

Kathi,

I hope you had a lovely if perhaps distanced Hanukkah and Christmas with family. I am writing to you as the new District board president, in hopes of a status report on the board stipend issue.

It is now December 29th and my understanding is that a response to Ms. Long is required by the end of the year. No communication has been received by me from her office or the District. This kick the can down the road approach to yet another critical issue is more than exasperating.

Based on the draft recovery letter attached to the December agenda, the District seeks to recover six hundred dollars from me. This amount is inaccurate. If in fact the one hundred dollars per meeting stipend applies effective February of this year, the following calculation should be utilized.

Meeting Stipends Paid to Me

June Board Meeting Payment	\$250	
June Budget Meeting Payment	\$250	
July Board Meeting Payment	\$250	
August Board Meeting Payment	\$250	
Total	\$1,000	
Permitted Amount @ \$100 per Meeting	(\$400)	
Your Estimated Amount Owed	\$600	
Credit for Three (3) By-laws Meetings	(\$300)	In your Home
Credit for One (1) Manager Compensation Meeting	(\$100)	In your Home
Credit for One Zoom Meeting w/Ms. Long	(\$100)	Initial Meeting
Correct Calculation	\$100	

When I joined the board in June of this year, I was informed that a challenge had been made by the Christian Valley Residents Coalition four months *prior*. I was explicitly told that the Board had made a conscious choice to defer a response (or consultation with current counsel) but to instead, seek an opinion when new counsel was retained. As a reminder, the entire stipend issue was ostensibly reviewed by Mr. Elias and the District's then legal counsel during the transition from the waiver of service fees compensation to a direct stipend. I accepted the terms with the understanding that given the review of State Code at that time, Mr. Elias was fully confident that the stipend was legal. Although the District is small, it nevertheless is a California public agency and as such, it is ultimately his responsibility to be fully versed on all areas of the Code that impact the District and its operations.

My position is that responsibility for any overpayment lies solely with Mr. Elias. If in fact he forgot what Code allows, never researched it in the first place or simply was too timid to steer well a intensioned prospective board member in the right direction, accountability is his, not mine. You would NEVER expect a prospective city council member or other elected official, no matter how small the agency or district, to research Code themselves. We rely on those city managers, county administrators and attorneys to establish stipends that are fully within legal parameters. As such, I suggest that you look to Mr. Elias for recovery of the one hundred dollars (\$100) that it appears has been overpaid to me in error.

Bonnie Gilmore