

Supervisors Vote to Use County Emergency Funds For Ambulance Bid Agreement

July 26, 2024



In an item presented by 1st District Supervisor Darrin Short, the Board of Supervisors voted to utilize County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) funds to complete the competitive bid process for an exclusive operating area ambulance services contract in Del Norte.

The decision was narrowly passed 3-2.

The vote was made by motion maker Short, seconded by Supervisor Valerie Starkey and an additional AYE vote by Supervisor Joey Borges. Supervisor Chris Howard and Board Chair Dean Wilson opposed the motion.

Howard asked Short if he observed improvements of Short's concerns on Del Norte Ambulance performance. Short deferred any response.

The bid will include the cost for North Coast Emergency Medical Services (NCEMS) to prepare and administer a competitive bid process for an as yet unnamed consultant.

The cost to conduct the Request for Proposal (RFP) is still an unknown. In its Board Report, Chief Administrative Officer Neal Lopez researched other agencies that have conducted similar procurements and has learned the costs range between \$143,000 and \$225,000. NCEMS consultant Pam Mather estimated the cost to range \$50,000 to \$150,000 but couldn't be confirmed until a proposal is selected for the consultant. NCEMS staff will be conducting the RFP was uncertain on the process to recover some or all of the costs associated with funding an RFP once the consultant was awarded a contract. Supervisor Valerie Starkey who voted to support the competitive bid process was adamant in her objection to the award winner reimbursing the County for these costs. "I'm against that (reimbursement). "I don't think it's fair for small operations to have to win the bid then pay to play. It places Del Norte County at a great disadvantage."

At the May 18, 2023 NCEMS meeting, North Coast staff were prepared to proceed with the grandfathering clause, following the Humboldt County model, but NCEMS would take into consideration the recommendation of the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors, specific to the bidding process.

Del Norte Ambulance is under contract to provide 911 services within Del Norte County with a contract which expires June 30, 2027. Supervisors Wilson and Howard, along with Sutter Coast Hospital expressed their support and recognition for Del Norte Ambulance, the sole provider of ambulance emergency services for four decades in Del Norte.

As a final action on this item, the Board authorized the Director of the Dept. of Health and Human Services to select up to three staff members to represent the County in the review of responsive Bids, in collaboration with NCEMS representatives for the consulting services to administer the RFP. The vote was unanimous.