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SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY MOSQUITO & VECTOR CONTROL DISTRICT TRUSTEE COMPENSATION and HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

In May 2012, the San Joaquin Taxpayers Association (SJTA) questioned what appeared to be conflicting information on the amount of compensation that was made public and what taxpayers were actually paying the trustees of the SJC Mosquito & Vector Control District.¹ We discovered that the District's part-time, appointed trustees can receive the same health care coverage as full-time employees! The trustees authorized this benefit for themselves at the Mar. 17, 2009 BOT meeting via Resolution 08/09-5; implemented on Aug. 1, 2009. This compensation was not disclosed to the public on the county's fact sheet. (However, the fact sheet was revised on July 13, 2012).

A review of all 61 appointed boards and committees in San Joaquin County shows that 47 of them offer no compensation and 14 pay only a stipend of \$25 to \$100 per meeting plus mileage/travel expense. The District records confirmed that, from January 2007 to June 2012, board members have indeed only met once each month. Yet, during the period of Aug. 1, 2009 to June 1, 2012, the District paid five trustees a total of \$112,086.78 for health insurance benefits.²

On Nov. 20, 2012, the Board of Trustees formed an ad-hoc committee to review the impact of trustee health benefits on the District and to bring to the full Board a recommended course of action.³ On Jan. 15, 2013, the District board met again. The reasons for which the committee was formed were not discussed and the trustees again voted unanimously to maintain their health insurance benefits.^{4 5 6}

The SJTA sent a letter to all elected officials who appoint the District trustees on June 29, 2013, asking for their opinion on the action taken by their appointees in 2009. No one responded.

On July 16, 2013, District trustees met to discuss what had now become a parallel concern for both the SJTA and the San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury.⁷

In August 2013, the SJTA contacted all 58 California county clerks, requesting information on the cost of those appointed to county boards and committees. In fact, hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxpayer-funded health coverage that should be reserved for full-time employees are paid to part-timers. It amounts to a gift of public funds, a theft from taxpayers.

At the Jan. 21, 2014 BOT meeting, most trustees defended the health benefit, but it was decided that the Board would again discuss this matter at their next meeting.⁸ The Mar. 17, 2014 BOT Agenda Item 8

¹ **The Record**, July 19, 2012 - The taxpayer group began researching the compensation at the District after receiving a tip.

² **The Record OPINION**, July 24, 2012 - Benefit bites taxpayers. Medical insurance for full-time workers is splendid; for part-time board members it must be heavenly.

³ **Lodi News-Sentinel**, Nov. 20, 2012 - The board had an animated discussion in 2009... they don't seem to be in agreement now.

⁴ **The Record**, Jan. 21, 2013 - After further review, S.J. pest control board to keep health benefits.

⁵ **The Record OPINION**, Jan. 23, 2013 - Bug board's benefits over the top. Coverage for workers is one thing. Coverage for part-time appointees is another.

⁶ **The Record**, Jan. 23, 2013 - Gravy train spotting. The reason we are aware of this is the San Joaquin Taxpayers Association.

⁷ **News 10/KXTV**, May 28, 2013 - A grand jury report comes after a local taxpayers association repeated its criticism.

recommendation is that, 'following discussion, the Board should determine whether to continue Trustee Health Coverage as currently constituted'.

CONCLUSION

San Joaquin County Supervisors appoint more than 500 citizens to 61 boards, with City Council Members appointing even more.

The San Joaquin County Mosquito & Vector Control District is governed by a nonelected, part-time Board of Trustees, and the agency is funded through property taxes and special benefit assessments. Each of the seven cities in San Joaquin County appoints one trustee and the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors appoints four trustees to represent the unincorporated areas of the county.

District trustees meet monthly, for which they receive a reasonable stipend. But it is unconscionable for part-time, non-elected individuals who are appointed to community service to expect us to pay for their health coverage, and that of their families.

Because of an increase in public interest and local media coverage, trustees decided to meet again to discuss this misguided policy. They have a fiduciary duty to end an outrageous betrayal of public trust.

The public is invited. We encourage you to attend.

Monday, Mar. 17, 2014: SJC Mosquito District, 7759 S. Airport Way, Stockton @ 1:00 p.m. - (209) 982-4675.

FUTURE PLANS

Hundreds of California's so-called special districts provide medical coverage and retirement packages to officials whose public duties may entail attending only a meeting or two a month.

What's more, such benefits are often "hidden" because the districts, for the most part, function out of the public eye. Negligible attention seems to be paid to the tax-financed retirement and insurance benefits that a largely invisible class of local office holders has awarded themselves.

The San Joaquin Taxpayers Association will seek bipartisan support from California lawmakers to introduce legislation that will

1. Prohibit part-time elected or appointed officials of local governments and special districts from receiving pension, retirement, health insurance and other benefits,
2. Limit compensation of part-time local officials to salary, stipend or per diem payment for attending public meetings and
3. Require the amount of monetary compensation provided to a part-time official to be posted prominently on the websites of the governmental body and the State Controller

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⁸ **The Record**, Jan. 23, 2014 – Benefits for S.J. Board intact. Not enough votes to alter policy of Mosquito District.



Media reporting:

- Taxpayer Watchdog Questions Mosquito Board's Benefits:
The compensation from the benefits was not listed on a fact sheet posted on the San Joaquin County government website. The Record July 19, 2012
- Trustees Agree To Reconsider Their 2009 Vote On Health Benefits:
The board will meet this afternoon to discuss whether they want to increase benefits, reduce them or eliminate them altogether. Lodi News-Sentinel Nov. 20, 2012
- The San Joaquin County Mosquito Board Postpones Decision On Trustee Health Benefits:
The board had an animated discussion in 2009 when trustees voted to allow themselves to have health benefits and they don't seem to be in agreement now. Lodi News-Sentinel Nov. 21, 2012
- Postponement Requested By The SJTA On Mosquito Board Appointments:
Lodi News-Sentinel Jan. 6, 2013
- County Supervisors Made Board Appointments:
Despite a plea by the SJTA for postponement until the trustees finished deliberation about health benefits received by trustees. The Record Jan. 9, 2013
- After Further Review, S.J. Pest Control Board to Keep Health Benefits:
The vote to maintain the benefit for the trustees was unanimous, according to the district. The Record Jan. 21, 2013
- Bug Boards' Benefits over the Top:
The SJTA questioned why appointed board members of a mosquito board should even have their health care covered by the taxpayers. Coverage for workers is one thing. Coverage for part-time appointees is another. The Record Jan. 23, 2013
- Gravy Train Spotting:
The reason we are aware of this is the San Joaquin County Taxpayer's Association. We should be glad the Taxpayer's Association is out there. The Record's Metro Columnist Jan. 23, 2013
- Mosquito Control Board Criticized By SJTA and Grand Jury:
News 10 TV May 28, 2013
- San Joaquin Taxpayers Association president: 'We want to be seen as truly nonpartisan':
We will ask the state Legislature to ban appointed county committees from voting themselves health insurance benefits. Lodi News-Sentinel June 29, 2013
- San Joaquin County Mosquito and Vector Control District board responds to Grand Jury:
The District attorney advised the board to revisit the issue due to the public interest, particularly by the grand jury and the San Joaquin Taxpayers Association, about the health insurance issue. Lodi News-Sentinel July 17, 2013