website.

Upon receiving the list, each department-head will review each of the web-pages, linked-documents, and external-links to determine its relevance and timeliness.

- ❖ Items which are out-dated, no-longer relevant, or un-necessary should be marked for removal.
- ❖ Items which are out-dated, but still relevant should be replaced by an up-to-date version wherever possible.
- ❖ Other information, documents, links, etc., which are not currently included in the department's section of the website, should be marked for addition/inclusion.

Having completed the review of information, each department-head will, within 30-days of receiving the list, return the evaluated list to the City Webmaster, including any information which should replace out-dated information, or new information which should be added to the website.

Once the lists have been reviewed and returned to the City webmaster, the webmaster will then make appropriate changes to each department's section of the website as quickly as is practicable.

While not required, a more frequent, periodic review by department-heads of their department's section of the website is encouraged.