



April 2, 2020

TO: LOCSD Board of Directors

FROM: Ron Munds, General Manager

SUBJECT: Agenda Item 7F – 4/2/2020 Board Meeting
Recommendation to Continue to Utilize Moss, Levy and Hartzheim (MLH) for District Auditing Services

DESCRIPTON

President

Charles L. Cesena

Vice President

Christine M. Womack

Directors

Matthew D. Fourcroy
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General Manager

Ron Munds

District Accountant

Robert Stilts, CPA

Unit Chief

Scott M. Jalbert

Battalion Chief

George Huang

MLH has provided high quality auditing services to the District since 2013. Government Code requires auditor rotation to a local agency if the lead audit partner or coordinating audit partner having primary responsibility for the audit has performed audit services for six consecutive fiscal years. The government code does allow for a firm to continue provide auditing services beyond the six years if the lead audit partner or coordinating audit partner are rotated to a new lead individual within the firm.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This item will be approved along with the Consent Calendar unless it is pulled by a Director for separate consideration. If so, staff recommends that the Board adopt the following motion:

Motion: I move that the Board approve a one year contract with Moss, Levy and Hartzheim LLP for the District's Auditing Services for Fiscal Year 2020-21.

DISCUSSION

MLH has been providing high quality auditing services to the District since 2013. Last year, the Board directed staff to release an RFP for auditing services since State law requires the rotation of audit services at least every six years with the caveat that the same firm can continue to provide services if a new lead audit partner is designated. The results from the RFP process were mixed with only two other firms besides MLH proposing; all relatively close in price for the audit services. The Board chose to remain with MLH.

The following is a brief discussion on the decision points that should be considered when making a determination on future auditing services.

What are the advantages and disadvantages to auditor rotation?

Auditors are supposed to be independent of their clients, closely scrutinizing their operations. Some feel if they're with the same auditor too long, the auditor may lose objectivity and won't ask hard questions. Divergently, if an audit firm is familiar with an organization, it knows what reports to ask for and where to get them. It also learns the company's terminology, which streamlines the audit process. Auditors can be more effective after they've gone through multiple audit cycles because they have institutional knowledge and understanding of the District's business practices.

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How can the District determine if it's time to rotate auditors?

Through research of industry standards for auditing, the Districts needs to get a sense of how your audit relationship is going. Do we have a relationship with your auditor? Do you only see him or her once a year? Do you feel comfortable calling your auditor with a question? Is your auditor knowledgeable about your industry? Industry standards say you should have ongoing communication and a close professional relationship with your auditor to achieve accurate, effective and efficient audit results.

Staff Evaluation and Recommendation

The District is in a unique situation in that three of the four staff members primarily involved in the annual audit are new. When asked, the District's contract accountant/bookkeeper, who has been with the District for about three years and intricately involved with the MLH audit team, stated she is a proponent of remaining with MLH. Her opinion is based on the relationship with the audit team and the assistance they have provided over the past few years in organizing the District's financial records and their input into the District's policies and procedures to ensure a viable audit. From the General Manager's perspective, continuity is of utmost importance to ensure the continued success of the audits. The MLH audit team was extremely helpful in bringing the entire staff up to speed on the data requirements and information required to conduct a successful annual audit.

MLH has indicated they would be changing the lead audit partner as required by state law which would alleviate any concerns of loss of objectivity and also provide a fresh perspective when analyzing the District's finances. Based on the information that has been gathered and research conducted, staff is recommending to continue to utilize MLH for the District's auditing services.

Committee Recommendation

The Finance Advisory Committee supports the recommendation made in this report but recommend the District release a Request for Proposal for auditing services for fiscal year 2020-2021.

Financial Impact

The terms of the agreement are that the gross fee, including all expenses, will not exceed \$19,340.00. For reference, the cost of the 2018-19 fiscal year audit was \$19,290.00.

Attachment



March 4, 2020

To the Board of Directors and Management
Los Osos Community Services District
2122 9th Street, Suite 102
Los Osos, CA 93402

We are pleased to confirm our understanding of the services we are to provide Los Osos Community Services District (the District) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020. We will audit the financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information, including the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the basic financial statements of the District as of and for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020. Accounting standards generally accepted in the United States of America provide for certain required supplementary information (RSI), such as management's discussion and analysis (MD&A), to supplement the District's basic financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. As part of our engagement, we will apply certain limited procedures to the District's RSI in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. These limited procedures will consist 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 will not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance. The following RSI is required by U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and will be subjected to certain limited procedures, but will not be audited:

- 1) Management's Discussion and Analysis
- 2) Budgetary Comparison Schedule
- 3) Schedule of Changes in OPEB Liability and Related Ratios
- 4) Schedule of OPEB Contributions
- 5) Proportionate Share of Net Pension Liability
- 6) Schedule of Pension Contributions

We have also been engaged to report on supplementary information other than RSI that accompanies the District's financial statements. We will subject the following supplementary information to the auditing procedures applied in our audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, and we will provide an opinion on it in relation to the financial statements as a whole:

- 1) Non-major Governmental Funds Financial Statements

The following other information accompanying the financial statements will not be subjected to the auditing procedures applied in our audit of the financial statements, and our auditor's report will not provide an opinion or any assurance on that other information:

- 1) Introductory Section

Audit Objectives

The objective of our audit is the expression of opinions as to whether your financial statements are fairly presented, in all material respects, in conformity with U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and to report

on the fairness of the supplementary information referred to in the second paragraph when considered in relation to the financial statements as a whole. Our audit will be conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards for financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and will include tests of the accounting records of the District and other procedures we consider necessary to enable us to express such opinions. We will issue a written report upon completion of our audit of the District's financial statements. Our report will be addressed to the Board of Directors of Los Osos Community Services District. We cannot provide assurance that unmodified opinions will be expressed. Circumstances may arise in which it is necessary for us to modify our opinions or add emphasis-of-matter or other-matter paragraphs. If our opinions on the financial statements are other than unmodified, we will discuss the reasons with you in advance. If, for any reason, we are unable to complete the audit or are unable to form or have not formed opinions, we may decline to express opinions or issue reports, or may withdraw from this engagement.

We will also provide a report (that does not include an opinion) on internal control related to the financial statements and compliance with the provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a material effect on the financial statements as required by *Government Auditing Standards*. The report on internal control and on compliance and other matters will include a paragraph that states (1) that the purpose of the report is solely to describe the scope of testing of internal control and compliance, and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control on compliance, and (2) that the report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the entity's internal control and compliance. The paragraph will also state that the report is not suitable for any other purpose. If during our audit we become aware that the District is subject to an audit requirement that is not encompassed in the terms of this engagement, we will communicate to management and those charged with governance that an audit in accordance with U.S. Generally Accepted Auditing Standards and the standards for financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* may not satisfy the relevant legal, regulatory, or contractual requirements.

Audit Procedures – General

An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements; therefore, our audit will involve judgment about the number of transactions to be examined and the areas to be tested. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements. We will plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable rather than absolute assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement, whether from (1) errors, (2) fraudulent financial reporting, (3) misappropriation of assets, or (4) violations of laws or governmental regulations that are attributable to the government or to acts by management or employees acting on behalf of the government. Because the determination of abuse is subjective, *Government Auditing Standards* do not expect auditors to provide reasonable assurance of detecting abuse.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, combined with the inherent limitations of internal control, and because we will not perform a detailed examination of all transactions, there is a risk that material misstatements may exist and not be detected by us, even though the audit is properly planned and performed in accordance with U.S. Generally Accepted Auditing Standards and *Government Auditing Standards*. In addition, an audit is not designed to detect immaterial misstatements or violations of laws or governmental regulations that do not have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, we will inform the appropriate level of management of any material errors, any fraudulent financial reporting, or misappropriation of assets that come to our attention. We will also inform the appropriate level of management of any violations of laws or governmental regulations that come to our attention, unless clearly inconsequential, and of any material abuse that comes to our attention. Our responsibility as auditors is limited to the periods covered by our audit and does not extend to later periods for which we are not engaged as auditors.

Our procedures will include tests of documentary evidence supporting the transactions recorded in the accounts, and may include tests of the physical existence of inventories, and direct confirmation of receivables and certain other assets and liabilities by correspondence with selected individuals, funding sources, creditors, and financial institutions. We will request written representations from your attorneys as part of the engagement, and they may bill you for responding to this inquiry. At the conclusion of our audit, we will require certain written representations from you about your responsibilities for the financial statements; compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements; and other responsibilities required by U.S. Generally Accepted Auditing Standards.

Audit Procedures – Internal Control

Our audit will include obtaining an understanding of the government and its environment, including internal control, sufficient to assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements and to design the nature, timing, and extent of further audit procedures. Tests of controls may be performed to test the effectiveness of certain controls that we consider relevant to preventing and detecting errors and fraud that are material to the financial statements and to preventing and detecting misstatements resulting from illegal acts and other noncompliance matters that have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. Our tests, if performed, will be less in scope than would be necessary to render an opinion on internal control and, accordingly, no opinion will be expressed in our report on internal control issued pursuant to *Government Auditing Standards*.

An audit is not designed to provide assurance on internal control or to identify significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. However, during the audit, we will communicate to management and those charged with governance internal control related matters that are required to be communicated under AICPA professional standards and *Government Auditing Standards*.

Audit Procedures – Compliance

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement, we will perform tests of the District's compliance with the provisions of applicable laws, regulations, contracts, agreements, and grants. However, the objective of our audit will not be to provide an opinion on overall compliance and we will not express such an opinion in our report on compliance issued pursuant to *Government Auditing Standards*.

Other Services

We will also assist in preparing the financial statements and related notes of the District in conformity with U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles based on information provided by you. We will also perform the additional service of preparing the District's Special Districts Financial Transactions Report in accordance with the records provided to us by the District's management. These nonaudit services do not constitute an audit under *Government Auditing Standards* and such services will not be conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*.

Management Responsibilities

Management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls, including evaluating and monitoring ongoing activities, to help ensure that appropriate goals and objectives are met; following laws and regulations; and ensuring that management and financial information is reliable and properly reported. Management is also responsible for implementing systems designed to achieve compliance with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements. You are also responsible for the selection and application of accounting principles, for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements and all accompanying information in conformity with U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and for compliance with applicable laws and regulations and the provisions of contracts and grant agreements.

Management is also responsible for making all financial records and related information available to us and for the accuracy and completeness of that information. You are also responsible for providing us with (1) access to all information of which you are aware that is relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements, (2) additional information that we may request for the purpose of the audit, and (3) unrestricted access to persons within the government from whom we determine it necessary to obtain audit evidence.

Your responsibilities include adjusting the financial statements to correct material misstatements and for confirming to us in the written representation letter that the effects of any uncorrected misstatements aggregated by us during the current engagement and pertaining to the latest period presented are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

You are responsible for the design and implementation of programs and controls to prevent and detect fraud, and for informing us about all known or suspected fraud affecting the government involving (1) management, (2) employees who have significant roles in internal control, and (3) others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements. Your responsibilities include informing us of your knowledge of any allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the government received in communications from employees, former

employees, grantors, regulators, or others. In addition, you are responsible for identifying and ensuring that the government complies with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, agreements, and grants and for taking timely and appropriate steps to remedy fraud and noncompliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts or grant agreements, or abuse that we report.

You are responsible for the preparation of the supplementary information, which we have been engaged to report on, in conformity with U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. You agree to include our report on the supplementary information in any document that contains and indicates that we have reported on the supplementary information. You also agree to include the audited financial statements with any presentation of the supplementary information that includes our report thereon or make the audited financial statements readily available to users of the supplementary information no later than the date the supplementary information is issued with our report thereon. Your responsibilities include acknowledging to us in the written representation letter that (1) you are responsible for presentation of the supplementary information in accordance with GAAP; (2) you believe the supplementary information, including its form and content, is fairly presented in accordance with GAAP; (3) the methods of measurement or presentation have not changed from those used in the prior period (or, if they have changed, the reasons for such changes); and (4) you have disclosed to us any significant assumptions or interpretations underlying the measurement or presentation of the supplementary information.

Management is responsible for establishing and maintaining a process for tracking the status of audit findings and recommendations. Management is also responsible for identifying and providing report copies of previous financial audits, attestation engagements, performance audits or other studies related to the objectives discussed in the Audit Objectives section of this letter. This responsibility includes relaying to us corrective actions taken to address significant findings and recommendations resulting from those audits, attestation engagements, performance audits, or other studies. You are also responsible for providing management's views on our current findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as well as your planned corrective actions, for the report, and for the timing and format for providing that information.

You agree to assume all management responsibilities relating to the financial statements and related notes and any other nonaudit services we provide. You will be required to acknowledge in the management representation letter our assistance with preparation of the financial statements and related notes and that you have reviewed and approved the financial statements and related notes prior to their issuance and have accepted responsibility for them. Further, you agree to oversee the nonaudit services by designating an individual, preferably from senior management, with suitable skill, knowledge, or experience; evaluate the adequacy and results of those services; and accept responsibility for them.

Engagement Administration, Fees, and Other

We understand that your employees will prepare all cash or other confirmations we request and will locate any documents selected by us for testing.

We will provide copies of our reports to the District; however, management is responsible for distribution of the reports and the financial statements. Unless restricted by law or regulation, or containing privileged and confidential information, copies of our reports are to be made available for public inspection.

The audit documentation for this engagement is the property of Moss, Levy & Hartzheim, LLP and constitutes confidential information. However, subject to applicable laws and regulations, audit documentation and appropriate individuals will be made available upon request and in a timely manner to a federal agency providing direct or indirect funding, or the U.S. Government Accountability Office for purposes of a quality review of the audit, to resolve audit findings, or to carry out oversight responsibilities. We will notify you of any such request. If requested, access to such audit documentation will be provided under the supervision of Moss, Levy & Hartzheim, LLP personnel. Furthermore, upon request, we may provide copies of selected audit documentation to the aforementioned parties. These parties may intend, or decide, to distribute the copies or information contained therein to others, including other governmental agencies.

The audit documentation for this engagement will be retained for a minimum of seven years after the report release date. If we are aware that a federal awarding agency or auditee is contesting an audit finding, we will contact the party(ies) contesting the audit finding for guidance prior to destroying the audit documentation.

We expect to begin our audit after May 1, 2020 and to issue our reports no later than December 31, 2020. The preparation of the District's Special District Financial Transactions Report will be completed no later than January

31, 2021. Alex C. Hom, CPA is the engagement partner and is responsible for supervising the engagement and signing the reports or authorizing another individual to sign them.

Our fee for these services will be at our standard hourly rates plus out-of-pocket costs (such as report reproduction, word processing, postage, travel, copies, telephone, etc.) except that we agree that our gross fee, including expenses, will not exceed \$19,340 for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020. Our standard hourly rates vary according to the degree of responsibility involved and the experience level of the personnel assigned to your audit. Our invoices for these fees will be rendered each month as work progresses and are payable on presentation. In accordance with our firm policies, work may be suspended if your account becomes 30 days or more overdue and may not be resumed until your account is paid in full. If we elect to terminate our services for nonpayment, our engagement will be deemed to have been completed upon written notification of termination, even if we have not completed our report. You will be obligated to compensate us for all time expended and to reimburse us for all out-of-pocket costs through the date of termination. The above fee is based on anticipated cooperation from your personnel and the assumption that unexpected circumstances will not be encountered during the audit. If significant additional time is necessary, we will discuss it with you and arrive at a new fee estimate before we incur the additional costs.

We appreciate the opportunity to be of service to Los Osos Community Services District and believe this letter accurately summarizes the significant terms of our engagement. If you have any questions, please let us know. If you agree with the terms of our engagement as described in this letter, please sign the enclosed copy and return it to us.

Very truly yours,

Moss, Levy & Hartzheim LLP

Moss, Levy & Hartzheim LLP

RESPONSE:

This letter correctly sets forth the understanding of Los Osos Community Services District.

Management signature: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Governance signature: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____