

# **COLAB SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY**

**WEEK OF JANUARY 13-19, 2013**

**SLOCOG REJECTS HILL AS 2013 PRESIDENT  
SELECTS MECHAM INSTEAD**

**SUPERVISOR ARNOLD QUESTIONS BOARD CHAIR  
ROTATION**

**BOARD MEETING OF JAN. 15, 2013 CANCELLED**

**COUNTY'S "MANAGEMENT SYSTEM": MBLF  
MANAGING BY LOVE FEST**

**SAVE THURSDAY MARCH 21<sup>ST</sup> 2013 5:30 PM  
COLAB'S 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL DINNER /FUND RAISER  
MADONNA EXPO CENTER**



**IT WILL BE A "CLASSIC" EVENT  
DETAILS COMING SOON  
STEAK, CAKE, WINE, A FUN AUCTION, AND A BRILLIANT SPEAKER  
WILL CELEBRATE OUR SUCCESS**

## **Board of Supervisors Meeting of January 7, 2013 (Completed)**

**Supervisor Arnold Raises Important Fairness Question.** The Board met to reorganize itself and elected a new Chairman and a Vice-Chairman. Newly elected Supervisor Arnold pointed out that the rotation that the Board had established for Chairman had been disrupted during the control of the previous majority. She indicated that the Vice-Chairman should be Supervisor Mecham, not Supervisor Gibson as had been preplanned. As can be seen in the

chart below, the 2<sup>nd</sup> District has controlled the Chair slot 3 times in the past 14 years and the 1<sup>st</sup> District only twice. The result of making Gibson Vice-Chair this year would be that he would likely claim that he should be Chair in 2014, making it 4 times for the 2<sup>nd</sup> district.

### **Board Chair and Vice-Chair Rotation History**

2014 - 2nd?
2013 - 4th (2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair)
2012 - 5th (4 <sup>th</sup> Vice-Chair)
2011 - 3rd (5 <sup>th</sup> Vice-Chair)
2010 - 1st (3 <sup>rd</sup> Vice-Chair)
2009 - 2nd (1 <sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair)
2008 - 5th (1 <sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair)
2007 - 3rd (5 <sup>th</sup> Vice-Chair)
2006 - 4th (5 <sup>th</sup> Vice-Chair)
2005 - 2nd (1 <sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair)
2004 - 1st (2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair)
2003 - 5th (1 <sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair)
2002 - 2nd (5 <sup>th</sup> Vice-Chair)
2001 - 4th (2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair)
2000 - 3rd (4 <sup>th</sup> Vice-Chair)

In the end, the Board voted 3-1 (Mecham absent), with Ms. Arnold dissenting to appoint Supervisor Gibson as Vice-Chair and pre-position him for Chairman in 2014. During June of 2014 there will be a primary election in which Mr. Gibson will be up for election if he chooses to run for a 3<sup>rd</sup> term. The Chairman position will provide him a nice visible pulpit from which to speak and a powerful base from which to control the cadence of issues coming before the Board of Supervisors. **Since Supervisor Teixeira was on the prevailing side, would he consider moving for reconsideration? At least this would give Supervisor Mecham a chance to vote.**

### **Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, January 8, 2013 (Completed)**

There were no significant policy matters on this relatively short agenda. However an important policy and process issue was initiated by a relatively innocent question posed by Supervisor Arnold as illustrated below:

**San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (SLORTA)- Wisdom of Debt Powers Questioned.** One matter did illustrate the mindset of the new Board minority (Hill and Gibson). It pertained to the legal authority of SLORTA to issue debt. SLORTA is a joint powers authority (JPA) enabled by State law. It allows cities and counties to join together to operate a bus system. The Board item contained technical amendments to the JPA agreement designed to bring titles and wording up to date. The entire JPA document and the revisions were presented as part of the item. Supervisor Arnold pulled the item and used the

occasion to question the wisdom of continuing the ability of derivative agencies such as SLORTA to directly issue debt. She asked if it was prudent to have derivative agencies (SLORTA, APCD, IWMA, etc., appointed by their jurisdictions – the cities and county) vote instead of having a direct full vote of each of their respective governing bodies (each city council and the Board of Supervisors on debt issuance). A SLORTA staff executive rose and began to answer the question by giving background and stating, “This is the way we have always done it.” Since this was not a full or real answer, Ms. Arnold persisted by asking if such a practice is still prudent in a recession and an era of financial risk. At this point Supervisors Hill and Gibson jumped in and started answering for the staffer. Senior Deputy County Counsel McNulty felt compelled to jump in as well. Their manner was condescending and conveyed their irritation that the issue had been brought up at all. Gibson scolded Ms. Arnold, saying that the item was not about debt and she should not have brought it up. Hill stated that “to conflate it (the item) with some larger issue of debt is not accurate.” McNulty piled on, trying to deflect and diminish the question by talking about the state enabling legislation and reiterating that SLORTA had issued debt in the past for some of its facilities (irrelevant issues to distract from the real question).

**Ms. Arnold had a valid question:** By extension the Board should be willing to take time to have its staff explain what will happen if SLORTA goes bust and can’t pay its debt. What if one of the other derivative agencies issues debt and goes bust? We hope that the new Board majority goes into much more detail on reviewing financial matters of all types now and in the future. For the past few years there has been no penetrating review. Budget sessions, major financial transfers, discussions of debt, and retirement liability have been love fests during which Board members have wallowed in self-congratulation.

<b>Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, January 15, 2013 (Cancelled)</b>
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**The meeting has been cancelled.** Reportedly there are insufficient items for consideration. Some issues that could use Board review and could be scheduled in the light weeks include:

1. Status and explanation of the massive US Fish and Wildlife Steelhead (fish restoration plan).
2. Status of the north county Habitat Conservation Plan.
3. Review of County Performance Measures which are included in the annual Budget document.
4. Status of the project to establish a long range County Capital Improvement Plan, five-year capital budget, and one-year capital budget.
5. Status of the funding, growth, and plans to finance the unfunded accumulated actuarial (UAAL) liability of the SLO County Pension Trust (employee retirement system).

6. Status and performance of the County Economic Development Strategy (Operated by the Economic Vitality Corporation, EVC) including achievement quantified performance (such as whether or not its activities have increased jobs, property taxes, sales taxes, generated expanded firms, recruited new firms into the County, prevented any firms from leaving.)

7. County lost time due to sick, workers compensation, and absent without leave (AWOL). What are the rates overall for the County? What are the rates by department? For example, a lost time rate of 3%, with 2400 employees, is equivalent to paying 72 employees who never came to work for a year. A lost time rate of 6% would be the equivalent of paying 144 employees who never came to work for a year. Does anyone in the County even know what the lost time rate was for 2012?

8. County Vacancy Report. How many budgeted positions are vacant? What is the average vacancy rate over time? What are the expected general fund and categorical fund savings at June 30, 2013 from the vacancies?

**Managing By Love Fest (MBLF).** There are plenty of things for the Board to review to hold the bureaucracy accountable. Perhaps they are “managing” by love fest (MBLF).

<b>Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, January 10, 2013 (Completed)</b>
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**Camouflaged Wireless Facilities.** The Commission and staff conducted a desultory discussion of requests by wireless companies to install transmitting and support facilities in various parts of the county. The facilities will be disguised as windmills, barns, and “faux pine trees.” Issues of design, distance from neighbors, scale, and interference with nesting birds consumed much of the morning.



**San Luis Obispo County Council of Governments (SLOCOG) Meeting of Wednesday, January 9, 2013 (Completed)**

**SLOCOG BOARD REJECTS HILL FOR PRESIDENT.** Item 4a of the SLOCOG agenda was election of officers. A fundamental question was whether the 7 cities and the other Supervisors actually would tacitly accept Hill's bullying behavior by electing him President of this powerful regional body that allocates Federal and State transportation funds and represents San Luis Obispo in many State and some Federal forums? Would they allow Hill to be President of an organization which is formulating the SB 375 Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) designed to force future development into dense (stack 'em and pack 'em) "environmental" ghettos? Would Hill, if appointed, use the position to bully people who disagree. Would they be threatened with midnight phone calls, libelous emails, political retribution, and economic retaliation?

In the end, the SLOCOG Board voted 9 to 2 to reject Hill. Hill, himself was absent and reported to be sick. Mecham was appointed instead. SLO City Mayor Jan Marx and Supervisor Gibson supported Hill. Gibson stated that although he disagreed with how Hill had delivered some of his message, he was correct on policy, a hard worker, and had the experience necessary to lead the agency. Gibson further stated that the opposition to Hill was based on policy differences, which were being personalized. Gibson tried to front Meacham out by demanding that he state whether he was willing to serve and if he opposed Hill. Mecham never answered. Marx rationalized that Hill had just been elected by the voters by a substantial majority, and although she too disagreed with his style (she said she had called him on the Thoma matter), she thought that he should be elected.

A number of the other SLOCOG Board members spoke and expressed their concerns about Hill's behavior. Member Higginbotham, Mayor of Pismo Beach, gave a nice talk on the need for public officials to maintain an ethical approach at all times and that in addition to their substantive policy positions, they needed to have an open and tolerant approach to public interaction.

COLAB and other speakers opposed Hill's appointment. Outgoing SLOCOG President Fred Strong, Council Member from Paso Robles, cautioned COLAB Government Affairs Director Brown to speak with proper decorum. His comment came after Brown spoke. Brown had indicated that Hill was not qualified to hold the position of SLOCOG President because he lacked the proper temperament and did not have a sufficient understanding of the American economic system (the latter based his email disparaging the Exxon Mobil Corporation and the Koch Refining Company).

**Stay Tuned:** On January 23, 2013 Hill is up for Chairman of the Air Pollution Control District (APCD).

**Background:** The minutes of a SLOCOG Executive Committee meeting, which took place on December 12, 2012, suggested that it was a foregone conclusion that Hill would be elected president for 2013. Note the underlined portion of the quoted section below:

*4. SLOCOG January 9, 2013 Draft Agenda: Mr. Ronald De Carli noted that SLOCOG and RTA will have a brief joint session to welcome new Board members, recognize outgoing Board Member John Shoals (City of Grover Beach), and elect new officers.*

He asked if President Strong would be relinquishing the control of the meeting to the new president in January or February and when he would like to receive the Plaque of Appreciation (January or February).

*President Strong queried Vice President Hill if he would be willing to take the reign in January. Vice President Hill indicated he prefers to take over the leadership in February. President Strong concluded he would like to receive the plaque in February. Staff concurred.*