



San Juan County Public Hospital District No. 1
San Juan Island Emergency Medical Services
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PUBLIC RECORDS LAWSUIT FROM ERIC HOOD

On January 5, 2020, our District received a request from Eric Hood stating that “I learned that your organization was recently audited by the state auditor,” and “May I have all records it got from the auditor and all records of any response to the audit or to the audit report, including any changes or planned changes to policies or practices?”

This request did not identify a specific record and could have been denied. Instead, the District released its three most recent audit reports, which include the district’s response to the audit, and asked the requestor to provide clarification on what was specifically desired. The requestor responded it was audit 1023513, which we had provided. The District took this as confirmation that he had received the requested report. He did not ask for a more detailed response, set of records, or indicate dissatisfaction in any way.

During the last week before the statute of limitations on public records lawsuits ran out, the requestor filed a lawsuit against the District alleging that we did not comply with his request. The District has opted to settle this lawsuit for \$15,000. Commissioner Everett Clary said, “Initially we wanted to fight, but it would have cost us more to litigate it, and it would have cost the public two to three times the amount of money to prove we were right. It’s public money, and we want to treat it respectfully.” Commissioner Trish Lehman added, “I too would want to fight this, but the cost in public money was just not worth it.”

We have since discovered that Eric Hood has apparently filed over 100 lawsuits against small entities across the state, many of which settle in the same range as our District, and a comprehensive list has been covered by Port Townsend reporter Brian Kelly in the The Leader.