



PRESS RELEASE

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2021-2022 SAN JOAQUIN CIVIL GRAND JURY RELEASES REPORT ON LATHROP-MANTECA FIRE DISTRICT

Stockton, CA — On June 23, 2022, the 2021-2022 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury released its [report](#) investigating the Lathrop-Manteca Fire District (LMFD) in San Joaquin County. The Civil Grand Jury's duty is to address citizens' concerns regarding the operation of local government entities.

The LMFD became the focus of public scrutiny following media reports alleging misconduct at a training retreat held in Napa in February of 2021. These media reports detailed instances of inappropriate behavior and the improper use of the district's credit card for personal services and items prohibited under the district's credit card policy. When the LMFD Board of Directors learned of these issues, a third party was employed to investigate complaints and personnel issues related to the off-site retreat. The Fire Chief, as Chief Executive Officer of the LMFD, retired from the district at the conclusion of the third party's investigation and an interim Fire Chief was appointed. The Grand Jury decided to open an investigation after receiving a written complaint and reviewing subsequent media reports of questionable expenditures by LMFD management.

In its investigation, the Grand Jury conducted interviews with key district leadership figures, reviewed the district's governing rules and regulations, and analyzed staff complaints to determine the depth and accuracy of the allegations against the LMFD. The Grand Jury found the Board of Directors lacked training in government oversight and district policies, inadvertently, granting the former Fire Chief near autonomous authority over the district without including a system of checks and balances or an oversight function by the Board. This lack of Board oversight contributed to a hostile work environment and exposed the LMFD to potential liability including financial penalties.

The Grand Jury's report details the complete findings of the investigation into allegations of misconduct in the LMFD under the former Fire Chief and provides the Board of Director's with the framework to conduct the search and screening process for hiring the permanent Fire Chief. The LMFD improvement process is a work in progress but, with a committed Board of Director's, an opportunity exists to restore trust following the turmoil and upheaval created under previous management.

The public is encouraged to read the complete report by visiting the [Grand Jury's website](#).

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