

**TOWN OF FAIRFAX
COUNCILMEMBER REPORT**

To: Mayor and Town Council

Meeting Date: August 1, 2012

From: Councilmember Weinsoff

Subject: Response to Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report-
“Pre-Schoolers Learn to Share – Can Local Government”

On June 1, 2012, the Marin County Civil Grand Jury released a report titled “Pre-Schoolers Learn to Share – Can Local Government.” The focus of the Report is the question “Who knows how many local government agencies exist in Marin County? The report, a continuation of prior Grand Jury examinations of the high cost of government in Marin County, includes a number of recommendations, including:

- All government officials make it a priority to identify institutional duplication within their sphere of influence and bring leadership, vision and openness to new, more cost-effective alternatives.

The Town’s response to the Report (included in whole as part of the Agenda Packet) was initially placed on the July 11, 2012 Council Agenda by the Interim Town Manager. I requested the Town’s response be set for the August 1, 2012 Agenda to allow for a re-drafted response to the above recommendation titled “R4.” I propose the following response:

“The Town Council has recently addressed a number of “institutional duplications” and taken important action to conserve tax dollars and improve the operations of local fire and police services in the Ross Valley. These include providing full-member status to the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District and adding the Town of Ross to the Ross Valley Fire Department JPA, and expanding the Fairfax Police Department’s dispatch service to include the Town of Ross and the College of Marin.

The Town Council has also addressed the “institutional duplication” found in the operation of the Ross Valley Sanitary District (“RVSD”). The Town Council has communicated to the District its concern over spiraling rate increases and has recommended that it consolidate sanitary services with the Central Marin Sanitation Agency, Sanitary District #2 (Corte Madera) and the San Rafael Sanitation District. RVSD has not consolidated services as of the filing of this response.”

Response to Grand Jury Report from the Town of Fairfax:

Report Title: ***PRE-SCHOOLERS LEARN TO SHARE – Can Local Governments?***

Report Date: May 29, 2012

Public Release Date: June 1, 2012

Response by the Town of Fairfax

FINDINGS

We agree with the findings numbered 2-8

We disagree partially with the findings numbered 1 and 9

Finding Number 1: The cities and towns of Marin already share many services through Joint Powers Authorities and Boards, i.e., Marin County Disaster Council, Marin General Services JPA, Major Crimes Task Force JPA, Marin Media Center, Transportation Authority of Marin, Marin Energy Authority, Flood Zone, Marin Emergency Radio Authority, Marin County Hazardous and Solid Waste JPA, etc. Our Council assignment list (attached) illustrates how our Town participates in these entities.

Finding Number 9: We are not aware of federal grants of this nature but have taken advantage of the Safe Routes to School funding that crosses local boundaries and are open to the possibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R2: City Councils and Marin County Board of Supervisors require annual reports from their city managers or county administrator that identify any and all opportunities for a regional approach of sharing public services.

The Town Manager reports to the Council on an annual basis as part of his budget message. A report on Shared Services will be made a part of this report.

R3: Every local governmental entity, when facing major capital expenditures (e.g., new facilities, equipment, vehicles, or computer systems) seek out other entities to share the use and costs of the items.

There are limited opportunities for a Town as small as Fairfax, but we share a boom truck with San Anselmo and look for other equipment sharing possibilities when feasible.

R4: All government officials make it a priority to identify institutional duplication within their sphere of influence and then bring leadership, vision and openness to new, more cost-effective alternatives.

This is already implemented by towns and cities with some of the special districts like the Ross Valley Sanitary District. This year, the Ross Valley Fire Service added the Town of Ross to their

JPA and last year added Sleepy Hollow as a full member. This was due to the proactive efforts of Ross Valley Fire Chief Meagor with cooperation and encouragement from the Town Councils of Fairfax and San Anselmo. The Fairfax Police Department just began providing dispatch services to the College of Marin and the Town of Ross with our existing personnel and equipment. This was due to the proactive efforts of Fairfax Police Chief Morin with the cooperation and encouragement of the Fairfax Town Council.

R5: Public officials assume the obligation of informing and leading their citizens toward the changing paradigms of government that result in more cost-effective government.

The Town of Fairfax provides updated information for its citizens on our Web site and through the Town Manager's blog. We are in the process of installing the necessary equipment to broadcast our meetings to allow for more participation by the public, more transparency and better communication.