

Subject: King County Fire Protection District 34

Editor, Redmond Reporter:

By his letter in the February 7th edition of the Redmond Reporter, Commissioner Lucarelli would have your readers believe it was my letter in your January 31st edition that caused failure of the district's fire tax levy lid lift. Although I have tried to tell these commissioners that their job is about duty, responsibility and accountability, he would rather blame the messenger than face facts. But all he does is attack me and reiterate the press-release-based-article that appeared in the same issue as my letter and which talks about nebulous cost increases and the District's supposedly wonderful relationship with the City of Redmond Fire Department. In fairness, the commissioners issued their press release albeit eleven days after I wrote my letter, ten days after voters received their mail-in ballots, but only eight days before election day.

However, the personnel and management that Redmond provides to District 34 is expensive, very expensive, and has been complicated by what they like to refer to as excess (unplanned) overtime expenses. During 2006, this amounted to about a half-million dollars for Redmond and will be two hundred to three hundred thousand dollars for the District 34's share. In the private sector, this is referred to as poor or mismanagement. Outrageously, this has resulted in what they like to refer to as rolling closures intended to reduce labor costs by sequentially closing fire stations during the supposedly least busy nighttime parts of the day. And the City of Redmond is responsible for the labor contract with the firefighters union but has not settled since 2004. Little wonder that Redmond's fire department related ballot issue failed last year.

Not to be outdone by the rain water roof leaks that caused mold and damage to Redmond's Fire Station 16, District 34's Station 14 has exterior siding problems that they blame on the rain rather than the people, contractors or suppliers involved. These repair costs are kept hidden from view. Of course, they don't mention the \$50,000 they wasted on a phony, cronyism-tainted, public-opinion telephone survey last summer. On top of all this, District 34's attorney is inexplicably raising his rates by ten percent next year. Go figure.

But rather than face facts, these commissioners have not divulged why they want more taxes, did not publish a newsletter, did not provide a voters pamphlet ballot issue statement, did not send a direct mailer, did not use yard signs, did not distribute flyers, and did not hold the two public meetings they talked about. All talk.

Yes, all talk. And no comparative emergency response time statistics were provided concerning the Pre/Post Closure of Fire Station 15, either, as they had promised; just more talk.

Duty? Responsibility? Accountability? And it's my fault their tax levy lid raise election failed? Give me a break!

Ken Jauch, Taxpayer and Resident, District 34