

Thursday, February 25, 2010

[EDITORIAL: Interesting Times For The Socorro Electric Co-op](#)

By John Severance
Editor

Editor's note: The Socorro Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees met Wednesday night and reportedly discussed some of these issues. A report on the Co-op meeting will appear in next week's Mountain Mail.

Somewhere in the middle lies the answer for the Socorro Electric Cooperative.

Where that is, it's not entirely certain.

This is what the members in District 3 and District 5 are asking for.

In District 3, members want all expenses incurred by the SEC on behalf of a Trustee shall not exceed \$10,000 and \$15,000 for the president. Members in District 3 want all meetings to be open and all members must be permitted to attend any meeting. There should also be time set aside for any member to address the board at any of its meetings. The Board also would have the right to remove persons disrupting a meeting. District 3 members also want the board to follow the New Mexico Open Meetings Act and the Inspection of Public Records Act.

District 5 propositions are a little more lengthy.

- They want to make sure the board is restricted from making contributions to adult or civic organizations, but they can make contributions to student scholarships.
- The Co-op shall be managed by five trustees.
- No member of the board of trustees shall serve more than two consecutive terms.
- The Trustees will have one regular meeting per month.
- The board shall guarantee transparency of its actions with open access to books, records, audits and membership lists to members for a proper non-commercial purpose with the exception of those records which would violate the Privacy Act.
- The board will account for and notify members of their Patronage Capital annually.
- The co-op board shall make adequate arrangements to assure fair elections, which include voting by mail and election administration by a third-party accounting firm.

New trustee Donald Wolberg is trying to mend the differences between the trustees and the members. He was the one responsible for organizing an informational meeting, scheduled for March 27 in the Finley Gym, that he said would educate members on the upcoming resolutions and what to expect in the general meeting on April 17 at the same facility.

Judging by the letters to the editor and the emails the Mountain Mail has received, the SEC Reform Group, the ones backing the new resolutions, thinks this extra meeting is a bad idea, saying why is the co-op spending another \$20,000 or so for another meeting and it's also asking too much for members to attend two special meetings.

And to be sure, the ones holding the majority on the board are resistant to change and probably will do anything to keep the status quo. Maybe they will even try to get some trustee-sponsored resolutions passed in the informational meeting.

Attorney Dennis Francish warned the board a couple of weeks ago that it has to get organized and figure out what it wants to do with the resolutions.

"You have to make some decisions," Francish said. "If you don't, there could be some multiple lawsuits out there."

The best thing to remember for all involved is that compromise usually is the best policy.

One final thought

The mayor made the remark at the most recent council meeting that "Journalism takes a holiday when you own a newspaper."

The comment was in reference to clerk Pat Salome's long, rambling explanation of how the city is not breaking any laws when it conducts its elections and that our editorial a couple weeks ago was off base.

We keep in mind the fact that public officials are more apt to be complimentary on articles that put them in a good light, and critical of newspapers that pose too many questions.