

President's Report – July 2015

- Many thanks to Margaret Eychner for her good work on the BOS Compensation Advisory Commission. Their results were reasonable, fair and widely appreciated – except for the petulant responses from supervisors Piepho and Mitchoff, who apparently feel it's fair to taxpayers for them to receive both a generous auto allowance AND mileage reimbursement. Brother Steve Weir, who facilitated the commission's work, is highly complimentary of Margaret's contributions.
- Please welcome our new Business Manager, Denise Sheehan. I have known Denise for many years, and am confident she will soon resolve several pressing administrative issues. I appreciate Holly Dickerson's help during this turnover period, and we wish her well in her new full-time position.
- We continue to support the work of activists in the West Contra Costa USD who are pushing for a thorough and unbiased examination of the allegations published by a whistleblower on the district's bond mismanagement. These charges reinforce the concerns often raised in the past by CoCoTax members Anton Jungherr, Ben Steinberg, Sue Pricco and others. Bond oversight remains a top priority at CoCoTax, in the spirit and letter of Prop 39.
- Pension reform remains another critical issue for taxpayers, as the total unfunded liability for public employees' pensions is now being disclosed throughout the state and our region. As VP Jim Pezzaglia pointed out recently, CalPERS 7.5% estimated rate of return stands in stark contrast to its current 2.4% actual return. This means higher pension premiums for cash-starved municipalities, and cuts in services – see East County Fire District. Short of bankruptcy – a looming probably for many cities and districts – agencies are scrambling to raise new taxes and fees, which we generally oppose. Former San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed's new state-wide pension reform initiative offers hope, and we have invited Chuck to address a membership meeting later this year.
- VP Ryder Brose has completed the first phase of our project to identify the various government bodies in which our members are constituents, and we will soon have a guide to member resources available to perform a variety of watchdog and advocacy tasks; stay tuned.

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