EDITORIAL

Who cares?

We’ve published several articles and editorials about local boards that have violated the Colorado Open Meetings Law (COML) over the past few years. We’ve called out those boards for not following procedure. One local reader asked us if the “average” citizen even understood why they should care about boards violating the law. Why should you care if your elected officials are following the law? Why should you care if boards are holding meetings that are publicly noticed? Why should you care if agendas are posted according to policy and in a timely manner? Why should you care if your elected officials are “home trading” in the hall before meetings? Why should you care if boards follow the rules for executive sessions and do not make decisions secretly behind closed doors? Why should you care if boards are discussing public matters while traveling in autos together? Why should you care if board members are emailing a quorum of the board to discuss public business? Why should you care if boards are voting in emails and by secret ballot? Why should you care if boards are being polled for their opinion and input on public matters through emails and phone calls? Why should you care if a board is splitting up into small groups to avoid the law and make decisions out of the public view? Why should we care about open meetings in government?

First and foremost, because it is the law. It is legislative policy that formation of public policy is in public business and may not be conducted in secret. The COML’s intent is simple: Present the public’s business from being conducted in private. The purpose of the law is to ensure each and every citizen that the board, council or committee that represents the community does the public’s business in the light of day. Taxpayers are the owners of government and they have a right to know how it is being operated. Agendas posted timely allow citizens enough time to plan and attend a meeting they care about. A lack of transparency only serves to erode trust. Public officials must be accountable to the public on matters of management. Some of the above methods manipulate the COML, and, legal or not, they violate the spirit of government of the people, by the people, for the people. The only way to have full faith and confidence in our elected officials is to know they are working for the public’s good and not their own behalf.

Why should you care if our three Archuleta County commissioners take the time to review board material in preparation for their regular meetings? Why should you care if boards are discussing public matters with emails and phone calls? Why should you care if the board is splitting up into small groups to avoid the law and make decisions out of the public view? Why should we care about open meetings in government?

We all should care that they do all the public’s business the right way: Terri Lynn Oldham House

WHY I CARE

Do you care how closely government boards follow the law?

Gregoria Sauceda

“Yes. There is a reason why laws were written. It’s just ethical to be respectful of our laws.”

Lilliana Hale

“I suppose.”

Raven Ayotte

“Honestly, I don’t care any more because they never do what they originally plan on.”

This week online: What Pirate sport are you most looking forward to this fall? Vote at www.pagosasun.com

LEGACIES

By Stati Pierce

90 years ago

Taken from SUN files of August 5, 1927

The board of county commissioners met in regular session Tuesday. It was learned that the county offices be removed by the 1st of September to the recently purchased court house. The monthly session Tuesday. At this time it was ordered that the county offices be removed by the 1st of September to the recently purchased court house. The monthly session Tuesday. At this time it was ordered that the county offices be removed by the 1st of September to the recently purchased court house.

75 years ago

Taken from SUN files of August 14, 1942

Jimmie Anderson, 15-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Anderson, shot and killed a brown bear Saturday on Williams Creek Sheep Range. The bear had been killing stock and Jimmie and his father, who is the government trapper here, had been on the trail of the manador for several days. He’s a mighty proud boy.

Preliminary instruction in the use of infantry weapons is occupying the time of former residents of this city who reported recently to Camp Roberts for 13 weeks of basic training. Pagosa Springs men recently assigned to the California Replacement Training Center include: Arthur S. Childers, Kimmer M. Snow, Max B. Martinez, Thomas W. Mee.

50 years ago

Taken from SUN files of August 10, 1967

This is County Fair week and there will be big things this weekend. The exhibits at the County Fair hold the most interest for the general public. The exhibits at the County Fair hold the most interest for the general public.

50 years ago

Taken from SUN files of August 13, 1992

Eight deputies from the Archuleta County Sheriff Department raided a marijuana growing operation adjacent to the Aspen Springs subdivision Wednesday, arrested two men, and confiscated $135,000 of the illegal weed. The operation first came to the attention of the department in late July, said Capt. One Mar. “We found out about the fields on July 27 and we immediately put them under surveillance. The suspects went to the plants yesterday Saturday, went to the plants yesterday (Saturday). One went to the patches and the other stayed guard. We decided to raid the patches on Wednesday because we feared they were going to harvest the crop. The marijuana patches were located in dense undergrowth, south of the Aspen Springs sales office.

LOOKING BACK

From the July 2, 1970, Pagosa Springs SUN. SUDDEN STOP — This vehicle came to a sudden stop when it hit a tree after leaving the highway. The wreck took place last Thursday on the Piedra road about three miles above Highway 160 and was investigated by Patrol Officer Allen. There were no serious injuries and both occupants were wearing seat belts.