

Editor's Note - Supervisor Says TriPLICATE Delivering "Bad Press" on Emergency Ambulance RFP.

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CEC Awarded Significant Increase from Transportation Dept.



ROGER GITLIN
Country Media, Inc.

Newly-sworn in Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy experienced an extremely challenging week following his swearing-in as Secretary, last week, the day Duffy took his Oath. The terrible tragedies of the Army Blackhawk/ American Airlines mid-air collision killing 67 souls over Reagan National airport in DC and the air ambulance crash in Philadelphia, killing seven, oc-

Airport Director Ryan Cooley

File Photo



"Never Argue with Someone Who Buys Ink by the Barrel"

2nd District Supervisor Valerie Starkey, during her bi-weekly comments on the Board of Supervisors leveled a broad charge The TriPLICATE was delivering less than good news statements on the County's venture into seeking a Request for Proposal for new ambulance service for Del Norte. In fact, Starkey called The TriPLICATE reporting, "Bad News" failing to identify whether the reporting was accurate or not.

The TriPLICATE respectfully disagrees. The reporting is spot-on accurate.

We've reported all matters factually to the Request that Emergency Medical Consultant EndPoint has been hired at initial cost of about \$97,000 for the purpose of reviewing current ambulance service provided by Del Norte Ambulance (DNAMB) for over 40 years. As far as we can see, DNAMB has provided excellent 9-1-1 ambulance service with no serious allegations and few complaints over its over-four decade track record.

The Triplicate has asked Starkey and her colleagues for the rationale on why the Board found it necessary to release the RFP at an expense which may cost the County in excess of \$150,000. The Department of Health and Human Services has stepped up to cover all costs of the RFP from its emergency fund, but failing to disclose the so-called emergency.

The Triplicate AGAIN asks what's the Emergency?

Crickets!

Since the vote was a narrow one to request the RFP, The Triplicate continues to ask these vexing questions.

Supervisors Dean Wilson and Chris Howard voted NO to seek the costly RFP, hoping to "grandfather" DNAMB continuing to serve Del Norte County. Supervisors Starkey, Darrin Short and current chairman Joey Borges voted YES, the latter two may have serious appearances of impropriety surrounding their votes.

In an attempt to provide objective reporting, The Triplicate has and continues to offer a Guest Opinion commentary from an esteemed supervisor on the justification for the RFP versus a grandfather process, the latter is without cost to the taxpayer. Exclusive Right to provide 9-1-1 Emergency City will continue to be offered to the County. The offer to retort was specifically offered Supervisor Starkey, TWICE. The response? NO RESPONSE!

Instead, Starkey in her broad stroke attack on The Triplicate at the March 11 Supervisors meeting comments made a vague reference to metrics (measurements) when she turned to Supervisor Chris Howard who she'd believed would support the metrics argument, and the impending report from the EndPoint team on Ambulance services in Lassen County. Howard actually voted to avoid the entire RFP process.

As a side issue and important to note...

(See attached news report from Santa Barbara County on a similar measure to supplant the existing 9-1-1 Emergency service) the RFP ended badly for the Santa Barbara taxpayer. The County of Santa Barbara chose to go the RFP route which was legally challenged by the existing 9-1-1 Ambulance carrier. Santa Barbara County lost! New equipment was purchased and upon loss of the lawsuit, that emergency equipment was turned over to the existing emergency server. The actions by the Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors cost taxpayers millions.

One would hope Starkey, Borges and Short might come to their senses and stop pondering metrics in favor of some good old fashion common sense; one would hope that.

Is metrics the real reason the Board has moved forward on this expensive exercise in seeking a new 9-1-1 service? The Triplicate suspects not. Long-simmering ego personalities are definitely moving the "metrics" meter.

Starkey has vowed to follow the process and even admitted DNAMB may very well end up with the new contract in 2028. The comments made little sense and failed to justify the costs of undertaking the Request for Proposal.

The Triplicate referred to Supervisors Short and Borges as being conflicted.

- Short sits on the Northcoast EMS Board and has compromised any perceived objectivity on making a decision in support of DNAMB. Cal-Ore Ambulance
- Borges' brother is a Captain on the Crescent Fire Protection District under Chief Kevin Carey.

The Triplicate continues to investigate the relationship between Cal-Ore Ambulance (owned by GMR Services), Joe Gregorio Managing Director of Cal-Ore Ambulance who recently resigned from the Crescent Fire Protection Board, to spend more time with his family and the athletic career of his granddaughter, Chief Carey and the three dissenting supervisors.

The offer still stands... Supervisor Starkey, you may articulate your position on p. 2 of The Triplicate for expenditures of limited funds and your rationale on fixing something that is clearly not broken.

A call to ex-Crescent Fire Protection District Board member Gregorio was expediently returned. Gregorio cited his resignation was due to spending more time with his family and play a more active part in his granddaughter's athletic career.

The story of who controls what is a bit more complicated.

GMR is the parent company which is controlled by an investment group KKR, and oversees Cal-Ore which also owns and controls Emergency 9-1-1 Ambulance service in the following communities across the North State and adjacent Oregon:

Reach; City Ambulance in Eureka, Arcata, Redding and Grants Pass AMR.

Del Norte Ambulance is clearly in Cal-Ore's periscope.

Not to worry... The Triplicate follows in the era of Mark Twain who stated so eloquently, "Never argue with someone who buys ink by the barrel."