

Letter: Consent Agenda Lacks Transparency

July 11, 2024



I have stood before the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors many times over the past few years to voice my dismay over a wide variety of issues that have come before the Board that never seem to end in the public's favor.

One of the most egregious abuses of governance on this over-dependence is the Consent Agenda to pass by (a single vote) almost always unanimous vote many items of business with little transparency or discussion.

In the most recent meeting, June 25, fully 26 of the 38 items were placed on the Consent Agenda which passed with near-total lack of discussion, 4-0 Supervisor Howard being absent. The Public would have been allowed (to speak) but three minutes to comment on the many items, a near impossibility to communicate concerns when many items require clarification and further discussion, yet that is the limit the Board has installed despite the numerous objections by members of the Public. The behavior of the Board has all the earmarks of rule by decree rather than representative governance. Fully 70 percent of this meeting was handled in the Consent Agenda in less than ten minutes of a four hour meeting.

The Consent Agenda was originally put in place to streamline government meetings by constructing a brief list of non-controversial items, minutes of the previous meeting letters and awards of recognition. proclamation days, etc., that necessitated a vote of approval by the Board. It now contains a vast majority of the County's general business, contracts for vendors, contracts for services, promotions, job re-classification,

raises for employees and a general bureaucratic wish list for the County's un-elected. At some point the wants of the bureaucratic administration of Del Norte County has superseded the needs in the Board's participation in the governance of the County.

When a member of the Board asks for an item to be removed for further discussion, it is granted without exception. This is not an option afforded to the Public, thereby excluding any of the Public's concern on an item in question.

It now begs the question who exactly is running the show: The Board of Supervisors or the County's un-elected; and if it's not our elected representatives then what need is there for supervisors if they only listen to the un-elected.

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