



CITY OF RIO VISTA

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June 2, 2011

Honorable D. Scott Daniels
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Solano Superior Court
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533

Honorable Judge Daniels,

I have reviewed the Solano County Grand Jury's report issued on May 23, 2011 entitled "Rio Vista Wastewater Treatment Plants". Please accept this letter as the City of Rio Vista's response to the 2010-2011 Grand Jury Report, in the manner described in California Penal Code Sec. 933.05.

Finding #1 – At this time there are no plans for the sale or reuse of the bio-solids produced during the wastewater treatment process at each plant.

Response to Finding #1 – the City agrees with the Grand Jury's findings.

Recommendation #1 – These bio-solids could be sold to be processed for agricultural use. This could generate funds to offset the cost of operating the plants.

Response to Recommendation #1 - The recommendation requires further analysis. The City of Rio Vista has two separate Treatment facilities with each producing its own bio-solids or sludge. Not only could selling of the sludge generate revenues it would result in a cost saving measure (no longer paying for disposal cost to landfill). Prior to considering the sale of sludge, the City must perform a cost benefit analysis to determine the cost to market, package, and sell the sludge with the revenues to be generated. The City must also evaluate Federal, State and local regulations related to the selling and application of bio-solids, and liability issues if the sludge is contaminated.

The City is presently co-mingling the sludge from Beach and NW. The sludge is dewatered using the belt press and dried using the solar driers. The end product or biosolids are being stockpiled. The biosolids meet Class "A" which means they can be used to grow crops. Although, there may be a couple of disposal options available, the City will likely select the least costly disposal method.

Finding #2 – There are several cities in California that now use reclaimed wastewater to offset the use of potable water. Rio Vista City Management evaluated the cost for use of reclaimed wastewater and determined that it was too cost-prohibitive at this time.

Response to Finding #1 – The City agrees with the Grand Jury’s findings.

Recommendation #2 – The City of Rio Vista should reconsider developing ways of using reclaimed wastewater produced by its plants.

Response to Recommendation #1 - The recommendation currently cannot be implemented due to the expensive cost to install necessary infrastructure to accommodate distribution of the reclaimed wastewater. Currently, the effluent from each wastewater facility is released to the River in compliance with strict State regulations. This method of disposal is the least costly for our residents.

For the Beach facility, the City would have to install “purple pipe” from the facility to every location where the effluent is to be disposed. This task would require substantial work, purchase of supplies, and expense. The City is focusing its effort on repairs to aging infrastructure and does not have the financial resources to commence a “purple pipe” program. It may be possible to apply for grants to offset this cost.

During the construction of the Northwest facility (2005), the City was required to prepare a water reuse plan. A plan was developed which determined that it was too costly to implement a reuse program. Thus, the effluent is sent to the river. With the approval of the Northwest NPDES permit in 2010, the City was again asked to evaluate a water reuse plan. The 2005 plan is being updated. Once the document is in final form staff will have an idea if it is or is not cost prohibitive to reuse effluent.

Finding #3 – Operating two wastewater treatment plants in a city the size of Rio Vista is a burden for the taxpayers of the City.

Response to Finding #2 – The City agrees with the Grand Jury’s findings.

Recommendation #3 – The City of Rio Vista should consider developing a plan to connect the Beach Drive plant’s collection system to the Northwest plant’s wastewater treatment system.

Response to Recommendation #3 - The recommendation requires further analysis. It is obvious that two wastewater facilities result in increased operational costs. To connect the two facilities, will require an analysis of the current systems collection lines, condition of the lines, survey on how to best redirect/switch flow(s) from the Beach Drive facility to the Northwest Facility, cost of infrastructure/easements/oversizing, and the cost to assure there is capacity in the Northwest plant to migrate Beach customers’ flows.

There are steps currently being taken to consolidate the two-wastewater facilities but this will be a long-term project. Through existing development agreements, the City has included language requesting oversizing of certain sewer lines to accommodate larger flows. This was done in anticipation of connecting existing flows to the newly installed lines transferring Beach influent to the Northwest Treatment Plant. There is a cost associated to the City/existing residents for oversizing sewer lines, acquiring capacity, adding infrastructure, and rerouting a lift station.

As part of the City's flow and financial evaluation to consolidate facilities, the City will also look at the possibility of re-directing a subdivision (Homecoming) from the Beach collection system to the NW system. This option would reduce the flow going to the Beach facility and provide Beach with extended capacity and reduced pressure on its existing process.

The process of consolidating is a long-term project, which may take years with the cost ranging in the millions. A rough estimate of the cost in today's dollars is \$20-30 million dollars.

Finding #4 – The Northwest plant does not currently produce alternative energy, such as solar or wind. Use of alternative energy production could reduce the operating cost of the Northwest plant.

Response to Finding #4 – The City agrees with the Grand Jury's findings.

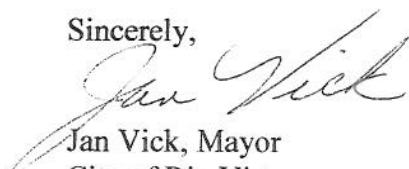
Recommendation #4 – The City of Rio Vista should consider developing a plan to install some form of alternative energy production at the Northwest plant. The funds for this project could come from Federal grants aimed at promoting the use of alternative energy systems.

Response to Recommendation #4 – The City evaluated solar and wind power energy in an effort to reduce the electrical cost of the Northwest facility. The City Manager and/or the Vice Mayor spoke to various companies. We explored leasing of land in exchange for some electricity, purchase of power directly from the energy companies at a price lower than currently being paid, and purchase of equipment to install energy units. The City determined that it was either not feasible to purchase small quantities directly from the energy company or too costly (rate of return was not beneficial to the City) for the City to purchase equipment for energy. Furthermore, there is an initial investment to install solar or wind energy on site (Northwest facility). Staff will continue to evaluate energy options in an attempt to reduce energy/operational costs.

There is currently a Measure poised for a special election to reduce water and sewer rates, which if approved will result in insufficient funds to continue operations let alone investment in energy power.

Should you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (707) 374-6451.

Sincerely,



Jan Vick, Mayor
City of Rio Vista