

Dennis Hansberger, Tireless Politician, Influence Merchant & Reformer, Gone At 78

By Mark Gutglueck

Dennis Hansberger, a central figure within the Redlands political and financial establishment who served 20 years on the San Bernardino Board of Supervisors over the course of nearly four decades and adroitly used the political revolving door to capitalize on his insider knowledge in the role of a lobbyist once he was out of elected office, has died.



Dennis Hansberger

As must all mortals, Hansberger this week made his exit from this

world, in his case peacefully and with members of his family near him. His last weeks, days, hours and minutes were spent in Redlands, the epicenter of the county's old guard and old money, which, while Hansberger was yet one of its prime movers and most dynamic operators, gave way to the upstart Young Turks in Ontario, Rancho Cucamonga and Fontana who created an

economic synergy that shifted the power balance to the west end of the county in the 1970s, 1980s 1990s and 2000s.

Hansberger came to social and political prominence within the context of the Redlands political machine, in no small part because of assistance from his father, Leroy, who had become a part of the East Valley Establishment in the generation prior to Den-

nis Hansberger's rise to public life.

Despite having well-heeled and highly influential distant familial relations elsewhere in the country, Leroy Hansberger had as legitimate of a claim to being a self-made multimillionaire as anyone. Driven by an uncommon work ethic, he had come while he was still a child with his mother, Irma Lee Hansberger and step- See P 2

County Survey Of Homeless Shows Sharp Incline

San Bernardino County saw a significant increase in the number of obviously homeless individuals within its 20,105-square mile confines over those tallied last year as reflected in its official count of the destitute its officials conducted in January.

County officials were quick to point out that improvements in its means of surveying and information-collection very likely accounted to some degree for the larger number of registered homeless, and that the upsurge in those living on the streets in the county was not as pronounced as the numbers reflected.

Nevertheless, the *Sentinel* is knowledgeable with regard to elements of the homeless population that were overlooked in the count that was carried out on January 24.

The survey was conducted by the San Bernardino County Homeless Partnership, which consists of 211-United Way San Bernardino County, the American Round Table to Abolish Homelessness, Assemblywoman Eloise Gomez-Reyes' office, the California Department of Transportation, California State University – San Bernardino, the Church for Whosoever in Apple Valley, the Church of Latter Day Saints in Redlands, the Town of Apple Valley, the City of Barstow, the City of Big Bear Lake, the City of Chino, the City of Chino Hills, the City of Colton, the City of Fontana, the City of Grand Terrace, the City of Highland, the City of Loma Linda, the City of Montclair, the City of Needles, the City of Ontario, the City of Rancho Cucamonga, the City of Redlands, the City of Rialto, the City of See P 3

In A Harbinger Of What Is To Befall Most Other Cities

Grand Terrace Cuts Half Its Employees & Redlands To Lay Off 10 Percent Of Staff

Seven weeks into the coronavirus crisis, brutal consequences have been or are about to be visited upon local governmental employees as what was previously assumed would be a robust economy at least until the end of the year is now heading toward a virtually unprecedented crash. Once-bright economic prospects have been undone by stay-at-

home mandates and the shuttering of a significant portion of the state's retail businesses.

Local governments are being hit with a triple-whammy. With retail sales down, sales tax revenue, a staple of government in California, is dwindling. Simultaneously, California's unemployment rate has zoomed to 12.6 percent and Governor Gavin

Newsom has predicted it will jump to 18 percent before the crisis hits its zenith, while others are sounding a more dire warning that it could reach 21 percent. To placate the masses of those ordered to stay home – those who are now filling out the unemployment rolls – and prevent them from rioting, essentially, the federal government is augmenting the maxi-

mum state unemployment stipend of \$450 a week with \$600, so that those on the dole are collecting a maximum combined payment of \$1,050 on a weekly basis, which is in many cases more than those recipients would be making if they were actually working. Paradoxically, the beneficiaries of that largesse, by and large, are not spending it, or

not spending most of it, in some measure at least because with all of the shops closed, the goods and services to purchase are not available, and because of uncertainty and fear. Rather, much of that money is being hoarded. In this way the reserves of big government – federal and state – are being drawn down. According to Governor Newsom, California has See P 5

Upland's Use Of Coronavirus Crisis To Shield Decisions From Public Scrutiny Decried

By Brinda Sarathy

This past week, "freedom" protesters rallied in parts of Southern California and elsewhere, in defiance of state and county social distancing measures to prevent the rapid spread of COVID-19. Many protesters were tired of staying at home and asserted that the economic and social impacts of sheltering in place posed greater harms than the risk of infection, illness, and

death by coronavirus.

There is no question that individual rights of free assembly are in tension with requirements to restrict our movement and mass gathering in public spaces. Medical experts rightly note that physical distancing serves as a bulwark to protect public health and, as a scientist and academic, I fully agree.

Yet, if the public is being asked to radically alter individual behav-

iors for the greater good, then we should commensurately expect our elected officials to not abuse the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity to ram through development projects that many believe will harm other arenas of the public welfare over the long run. Unfortunately, some municipalities are doing just this: they are using the COVID-19 emergency as cover to fast track highly contested proj-

ects, skirt environmental regulations, and further benefit those already in positions of power and influence, and all without being fully accountable to their actual constituents.

Over the past month, in my own town of Upland (ostensibly the "City of Gracious Living"), I have witnessed COVID-19 restrictions being weaponized by a majority of elected officials and city staff to disallow

in-person city council and planning commission meetings. While it is imperative to disallow in-person attendance on the grounds of protecting public health, our elected officials should similarly pause decision-making around highly controversial developments, on the grounds of protecting democracy.

Instead, participation at Upland City Council and planning commission sessions are See P 7

Having Condemned Cronyism To Achieve Office, Hawkins Now Hiring His Own Associates

Fresh from having gotten out from under what was perhaps the most controversial of a string or highly questionable hirings widely criticized or perceived as political patronage, the West Valley Water District this week entered into yet another arrangement by which an individual was given work, this time by means of a contract, to supply a service which seemingly bears no relationship to

the district's underlying function.

As a relatively obscure governmental entity with the limited charter of providing water to some 82,000 customers, households or businesses in Bloomington, Colton, Fontana and Rialto, as well as unincorporated areas in San Bernardino County and Jurupa Valley in Riverside County, the West Valley Water District functioned for the better part of its

then-63-year existence in relative obscurity until the 2015 retirement of longtime general manager Butch Araiza. Araiza then vied unsuccessfully in the 2015 board election, after which the district descended into a state of instability which featured firings and re-terminations, infighting and power struggles at the managerial and political levels that have been chaotic and bitter with only brief respite.

In the midst of those power struggles and at least partially as a result of them, the opposing factions on the board, which did not fully manifest until 2018, have sought to install their respective political allies into positions of authority within the district's staff to assist them in their successive stabs for control.

The district's employment of personnel focused on politics who

were inadequate to the task of water service operations created further dysfunction within the district, exacerbating an already deteriorating situation.

Shortly after his 2017 election to the board, Michael Taylor, who was previously the police chief of Baldwin Park and would shortly thereafter be rehired to that assignment, with the support of the majority of the board See P 4

After His First Stint As Supervisor, Hansberger Became The Most Effective Local Government Lobbyist In The County *from front page*

father Arthur Fagg, from Los Angeles where he was born in 1918, to Yucaipa, where his family worked a farm on Third Street. That farm initially consisted of a few cows, poultry and rabbits and mostly apple groves, which were eventually converted to peaches and plums and other crops when the coddling moth wreaked havoc on the farm's apples.

From about the time he was 12, Leroy was functioning as the head of his family, doing a good half of the work on the farm. Even before he had graduated from Redlands High School

acre Ford Apple Ranch in Yucaipa, which he bought from Fred Ford, along with another large spread Ford owned, the Snow-Line Orchards; and a substantial portion of the Martin Ranch in Yucaipa. Leroy Hansberger subdivided the latter property into the Rolling Hills Estates. Over the course of several decades, he owned over a thousand acres, much of which he developed either residentially or commercially. Other real estate holdings he had were spun off at a profit to others who developed them.

With his wife, Helen, Leroy Hansberger had four sons, all of whom were given names that started with the letter D: David, Dennis, Doug, and Don.

Hansberger Family

Dennis was born October 1, 1941 in Redlands. Seemingly determined to equal or surpass his father's display of



Leroy and Helen Hansberger with their brood, circa 1946.

in 1936, he had made a foray into the world of business outside the family farm, delivering groceries from Sawyer's Market along with newspapers.

By the time he was 22, Leroy Hansberger owned his own trucking company, which had come about when he traded the car he was using to make deliveries for a truck. He used the proceeds from the trucking company to bootstrap himself up further, purchasing Tri-City Concrete and Tri-City Rock Company, located in Redlands. With the combined income from the trucking company, the rock company and the concrete company, he began purchasing property, at first an acre or two at a time, then larger and larger parcels. Among his purchases was the 240-acre El Dorado Ranch; the 140-

early initiative, while he was yet attending Redlands High School, from which he graduated in 1960, Dennis was working the night shift at Atlas RediMix Concrete Company in Colton. He remained employed with Atlas while he attended San Bernardino Valley College from 1960 to 1963. In 1964, he enrolled at the University of California at Riverside, studying geology, world literature and business administration. At that time he was employed with the Redlands School District, as a teacher's assistance in a class for handicapped children at Crafton Elementary School. Late in 1964, his father hired him as the financial manager of the Tri-City Concrete Company.

Four years later, convinced by his father of the convergence between politics, government and

business, Dennis applied for a position of authority in government. At that point, such an opportunity had presented itself when Wesley Break, a Redlands establishment institution unto himself and friend of Leroy Hansberger, chose not to seek reelection as Third District San Bernardino County supervisor, retiring after his sixth term in office and endorsing another element of the Redlands establishment who was also a Leroy Hansberger associate, Don Beckord, to succeed him. Rather than begin at the bottom rung in government, the younger Hansberger relied upon his father's connections and he bypassed a good seventeen steps up the county pecking order, applying to become and being accepted as Beckord's executive assistant and lead field representative. Dennis Hansberger over the next four years made himself intimately familiar with the ins-and-outs of San Bernardino County governance. When Beckord opted out of seeking reelection after serving a single term, from December 1968 until December 1972, Hansberger vied to succeed him, winning that election. He was 31 years old, making him, after Norman Taylor in 1855, Minor Cobb Tuttle in 1862, Robert McCoy in 1861 and John C. Turner in 1893, what was then the fifth youngest member of the board of supervisors in San Bernardino County history.

After just two years in office, in December 1974 at the age of 33, he was selected by his supervisory colleagues, to serve as board chairman, making him what was then celebrated as the youngest chairman of the 58 boards of county supervisors in California, and the second youngest, after John C. Turner in 1895, board chairman in San Bernardino County history.

In 1980, after serving eight years on the board, the latter four with then-Fifth District Supervisor Robert Hammock, one of the most corrupt politicians in San Bernardino County history, and the latter two with then-Second District Supervisor Cal McElwain, whose self-interested

voting decisions and political and personal associations with disreputable and unscrupulous personages and business interests cast discredit upon San Bernardino County and its governmental structure, Hansberger declined to seek reelection.

In short order, he formed Hansberger and Associates, a lobbying firm in which he front-ended for a host of businesses and entities which had project proposals before or were seeking contracts or franchises from local governmental entities. One initial success that Hansberger and Associates scored was when four ambulance service providers – Steve Dickmeyer, Don Reed, Homer Aerts and Terry Russ – who up until that time were in a cut-throat competition with one another for ambulance routes and franchises within the most urbanized portions of lower San Bernardino County, merged to become Mercy Ambulance Service. With Hansberger as both its strategist and representative, the company carried out a campaign of ruthlessly acing out its competitors through a combination of hefty political donations to city council members and members of the board of supervisors, retaining as the company's legal counsel members of the law firms that employed many of the city attorneys where Mercy was seeking an exclusive ambulance franchise, inducing city councils to adopt ambulance ordinances ostensibly written to protect the public but which locked in Mercy's operating advantages, and thereupon buying out or forcing out of business other ambulance companies in the area. Ultimately, Mercy, functioning within the pay-to-play atmosphere that had become the norm in San Bernardino County at both the county and municipal levels, established what was, if not a technical monopoly, then absolute dominance over the provision of ambulance service in the most populated, and therefore most lucrative, districts within the county's 20,105-square mile expanse.

In relatively short order, Hansberger had

The San Bernardino County

Sentinel

Published in San Bernardino County.

The Sentinel's main office is located at 10788 Civic Center Drive in Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730

A Fortunado Publication in conjunction with Countywide News Service

Mark Gutglueck, Publisher

Call (951) 567-1936

to learn of locations where the Sentinel is available or to provide news tips

10808 Foothill Blvd., Suite 160-446

Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730

SBCSentinel@yahoo.com

Legal Notice Department 909 957 9998

Message Line 909-276 5796

established his reputation as a political fixer, someone who in advance arranged, in the backroom or across the table at a restaurant or in some other type of private meeting, how things were going to play out publicly when a governmental decision-making panel made its vote in public. Skillfully, Hansberger was able to convert the goodwill and influence some of his clients were achieving and obtaining with their large-scale political donations to officeholders into carryover goodwill and influence for his other clients. While the companies that hired Hansberger and Associates to represent them were not the only successful applicants for project approvals or the only competitors for county or city contracts or franchises, few elected officials who were recipients of substantial political donations from Hansberger and Associates' clients were willing to vote against or make decisions contrary to the interests of those represented by Hansberger. The message to politicians all over San Bernardino County was clear: *Support Dennis Hansberger in whatever he is advocating and you will receive sufficient political donations to sustain yourself in office; vote against what he advocates, and your political opponent in the next election will be provided with enough monetary support to ensure your removal from office.*

More than three decades after Hansberger had perfected this formula, he conceded that it was "distasteful, but that's the way things get done in politics."

The way Hansberger was operating was not without controversy at the time, and on occasion, his advocacy for a particular applicant for governmental approval triggered very close and always unwanted scrutiny of the applicant and the applicant's proposal by a member of the decision-making panel who was offended by the casual political influence-purchasing ethos that Hansberger embodied. Such episodes were relatively rare, however. The standard response that Hansberger had formulated when he was confronted in this manner was to state that he could not understand why his communicant was so angry.

In 1996, after 16 years in the private sector, as the political gravitas of San Bernardino County was shifting away from the old money Redlands-based political establishment toward the new money West San Bernardino County political forces in Rancho Cucamonga, Ontario, Chino and Fontana, Hansberger, in what might be interpreted as an effort for the traditionalists in power in Redlands to reassert themselves over the political sphere in San Bernardino County, again took up the political gauntlet, running to replace the retiring Barbara Cram Riordan, another member of the Redlands old money political establishment who had held the Third District position for 13 years after initially being appointed to the post when David McKenna, who had succeeded Hansberger in 1980, was appointed county public

Continued on Page 4

SB, Victorville, Redlands, Colton & Fontana Are Hosts To The Highest Number Of Surveyed Homeless Throughout The County *from front page*

San Bernardino, the City of Twentynine Palms, the City of Upland, the City of Victorville, the City of Yucaipa, the Town of Yucca Valley, the Environmental Systems Research Institute, the Family Assistance Program, the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Yucaipa, Mercy House of Ontario, Morongo Basin Haven, the Mountain Homeless Coalition, New Hope Village of San Bernardino, the county administrative office of San Bernardino County, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, the San Bernardino County Council of Governments, the San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health, the San Bernardino County Child Support Services Department, the San Bernardino County Human Resources Department, the San Bernardino County Information Services Department, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department's Homeless Outreach Proactive Enforcement Team, St. Richard's Episcopal Church in Skyforest, Step Up on Second, the United States Veterans Administration Healthcare System of Loma Linda, and the Water of Life Community Church/CityLink Youth Hope Foundation.

For reasons that are not clear, the City of Adelanto was not credited with being a part of the partnership.

The results of the survey were compiled into a 150-page report entitled the 2020 San Bernardino County Homeless Count and Subpopulation Survey Final Report.

The executive summary of the report states, "There were 3,125 persons who were counted as homeless on Thursday, January 23, 2020. The previous homeless count and subpopulation survey was completed

in 2019 when 2,607 persons were counted. A comparison of the last two counts reveals that 518 more persons were counted in 2020, which represents an increase of 19.9%; 470 more persons were counted as unsheltered in 2020 when compared to the unsheltered count in 2019, which represents an increase of 24.5%; and 48 more persons were counted as sheltered in 2020 when compared to the sheltered count in 2019, which represents an increase of 7.0%."

A table in the executive summary shows that in the 2019 homeless count 687 people without homes in the county were sheltered, 1,920 were living without shelter, for a total homeless count of 2,607 in the county. In 2020, according to the table, there were 735 homeless living in shelters and 2,390 living on the streets, for a total count of 3,125.

The report provides a breakdown of the homeless in the county by jurisdiction.

In Adelanto, according to the report, there were no sheltered homeless, 13 people living in transitional housing, 11 unsheltered, for a total of 24; In Apple Valley, there were seven sheltered homeless, no one living in transitional housing, 24 unsheltered, for a total of 31; In Barstow, there were three sheltered homeless, 27 people living in transitional housing, 78 unsheltered, for a total of 108; in unincorporated Big Bear City/Sugarloaf there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 12 unsheltered, for a total of 12; in incorporated Big Bear Lake, there were two sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, none unsheltered, for a total of two; in Bloomington, there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 19 unsheltered, for a total of 19.

According to the report there were no homeless in Cajon Canyon nor in West Cajon Canyon, whatsoever.

In Chino, according to the table in the report, there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 31 unsheltered, for a total of 31; in Chino Hills, there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, two unsheltered, for a total of two; in Colton there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 136 unsheltered, for a total of 136; in Crestline, there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 22 unsheltered, for a total of 22; in Fontana, there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 116 unsheltered, for a total of 116; in Grand Terrace, there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, five unsheltered, for a total of five; in Hesperia, there were seven sheltered homeless, six people living in transitional housing, 19 unsheltered, for a total of 32; in Highland, there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 78 unsheltered, for a total of 78; in Joshua Tree, there were no sheltered homeless, five people living in transitional housing, 54 unsheltered, for a total of 59; in Lake Arrowhead, there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 11 unsheltered, for a total of 11; and in Landers, there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, two unsheltered, for a total of two.

According to the report there were no homeless in Lenwood, no homeless in Lytle Creek and no homeless in Mentone/Crafton, whatsoever.

In Loma Linda, according to the report, there were no sheltered homeless, 24 living in transitional housing, 27 unsheltered, for a total of 51; in Montclair, there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 54 unsheltered, for a total of 54; in Morongo Valley, there were no sheltered homeless, five people living in transitional housing, none unsheltered, for a total of five; in Muscoy, there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 24 unsheltered, for a total of 24; in Needles, there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 16 unsheltered, for a total of 16; in Ontario, there

were 14 sheltered homeless, 14 people living in transitional housing, 74 unsheltered, for a total of 102; in Phelan/Pinon Hills, there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 11 unsheltered, for a total of 24; in Rancho Cucamonga, there were three sheltered homeless, three people living in transitional housing, 48 unsheltered, for a total of 54; in Redlands, there were 45 sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 141 unsheltered, for a total of 186; in Rialto, there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 115 unsheltered, for a total of 115; in Running Springs, there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, one unsheltered, for a total of one; in San Bernardino, there were 183 sheltered homeless, 50 living in transitional housing, 823 unsheltered, for a total of 1,056; in Twentynine Palms, there were 17 sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 28 unsheltered, for a total of 45; in Upland, there were no sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 44 unsheltered, for a total of 44; and in Victorville, there were 132 sheltered homeless, 21 living in transitional housing, 298 unsheltered, for a total of 451.

According to the report, there are no homeless in Yermo, whatsoever.

In Yucaipa, according to the report, there were four sheltered homeless, none living in transitional housing, 13 unsheltered, for a total of 17; and in Yucca Valley, there were eight sheltered homeless, 19 people living in transitional housing, 44 unsheltered, for a total of 71.

Elsewhere around the county or actually residing in unknown locations are 112 sheltered homeless, 11 living in transitional housing and 18 unsheltered for a total of 141.

Holding the top five spots for the sheer number of homeless, according to the report, were San Bernardino with 1,056; Victorville with 451; Redlands with 186; Colton with 136; and Fontana, with 116.

The list of cities host-

Latest Known Coronavirus Stats*

2,629 Confirmed Cases Of COVID-19 111 Deaths

* Based on all reported testing by the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health Countywide

ing the top five highest totals of homeless in the county this year was 40 percent different than the list tallied last year when San Bernardino was in the unenviable first position with 890 homeless; Victorville 333; followed by Redlands with 183, Rialto with 133, and Ontario with 128.

Of the 3,125 persons counted in 2020, 2,390 or more than three-fourths (76.5%) were unsheltered, which is defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as "An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning: (i) An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings."

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development require local jurisdictions to compile data on their homeless populations.

Of the county's 3,125 homeless, 2,390 are unsheltered, according to the report. Of those 2,390, 2,361 are adults, and there are 21 children living in homeless families and eight unaccompanied youth under the age of 18 who are homeless. Of the 2,361 adults, 1,688 or 71.5 percent are men, and 656 or 27.8 percent are women. Three, or 0.1 percent are transgender and 14 or 0.6 are classified as gender non-conforming.

Within the unsheltered homeless adult population, 718 are Latino or Hispanic and 1,643 are Non-Hispanic or Non-Latino. Seven of the children in families are Latino or Hispanic and five are non-Hispanic or Non-Latino. Three of the unaccompanied home-

less minors are Hispanic or Latino and five of the unaccompanied homeless minors are non-Hispanic or Non-Latino.

Of the adult unhoused population in the county, 57 or 2.4 percent are American Indian or Alaska Native; 18 or 0.8 percent are Asian; 505 or 21.4 percent are Black or African-American; 17 or 0.7 percent are Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; 1,345 or 57 percent are white; and 419 or 17.7 percent are classified as other.

Among the homeless children living with a family, one is American Indian or Alaska Native; six are Black or African-American; 11 are white; and three are classified as other. Five of the unaccompanied homeless youth are white and three are classified as other.

According to the report, 691 or 29.3 percent of those counted this year are chronically homeless adults; 440 or 18.6 percent were identified as having mental health problems; 185 or 7.8 percent were veterans; 497 or 21.1 percent were labeled "substance users"; and 640 or 27.1 percent were unaccompanied women.

Another 88 or 5.8 percent claimed they were in a state of homelessness because they were "fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking."

Known to the *Sentinel* is that there was some undercounting in the survey. While the report stated that there were no homeless in Cajon Canyon or West Cajon Canyon on January 24, in actuality there was a single homeless adult in Cajon Canyon in a tent and another single homeless adult, residing in a vehicle accompanied by his dog, in Cajon Canyon on January 24.

-Mark Gutglueck

Rampant Cronyism Within The WVWD from page 2

with whom he was then on good terms, wangled the hirings of Robert Tafoya, the city attorney for Baldwin Park, as the district's general counsel; the hiring of Baldwin Park City Councilman Richard Pacheco as assistant general manager with the district; and the hiring of Clarence Mansell, a journeyman water operations professional who had previous experience in Rialto and else-

where in Southern California and with whom Taylor was acquainted, as the district's general manager. Subsequently, when the district had divided into two warring camps led by Taylor on one side and Director Clifford Young on the other, the district hired Jeremiah Brosowske to serve as yet another assistant general manager. Brosowske boasted a résumé as a political operative, having worked on numerous political campaigns and then having acceded to the position of executive director

of the San Bernardino County Central Committee, thereafter garnering first an appointment, and then election, to the Hesperia City Council. Brosowske, however, had no experience, no training, held no certificates or licenses, and possessed no expertise in water operations or public agency administration or management.

While both Mansell and Tafoya filled roles in which they had to function visibly, there was virtually no dispute that Pacheco and Brosowske had been given sine-

cures.

A sinecure is defined as a position requiring little or no work but giving the holder status or financial benefit.

Both Pacheco and Brosowske had each been provided with contracts to serve in their respective assistant general manager positions at an annual salary of \$189,592 along with benefits and add-ons valued at over \$62,000 per year.

Upon their initial hirings, both Pacheco and Brosowske had been given the official title of assistant manager for

external affairs, which essentially related to overseeing the district's communications function. Pacheco was moved into a so-called "operational" assistant manager's post to make way for Brosowske.

Pacheco rarely showed up at the West Valley District Office, located at 855 W. Base Line Road in Rialto.

Many considered the external affairs management position to be absolutely superfluous, as Mansell, in his general manager capacity, is authorized to make official

statements on behalf of the district, and the district already had in place a public affairs manager, Naseem Farooqi, as well as a crew of customer service representatives.

With the advent of the 2019 election season, the public was given a demonstration of how it was that Brosowske's hiring was a patently political one. He was put to work supporting the reelection candidacies of board members Don Olinger and Kyle Crowther, both of whom had hewed to

Continued on Page 7

When The Colonies Partners Engaged In An Influence Purchasing Strategy Similar To The One He Had Perfected As A Lobbyist, Hansberger In His Second Tour As Supervisor Resisted The Tactic from page 2

defender.

Hansberger was elected, largely on the strength of backing by the rapidly-aging-and-fading but yet far-reaching Redlands power elite. Once again in office, Hansberger encountered a world that had changed in many respects from when he had previously been on the board. Most evident was that the Redlands power block, which at one point was so pervasive in its reach that it outweighed, outranked and could outspend the other four-fifths of the county and its presence on the board of supervisors, no longer held the sway it once did. Hansberger encountered, and was encountered by, board colleagues who were very much his equals in terms of political control and influence. One of the few means of leverage he possessed was the Republican affiliation he shared with the majority of the board's members, as the Republican Party remained a significant player in the way in which governance manifested in San Bernardino County.

Still, there was another presence on the board that Hansberger had to contend with in the personage of Jerry Eaves, a labor union-affiliated Democrat who was both a former mayor of Rialto and a member of the California Assembly before he had somewhat inexplicably departed pre-term limit Sacramento to successfully run for Fifth

District San Bernardino County supervisor when Bob Hammock, unsuccessfully, had sought to vault into Congress in 1992. Eaves, who was only marginally less dishonest, self-serving and corrupt than his predecessor as Fifth District supervisor, represented a formidable political presence on the board. Whereas Eaves had been at most a medium-sized fish in the Sacramento Lake, he was a virtual whale in the San Bernardino County pond. One strength Eaves had was that he had done favors for a number of state, national and international interests during his eight years in the California legislature, collecting chits along the way. Having returned to localized politics on a board where instead of lining up dozens of votes to achieve legislative goals he needed only two votes beyond his own to prevail, Eaves would call upon his donors from outside the Fifth District, outside San Bernardino County, indeed even outside of California or the United States to confer large donations on those he would designate to be the recipients of that largesse. In this way, Eaves was purchasing, when the stakes were high enough and he needed to, control over the board of supervisors to achieve his sometimes lofty and sometimes sordid, sometimes noble and sometimes ignominious, objectives.

As a consequence,

Hansberger somewhat paradoxically given his 16-year role as an influence broker, found himself in the role of a political reformer, one of the minority members of the board of supervisors resisting special interests who were seeking to use their monetary reach to influence the county's public policy in a way that would benefit a private interest to the detriment of the public at large. Ultimately, Hansberger would see his political stock rise when Eaves became enmeshed in a political corruption scandal and was forced from office upon being convicted.

While serving as supervisor, Hansberger served on a multitude of regional governmental adjunct and joint powers authorities and boards, and acceded to the presidency of the Southern California Association of Governments, the foremost regional planning authority in the southern part of the state, known by its acronym SCAG. He also received a gubernatorial appointment to serve on the California State Board of Mines and Geology.

Hansberger's return to politics coincided with the break up of his first marriage. In 2000, Karen Gaio, an obstetrician-gynecologist who was 23 years Hansberger's junior, had been elected to the Loma Linda City Council. Subsequently, her city council colleagues had appointed her mayor. Hansberger and Gaio encountered each other on governmental adjunct and joint powers authority boards in their capacities as supervisor and councilwoman/mayor. By 2001

they had entered into a personal relationship. In 2002, they married.

Hansberger's role and reputation as a political reformer in the face of Eaves' depredations carried across partisan lines when he stood up against the county being cozened into providing the flood control infrastructure for a massive development proposal on over 400 acres of what was considered undevelopable land in Upland which was crisscrossed with flood control easements and had traditionally been used for groundwater recharge. When Dan Richards, a prominent Republican who was a member of the new money Republican political faction on the county's west side, sought to have the county defray a significant portion of the cost of supplying the Colonies at San Antonio residential and Colonies Crossroads commercial subdivisions' drainage infrastructure, Hansberger consistently supported the county in administratively and legally opposing those requests. Ultimately, the county board of supervisors, over an opposing vote by Hansberger and Fifth District Supervisor Josie Gonzales, in November 2006, voted to settle litigation brought by Richards' company, the Colonies Partners, over the county's lack of cooperation in allowing the project to proceed. That settlement included a \$102 million payout from the county to the Colonies Partners.

That was not the end of it, however, as Mike Ramos, himself a member of the Redlands Republican political establishment who had first

been elected district attorney in 2002 with Hansberger's support, had charges filed against Richards' primary associate in the Colonies Partners, Jeff Burum, on charges that the Colonies Partners had used intimidation, extortion, blackmail and bribery to obtain the \$102 million settlement. In addition to Burum, that prosecution extended to First District Supervisor Bill Postmus and Second District Supervisor Paul Biane, who voted in support of the settlement, as well as to Mark Kirk, the chief of staff to Fourth District Supervisor Gary Ovitt, who had likewise voted in favor of handing the \$102 million in county money over to the Colonies Partners, and Jim Erwin, a one-time sheriff's deputies union president who had assisted the Colonies Partners in its strategy to obtain the settlement. The prosecution of Postmus, who was convicted in the scheme, along with that of Burum, Biane, Kirk and Erwin, was undertaken in some measure on the strength of information provided by Hansberger to the district attorney's office then under the authority of Ramos.

Well after Hansberger had left office following his second stint as supervisor, he was again in the public limelight when he was called as a witness in the case against Burum, Biane, Kirk and Erwin when it at last went to trial in 2017. Hansberger's testimony was considered one of the key components to proving the case the prosecution had but together against the defendants, one which in significant measure hinged on the

use of political influence – what the prosecution insisted was tantamount to bribery – in obtaining the \$102 settlement. As it would turn out, however, the use of Hansberger as a witness in the case proved problematic. Hansberger's own reputation as a political fixer who had arranged for the provision of large amounts of cash to politicians to gain their support for his clients' projects, contracts and franchises undercut the prosecution's case. Burum, Biane and Kirk were acquitted and the jury hearing the matter against Erwin was unable to reach a verdict.

A complicating issue during Hansberger's second tenure as supervisor was the bark beetle infestation in the San Bernardino Mountains. In 1967, the Lake Arrowhead Corporation had merged with lumber giant Boise-Cascade, whose CEO, Robert Hansberger, was a distant relation to Dennis Hansberger. Boise-Cascade, after its Lake Arrowhead acquisition, had continued to clear forest property where it could for the purpose of subdividing properties and developing residential tracts. In 1971, Boise-Cascade had sold most of its Lake Arrowhead holdings to a consortium out of Chicago, but then reacquired the property as the result of a foreclosure. By the late 1970s, Boise-Cascade had divested itself of much or most of its Lake Arrowhead holdings. By the time of Dennis Hansberger's second tour as third District supervisor, his father had acquired

Continued on Page 7

Grand Terrace Municipal Employee Ranks Down To A Half Dozen *from front page*

now paid out \$10.6 billion in unemployment benefits to workers as a consequence of the coronavirus-related business shutdowns.

In practical terms, this means that local government – counties and cities and districts – will not likely be able to turn to the state or federal government to bail them out. This presages drastic belt-tightening, fiscal austerity that translates into either substantial salary and benefit reductions, or massive layoffs, or both.

Two of San Bernardino County's municipal canaries in the mine are Grand Terrace and Redlands.

At the Wednesday May 6 Grand Terrace City Council meeting, City Manager Howard Duffy previewed the Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget for the diminutive city, together with the imposition of an immediate adjustment of the current 2019-21 budget which will draw to a close with the end of the fiscal year on June 30. He called his proposal a "revenue enhancement and expenditure reduction plan." Up front, Duffy said, his approach meant immediate "layoffs of city personnel."

Duffy teamed with Assistant City Manager Cynthia Fortune in making the pitch to the city council.

According to a written report from Duffy presented to the council, "As the economy continued to linger with city facilities closed, the city could no longer continue to retain its current level of expense without it having a significant impact on its bottom line. It is projected that the City of Grand Terrace is facing an estimated \$545,210 shortfall for Fiscal Year 2019-20 and a projected \$1,116,387 for Fiscal Year 2020-21. The expenditure reduction plan was developed to surgically correct operational losses, deliver services within fiscal means and strategically address fiscal deficits. The expenditure reduction plan calls for the re-

duction in staff through layoffs."

Grand Terrace, at 3.5 square miles, is the county's smallest city in terms of geographical area and, with fewer than 13,000 residents, the third smallest of the county's 24 incorporated municipalities in terms of population. Positioned, as its name implies, on high ground above the frontier with Riverside County on its south, above the I-215 Freeway and Colton to its west, above lower lying Colton and San Bernardino to its north and Colton's Reche Canyon and the further lying Loma Linda wilderness to its east, Grand Terrace does not get a great deal of vehicular through-traffic from the commuters and travelers on the I-215 Freeway or the nearby I-10 Freeway, so the relatively sparse retail establishments within its city limits count Grand Terrace's relatively limited population base as their primary clientele. Thus, in the best of times, Grand Terrace has but a modest sales tax revenue stream. Under the duress of the coronavirus shutdowns, its revenue is extremely anemic. In years past, the city had reduced itself to a bare bones staff. Already at just 12 current employees, the staff will be reduced by half to six, under Duffy's proposal, and one of those remaining employees will go from full-time, at 40 hours, to part-time, at 20 hours.

Eliminating a management analyst, Fortune said, will provide the city with \$10,430 savings this year and \$90,690 in Fiscal Year 2020-21.

Dispensing with two maintenance workers, will save the city \$7,410 in 2019-20 and \$77,090 next year, according to Fortune.

Fortune said that laying off the city's executive assistant will save the city \$9,965 in the current fiscal year and another \$82,210 next year.

The termination of an office specialist will provide \$5,350 savings right now and cut \$44,995 from the expenditure side of the budget in 2020-21, she said.

Continuing to leave the department secretary position unfilled will

save \$12,730 through to the end of 2019-20 and save an outlay of \$76,370 in 2020-21.

One of the city's code enforcement officers, who also works in the capacity of an animal control officer and is now making \$56,960 per year, will have his or her hours cut in half, such that the city will see a savings of \$4,745 between this week and June 30 and a \$28,480 discount from the 2020-21 budget.

In addition, the city is going to reclassify the city's public works director position, held by Allen French, to that of senior engineer, reducing French's income for the remainder of 2019-21 by \$3,935 and by \$23,610 in 2020-21.

Overall, the adjustments are to save the city \$45,985 in the current fiscal year and \$371,355 in Fiscal Year 2020-21.

The elimination of the positions will amount to "not quite two months savings" in the current budget, Fortune said, as those leaving will be paid through their current paycheck period and will be given "leave balances and any accrued time they have."

Fortune said that she and Duffy had attempted to be judicious in the elimination of positions "to reduce everywhere we can as best as we can and still be able to provide services that we normally would to the community."

Duffy said, "We wanted to move forward in the new fiscal year to get as much savings as we can."

There will be no cuts to the \$2.1 million contract the city has with the sheriff's department for the provision of law enforcement services, Duffy said. He said that he had contacted the sheriff's department to see if it would defer or postpone the increase in rates the sheriff's department will impose to continue the contract. He said other cities that contract with the sheriff's department, such as Rancho Cucamonga, had made similar overtures, and that Sheriff John McMahon had agreed to pass the inquiry on to the county board of supervisors to determine whether that request can be fulfilled.

The city is currently

in a dialogue with the entities that provide other contract services to the city to see if they will be willing to accept a ten to 15 percent reduction in the rates the city is paying for those services, Duffy and Fortune indicated.

Upon a motion by Councilman Bill Hussey, seconded by both councilmen Jeff Allen and Doug Wilson, the city council voted unanimously to follow Duffy's and Fortune's recommendation to lay off one of the city's two management analysts, two of the city's four maintenance workers, two of the city's four administrative support personnel and to unfund or defund the currently vacant secretary's position, leaving the city with one office specialist, and to reduce one of the city's two full time code enforcement officers from 40 hours to 20 hours.

Redlands, the county's 11th largest city with its roughly 72,000 population, has been hit every bit as hard as Grand Terrace. With over 520 employees and a \$75 million budget in Fiscal Year 2019-20, the city is sustaining an \$8 million shortfall in the current spending cycle ending June 30.

According to City Manager Charles Duggan, the best prognosis is that the city will be hammered with a \$15.7 million downturn in revenue in 2020-21.

The city has scheduled a specially-called budget examination and strategizing meeting for next week, on Tuesday, May 12.

Duggan has put together a very somber report for that meeting, what he titled the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Budget Message. In it, he references, "an exceptionally challenging economic environment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Financial market volatility, record-setting increases in the unemployment rate, and eroding consumer confidence from this unprecedented halt in economic activity have led to deteriorating revenue streams for all forms of government."

The upshot?

It looks like 52 Redlands municipal workers will lose their jobs. At the same time 28 posi-

tions with the city that are vacant at the present time will remain unfilled.

Faced with the loss of more than ten percent of the flow of money into the city's coffers, something must be done, Duggan said, and rather than drawing down the salaries of the entirety of those that work at the city, he is recommending that something on the order of ten percent of the city's work force be handed pink slips.

"Without question, the economic impacts of COVID-19 will profoundly change the structure of municipal government and the way the City of Redlands delivers services to its residents for many years to come," Duggan said.

Continuing measures to limit the spread of the coronavirus, including social distancing requirements and closures of commercial venues, will perpetuate the loss of revenue well into the upcoming fiscal year, until such time as a vaccine against the coronavirus is developed, he said.

"With revenues estimated at \$69.5 million and expenditures planned initially for \$85.2 million, a staggering shortfall of \$15.7 million was identified," Duggan's report, which consistently refers to him in the third person, states. "In meeting this challenge, the city manager and executive staff have been left with little choice but to address the city's structural budget issues head on and consider how the city can continue to deliver those essential services that residents and local businesses require."

The city is in a difficult position, Duggan said, in that it faces economic demands brought on by hefty commitments to the city's workforce that were to escalate the city's outlays in the upcoming fiscal year by something under \$6 million over what it will have shelled out at the close of this fiscal year on June 30.

For Fiscal 2020-21, Duggan said, "On the expenditures side, department requests for appropriations in the amount of \$77.8 million were cumulatively \$5.9 million higher when compared

to the department's current 12-month estimates for expenditures for Fiscal Year 2019-20. Some of this variance is due to increases in the amounts budgeted for services and supplies, but the vast majority of this increase is attributed to higher personnel costs in the form of higher pension costs, a 3 percent across-the-board increase to non-safety employees, and natural growth in compensation levels that takes place over time," he said, referencing "merit increases, reclassifications, etc."

Somewhat obliquely, Duggan then alluded to "the elimination of 38 full-time positions and 42 part-time positions." Duggan noted that at present, of the 38 full-time assignments to be eliminated, 21 are filled. He indicated that of the 42 part-time posts the city will shed, 31 are currently occupied. Thus, he stated "21 full-time and 31 part-time" city employees will be laid off.

Duggan explained the process by which a game plan for dealing with the shortfall was developed.

"With the decreases in revenue described, a total of \$69.5 million was estimated to be available for Fiscal Year 2020-21," his report states. "Total department requests for appropriations were submitted to the city manager in the amount of \$77.8 million and a total of \$7.4 million was allocated for required transfers out of the general fund for a total estimated use of funds in the amount of \$85.2 million – an unprecedented gap of approximately \$15.7 million. Confronting this challenge, departments were asked initially to reduce their budget requests, understanding the monumental task that lay ahead in addressing a \$15.7 million shortfall. Suggestions were provided for retrenchment strategies and the departments returned with \$4.2 million in spending reductions. In addition, as a mitigation effort, finance staff have increased revenue projections above presently forecasted levels by \$1.5 million in the hope that the economy will rebound at a stronger and much faster rate. Additionally, transfers to the

Continued on Page 6

Hansberger Hailed As “Legendary, Kind, Thoughtful, A Maverick, An Icon & Honorable” from page 4

a good deal of property in the San Bernardino Mountains. Among a cross section of mountain residents, there was concern – rightly or wrongly – that from his position as a member of the board of supervisors, Dennis Hansberger was going to use the bark beetle infestation to engage in the wholesale destruction of swathes of the forest to allow the property there to be developed.

At certain points during his second round as supervisor, Hansberger was dogged by charges that his chief of staff, Jim Foster, was using his position of authority to enrich himself, as when he purchased a piece of what the county had deemed to be surplus property in Redlands. Foster was also suspected of steering business to his wife’s company, based upon his county influence. Eventually, Hansberger was obliged to shed Foster as his chief of staff.

Protecting Citizens’ Health Is Not A License To Trample On Their Democratic Rights from front page

now mediated through Zoom calls and phone-in access for public comment. These remote sessions drastically blunt public participation and further diminish the accountability of our elected officials to their constituents. Recently, via Zoom, the city council voted through the highly contested Bridge Development Project on Foothill Boulevard (the rumored tenant for which is Amazon). This project has seen major public outcry as residents have expressed legitimate concerns about its long-term negative impacts to quality of life, and increased levels of air pollution and traffic. Similarly, in another remote session, the majority of Upland City Council green-lit the Villa

In 2008, as Hansberger was nearing the completion of his third term in his second go-round on the board of supervisors and his fifth term overall, the political forces on the west side of the county, including those affiliated with the Colonies Partners, moved to derail his political career. Without major fanfare and doing so in a well-timed manner which essentially prevented Hansberger from knowing what was afoot until it was too late for him to effectively react to counter the intensive campaign against him, those focused on his removal vectored their support to then-San Bernardino City Councilman Neil Derry, who outpolled Hansberger in that year’s June primary, a head-to-head contest in which Derry prevailed by the relatively narrow margin of 22,567 votes or 51.89 percent to Hansberger’s 20,926 or 48.11 percent.

Hansberger’s political career was over, but he managed to have something of the last laugh, or perhaps, two last laughs. In April 2011, Hansberger was able to have Mike Ramos, the district attorney with whom he remained closely associ-

ated, charge Derry with one felony count of perjury, one felony count of filing a false document and one misdemeanor count of failing to report a campaign contribution properly, stemming from a \$5,000 political contribution to Derry’s 2008 campaign that had originated as a \$10,000 check from developer Arnold Stubblefield, but which was, according to Ramos, “laundered” through a political action committee controlled by Bill Postmus, who kept \$5,000 of the money Stubblefield provided for himself. Ultimately, Derry pleaded guilty to the misdemeanor count in return for the two felonies being dismissed. Thereafter, Hansberger convinced James Ramos, the independently wealthy chairman of the San Manuel Indian Tribe, who reportedly netted \$18,000 per day from the tribe’s casino operation, to run against Derry in the 2012 election. Hansberger crossed party lines to promote Ramos, a Democrat, over Derry, a Republican. To Hansberger’s immense satisfaction, Ramos defeated Derry.

In 2018, when James Ramos was elected to the California Assem-

bly in the middle of his second term as Third District supervisor, necessitating that he resign to take the state legislative office, Hansberger was one of 48 applicants seeking the appointment to replace Ramos. He was one of 13 of the 48 chosen to be interviewed by the board of supervisors before a selection was made, which ultimately fell to former Yucca Valley Councilwoman Dawn Rowe.

Hansberger cited as his proudest accomplishments in public office the construction of the Seven Oaks Dam at the headwaters of the Santa Ana River in the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains near Highland and Mentone; his contribution with regard to the establishment of the South Coast Air Quality Management District, of which he was a founding member and among its first directors; the completion of the San Timoteo Creek Project; the expansion of the San Bernardino County Museum; the expansion of the San Bernardino County Regional Park System, most particularly Yucaipa Regional Park; ongoing efforts against blight, and his role in securing federal

funding for that effort; and the restoration of the public’s trust in the integrity of local government.

At the time of his death, he was on the board of the San Bernardino County Museum.

He died Wednesday, at the age of 78, less than a month after he was diagnosed as suffering from pancreatic cancer. A report held that his wife, Karen Gaio Hansberger, his sons Martin, Mark and Matthew, and his daughter Marshand were present at the time of his passage.

Assemblyman James Ramos said, “My family and I express our deepest condolences to the family of Chairperson Dennis Hansberger. Our thoughts and prayers are with them. Among my fondest memories of Dennis are the many times we spent talking about the history of San Bernardino County, often from my perspective as chairperson of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians. Dennis was also a valued supporter who encouraged me to run for the county board of supervisors, and was proud when I became chairperson of the board. He will always serve as a

model for me because of his integrity and service to constituents. Dennis carries a special place in my life.”

“Dennis was a kind and thoughtful leader who truly cared about improving the lives of the people he served,” said current Third District Supervisor Dawn Rowe. “The role he played in shaping the future of our county cannot be overstated. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife, Karen, and his entire family.”

Board of Supervisors Chairman Curt Hagman said, “Dennis is a legendary figure in the history of San Bernardino County. We will remember him as a fearless and vocal advocate for ethical, open and intelligent government who guided our county through some of its most challenging times.”

Supervisor Josie Gonzales characterized Hansberger as a “San Bernardino County icon who was always steadfast in his convictions and who valued the truth above his own popularity. He was a maverick... never afraid to say what needed to be said and bring up new ideas and fresh approaches. He was an honorable man.”

Serena development of 65 homes on a flood control channel, despite every single member of the public who called into the meeting opposing the proposal, and despite Upland’s own planning commission having voted down the project at an earlier, in-person pre-COVID-19 session.

Today, many members of our community are dealing with added child-care responsibilities, lost incomes, and heightened anxieties. How is it possible for concerned citizens and residents to stay on top of local government decision-making and to have a meaningful pub-

lic voice, in these precarious times? City officials should exercise prudence and place a moratorium on decision-making around highly controversial projects that have the potential to significantly impact the public good over the long-term. The COVID-19 crisis will eventually pass, and

hopefully our individual actions and limitations on personal freedoms will have saved lives. In a similar spirit, our elected officials should look to protect democracy and preserve meaningful public engagement, rather than using this crisis to fast-track projects that may not benefit

the greater good.

Brinda Sarathy, Ph.D. is a professor of environmental analysis and director of the Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability at Pitzer College and an Upland resident.

Hawkins Moved To Stem Water District’s Persistent Cronyism from page 4

the Taylor side of the political divide in the district, and he also worked to oppose the reelection of Greg Young, who had sided with Clifford Young in the district power struggle. Vying against Olinger was a relative newcomer on the Rialto political scene, Channing Hawkins, who was presenting himself as a reform candidate intent on eliminating the untoward political machinations and cronyism that were overriding the district’s function, and

Hawkins vowed a return to a focus on simply delivering quality water at an affordable rate to the district’s customers.

Meanwhile, Taylor was working assiduously to prevent Hawkins from being able to sell himself to the voters, and he expended \$22,620.48 from his own campaign fund to support Olinger throughout the campaign.

Ultimately in November, Young and Crowther achieved reelection. Hawkins ousted Olinger, which seemed to presage a dynamic political shift on the board in which Taylor would no longer be in ascendancy and Clifford Young,

who is no blood relation to Greg Young, would likely move into a position of relative primacy. Just two days after the November 5 election, even before Hawkins had been sworn in as the district board’s newest member, Pacheco departed, taking with him nine months of salary as a severance, equal to \$142,194, pursuant to a separation agreement worked out for him by Tafoya. The assumption was that shortly after Hawkins came onto the board, the reforms he had been calling for during the election would be actuated, and that the political patronage in the district would

come to an end and all, or virtually all, of the remaining individuals associated with Taylor who had been provided with sinecures at the district or were otherwise put into positions of authority there because of connections with him – Mansell, Tafoya and Brosowske – would no longer be employed at West Valley.

In an adroit political move, however, Taylor succeeded in offering Hawkins an olive branch, arranging to nominate him to serve as board president almost immediately after his December 5 swearing in, a move that succeeded. Hawkins’ ascendancy

to the position of board president ameliorated his attitude toward Taylor, while dimming, at least somewhat, Hawkins’ reform fervor, leaving, for the time being, Mansell, Tafoya and Brosowske in place.

Nevertheless, Hawkins, less than two weeks after he was in office, quietly and without involving the other board members, directed Mansell to retain the public relations firm of ChamberlaynePR, owned by Charles Chamberlayne, to undertake certain communications services for the district. The initial installment of

Continued on Page 8

Hawkins' Effort To End Former Regime's Cronyism Involved Political Patronage Of His Own

from page 7

that contract, as awarded by Mansell using his authority to enter into contracts or make expenditures of \$25,000 or less without board approval, committed to paying ChamberlaynePR \$23,000 before the board revisited the matter to determine if the contract should be extended.

Charles Chamberlayne had been one of Hawkins acquaintances while both were attending Howard University in Washington, D.C. in the early 2000s. Chamberlayne had also assisted Hawkins in his campaign.

An assignment Chamberlayne was tasked with was to coordinate the district's communications, an assignment that took on greater meaning a few months later when the district was obliged to make a cogent response to the coronavirus crisis. Hawkins had also arranged to have Charles Chamberlayne make an assessment of the district's commu-

nication function, what was referred to as its "external affairs." Of concern was that despite the degree redundancy in terms of the district's communications functions, no clear message was reaching the public.

On April 16 at the West Valley Water District board meeting, Chamberlayne returned his evaluation, which was highly critical of both Mansell and Brosowske.

Chamberlayne's report noted that "The West Valley Water District is in constant disarray, shrouded in a mass of unflattering news reports, seemingly dysfunctional communications resources and abysmal media responses." While conceding that some of the district's difficulty stemmed from "unnecessary prior political infighting and mismanagement from organization leadership," Chamberlayne stated that "We find grave issues extending from problematic leadership on the part of the general manager [Mansell] and assistant general manager [Brosowske]."

Of Brosowske in particular, Chamberlayne said he "seems to lack many of the necessary skills and ex-

perience to run the department." Brosowske, Chamberlayne opined, was short on "management and public affairs/relations, advocacy, writing and editing skills and experience," which Chamberlayne said "contributes to overall sub par communications



Jeremiah Brosowske

performances and execution."

Before the board had been briefed on the external affairs report, read it or fully digested it, Brosowske, seeing what was coming, submitted a separation agreement, which the board, in a 4-to-1 vote with Director Greg Young abstaining, accepted. Under the terms of that agreement, Brosowske was provided with a severance package of \$154,884.80, which included nine months salary and a \$5,000 tuition reimbursement for classes he was taking with regard to water operations to bring him up

to speed on issues the district dealt with. Thus, for the slightly more than eleven months he was with the district, Brosowske, who had been deemed inadequate to the position he held, received \$389,542.72 in total compensation.

While some credited Hawkins with having been able coordinate Brosowske's departure, albeit at some expense, he thereafter offset at least some of the good will he had accrued by arranging to have the district extend a contract to Chamberlayne's firm, ChamberlaynePR to provide further consulting services to the district beyond which it had already provided.

After the initial \$23,000 retainer paid to ChamberlaynePR in December, the board approved another \$25,000 for ChamberlaynePR on April 2.

This week, the board considered, and then approved, a \$150,000 consulting agreement with ChamberlaynePR for what was described as "issues management and crisis communications."

While district officials sought to defend the outlay as one that had been committed to after bids were sought for the work, the consul-

tancy arrangement drew fire on multiple score. The bidding consisted of a "request for qualifications" having been posted on the website planetbids.com on April 24 with a May 4 submission deadline. That summoned two responses, one from ChamberlaynePR for a minimum of \$90,000 and another for \$502,800 from Mercury Public Affairs, LLC of Los Angeles. The board accepted making a \$150,000 commitment with ChamberlaynePR to provide its trademark public relations service.

Some have questioned what need the district would have to engage in public relations if it simply carried out the business it is chartered to do, and delivered water to its customers.

The district has now approved three payments totaling \$198,000 to ChamberlaynePR in less than five months, essentially to provide communications services that many consider to be redundant or unnecessary. Simultaneously, given Charles Chamberlayne's prior and ongoing relationship with Hawkins, including promoting Hawkins' campaign for the board last fall, there is a growing perception that the widespread cro-

nyism Hawkins made an issue of when he was running for office has not been eradicated but is persisting with different players aligned now with him rather than Taylor.

The San Bernardino Sun, the daily newspaper with the largest circulation within the jurisdictional confines of the West Valley Water District, was referenced in Chamberlayne's report delivered to the board on April 16 as having engaged in an "unrelenting cycle of unfavorable media inquiries and reports."

Ironically, providing ChamberlaynePR with the contract last night appears to have created the precise type of controversy and negative perception the firm was hired to head off. In an article bearing today's May 8 dateline authored by Joe Nelson, the *Sun* reported on the action by the West Valley Water Board Thursday night providing the \$150,000 contract to ChamberlaynePR. The article at one point stated, "Hawkins has come under fire recently for allegedly perpetuating a longstanding pattern of rampant cronyism at the district."

-Mark Gutglueck

After Years Of Lording It Over The Private Sector, Government Employees Are About To Experience A Major Correction

from page 6

profound reductions in the level of service to which residents and local businesses have been accustomed. This year, instead of efforts to present a budget balanced on recurring revenues, the city manager's office is presenting a budget that strives to minimize service reductions to the community while making use of measured amounts of the general fund's unassigned fund balance to counteract the immediate and devastating impacts on revenue from the COVID-19 crisis. There remain many unknowns. As we consider the financial outlook for Fiscal Year 2021-22 and 2022-23, we are left with little

choice but to address the city's structural budget issues head on and consider how the city can continue to deliver those essential services that residents and local businesses require. Despite cuts of more than 12 percent to each department, including the elimination of more than 38 full-time positions and 42 part-time positions (21 filled full-time and 31 filled part-time), and the assumption that additional revenues of \$1.5 million could be achieved as a result of a stronger-than-projected economic recovery, a \$5.6 million estimated shortfall remains at June 30, 2021."

The Redlands City Council is set to consider action that will be taken in response to the prolonged cash flow difficulty the city is experiencing during a specially-called meeting for 8:30 a.m. Tuesday May 12 in the council chamber at City Hall. Because of the social distancing

mandated in reaction to the ongoing coronavirus outbreak, the public will not be allowed to attend. According to City Clerk Jeanne Donaldson, "Following public health recommendations to limit public gatherings during the Covid-19 pandemic, City Manager Charles M. Duggan Jr., acting as the City of Redlands emergency services director, has directed that city council meetings be closed to the public until further notice or until the current local state of emergency has been lifted. The council chamber will not be open to the public during the city council meeting. In order to have your public comment read into the public record at the meeting, members of the public are asked to submit comments up until 5 p.m. the day before the city council meeting by email at publiccomment@cityofredlands.org, through the public comment form on the city's website at <https://www.cityofredlands.org/public-speaker-form>, or written comments directly to the city clerk's office at 35 Cajon Street."

During the meeting, all of the city departments, including the city clerk, city attorney, city council, management services, development services, the library, the police department, the fire department, the facilities division, community services, municipal utilities and the engineering department will be afforded the opportunity to make a presentation with regard to what economies each has already proposed to make or has sustained, and appeal for being spared from further cuts.

A reckoning within local government in California has been looming on the horizon for some time. Salaries and benefits in most cities and counties are extremely high based on pay, perquisites and pensions provided for comparable work in the private sec-

tor, exacerbated by what public employees refer to as the "10-90 rule," which holds that a significant number of public sector jobs are not demanding, such that "ten percent of the people working for government do ninety percent of the work." Redlands is a particularly egregious example of that circumstance. Former Redlands City Councilman Jerry Bean, a captain of industry in the private sector who has owned or published six newspapers, previously openly remarked about what he termed the "municipal culture" at Redlands City Hall in which productivity did not match the outlay of taxpayer money to achieve it. Across the county, in Upland, former City Councilman Glenn Bazar lamented that local government in Southern California had become "a huge jobs program" which created "make work" assignments for a workforce too unskilled

to be meaningfully or productively employed in the private sector. Bazar likened the majority of public employees to "a parasitic growth on the body politic."

Of question is whether the Redlands City Council will on Tuesday suspend its members' reception of a stipend for their work on the council, thereby assuming the symbolic moral authority to make further inroads in whittling down the size of municipal government in what has traditionally been one of San Bernardino County's most affluent cities.

For the 22 incorporated cities and towns in San Bernardino County beyond Grand Terrace and Redlands, it is a matter of time before the fiscal reality of the economic contraction precipitated by the coronavirus crisis results in similar parings of their respective workforces.

-Mark Gutglueck