

Beloved Supervisor:

I wish to comment on this bizarre idea of the acting sheriff to sue Mendocino County because of perceived conflicts of interest.

Any department, such as the Sheriff's Department, whose budget receives public funds should be required to submit an annual audit to the Board of Supervisors. For example: Behavioral Health, which receives no money from the county's general fund, must complete up to twelve audits a YEAR at the federal and state level to account for spending public money. Behavioral health is just as involved in public safety as law enforcement.

In addition, IT services should be integrated within one county department. Of course this system is in desperate need of update, but the different departments within the county could have certain IT specialists assigned to them. Nevertheless it should be one department and system. For example, if the Stepping Up initiative is ever properly implemented in Mendocino County, there will be a need to track behavioral health clients within the criminal justice system. My understanding is that currently everything has to be done by hand because there is no overall data system. This makes tracking individuals with mental health ailments who could be helped very difficult. If there is a separate IT system for the Sheriff it will remain so.

Finally, as much respect as I have for Sheriff Kendall, it is appalling to entertain the idea of suing one's employer because one can't have what they want. Duncan James and associates should be ashamed for jumping quickly to profit at the public's expense. If there is a problem, good consultation that examines the different perspectives and explores the facts can resolve it. If the parties can't or won't consult, mediation is the proper path. Certainly, spending public dollars on lawyers for a silly turf and ego fight is irresponsible and disrespectful. I hope the parties that be grow up and become responsible adults who can resolve this issue gracefully.

Thank you for your attention,
Jan McGourty, MPA