



CITY of LAGUNA WOODS

Bert Hack
Mayor

August 8, 2011

Cynthia Conners
Mayor Pro Tem

Martin Rhodes
Councilmember

Bob Ring
Councilmember

Milt Robbins
Councilmember

Leslie A. Keane
City Manager

The Honorable Craig E. Robinson
Supervising Judge, Central Felony Panel
Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Dear Judge Robinson:

The City of Laguna Woods is in receipt of the Grand Jury's report titled "Compensation Study of Orange County Cities." Please note our response to the required findings and recommendations below:

Findings

F.4 Public disclosure of municipal compensation levels is widely inconsistent, ranging from good to non-existent; and

F.7: There is currently no disclosure of written employment contracts on the majority of cities' websites.

The City of Laguna Woods cannot speak for other cities in the county. Laguna Woods has provided public disclosure of employee and councilmember compensation since its incorporation. We have received numerous requests for this information over the years and have always provided the information requested, including actual salaries/benefits and employee contracts. Salary ranges/benefits and the cost of these, as well as the city manager's contract, has also been available on the City website since 2000.

Recommendations

R.1: Transparency - All cities in Orange County report their compensation information to the public on the Internet in an easily accessible manner. The Compensation Disclosure Model (Appendix 4) provides a sample as to the items that should be included in determining total compensation

Compensation in the City of Laguna Woods is regulated by resolution of the City Council; all compensation resolutions are approved in public meetings. The City has no organized bargaining units, and with the exception of its city manager, no contracts or memoranda of understanding. At the time of the Grand Jury's report,

the most recent compensation resolution was adopted on January 21, 2009. The City of Laguna Woods has not granted cost of living increases since 2002. Employees are eligible for merit increases within the scope of approved salary ranges and the adopted budget; however all salaries were frozen in 2009 and 2010.

Agenda packets for City Council meetings, including copies of all proposed modifications to compensation, are posted on the City's website. In 2010, the City of Laguna Woods placed actual employee and councilmember compensation on its website. In 2011, it established a "Local Government Transparency" section on the website that includes a variety of financial information as well as compensation.

During the last year, the City has received numerous requests for compensation information in a variety of formats. Each format's calculation results in different compensations totals for employees, and each requestor has insisted that it's is the "correct" format. Our website compensation disclosure includes all of the information requested by the Grand Jury, as well as the additional information requested by other organizations/individuals. In addition, while the Grand Jury only requested information about councilmembers and employees with a base salary exceeding \$100,000, the Laguna Woods website includes compensation information for all councilmembers and full-time employees, regardless of the compensation amount.

R.2: Employment Contracts – Each city reveal any individual employment contracts in an easily accessible manner.

The only Laguna Woods employee with an employment contract is the city manager. Her current contract was approved at a public city council meeting in 2006 after a full discussion. Members of the public were allowed to, and did, comment on the proposed contract. The city manager's proposed and approved contracts have always been available on the City's website. The current contract can be found in the item titled "Councilmember and Employee Compensation" in the Transparency in Local Government section.

The City of Laguna Woods strongly supports transparency in all levels of government, and we appreciate the diligent effort the Grand Jury put forth on this matter. If you have any questions or require additional assistance about the City's response to the findings and recommendations in your report, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 949-639-0511.

Sincerely,


Leslie A. Keane
City Manager

CC: Mayor and City Council Members