

Fortier changes financial forms after questioned by League

By Kathryn Reed

Claire Fortier received nearly \$10,000 from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency last year. Now she is on the Governing Board of the bi-state regulatory agency and the League to Save to Lake Tahoe is going through TRPA documents to find out what all Fortier has done for TRPA.

Since the League brought the information to light, Fortier has since amended her financial disclosure forms.



Claire Fortier

“I’m not sure I did need to change it. That’s the big if. For the year before you are on the TRPA board you have to disclose what you made,” Fortier told *Lake Tahoe News*. “I amended my statement even though (the payment) was outside of a year.”

Fortier did the work for TRPA on behalf of her Reno-based company Laren Communications. The last check she received was in February 2010. A year later she was on the Governing Board, after being appointed to it by her colleagues on the South Lake Tahoe City Council, to which she was elected in November 2010.

“It’s not that she did anything wrong, but the fact she

revised her disclosure statement (is something) the public should know," Rochelle Nason, executive director of the League, told *LTN*.

Fortier also worked on a brochure for TRPA a few years ago regarding Pathways 2007.

"I absolutely believe they are going after me because I am calling them on having an unbendable stance that is stymieing our ability to fix ourselves, to fix Lake Tahoe," Fortier said of the League.

Jeff Cowen, spokesman for TRPA, said the \$9,681 worth of work Fortier did was research of the agency's history so a presentation for that 40th anniversary could be put together. He said staff did not have time to do it.

"Claire Fortier did not have a contract with TRPA. Our purchase procedures call for a formal bid and contract when the expense is above \$25,000 and this project's total cost was under \$10,000. The project Claire Fortier/Laren Inc. worked on for TRPA began with a scope of work which evolved over the course of the project," Cowen said. "The project necessitated more of Claire's time to complete the State of the Basin slideshow and report to the Governing Board, vs. the 24-page report and website we had initially scoped."

She was paid an hourly rate.

"The League is glad Claire has stepped up and done the right thing in disclosing her financial dealings with the TRPA. We are encouraging her to be proactive about contacting the Fair Political Practices Commission and making sure she has made all the disclosures required by state law as well," Nason said. "We are still concerned with the question why TRPA would spend almost \$10,000 for historical research on its 40th anniversary. All that information has been assembled repeatedly in the past, in connection with the 30th, 25th, 20th, and 10th anniversaries of the agency. We will be seeking

information about the contract, payments, and work product and expect to offer some suggestions about how the agency might operate more efficiently.”

Here are the forms involving Fortier:

- Jan. 11, 2011, 700 form
- Jan. 11, 2011, TRPA form
- April 27, 2011, TRPA form.

And here is the end result of her work – the TRPA slide show.