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To: <kabzuagvaj@gmail.com>, <nruas@charter.net>, <nvuefran@freedom-inc.org>, <rogergarms@gmail.com>

Subject: Hmong and Cambodian Community

Dear Doua, Kabzuag, Nancy and Roger,

At our meeting on November 2nd we had a very thorough and deep discussion about the future of our Hmong and Cambodian community and the services that are needed.

There were several questions raised regarding funding and who represents the members of the community, specifically the elders. Your request of those of us present was that we recognize the Southeast Healing Center as the entity to receive funding to provide community and mental health services now and in the future based on various concerns and lack of information. I and other supervisors took your concerns seriously and recognize any member of your community has the right to want to serve the elders.

Several questions were raised by myself and you all regarding the funding, it was my understanding that we came to an agreement about how to move forward. I stated several times I did not believe I nor the County Board should be the arbiter of this tension between members of your community. I asked that any attempt to work this out without our intervention was the best path for the community. I also suggested that the budget process did not need to be the avenue by which we resolved this conflict; and, in fact, the depth of the conversation may require work that probably could not be completed in this process.

I was told that a meeting of the stakeholders was the only way to move forward, and I stated I would work to try and pull that together after the election was over because of my other responsibilities. In the mean time, you all were going to meet with Anesis, work on your budget needs, and keep communication with the Board focused on the supervisors already engaged.

During this time, much has occurred. While trying to pull together stakeholders the following information has been shared:

- 1) Doua resigned from Anesis prior to our meeting. He is no longer a staff under the current contract for 2018.
- 2) We were told at the meeting food and transportation was not being paid for and was being provided in a way that was concerning. This is just not true. Funding for food is occurring, is being spent, and is at a standard that challenges the assertion only rice and poor vegetables are available. I have been informed that even local law enforcement have been excited for the lunch and joined the elders. It is true that cash is not available for non staff to buy food.
- 3) County Board Supervisors began getting emails from the Southeast Healing Center.
- 4) An incident occurred at the Catholic Multicultural Center where a non staff in front of elders and the public tried asserting authority unprofessionally over the contracted staff to the point of saying the staff should depart the premises.
- 5) Elders are being asked to take sides while at the center, which is supposed to be a healing center, and told they need to sign a letter committing their support to an organization for future care. In addition, reports were that a program van was used without authority to transport elders without a full understanding of where they were going to last Wednesdays Finance hearing.
- 6) Alleged unethical actions have been reported.

7) All stakeholders have been called under pressure to change funding and service delivery immediately regardless of current contracts.

8) Most importantly, elders are in the middle and being retraumatized by being forced or maybe even coerced to participate in tactics and efforts over fear of loss of care or told they are not cared for under the current circumstance.

You asked me to intervene, and as I stated, you would force me to become involved and collect the necessary information to figure how best to move forward. You said I may have to make a decision, even though I suggested you working this out could prevent it.

As I started to try and pull the meeting together and get answers to the issues you raised, I found many of the accusations to be false. I found seriously reportable and unethical practices of some individuals I will need to explore further with the county, and I found stakeholders including elders in agreement that a meeting where accusations and fighting over funding is not in the best interest of the elders.

Human conflict and disagreement is natural and when fear and minimal resources are a part of everyday competition for resources it overshadows working together and what it is those resources are for, people.

I am saddened because as we fought to overcome division at the state and national level, the ware of that division perpetuated by others has taken its toll on all of us in every community. Those tactics that went unanswered for so long are now being employed here. As a result, it appears a meeting is unlikely. Your actions have concerned everyone involved, and I cannot force people to meet with you.

I know that many people share my belief that you have the ability to form any organization you so choose, and I believe there is value in multiple organizations being available to serve our most vulnerable. You too can work towards public funding in the upcoming year.

But given what has transpired, I cannot push for a change in funding in this budget at this time. In fact, I believe it even more important it stay as is.

I will continue to be available to talk with you about the future. It is clear though that you will need to make a concerted effort to undo some of the damage that has been done to move forward. County funding requires collaboration, and I am hopeful that is something that you can achieve in the future.

Jamie Kuhn