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CANE BRAKE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

Contact Us

Your name: Robert E Fritz

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Subject: Need to Improve

Message: The first year of the CCWD board members sworn in last January is coming to a close. With a largely new set of board members some of the community were optimistic that CCWD business would be conducted in a more sophisticated, professional manner. The board set no goals or objectives for the year. They are following no plan or schedule with any detail. Without plans or goals there can be no progress for you don't know where you started not do you know when you are finished. The planning mantra of the CCWD board is "We will do tomorrow what we did today, because that is what we did yesterday." Is CCWD better off after a year of this new board? I think not. Over \$10,000 was spent to buy a secondary storage tank for the system but just a few weeks short of a year the tank is still not on line. So, the board spent the last of a reserve and has received zero return on investment after a year. We are still without a backup storage capability after more than two years, which is both a health and fire safety concern to people who are full time or seasonal residents. CCWD no longer has a backhoe. It was sold off and replaced with a much less capable machine and now will have to be augmented with additional devices for which there is apparently they expect the community to donate money to the board for them to spend. Secondary Storage Tank The problems arise from several instances of failed leadership. The first failure is that the board effectively determined that they are not accountable to the customers or voters by reinstating as president the person voted out. This is the first instance of the board's decision criterion: "Do what is fast and easy for the board without regard for what is best for the system or just for the customers." He immediately showed why he was voted out by vehemently stating that the tank would be installed without the knowledge of the county and that is need be he would "move the tank in at midnight". Fortunately, a knowledgeable Canebrake resident informed the county and county officials immediately took steps to ensure the installation complied with county health standards. Another instance of "Do what is fast and easy for the board without regard for what is best for the system or just for the customers." It took four months to get county approval. During this time did the board put together a plan describing the activities, resources, materials, and duration so that they could create a schedule to get the work done? Of course not, schedules mean accountability and responsibility, especially when someone is named to head an activity. Now in the new year, none of the customers have any idea when the tank will go online because there is no published schedule. Another instance of "Do what is fast and easy for the board without regard for what is best for the system or just for the customers." Capital Equipment Surplus disposal My scant experience with looking at capital equipment from the government or corporation is that the advertisements are placed on well known outlets. The typical listing tells what the item is, where it is located, when it may be viewed or examined, and other pertinent details about the item. The closing date for bids is published, and the terms of sale and transport are listed. CCWD put the notice of sale on a closed membership Facebook page and their little seen website. No details were given about location, viewing opportunities, closing date for bids or other terms. Instead, just a few days later, a week or ten days perhaps, it was announced that a single bid was made and that it was accepted. That single bid apparently came from a board member. A lot of

corners were cut here, resulting in another instance of "Do what is fast and easy for the board without regard for what is best for the system or just for the customers." Equipment Acquisition Typically, when the government or large corporation needs to acquire a device or system of significant capability and complexity, it creates a written specification which lists the requirements the system must perform. This may include a set or core requirements that absolutely must be met and possibly a set of requirements that are desirable but optional. One of the requirements is cost. Did CCWD prepare a requirements specification for the new equipment? Or was it a matter of looking at how much money was available and looking in a catalog to find a matching price? I don't know the details because the process was not disclosed. Is this another instance of "Do what is fast and easy for the board without regard for what is best for the system or just for the customers"? Is there a requirements specification for the additional equipment? Does CCWD have an acquisition strategy that does not require voluntary donations from the community? Is there not a financial plan with a budget item to fund future capital acquisitions? What are the plans for ensuring there are enough trained operators to use the equipment? Recently we had an extreme thunderstorm that washed out Stafford's Crossing and parts of Canebrake Road. The washout at Stafford's Crossing forced traffic to divert through Whitely's property, including non-Canebrake people going to the ranch in the Inner Pasture. The equipment was here, but no keys and no operator. It took four days for an operator to appear to make the repairs. The permanent and seasonal residents of Canebrake need assurance that the equipment and trained, certified operators are available to respond to future emergencies. Decorum The single employee of CCWD is often seen performing his duties shirtless. Recently he arrived in the community center looking for board member while people were cleaning and performing other actions. Several people were quite taken aback by this. If the image the board is trying to project is that it is slovenly, unkempt and unprofessional then they are succeeding. When SDGE or AT&T (or UPS, or FedEx, or the Sheriff's Volunteer Patrol) come to Canebrake their technicians are professionally dressed in a uniform shirt. That this is the desert is not an excuse. Buy your employee a couple of uniform shirts and set the requirement that when he is performing CCWD tasks or is using the CCWD truck he is to have the shirt on at all times. Distribution Level 1 Certification None of the CCWD personnel who have operational roles are D-1 certified. This is unacceptable and possibly a cause for the frequent breaks in the new pipe installation and the spate of positive E Coli tests. All operations people should have D-1 certification. I am aware that your financial officer earned the D-1 certification. That is ludicrous to satisfy the county requirement. That would be like telling me as an engineer I had to have certification in accounting. Another instance of "Do what is fast and easy for the board without regard for what is best for the system or just for the customers." Donations A rumor is circulating that CCWD expects the customers to donate money so it can be spent on needed items. CCWD has performed dismally on two recent significant non-recurring installations, installing 1200 feet of pipe in three years at three times the original estimate (cost includes the original \$12,000 that was supposed to come from the savings by not having an employee for a year) and now taking over a year to install a tank that could have been done in a couple of months if it had been planned and scheduled in advance. Until you have a detailed future plan that includes an in-depth analysis of all finances including both revenue and expenses, how you intend to escalate rates to match inflation of the various costs and to provide for future non-recurring installations (i.e. replacing additional sections of pipe or automating meter-reading, or what ever else you determine to be in the long-term plan) I don't think responsible people are going to just give you large sums of money to do as you please. Certainly I will not. CIA has enjoyed significant contributions for new windows and most recently new flooring. One reason for the generosity of the donations is that the scope of activity or acquisition is clearly defined. Another reason is that people like Carl McKenny and Jeff McNair who headed up the window replacement are used to doing projects that require they be executed promptly and efficiently. The same is true of the flooring effort headed by Bill Dimmock who also has the kind of job that requires him to make plans and execute a schedule. I am not conversant in the details of the backgrounds of all board members, but I do not think any of the current board has had to plan, schedule, and execute a product development and system integration repeatedly as part of their vocation. I will oppose any effort to have CIA transfer funds from its accounts to the CCWD. CIA income was intended for recreation not CCWD charity.

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