



September 4, 2024

Lori Sanders, KHD Director
1425 Marion Street
Kingsburg, California 93631

RE: Letter of Guidance

Dear Director Lori Sanders:

On February 9, 2022, you signed an Acknowledgment and Agreement on page 2 of the Kingsburg Healthcare District (“**District**” or “**KHD**”) Code of Ethics for District Board Members (“**Code of Ethics**” or the “**Code**”). Item 6 of the Code provides, in relevant part:

“...**Code**:...Board members pledge to accept this code as a minimum guideline for ethical conduct and shall:...

6. Treat all community members with dignity and respect, even in the face of criticism and opposition.”

BACKGROUND

At the District’s Board meeting on June 12, 2024, you requested as a courtesy, on your own and not as an official Board request, that the public not discuss the grants approved or denied in open session until District Secretary Shereme Watson was able to officially notify the applicants of the Board’s decisions.

In particular, at the Board’s May 22, 2024 special meeting, Ms. George indicated that in prior years she was somewhat overwhelmed with calls and inquiries from funding applicants before she had the opportunity to send out formal notifications to all of them. Therefore, those still in attendance at the conclusion of the May 22, 2024 special Board meeting were requested to delay discussing the Board’s decision on all the funding applications, until Ms. George had an opportunity to send written notifications to them. There was no dispute about:

1. Whether this information was public, since it occurred during an open and public Board meeting;
2. That the request to delay discussions about the Board’s decisions was intended to only delay the timing of release of information, and was not intended as total and permanent avoidance of transparency about the Board’s funding decisions; and

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3. That both Mr. Silva and you both have a right under the First Amendment to voice your opinions in a public forum like the public comment period of a public meeting.

At the Board's June 12, 2024 meeting you raised concerns of a public citizen's release of information regarding Board decisions on grant applications. Your discussion of the matter was impassioned and emotional, and some people perceived it as accusatory and rude. Because you were on the dais, your comments appeared to be an official Board position, which it was not.

At the District's Board meeting on August 14, 2024, you apologized to the public and explained that you were simply expressing frustration for people not honoring a professional courtesy, and acknowledged that the public had no legal obligation to not disclose public information he learned during a public Board meeting held by the District. The apology was generally accepted by the public, leaving the incident in the past.

GUIDANCE

The Board of Directors has approved this Letter of Guidance to remind you of the Code of Ethics which you have signed. In particular, the Code requires that each member of the District's governing body "Treat all community members with dignity and respect, even in the face of criticism and opposition." As much as you had a right to express your frustrations, Mr. Silva also had a legal right to disclose information from the District's May 22, 2024 Board meeting, and expression of your frustration toward him could be perceived as an indignity and lack of respect for his legal rights. In the future, please consider approaching individuals whom you are frustrated with privately rather than publicly because the actions of one Board member can reflect negatively upon the entire Board. Thank you for your consideration of this guidance and for your service on the District's governing Board of Directors.

Sincerely,

Todd B. Thompson, KHD Board Chair