

Letter: Grand Jury Receives an F for Failure

August 9, 2024



In a damning indictment of procedural oversight, the Grand Jury has been given a failing grade after an exhaustive investigation into alleged corruption within the Harbor District. Despite submitting a comprehensive 563-page complaint, backed by detailed credit card statements, agendas, and meeting minutes, the case presented a staggering \$75,000 in suspected credit card abuse.

The meticulous complaint included letters from key law enforcement and oversight figures, including the Sheriff, the Chief of Police, the District Attorney, and the County Auditor. These Documents highlighted the concerted effort to address the issue through every available official channel. However, the only significant acknowledgment of the problem came from Chief Richard Griffin of the Crescent City Police, whose proactive stance stood in stark contrast to the apparent inertia of other authorities.

The Grand Jury's Response to this substantial body of evidence has been nothing short of disappointing. Rather than confronting the extensive allegations head on, the Grand Jury chose to downplay the severity of the situation. They acknowledged only a single transaction as unlawful, which was allegedly paid back without proof of course, effectively softening the perception of corruption within the Harbor District.

The Complaint was originally turned over to the Crescent City Police, and the Del Norte Sheriff, who turned the documents over to the County Auditor. The County Auditor and the District Attorney Micks then decided it was nothing more than a "material weakness."

However, a material weakness is defined as a significant deficiency, or combination of significant deficiencies, that results in more than a remote likelihood that a material misstatement of the financial statements will not be prevented or detected. Just to be clear, a material weakness is worse than a significant deficiency when it comes to deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting.

The deficiencies were a result of using the Harbor District's credit card system where employees have access to 12,000 dollars a month which is paid without review or question by the Harbor Commissioners, who allowed such purchases of clothes, skin products, shoes, airline tickets, hotel rooms, dining out at fine restaurants and alcoholic purchases.. This is where the money at the Harbor District has been mysteriously disappearing. The Harbor Commissioners were aware of this matter but done nothing to control it.

It is worthy to note there were two sitting attorney's and a former finance director sitting at the table on the Grand Jury. Attorney's are officers of the court, yet, they chose to ignore the significant charges of the former Harbor Master.

In light of these actions, it is the firm belief of the complainant that the Grand jury has failed the community. the failure to hold the Harbor District Accountable for the alleged misuse of public funds represents a significant breach of trust and responsibility. Consequently, the Grand Jury, in this instance, undeniably deserves an F for their failure to serve the community's interest.

Lastly, if the community cannot rely on a Grand Jury to conduct their very important job with integrity, honesty, and fortitude then there is absolutely no hope for this County.

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Crescent City