Del Norte Triplicate

OPINION

Opinion: End Point Assessment of Del Norte Ambulance Leaves Supervisor's Starkey, Short, and Borges With Egg on Their Faces

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I would suspect now is the time to rip the band aide off the proverbial festering wound. At the first meeting in August of the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors (BOS), it became painfully obvious at least three of the members ofin intention of doing what is right and beneficial for the citizens they represent. Although not surprising.

Supervisors Starkey, Short and Chair Borges were visibly uncomfortable with the results of End Point EMS's assessment of Del Norte Ambulance's (DNAMB) performance over a two-year span concluding DNAMB had met the contractual obligations for EMS service in Del Norte County. Nothing like a well-deserved slap in the face of three of the Board's "geniuses" who assured the County's residents their "thorough" investigation of DNA's performance while serving on an Ad Hoc committee to evaluate DNA's request to become the County's sole ambulance provider revealed DNA did not meet its obligations for EMS service. An investigation now proven to be false!

The Ad Hoc committee composed of Starkey and Short relied exclusively on a letter by Fire Chief Kevin Carey and the remaining county fire chiefs claiming "poor" response times and questionable performance by ambulance crews. No evidence of those claims being substantiated or factual has ever surfaced following the

Ad Hoc committee's report to the board in a February 2024 meeting. The remaining members of the EMS community, the city police, the sheriff's department, the highway patrol, or the hospital expressed any similar concerns. How strange? Thorough huh!

This bogus reporting by Supervisor's Starkey and Short and Del Norte's fire chiefs allowed the board coupled with Supervisor Borges to deny DNA an exclusive operating permit and institute a Request for Provider to replace DNA as the ambulance service in Del Norte County. Public outcry against this action by the board has done little to change the board's course. An expensive consultant, End Point was the result. $160,000 and counting flushed down the toilet to produce an assessment of long recognized EMS deficiencies, none of which have anything to do with poor performance by DNA. JUST GREAT!

Will the egos on the board admit they were wrong? Not likely! Supervisor Starkey thinks more data will change the outcome of her poor decision. Supervisor Short thinks the assessment is somehow "new" information well worth the "emergency" funding spent. Chair Borges remains unengaged and the RFP trundles pointlessly on. What will it take for Borges, Starkey, and Short to understand THEY WERE WRONG?

In the meantime, DNAMB, after being thoroughly disrespected by the BOS and the county's fire chiefs, had undertaken steps to correct the EMS deficiencies above and beyond its contractual obligations before End Point's assessment was even revealed to the BOS. A fourth ambulance is to be stationed in Klamath. DNA's contract only requires three. An enhanced dispatch service to supplement the Sheriff's dispatch service was installed by DNA.

Still, Supervisors Starkey and Short prattle on in defense of their abysmal performance as Ad Hoc committee members. Chair Borges appears to have removed himself from any participation in county government. No board reports, barely a presence at meetings. Is this the kind of leadership the county's citizens have come to accept?

Following End Point's assessment down the well-traveled path outlining the County's EMS deficiencies, DEL NORTE AMBULANCE, looks to have taken the initiative to correct those issues within the glaring omissions of the County's contract for ambulance service at their own expense. The remainder of End Point's assessment points a finger at the deception of the county's fire chief's and the Ad Hoc committee of Supervisors Short and Starkey.

The remainder of the issues in the report highlight the need for the BOS to give the Sheriff's department the tools necessary to improve outcomes in dispatch and correct the unprofessional lack of cooperation by the fire hierarchy when engaged with ambulance personnel in emergency situations. None of which reflects badly on Del Norte Ambulance's service to the community over its near forty years' service in Del Norte County.

So, where are we now? It remains for Supervisors Short, Starkey, and Chair Borges to "DO THE RIGHT THING"! The RFP should be immediately suspended. End Point should receive fair compensation. DEL NORTE AMBULANCE SHOULD RECEIVE AN EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO PROVIDE SERVICE!

Supervisors Short, Starkey, and Borges should be reprimanded for wasting County resources. Kevin Carey and the local fire chiefs should be reminded to “stay in their own lane and cooperate”!

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