NOVATO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

MEMORANDUM ON INTERNAL CONTROL
AND
REQUIRED COMMUNICATIONS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2017
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MEMORANDUM ON INTERNAL CONTROL

To the Board of Directors of
the Novato Fire Protection District
Novato, California

In planning and performing our audit of the basic financial statements of the Novato Fire Protection District (District), in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, we considered the District’s internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing our auditing procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the District’s internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the District’s internal control.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct misstatements on a timely basis. A material weakness is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the District’s financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected on a timely basis.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses. In addition, because of inherent limitations in internal control, including the possibility of management override of controls, misstatements due to error or fraud may occur and not be detected by such controls. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses may exist that have not been identified.

Included in the Schedule of Other Matters are recommendations not meeting the above definitions that we believe to be of potential benefit to the District.

This communication is intended solely for the information and use of management, Board of Directors, others within the organization, and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Pleasant Hill, California
October 12, 2017
NEW GASB PRONOUNCEMENTS OR PRONOUNCEMENTS NOT YET EFFECTIVE

The following comment represents new pronouncements taking effect in the next two years. We have cited them here to keep you abreast of developments:

Effective in fiscal year 2017-18:

**GASB 75 – Accounting and Financial Reporting for Post-employment Benefits Other Than Pensions**

The primary objective of this Statement is to improve accounting and financial reporting by state and local governments for post-employment benefits other than pensions (other post-employment benefits or OPEB). It also improves information provided by state and local governmental employers about financial support for OPEB that is provided by other entities. This Statement results from a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of existing standards of accounting and financial reporting for all post-employment benefits (pensions and OPEB) with regard to providing decision-useful information, supporting assessments of accountability and inter-period equity, and creating additional transparency.

**GASB 81 – Irrevocable Split-Interest Agreements**

This Statement requires that a government that receives resources pursuant to an irrevocable split-interest agreement recognize assets, liabilities, and deferred inflows of resources at the inception of the agreement. Furthermore, this Statement requires that a government recognize assets representing its beneficial interests in irrevocable split-interest agreements that are administered by a third party, if the government controls the present service capacity of the beneficial interests. This Statement requires that a government recognize revenue when the resources become applicable to the reporting period.

**GASB 85 – Omnibus 2017**

The objective of this Statement is to address practice issues that have been identified during implementation and application of certain GASB Statements. This Statement addresses a variety of topics including issues related to blending component units, goodwill, fair value measurement and application, and postemployment benefits (pensions and other postemployment benefits [OPEB]).

**GASB 86 – Certain Debt Extinguishment Issues**

The primary objective of this Statement is to improve consistency in accounting and financial reporting for in-substance defeasance of debt by providing guidance for transactions in which cash and other monetary assets acquired with only existing resources—resources other than the proceeds of refunding debt—are placed in an irrevocable trust for the sole purpose of extinguishing debt. This Statement also improves accounting and financial reporting for prepaid insurance on debt that is extinguished and notes to financial statements for debt that is defeased in substance.
Effective in fiscal year 2018-19:

GASB 83 – *Certain Asset Retirement Obligations*

This Statement addresses accounting and financial reporting for certain asset retirement obligations (AROs). An ARO is a legally enforceable liability associated with the retirement of a tangible capital asset. A government that has legal obligations to perform future asset retirement activities related to its tangible capital assets should recognize a liability based on the guidance in this Statement.
REQUIRED COMMUNICATIONS

October 12, 2017

To the Board of Directors of
the Novato Fire Protection District
Novato, California

We have audited the basic financial statements of the Novato Fire Protection District (District) for the year ended June 30, 2017. Professional standards require that we communicate to you the following information related to our audit under generally accepted auditing standards.

Significant Audit Findings

Accounting Policies

Management is responsible for the selection and use of appropriate accounting policies. The significant accounting policies used by the District are described in Note 1 to the financial statements. No new accounting policies were adopted and the application of existing policies was not changed during the year, except as follows:

- **GASB 73** – Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pensions and Related Assets That Are Not within the Scope of GASB Statement 68, and Amendments to Certain Provisions of GASB Statements 67 and 68
- **GASB 74** – Financial Reporting for Post-employment Benefit Plans Other Than Pension Plans
- **GASB 77** – Tax Abatement Disclosures
- **GASB 80** – Blending Requirements for Certain Component Units—an amendment of GASB Statement No. 14
- **GASB 82** – Pension Issues—an amendment of GASB Statements No. 67, No. 68, and No. 73

The above Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) pronouncements became effective, but did not have a material effect on the financial statements.

Unusual Transactions, Controversial or Emerging Areas

We noted no transactions entered into by the District during the year for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus. All significant transactions have been recognized in the financial statements in the proper period.
**Accounting Estimates**

Accounting estimates are an integral part of the financial statements prepared by management and are based on management’s knowledge and experience about past and current events and assumptions about future events. Certain accounting estimates are particularly sensitive because of their significance to the financial statements and because of the possibility that future events affecting them may differ significantly from those expected. The most sensitive estimate affecting the District’s financial statements was:

*Estimated Net Pension Liabilities and Pension-Related Deferred Outflows and Inflows of Resources:* Management’s estimate of the net pension liabilities and deferred outflows/inflows of resources are disclosed in Note 9 to the financial statements and are based on actuarial studies determined by a consultant, which are based on the experience of the District. We evaluated the key factors and assumptions used to develop the estimate and determined that it is reasonable in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole.

*Estimate of Depreciation:* Management’s estimate of the depreciation is based on useful lives determined by management. These lives have been determined by management based on the expected useful life of assets as disclosed in Note 3 to the financial statements. We evaluated the key factors and assumptions used to develop the depreciation estimate and determined that it is reasonable in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole.

*Estimate of Compensated Absences:* Accrued compensated absences which are comprised of accrued vacation, holiday, and certain other compensating time is estimated using accumulated unpaid leave hours and hourly pay rates in effect at the end of the fiscal year as disclosed in Note 1 to the financial statements. We evaluated the key factors and assumptions used to develop the accrued compensated absences and determined that it is reasonable in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole.

**Disclosures**

The financial statement disclosures are neutral, consistent, and clear.

**Difficulties Encountered in Performing the Audit**

We encountered no significant difficulties in dealing with management in performing and completing our audit.
Corrected and Uncorrected Misstatements

Professional standards require us to accumulate all known and likely misstatements identified during the audit, other than those that are clearly trivial, and communicate them to the appropriate level of management. Management has corrected all/certain such misstatements. In addition, none of the misstatements detected as a result of audit procedures and corrected by management were material, either individually or in the aggregate, to each opinion unit’s financial statements taken as a whole.

Professional standards require us to accumulate all known and likely uncorrected misstatements identified during the audit, other than those that are trivial, and communicate them to the appropriate level of management. We have no such misstatements to report to the Board of Directors.

Disagreements with Management

For purposes of this letter, a disagreement with management is a financial accounting, reporting, or auditing matter, whether or not resolved to our satisfaction, that could be significant to the financial statements or the auditor’s report. We are pleased to report that no such disagreements arose during the course of our audit.

Management Representations

We have requested certain representations from management that are included in a management representation letter dated October 12, 2017.

Management Consultations with Other Independent Accountants

In some cases, management may decide to consult with other accountants about auditing and accounting matters, similar to obtaining a “second opinion” on certain situations. If a consultation involves application of an accounting principle to the District’s financial statements or a determination of the type of auditor’s opinion that may be expressed on those statements, our professional standards require the consulting accountant to check with us to determine that the consultant has all the relevant facts. To our knowledge, there were no such consultations with other accountants.

Other Audit Findings or Issues

We generally discuss a variety of matters, including the application of accounting principles and auditing standards, with management each year prior to retention as the District’s auditors. However, these discussions occurred in the normal course of our professional relationship and our responses were not a condition to our retention.
Other Information Accompanying the Financial Statements

We applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information that accompanies and supplements the basic financial statements. Our procedures consisted of inquiries of management regarding the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management’s responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We did not audit the required supplementary information and do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the required supplementary information.

We were not engaged to report on the Introductory and Statistical Sections which accompany the financial statements, but are not required supplementary information. Such information has not been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements, and accordingly, we do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on it.

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This information is intended solely for the use of the Board of Directors and management and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Maze & Associates

Pleasant Hill, CA
October 12, 2017