



## Community services district cuts jobs

By Mike Roberts | Village Life staff writer | July 14, 2009 09:23

Several El Dorado Hills Community Services District employees attended the July 9 board meeting to confirm what they already knew. The board approved General Manager Wayne Lowery's proposed staff reorganization that results in three layoffs and a major redeployment of district administration staff.

The moves are the latest in a series of belt-tightening maneuvers by a frugal CSD board that's badgered Lowery, Finance Director Allison Hamaker and the department heads all year, calling for deeper spending cuts and questioning head counts. The result was a nearly \$1 million reduction in spending.

Following approval of the of \$7,696,711 budget for 2009-10 in June the board took it a step further, asking Lowery to streamline the entire organization.

The reorganization shifts management responsibilities, centralizes administration, reduces staff and freezes hiring. It cuts one department and creates another. The immediate result is a \$200,000 to \$250,000 savings for fiscal year 2009-10. A total of 5.625 full time equivalent (FTE) staff positions have been eliminated, some already vacant. Two more vacant positions were "frozen" for six months:

- Planning director (1)
- Executive assistant (1)
- Finance administrative assistant (.125)
- Parks administrative assistant (.5 - vacant)
- Parks maintenance worker (1 - vacant)
- Parks office supervisor (1)
- Associate planner (1 - vacant)
- Pool maintenance worker (1 - frozen)
- Recreation coordinator (1 - frozen)

The most visible impact is the elimination of the Planning Department and its director, Dianna Hillyer.

Lowery explained the move. "In the current economy, with slowing growth, we don't feel there are the work requirements to continue with the organization the way it was."

Planning for new parks will be shifted to the Parks Department, headed by Kent Oakley, where Hillyer has been invited to stay on in a new, lower grade project manager position.

Most of the Planning Department's solid waste and cable television franchise responsibilities will be reassigned to the Finance Department, with Lowery providing management support when needed.

In a shift of emphasis for Lowery the Parks and Recreation Departments will now report directly to Assistant General Manager Sandi Kukkola, who assumes more responsibilities in the new organization.

The move is expected to reduced the general manager's role in supervision and operations to keep him more involved in strategic activities.

Two other familiar faces were also laid off, Lowery's executive assistant Charlene Ambrose and Parks Office Supervisor Janice McGrath. Both have been offered positions in a newly formed central administration pool.

Administration staff was pulled from each department to form the pool, which will be housed in the pavilion, and managed by a new support services supervisor under Kukkola.

The Finance Department will move to the Parks building at the north end of the Community Park to make room for the new administrative group.

A total of four new positions were created. Lowery said he hoped all could be filled from laid off staff.

- Support services supervisor (1)
- Administrative assistant II (2)
- Parks project manager (1)

Despite a long history with the district, including five years as a director during the late 1990s, Hillyer became the "odd woman out" in the reorganization. The new project manager position's salary is significantly less than her current director compensation.

When reached by phone on Monday she said she's "inclined to take the new position," but hasn't seen a final job description.

The reorganization plan was presented to district employees on June 24. Three meetings were held with union representative Gene Harter over the following week.

Last Thursday Harter complained to the board that the reorganization has workers doing their old jobs in lower grade positions. When pressed, he specified the planning director, associate planner and office supervisor positions as areas of concern. Lowery and Harter agreed to fast track negotiations to address union concerns.

Layoff notices were issued on Friday, along with draft job descriptions for the new and redefined positions. Layoffs are effective July 24. If accepted, the new assignments would be effective July 27. Lowery's goal is to have everyone settled in their new offices by Aug. 7.

In a press release following the announcement CSD Board President Tony Rogozinski explained the moves, and promised residents that CSD services won't be impacted. "The current economic climate served as the catalyst to aggressively explore and implement operating budget reductions without sacrificing the level of services that El Dorado Hills residents have come to expect."

[mroberts@villagelife.com](mailto:mroberts@villagelife.com)

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