

PROCEDURES FOR SERVING ON A PROP 39 BOND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

By Roy Weygand

Since one of the primary roles of a taxpayers association is to monitor the expenditure of tax dollars by governmental agencies, the natural extension is carried forward to Prop 39 School Bond Oversight Committees. In order for a member of an oversight committee to meet his/her charge, the member must be familiar with the role of the oversight committee, the school district's annual budget and the details of the bond issue that was passed with the 55% approval rate.

1. The committee members must thoroughly know their role and responsibilities as members of a bond oversight committee. These are outlined in the text of Prop 39 and AB 1908 (California Ed Code Sections 15278-15282).
2. The committee members must have a thorough working knowledge of the district's annual budget and the bond issue plans to make sure that all projects are identified and that funding is not duplicated.
3. The purpose of the crosscheck is to insure that the district cannot delete budget items and later fund these items with bond revenues. If general fund money is available, bond funds should not be used as a substitute-funding source.
4. When evaluating the bond issue, several questions should be asked:
 - a. Is there a written plan that delineates the proposed expenditure plan and the method of crosscheck that will be used to assure effective use of taxpayer dollars?
 - b. Are the projects that appear on the bond issue prioritized and categorized in a manner that endures effective use of tax dollars?
 - c. Are "like" projects scheduled together, in a similar time period to reduce costs?
 - d. Are members of the oversight committee designated with specific roles while serving on the committee (i.e. Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Site Review Committee, Finance Review Committee, etc.)? These assignments aid in the effectiveness of the committee and assure all aspects of the bond issue are being accomplished.
5. As individual projects are completed, is there a completed project review system established to assure that the project did not waste tax dollars and all aspects of the project were accomplished?
6. Members must assure that all meetings are properly noticed, with a published agenda, allowing a public comment period for citizens to comment on how their tax dollars are being spent. The length of the meeting should be specified and the meetings should follow the published agenda.
7. The taxpayers' representative should review each project, including designs and costs and establish that the proposed project fits into the district's Master Plan.
8. Lastly, an accounting of all bond issue expenditures should be reviewed at each meeting and a specific amount of uncommitted dollars should be held back to cover any projects that might have been overlooked in the original plan. These uncommitted funds should be a special report item on the agenda of each Oversight Committee meeting.

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