

This is Erin Dunn of the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

As many of you know, the obstetrics program at Redwood Memorial Hospital is on the chopping block and may be merged into the St. Joseph Hospital program.

And you may also know if you went to the Community Meeting in Fortuna last week, that if it was up to us, we would not allow that to happen.

But, it's not up to Fortuna. And it was very evident at the meeting last week that there is a disconnect between people involved in the decision making and our community.

The first example is the day and time they set the meeting.

As a community we started asking six months ago for them to attend a meeting in Fortuna. We were asked to wait. So, we politely waited. When it came time to schedule a meeting, St. Joseph Health set the date and time. A Thursday at Noon. I fielded a lot of calls at the Chamber from frustrated citizens who had to work on a Thursday at Noon. And one of our Rotary clubs meets Thursday at Noon.

Second, people walking into River Lodge were met by sturdy men—who looked like CR Police cadets—in bight vests that said SECURITY in very large letters. St. Joseph Health also asked Fortuna Police to have a presence at the meeting. The room was filled with young mothers and their babies, retirees, hospital staff and business people who somehow finagled time off from their job. Not exactly a rough crowd.

Third, Fortuna has a large Latino community. With families. And babies. The McLean Foundation arranged for an interpreter and provided headphones for Spanish speaking attendees. That was in no

part thanks to St. Joseph Health. The McLean Foundation knows this community.

And finally, someone from St. Joseph Health asked me to stop handing out copies a letter that had been signed by business leaders and officials. It didn't matter that I said it was going to be read aloud during the comment period. I guess they thought the Chamber lady was trying to incite a riot. But that's the point. They didn't know me. They didn't know the president of the hospital foundation board either so I don't feel so bad.

The Redwood Memorial Hospital Foundation Board, the City of Fortuna, The Fortuna and Ferndale Chambers of Commerce, the Fortuna Business Improvement District, the McLean Foundation, Supervisors Rex Bohn and Estelle Fennell are all asking the St. Joseph Health/Humboldt County Board of Trustees to please give us 36 months to recruit doctors. We are asking the Board of Trustees to remember the core values of the health system and that includes advocating for systems and structures that are attuned to the needs of the vulnerable and disadvantaged and that promote a sense of community among all persons.

Fortuna is that community. Please advocate for us.

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