

THE FOOTHILL INQUIRER

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

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Special FPUD Meeting Held For New Board Members

On Wednesday, November twenty third, a special FPUD meeting was held at the request of the newly elected board members. This was not a board meeting, but was put together in order for the new board members to attempt to get up to speed on district operations ostensibly to have a better understanding of how to execute their duties when they become responsible for the fiscal integrity of the district.

Of the three new electees, two showed up, (Bill Angerer and Brad Reeves), to listen to an overview of how the district is run. Until the announcement of the impending rate increase back in July none of the three

had ever attended an FPUD meeting. Bill Angerer has attended meetings since that time and Brad Reeves had attended the October meeting. Ralph Cantrell showed up at the October meeting but left early.

This meeting which was also attended by current board members George Shaw and Duane Frink was publicly noticed as per the requirements of the Brown Act which governs public entity meetings. Even though the three newbies are not officially seated on the FPUD board, the Brown act applies.

General manager Kurt Reed stated that as of that day the County Elections Department had not certified the election results but that it was expected any time. The three are to be sworn in at the next regular board

meeting which is scheduled for Wednesday, December 8th.

Kurt said that they had been provided with district policy manuals as well as some specifically requested information on employee duties, salaries, benefits and even copies of time sheets.

Kurt spoke at length about district operations as well as describing his own duties as general manager. He also spoke about many aspects of district financial responsibilities and State and Federal regulations that the district is obligated to abide by.

Discussion of the rate increase led to a description of the condition of the district infrastructure and how the bulk of the increase is earmarked for a special fund for the impending expenses needed to replace aging pipes, See FPUD on page 6

Handouts Cost FPUD Rate Payers Big Bucks

By Roy West, My Opinion

At the October FPUD board meeting, one agenda item dealt with a request, or should I say, demand, that a resident of Foresthill had submitted to the district.

A letter had been sent to the FPUD office in which he complained that the district policy for charging a discounted rate to low income FPUD rate payers amounts to "Age discrimination".

The policy/ordinance specifies that, "In order to qualify for limited reduced rates for domestic service.....that such customer/applicant is not less than 62 years of age and whose... gross annual income from all sources did not exceed \$22,900.00 for the preceding taxable year...." etc...

According to Sean Cox, (the letter writer who claims to be disabled and receiving SSD and SSI income), he is being discriminated against since he is only 47 years old and therefore not eligible for the reduced rate.

My wife's grandfather lost an arm in a hunting accident when he was 16 years old and proceeded to grow to manhood, get married and support a family of four for the remainder of his adult life. I had an economics professor in college who broke his neck at 16 and was paralyzed for the remainder of his life, yet he got an education and taught economics from his electric wheelchair at American River College.

Nowadays you are considered "disabled" if you have ever been a junkie or a drunk or if you are overweight or have ever been "depressed". Go figure.

My wife and I sent a letter to the FPUD board and others addressing this reduced rate issue and since that time we have received feedback from several fellow Foresthill residents/FPUD rate payers. The feedback has all been that of consternation at the fact that we are subsidizing several people by giving a sizeable discount to them on their monthly water bill.

I have been attending the monthly FPUD board meetings for over four years and do remember that the subject came up at a meeting in 2008. It didn't hit me at the time that it was a problem. But later at the July 2010 rate increase meeting, Faye Berry, (a recipient of our unknowing philanthropy), took issue with the fact that she was not able to protest the rate increase since she would not be subject to the *terms* of the increase.

See Handouts on page 4

Community Briefs

The Foresthill Forum, FPUD and Fire Protection District board meetings are filmed by the *FhInquirer*. Copies of these meetings can be rented from the Foresthill Library or can be purchased from the *Inquirer*. Contact *fhinquirer@ftcnet.net* for more info.

The Foothill Inquirer
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The Foothill Inquirer is an independent newspaper/newsletter that covers news-of-interest mostly dealing with the foothill area but also covering State and national issues.

Our goal is to provide current and accurate news for the foothill area.

The FhI is now available only on the web or by email. There are also hard copies at the Foresthill Library for reference. If you would like to be placed on the e-mail loop, email *fhinquirer@ftcnet.net* and request that you be placed on our email loop.

If you would like to place an advertisement the priced is \$12.00 for one months worth of advertising, plus your ad is on our website.

Contact us at our email address to place an advertisement.

If you have a community notice of an event or lecture it will be put in the 'Community briefs' section free of charge.

Meeting	Date	Time	Place
Foresthill Fire Safe Council	Tuesday Dec. 21	5:30 p.m.	Foresthill Fire District office 24320 Main St. Foresthill

More Updates

Vacancy on Foresthill Forum: Supervisor Montgomery Seeking Applicants

Fifth District Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery is seeking applicants for a vacancy on the Foresthill Forum. The seven-member Forum advises the Board of Supervisors on issues that the Board refers to the Forum. Members, who are appointed by the Fifth District Supervisor and confirmed by the full Board, serve two-year terms.

Members, at all times while serving, need to be residents, real property owners, or business owners or managers within the Forum's area.

Foresthill Forum meetings are held the first Monday of each month at the Foresthill Veterans Memorial Hall, 24601 Harrison Ave., Foresthill. All members serve without compensation.

Interested applicants should fill out an application and submit it to the Placer County Clerk of the Board, 175 Fulweiler Ave., Auburn, CA, 95603. The application is available at http://www.placer.ca.gov/~media/bos/cob/documents/comcom/co_co_app.ashx. The application deadline is Jan. 1, 2011.

Foresthill Christmas Baskets 29th Year Bulletin: Application Deadline — POSTMARKED by Dec 10th -This year is DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF MOOSE (THOMAS NOSCHKA) a 15-YEAR VOLUNTEER- Applications available - - -

- Foresthill Library.....367-2785
- Foresthill Valero Mini-Mart....367-2779
- Elijah's Jar Food Closet.....367-3085
- OR Leave Message @ 367-2929

Santa needs your help — Pick up Gifts Tags at the Foresthill Telephone Co/Sebastian across from the Post Office complex. (367-2222) Check out a GIFT TAG and return a new gift valued \$20.00 by Monday December 13th **Cash donations gratefully accepted or checks can be mailed to the address listed for Foresthill Community Services.** Christmas basket distribution Saturday December 18th Carpenter's place — old mill site 10AM-Noon Community Volunteer Workers for sorting & assembling baskets needed: Tuesday possible.. call 367-2929 Wednesday Dec 15th — 11AM-2PM (or done) Thursday Dec 16th (if needed to complete boxes) Sponsored by the Foresthill Community & Foresthill Community Services **Mailing Address: P O Box 108, Foresthill CA 95631 - -FCS is a committee of The Salvation Army Auburn- -

A LITTLE HISTORY

Christmas of 1918

As told by J.L. "Cap" Gonzales From The Foresthill Divide Community Forum, December 1979

It is coming to that time when Christmas Day will soon be upon us again in 1979, and with this thought it brings back to my memory the Christmas Day of 61 years ago. The day the main business block of our town burned to the ground all except Remlers General Merchandise building which survived the fire and is still actively engaged in the grocery business. (where Brian Connelly's law office is now).

My oldest brother and I were busy making sluice boxes and riffles to use when the rains came, which were long overdue that fall, when we noticed toward town smoke spiralling into the air. Shortly after, the fire bell rang its dreaded message. We immediately left our work and went up the hill to see if we could be of any help. By the time we reached town nearly half the block was burned, or in flames.

People were moving furniture and any article that could be moved out of the Forest House hotel. I remember going into the kitchen of the Forest House where the Christmas dinner had been made ready to serve; the roasted meats and cakes and pies and all other festive dishes on the tables. It all looked so tempting to a boy of fifteen years old, but there was not time for sampling as the building was in flames and about to collapse.

The fire is believed to have started in the Henry Jones Saloon and the wooded structures quickly ignited and burned like tinder.

As the towns people with heavy hearts surveyed the blackened ruins, I am certain no one including myself ever forgot the sights and sounds of that dreadful Christmas Day of 1918.

Thought I might add this footnote - there was no Christmas dinner at our home either. The pork roast my father

had placed in the oven was forgotten when the fire alarm sounded and our only festive repast that day was bottles of Buffalo beer and thick rum saved from the Forest House!

by J. L. "Cap" Gonzales

Historical Echoes

(Following is an exact transcript (including spelling) from the daily log of the Justice of the peace, Michigan Bluff.

July 20, 1888. At about 6:00 p.m. I was informed by James Gould, who had just returned from Sunny South, that I was to hold an inquest the next day on the body of Robert McKechnie, who lost his life that day in the Hidden Treasure mine at Sunny South. I summoned 10 jurymen to be ready at 9:00 a.m. next day.

9:00 a.m. (next day) the following citizens of Michigan Bluff served as jurors: A.C. Bowen, James Gould, S.M. Huffacre, A. Dixon, Noah Hough, Stephen Robinson. The jurors...went and viewed the body and then met in the church, and took the evidence of the following witnesses. Mr. Dixon questioned the witnesses and wrote out the testimony. Dr. Chapman, Forest H. Brown, — Hallygan, C.W. Middleton and Harold T. Power.

The verdict of the jury was that Robert McKechnie came to his death at Sunny South on the 20th day of July, 1888, while attempting to rescue his brother miners, he came to his death by suffocation.

He left a widow and three children, was a workman in good standing and she will receive two thousand dollars. He was burried by the Odd Fellows in the Odd Fellows cemetery at Michigan Bluff., on the 21st day of July, 1888. He was a native of Scotland

and aged 38 years.

The verdict was signed by all the jurors and all the evidence was sent to the County Clerk, July 23rd, 1888.

James A. Van Eman, J.P.
Acting Coroner

New FPUD Board Members Sworn In

On December 8th Ralph Cantrell, William Angerer and Brad Reeves attended their first meeting as FPUD-Board members. Beginning the meeting in the audience, the three were sworn in using an oath common for the occasion and thereafter took their seats at the Directors' tables.

Public comment started with Sean Cox who took issue with the Board for not getting back to him on his protest of the age restriction for reduced water rate status. Former director Duane Frink gave the board some ideas as to what goals to set as a board. Sean Cox declared, "You should be a director!". When the laughter in the room died down, Duane responded, "You just voted me off of the board."

The first agenda item after that was a report by General Manager Kurt Reed responding to a request by William Angerer to explain the difference in revenue since the rate increase back in July. Kurt said that since there was not a long track record, (like a year), to compare, he used September 2010 compared to September 2009. The difference was approximately a \$1000.00 revenue increase for that one month.

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In other words, while the rates for the rest of us were destined to go up substantially; she would continue to pay a mere \$9.19 per month with a monthly allowance of 4,000 gallons. She wants to accept the handouts but still wants to have input as to the rate increase that does not affect her.

As to Mr. Cox, he spent some time before the October meeting smoking outside and chatting on a cell phone that, quite frankly is a better model than I can afford. The feed-back that I mentioned earlier also included the observations by more than one person that Mr. Cox is regularly seen purchasing beer and cigarettes at the Vallero mini mart.

I don't smoke or drink but even if I had the desire to, I wouldn't; I can't afford those vices.

In his letter to the FPU D directors, Mr. Cox states, "I believe low income and disabled should also be entitled (sic) on this plan. P.G. & E. gives me a rate reduction for low income."

To tell you the truth, that attitude really chaps my hide. I have worked for practically every penny that has ever crossed my palms for my entire adult life. Actually I've been working for a living since before I was an adult. Here we have a supposedly disabled man who seemed able enough to me, (he mustered up the energy to make it to a public meeting to protest), not expressing any thanks for the "helping hand" that he already receives, but demanding more handouts.

At the November FPU D board meeting the subject was discussed and General Manager Kurt Reed provided information explaining the fiscal impact to the district, (That's you and me fellow rate-payers).

Now before you judge me as being too harsh on these "poor, unfortunate" neighbors of ours, keep the following facts in mind. Anyone who

qualifies as disabled or low income also qualifies for energy assistance, phone subsidies, rental assistance, food stamps, a discount on the County wood chipper program, free medical care, free legal advice and an additional list that is too long to put in this opinion piece.

According to Kurt Reed's numbers there are currently thirty six Foresthill residents receiving the discounted rate for water. This costs the rest of us rate payers \$11,121.12 per year at the current rates. Talk about finding places to cut costs! That total amounts to \$5.67 per year from each of us 1,960 +- rate-payers. Another way to look at it is that each of the thirty six reduced rate recipients of the board's generosity receives \$308.92 per year of their neighbor's money.

One man at the November meeting spoke up in favor of the subsidy stating that his parents received the discount and he was very thankful that it was in place for them as it really helped them make ends meet. Is it just me or does anyone else leap to the conclusion that this son of a poor couple might have stepped in to help his parents instead of allowing them to stay in a position of taking handouts from strangers?

It is becoming ever more obvious that our once great nation is not only in debt, we are and have been bankrupt for a long time. We simply cannot afford to continue the transfer of wealth from the producers to the non-producers.

There was a time when all charity was handled by private enterprise, personal involvement by family and friends, Christian Churches and relief organizations. The Salvation Army began in England because one man saw the need and decided to do something about it. These organizations took money and material donations that were clearly intended for the purpose of helping those with less.

Somewhere along the line the churches and other organizations turned to the Government to solve the problem of poverty. So now instead of a com-

passionate and responsible group of private citizens working to help those in need out of a sense of duty to their fellow man, we have what the Declaration of Independence calls, "...a multitude of New Offices, and...swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance." All in the name of helping those less fortunate than someone.

You see, such "Philanthropy" is an industry second only to war. Maybe that is why they call it a war on poverty; it is never intended to be won; just expanded to enrich those calling the shots.

From EVERY level of government, we who try to work and stay afloat are being soaked in order to keep paying the "entitlements" to people like Sean Cox and Faye Berry.

And since the courts have created the "entitled" class, we are forbidden to even consider ever requiring that they give anything for the largesse that they receive.

On that note, have you ever noticed how we often hear people of means declaring that they wish to, "Give something back to the community"? This usually comes from a business person who has created jobs and spin off businesses and wealth for others. Yet from "The entitled class", we hear, "We want more, It's not fair,...My fair share,..., I'm entitled.." etc... and on and on and on. The more they receive, the more they demand.

Why is it that someone who is on the dole never gets a "Community Service Award"? I'll tell you why. It is because they understand that they are not really expected to do anything for the community. The community is supposed to do for them.

They are the permanent underclass that gets a little testy if anything, and I mean ANYTHING is expected from them.

Oh, another piece of number fun that Kurt Reed provided was that if See Handouts on page 6

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the reduced rate/limited income policy was changed to eliminate the 62 year minimum age, we could possibly count on a flood of new applicants since, "The number of welfare, disabled and unemployed recipients as a percentage of the local population may be significant." He also noted that, "Should the cost [to the District] be \$50,000 per year, the District would likely need to increase water rates by \$1.52 per month per customer to offset the subsidization of the limited income rate class."

I don't know about you but I not only do not want the policy expanded, I want it done away with!

The economy has hit all of us and I cannot afford to pay someone elses water bill.

I am sure that someone will take offense at all of my ranting in this article, but I figure that I am "Entitled", since I am paying the bills.

Mine and theirs!

FPUD

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There was an explanation of two water line easements that the District was to accept which are located on and near the old mill site. One is offered by PCWA and the other by George McCafferty at no cost to the District. A third was discussed which is located on a parcel owned by George Grant and Ken Drone et al. According to Kurt, one of the partners declined to sign the papers unless the District was willing to pay for the easement.

Brad Reeves took issue with the wording of a District ordinance regarding organization of seats on the board. He said that the officers, (President, Vice President, etc...) should be elected each year. Currently the seats change on a rotating basis.

Board President Brett Grant worked through the appointment process for some Ad-Hoc Committees such as one to look at ideas for additional sources of revenue for the District and one to research the hiring of a new general manager.

Chuck Thiel representing the International Union of Operating Engineers was at the meeting and expressed his disappointment that the subject of the FPUD employees move to form a union was only an

"information item" on the agenda and not an action item. He held a different opinion than Kurt Reed's report from District counsel as to the requirements for the Board on the issue.

Ralph Cantrell asked why the employees wanted to unionize and was told that there was some rhetoric from the three candidates during the recent election that gave the employees reason to be concerned for their jobs.

The Board gave approval for a survey proposal for Sugar Pine Dam at an expense of \$13,500.00. The survey involves measuring the dam for external deformation.

The makeup of the board was altered somewhat with the entrance of the three new members. Adam Larsen will be President. Brad Reeves garnered the most votes in the election and therefore takes the Vice President seat. Brett Grant rotates down to Director, Bill Angerer will sit as Treasurer and Ralph Cantrell will hold a director's seat.

Standing sub-committees will be altered with the entrance of the three new members as well.



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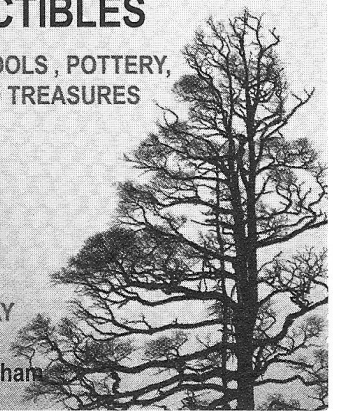
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Pam Covell & Jeanne Cunningham



FPUD

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connections and ultimately add needed storage to the system.

Bill Angerer asked if the district had looked into the possibility of securing grants in order to help pay for needed system improvements. Kurt assured him that had been done and for various reasons, the FPUD does not qualify for grants or low cost loans. "Quite frankly, this community is the wrong ethnicity", he said. Another reason is that the median income of Foresthill is too high.

Pointing out that there is currently an effort to gather signatures to force a roll back in the recent rate increase, Bill Angerer asked, "What will happen if the roll-back happens?" Kurt responded that since personnel related expenses are the only real variable that the board has control over that it would be necessary to lay off two or maybe even three employees though he said that even three layoffs will not bring expenses down enough to make up for the revenue loss.

"I believe that that would be the worst possible thing to happen", he said. "I recommend that the district fight it."

George Shaw pointed out that the petition being circulated states that one requirement is that all future rate increases must be tied to the "Cost of living index", but it does not specify which index is to be used. "There are a lot of different indexes out there and they don't identify which one they want to use", he said. Kurt expanded on that thought saying that other districts have challenged that requirement and have won in court.

"Why have elected officials; why would anybody want to be on the board?", he asked about the notion of a forced policy that the board cannot work around. "You [board members] will be responsible for the fiscal integrity of this district, by law. You have that responsibility; why would you want them to take that away from you?"

Tamra West spoke up saying that, "It would be a dumb idea to lower the

rates until you get a pulse of what is going to happen." Brad Reeves agreed, saying, "We'll leave everything like it is until we get a handle on what's going on. The general public just doesn't quite understand; they see their rates going up but they haven't taken the time to get educated." Bill Angerer agreed. Both men ran on a platform of being against the recent rate increase.

There was some discussion about the fact that the board will be in the market for a new general manager since Kurt Reed is retiring effective on January 31st.

The two new elected members did not give a time frame to have a new manager and asked that Kurt be available after his retirement if needed to help with district operations if any sort of difficult situation comes up. He agreed saying that he would be glad to help in any way he can. No mention of compensation was discussed at that meeting and would be an issue for the full board to consider at a future regular meeting.

December Foresthill Fire Protection District Board Meeting

By Tamra West

On Tuesday, Dec. 7th the Fire Board met; the members present were: Joan Elliott, Gary V. Hall, Forrest Eklund and Tyler Harkness. General Items discussed was Article #6 of the District By-Laws, a number of changes were made and this item will be brought back to the Jan. 2011 meeting.

There were NO new construction starts for the month of November and the district has collected \$16,709 year to date on new housing starts.

There were 65 calls for the month of November and 10 of those were to PCWA's new corporation yard. It seems that the new fire alarms in the

new PCWA building are malfunctioning and need tuning-up. Fire Marshal Gary Kirk said that it a case of the proverbial "boy that cried wolf", as he sees the response time to each call increase as crews know that it is just another false alarm. He hopes that PCWA resolves the problem before a real emergency occurs. The ambulance billed out \$76,669 for November and received \$47,505.

The Rooster Ridge project will be completed by 12/31/10 and the district has applied for more monies to clear projects on Long Point and Roach Hill in Iowa Hill.

Director Jerry Milsaps has tendered his resignation from the board. His business has increased and he does not have the time to devote to the board. He will be sorely missed! The board voted to post his vacancy and will take applications and then appoint a new director at the January meeting.

Tamra West asked the board if they are working on billing people out of our district that they have to rescue and the answer was "We are working on this" and will bring it to a future board meeting.