

NEWS

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Third District chief of staff Jim Foster resigns

After consultation with Third District Supervisor Dennis Hansberger, Third District Chief of Staff Jim Foster announced today that he will resign his position.

Supervisor Hansberger said, "Jim has told me that he believes he has acted in the best interest of the County, but has become a distraction. Jim said it is now appropriate for him to leave and for the County to move forward separately to avoid any appearance of conflict."

Supervisor Hansberger said, "Jim's departure will be a great loss to the County and to the Third District Staff. Jim has made many valuable contributions to the citizens of our region through his diligent pursuit of issues and his conservative fiscal attitude. However, in the face of a perceived conflict, it is necessary for Jim to leave in order to protect the reputation of the office, that of County government, and his own."

The Board of Supervisors engaged the law firm of Gumpert, Reitman to investigate the facts surrounding the allegation that Foster had violated County policy when he acquired an interest in a parcel of land at Sunset and Wabash formerly owned by the County.

Even if Mr. Foster acted in good faith and the County may have benefited from his actions, the report nonetheless raises sufficient concerns to lead the reader to believe that a conflict of interest may have occurred.

The Board is of the opinion that litigating the dispute is not cost effective and Mr. Foster's resignation ends the matter.

Supervisor Hansberger said, "I believe that Jim's intentions were good but his actions create an appearance of conflict that cannot be overlooked. I appreciate that Jim accepts this conclusion and has tendered his resignation in the interest of resolving this matter."

It is important to note that all of the records on which the report is based are available to the public. The information includes public documents and interviews with various persons.

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This incident marks another instance in which the county on its own became aware of a potential problem and acted quickly and appropriately in the public's interest.

Mr. Gumpert's investigation into past sales of surplus county property and the county's purchase of the Adelanto jail – which the county regards as a separate matter – are ongoing, and the public will be advised of any pertinent findings.

As for the matter involving Mr. Foster, the county considers the matter resolved, and the county's goal is to move on and continue conducting the public's business in a positive and productive manner.