

EDC Grand Jury blasts 2 elected officials

By Kathryn Reed

The El Dorado County Grand Jury raked Auditor-Controller Joe Harn and Supervisor Ron Mikulaco over the coals in separate reports that were released this week.

Neither of the elected officials believes there is much truth to the reports, with Mikulaco saying it is politically motivated.

Harn said it's hard to defend accusations when no examples of wrongdoing were presented.

Mikulaco, who is in his first term, represents the first district on the western edge of the county. He said he was never interviewed by the grand jury regarding the allegations made against him, which is a Penal Code violation.

"I'm not a good ol' boy. There is a cost to not towing the line," Mikulaco told *Lake Tahoe News*.

In the future he believes there needs to be better screening of the grand jury members so no one with blatant political connections and therefore perceived biases serves.

Brian Veerkamp, chair of the board, did not return a call. His secretary told *LTN*, "I doubt he will be able to comment, but I will give him your message."

In addition to the reports on the two elected officials, the grand jury also believes the El Dorado County Charter should be repealed and county government structured as a general law county.

This civil grand jury claims Harn cost the county more than \$1

million because he allegedly did not send a complete cost allocation plan to the state.

“The bottom line is they don’t understand the cost allocation plan. It didn’t cost us anything,” Harn told *Lake Tahoe News*.

In a prepared statement he further stated, “The state controller found no fault with the plan prepared by my office. The state controller found that the IT billings prepared by IT were not supported. IT didn’t maintain the records needed to substantiate the billings. My office is not responsible for the IT billings. The IT billings were done correctly for a decade prior to the former CAO’s reorganization of the management of IT.”

Since that time CAO Terri Daly was shown the door and the person who had always done IT’s billings for the cost allocation plan left the county.



Joe Harn

The findings against Harn include:

- **Report:** Harn delayed or refused to make payments for reasons of personal and political motivation.

Harn’s response: He has to pay the bills, so this isn’t possible

- **Report:** The Board of Supervisors has not ensured the independence of the outside audit of the county’s financial statements.

Harn's response: An outside audit is done every year. It's likely a new auditor will be hired this year because the same CPA firm has been used for the last seven years. He welcomes the board to have an audit committee.

· **Report:** He is not complying with two ordinances – sections 3.16.130 and 3.16.140.

Harn's response: The 1958 ordinance saying the Board of Supervisors approves bills for payment has been replaced by a 1978 resolution saying this is the auditor-controller's responsibility. (There is likely to be an agenda item June 23 repealing the 1958 ordinance so there is no confusion.)

· **Report:** He allows personal relationships to interfere with his management of his staff.

Harn's response: "I like and respect my staff, and they like and respect me."

· **Report:** The auditor-controller is guilty of harassment and disrespectful conduct toward employees of both the county and other entities.

Harn's response: "If they brought up specific examples, I might be able to say I should have been nicer. Earlier they say I'm a bully, but don't say who I bullied."



Ron
Mikulaco

As for Mikulaco, the report says, "District One Supervisor Ron Mikulaco lacks comprehensive awareness of his position as a county supervisor and fails to follow basic and generally

accepted principles of good governance. Equally alarming, he is abrasive, combative and insulting to others, and refuses to follow the protocols and processes expected of any elected official, especially an El Dorado County supervisor.”

The supervisor told *Lake Tahoe News*, “It was pretty brutal. I was a little caught off guard. They never talked to me about any of the items in there. They never interviewed me.”

The report accuses him of using taxpayer money for a satellite office in El Dorado Hills that the jury says is not necessary. (The district five supe has an office in South Lake Tahoe and Placerville.) Mikulaco said he furnished the office and pays for it out of the allowance he is given each year.

Each supervisor has \$250,000 to spend – this includes the salary for their assistant and then other items related to their job. Mikulaco said he has given money back to the county because he has not spent it all.

He said the training he received that the jury took issue with is no different than what others are offered.

As for his personality, Mikulaco said, “I agree I can be abrasive when people lie to me.”