

Opinion: Supervisor “didn’t get the memo”, Darrin Short is Playing with Fire

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Opinion

Apparently, Supervisor “didn’t get the memo” Darrin Short is willing to take Del Norte County down the recent and disastrous path of Santa Barbara County. Similar circumstances regarding Santa Barbara’s decision to replace its ambulance service compare favorably with Del Norte County’s vote 3-2 this past year and have placed Del Norte County’s Board on the RFP path to search for a replacement ambulance service at the behest of Supervisor Short and local fire chiefs. Santa Barbara’s supervisors pathway lodged the County’s Board on the wrong side of a million-dollar lawsuit. How clever of them.

Supervisor Short, who is clearly a little “short” on the uptake, has recently inserted his memo-less self in the County’s RFP process by nominating himself to serve on the North Coast Emergency Medical Services Ad Hoc committee to determine Del Norte Ambulance’s fate. No doubt to continue placing Short’s very large thumb on the scale where objectivity continues to elude the memo-less Short.

Short, a longtime associate with the local Crescent Fire and Rescue, appears to have been manipulated into filing the original complaint brought by four of the five fire chiefs in Del Norte County in an effort to supplant Del Norte Ambulance as the sole provider for EMS 9-1-1 services within the county. Four of the local chiefs who sent the letter, now in the public’s view, fail in every way possible to explain the fire

departments complaints. Repeated efforts in the community have not produced any further explanation for the fire department's allegations. How surprising!

No matter how this situation is resolved, the local fire chiefs will only be happy if the ambulance service is placed in their hands, something unlikely to happen due to cost. Even if another EMS provider is located and the County survives an almost guaranteed lawsuit, the fire department will not be happy.

In this particular circumstance, Short would have been wise to avoid his unnecessary participation in the ensuing discussion with his clear conflict of interest and elected to recuse himself in the process going forward. No such luck!

Unfortunately, Short continues to fail to realize his original allegations against Del Norte Ambulance have failed to pass the "smell test." Further allegations after Short's decision to join the NCEMS ad hoc committee are only likely to strengthen any lawsuit brought by Del Norte Ambulance against the county should DNAMB not be awarded the emergency services provider after 2028.

Clearly, Supervisor Starkey during her Board report of March 11th must have stumbled upon the weakness of the allegations by Short and the fire chiefs when she pivoted to "an updated contract" as the reason for her vote in 2024. Something not even discussed at the time. Not surprisingly, Short was left behind in the haste to explain why the county was spending \$150,000+ of "emergency funding" when it already had an acceptable EMS provider in Del Norte Ambulance. Talk about the imbecile not sending the memo to the idiot. Perhaps, one of the other two morons who voted for the RFP could have made this happen.

Nevertheless, the continued efforts by Supervisors Short, Starkey and the Chairman Joey Borges to replace Del Norte Ambulance and justify the expense are not selling well with the public. At least three members of the Board of Supervisors are living up to their well-earned titles of being Easter Island statues. Clearly, somewhat late, but necessary damage control should be exerted by the "No" voting members of the Board, Dean Wilson and Chris Howard, before Darrin Short takes them all down with the Titanic. "Nothing to see here" is definitely not selling well.

The current expense of \$97,000 of emergency funding to End Point Consulting has gone for no purpose. Further expenditures to cement the Board action at ambulance service replacement is risky, unnecessary, and will end badly for the County's residents.

At the end of this current mess, none of the Supervisors involved are likely to suffer the consequences of their foolish actions. Supervisor "memo-less" Darrin Short, Supervisor "consolation prize" Valery Starkey, and the worthless one Chair Joey Borges have shown themselves to be devoid of the nature of sound representative government on a very weak Board of Supervisors. 2026 a year to make changes on the Board, 2028 to finish the job.