

July 29, 2011

Mr. Joseph Brady, Trustee
Victor Valley College Board of Trustees
Victor Valley College
18422 Bear Valley Road
Victorville, CA 92395

Dear Mr. Brady:

I am writing to wholeheartedly endorse your idea for the College to begin live streaming of the board meetings. In 1993 while working for the City of Hesperia, I developed what would now be considered a “primitive” method to ensure that constituents who, for whatever reason(s) could not attend City Council meetings, could still have the benefit of hearing and seeing what transpired. The method—long before the days of webcasting—was to simply tape record the Council meetings then air the tape on what was known then as Falcon Cable.

So for those who were homebound, lacked transportation or simply didn't want to go out to a 7:00 p.m. meeting, Hesperia was a pioneer and became the **first** Victor Valley public agency to even make an attempt to ensure that the public could still be engaged in the government process.

Fast forward to 2011; the technology that we have at our disposal today to ensure that the general public is kept abreast of discussions and decisions made by our elected officials is encouraging. Facebook, Electronic Newsletters, Twitter (and other social media)—webcasting, we don't have to just rely on the local media to provide their interpretations of what transpired at a given meeting.

Given the magnitude of what public agencies are faced with today in these tough economic times, I would hope (maybe rather naively) that elected officials would **want** to exploit every avenue at their disposal to ensure that their constituents are kept informed about decisions being on behalf of constituents—and what led up to whatever decisions are made.

That's why your idea is timely and I believe crucial. I have attended VVC board meetings in the past and unless you camped out hours before hand, you were lucky if you could get in the room let alone get a seat. The location may have changed and circumstances may have changed—but what hasn't changed is that not everyone can attend a board meeting. Not every wants to attend a board meeting.

But for those of us who are just a bit curious about the proceedings, decorum and how decisions are arrived at (discussion, debate, deliberation), webcasting is a phenomenal tool that we have at our disposal. Even if the College can't afford to go the route of audio AND video, then simply consider audio. Mojave Water Agency does it.

Page two, 7-29-11 Ltr to Trustee Brady

So I say to the full Board of Trustees, prove to your constituents that you have nothing to hide, nothing you're ashamed of or are embarrassed about, and demonstrate that you truly believe in "open" meetings. **Make the investment to live stream your board meetings.** Don't hide behind the "*we don't have money*" excuse, anything short of live streaming your meetings suggests there's something you don't want the public to see and hear. Prove me wrong...

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Stevens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "S".

Michael Stevens, former student
Victorville Taxpayer
consultingbystevens@yahoo.com