
LAFCO MAP WORKSHOP (TODAY, TUES., 5 P.M. INGRAM HALL)

Lopez goes after Baugh

LAFCO Exec. hires attorney, puts former chair on notice

By Walt Caldwell

Mountain Echo editor

Shasta Local Agency Formation Commissioner Les Baugh, also a supervisor for Shasta County, received what amounts to a cease and desist and notice of possible litigation for violations of the Brown Act as it relates to the alleged disclosure of confidential “personnel and evaluation information” regarding the commission’s executive director, Jan Lopez. The letter from Cynthia Hackler, a Los Angeles, CA lawyer was dated February 25 and received by LAFCO March 6.

Attorney Cynthia Hackler states that the Ralph M. Brown Act prohibits the disclosure of information acquired during a closed session meeting and that personnel matters are one item that can be discussed in such a session. Hackler continues to allege that the willful disclosure of information regarding Ms. Lopez was made to at least two media outlets (apparently Mountain Echo and Record Searchlight) and consisted of confidential personnel and evaluation information which was only discussed by the Commission during closed session on January 29, 2015.

“The disclosure of this information directly related to Ms. Lopez’s ongoing evaluation process, and has subjected Ms. Lopez to unnecessary professional embarrassment.” ...”and we are in the process of evaluating Ms. Lopez’s legal options at this time.”
...”In the interim, we request that you immediately cease any disclosure of confidential personnel or evaluation information related to Ms. Lopez, as well as protect the confidential information regarding Ms. Lopez which you have acquired, or should acquire in the future, during closed session meetings of the Commission.”

The Mountain Echo article in question was apparently the one written by Mountain Echo reporter Loretta Carrico-Russell and published in the February 24 issue under the front page headline “Internal battles at LAFCO and fight between Fire Districts and Cal Fire dominate meeting. The article quotes Baugh in an interview as alleging that the disbursement lists expenditures with the executive officer’s name, for hotel, motel and meal expenses at local establishments for more than \$4,000. At least 20 payments were made to the Fall River Hotel, the Red Lion and Motel 6 in Redding; eight were for meals at Fall River Hotel, Clearie’s and Shasta Pizza.

At one point in the article current LAFCO Chairman Stephen Morgan said he couldn’t speak on the charges ... he said he didn’t know the disbursement statement was placed in the agenda packet as it was a closed session item from the closed session of the January 29 special meeting.

Baugh was one of those in attendance of the special meeting and closed session.



Walt Caldwell

Editorial

Tuesday's the big day. LAFCO is doing something it hasn't done in a long time, if ever - two of the commissioners plus the Executive Officer and staff are coming to a public map meeting tonight (Tuesday) 5 p.m. at Ingram Hall to discuss the current Fall River Mills, McArthur and Northwest Lassen Fire Department's joint sphere of influence map.

It is an informal workshop and no decisions can or will be made. I'm sure it will draw a lot of interest and a spread of views from positive to extremely negative. Personally I would like everyone to be civil

- there is very little to be gained by attacking or playing on personality issues. From my point of view the whole thing should be fairly simple, straightforward, and logical.

Yes, there are some historical issues that LAFCO should be able to demonstrate have been cleared up and are no longer issues. If they can't - well they (LAF- CO) deserves what it gets. If they can demonstrate that they are now non issues, then let's keep it civil.