

Supervisors Misunderstand What is a Medical Emergency

July 25, 2024

Letters to the Editor

One would think that as often as the words, “We are a poor County” are uttered in various Del Norte County Board meetings, the words would resonate and the Board would act as though it were true. Contrary to that assessment, the Board spends taxpayer money like the proverbial “Drunken Sailor.”

Millions of taxpayer dollars flow into the County’s coffers each year, the County’s government continues to grow and no apparent consideration is given to those, at least in theory, the supervisors are sworn to represent. During the July 9th meeting several striking examples stand out as money wasted for no discernible reason.

Earlier this Spring, local ambulance provider Del Norte Ambulance went before the Board requesting permanent and exclusive authorization to provide service within Del Norte. Most thinking people in the County are aware that Del Norte Ambulance has been a fixture for decades and has provided for the most part adequate service.

The Board decided by a narrow 3-2 vote, citing a laundry list of grievances generated by local fire departments and no one else, that this wasn’t going to happen. The Board’s action at the Spring meeting, set it on a course for a bidding contest, confirmed by Board action at the July meeting to replace Del Norte Ambulance.

Over the next several years, the Board has committed up to \$300,000 of taxpayer funds to conduct a search for an ambulance service which may or may not replace Del Norte Ambulance as the exclusive 9-1-1 service area provider.

A few unanswered questions come to mind.

- Is it likely a bidding process will produce a comparable or better service that we already have?

- Does it have the possibility that ambulance service will become more expensive even if Del Norte Ambulance were to remain our exclusive provider?
- And finally, is it likely to quell the clear animosity that has developed between the ambulance service and local fire departments.

Setting all this aside, the most troubling aspect of the shambles created by Supervisors Short, Borges and Starkey is the exceedingly large amount of our money that will be required to move forward toward the Request for Proposal until it was recognized by the Board that the successful bidder will be required to move forward for the RFP process for choosing the County's next service provider. Initially, it was thought the successful bidder would pass the cost on to the people it serviced. What to do?

It seems within the Department of Health and Human Services, there are taxpayer dollars to be used in the case of medical emergencies such as what the County experienced with Covid 19. Voila! Wave a magic wand and a three year a RFP process is transformed onto a "medical emergency."

Is it even legitimate for that transfer to occur?

And what happens if the County were to experience an actual medical emergency and the RFP drained that account dry?

It makes one wonder what other budgeted funds were related to support the Board's spendthrift habits.