

Board of Supervisors' Report
For the Angwin Community Council
January 6, 2009

To: Directors of the Angwin Community Council
From: Herb Ford

Today was a "start over" day for the board with the chairperson of the Board rotating from Supervisor Brad Wagenknecht to Supervisor Mark Luce. Supervisor Diane Dillon moved into the Vice Chair slot which Luce had held throughout 2008. Also starting for the first time on the Board was new Supervisor Keith Caldwell, representing the area of American Canyon.

Part of the start over involved electing Luce and Dillon to the top leadership slots on the following entities which the County oversees: The Board of Equalization, Napa County Public Improvement Corporation, Lake Berryessa Resort Improvement District, Napa Berryessa Resort Improvement District, Silverado Community Services District, Monticello Public Cemetery District, In-Home Supportive Services, and the Napa County Housing Authority. In record time the new leaders were elected, and dates set for their first 2009 meetings.

A record, if not near record 22 new County employees were introduced to the Board during its morning session today. The Human Resources director noted before the employees introduced themselves to the Board that they were all employed just prior to the County's current freeze on any new employees. In the last three months, if memory serves, three new groups of employees numbering 19, 16, and 22 (the group today) have been employed by the County.

An item was pulled from today's "Consent Items" to give the individual representing the labor union of Napa County employees an opportunity to speak about the move by the County to employ an "outside" negotiator to meet with the union over new terms it wants for its employees. Cost of the negotiator? \$73,500 (that is a cap, the cost could be lower). The union official said he felt the cost was a waste, and that part of the job description for the County's Human Resource people "may" include negotiation with the union. Much talk, and when the matter came to a vote the Board unanimously voted to employ the negotiator.

A group of four County department chiefs brought to the Board for review, direction and possible action draft definitions, current County initiatives and other proposed strategies promoting environmental, economic and social sustainability. I had no way to read the report given to the Board, but from the supervisors' comments it appeared there was nothing of great substance to it, only Supervisor Dillon advising the four chiefs to place themselves on stand-by should the Board feel there was something additional they should work on.

A new ordinance amendment will now mandate that any person considered for employment as the County's Public Works director must, in addition to his/her other public works skills, be a qualified surveyor. This requirement will be found in an amendment being drafted to Ordinance No. 254.

The Fiscal Year 2009-2010 Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement fund allotments came to the Board for review today. These funds come down from on high as a result of a huge class action case against American tobacco companies several years ago, and are being doled out year by year, the funds eventually making their way down to the county level for spending. In Napa County these funds are allocated almost exclusively to health care organizations. There is wide discretion given to the expenditure of these funds. In public comment on this year's allocation, I spoke, congratulating the County on now requiring that each of the funded organizations are now required to put smoking cessation high on their "things to do" list. I also noted that this quite naturally forms something of a tension in that the more these organizations advocate and work at smoking cessation the greater the chance that they are going to have less business (of treatment of those from smoking's consequences). And I noted the obvious: "The less we do in terms of public prevention and cessation, the greater the number of dollars we are going to have to shell out to the organizations to which we provide grants." I also asked the Board to find a way to do a greater amount of public prevention and cessation advertising, similar, I said, "to the advertisements the County places in all of the county's newspapers relating to mosquito abatement and control of the brown apple moth." When I finished speaking, Supervisor Bill Dodd, quipped, "Why don't we put Herb Ford on the Tobacco Committee?" Poor joke.

The "Jail Kitchen Freight Elevator Project, a matter which has been kicked about on the Board's agendas several times, came closer to closure today than ever before. The elevator in the County Jail broke down, and it has been hard for some on the Board to see the urgency of getting the thing fixed expeditiously. But Public Works people today noted that this elevator is critical to the movement of inmates throughout the facility, and it is critical to the movement of deliveries, equipment, supplies, food, and various other items throughout the facility. At the next Board meeting a complete review and necessary actions will be taken to bring even closer to a close the emergency actions needed to have this elevator in top working order very soon.

The County's District Attorney presented a good report on the completion of work on a new facility to which abused and otherwise mistreated children will be brought during court proceedings relating to their cases. From his report it appears that the County is providing the best and least traumatic surroundings possible for these innocent victims of bad people.

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