

I am writing this with Stephen in mind since he stated his preference for providers but I hope all of the commissioners will read it.

As our public servants, the community deserves to know exactly why, in detail, each of the Hospital District commissioners is voting the way you are, because it does not make sense that you would vote for the Shields Group which inherently is a vote against SuperTrack. It was disappointing that it took so much effort for you to agree to a one week delay in the vote.

One concern I have is the damage this process is causing to our reputation as a community in the broader health community. Think of how this looks to “outsiders”. You are considering jettisoning a respected, established doctor who came here when no one else would for a physician’s assistant who graduated just a few years ago. You gave the doctor less than 18 months to pull things together. Considering the effort, time, and monetary investments SuperTrack made to establish care here, that this process is occurring at all at this time is unconscionable. And for most of those 18 months, at least two employees conspired against their employer behind his back and for that you would be rewarding their disloyalty by giving them the contract.

Over and over, all the providers in and around Whatcom County have refused to provide services here. SuperTrack coming here was a complete fluke and not part of the RFP process. (I will leave it to Barb to tell you that story.) You have virtually guaranteed no one from mainland would even consider coming here again after they see how SuperTrack is being treated now.

Another issue involves the ongoing deception by the Shields Group. When and how that will occur with the commission and the community in the future is my next concern. It has been well known that Deb has been unhappy with SuperTrack since she came back to Point Roberts to take the job they offered her. She has been working on this proposal for close to a year while being their employee. When the Shields Group was formed, her family did not disclose their ties to her. Instead, they proceeded like they were merely business associates. And those who she has lined up to work for her have also intentionally not bothered to disclose that fact to the public.

For the last several years of the contract between the previous hospital district commissioners and Unity Care, the district had no choice but to rubber stamp anything and everything Unity wanted, including paying for a \$7,000 Unity Care branding sign. Everyone on both sides believed no other provider would come here. Unity Care’s COO Shanon Hardie repeatedly and smugly bragged about that fact numerous times and used it as leverage over the district.

In Tuesday’s meeting, I heard the current commissioners make the opposite mistake. Some of the dialog seemed predicated on the assumption that we could open the contract again in a few years and entertain proposals from multiple providers. I think this would be a critical mistake.

If you choose to jettison SuperTrack in favor of a former employee who betrayed them, you will find yourselves in the unpleasant position of being beholden to a single provider once again. Like Unity Care, the Shields Group will call all the shots. They will tell you what they want and need, and you will have no option but to jump.

I suspect most people believe the vote will be 3-0 for the Shields Group. The logic goes that since they are supposedly “local”, what other choice do you have? More importantly, each of you has a personal connection with at least one principal in the Shields Group. The optics of that should be evident. Further, “local” in this case is that Deb only returned here when she got the job with SuperTrack.

While “local” may be seen as a selling point, what it boils down to is that everything rides solely on Deb’s shoulders. While her proposal offers the moon and more, her bench, as described by Barb during the meeting, is extremely shallow. What if her health declines? What if she decides to move? We all know that allegiances and friendships here are very fluid. What will happen when things begin to fall apart within the Shields Group? You will be consigning us to just hope someone lives here whom she could recruit because no one else from the mainland will be coming to our rescue again.

Please vote to allow SuperTrack the opportunity to continue providing care here.