

## Untitled

Commission Meeting

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## Comments:

We are in the middle of acrimony right now about the proposed dissolution of the La Madera Volunteer Fire Department, and the impact of that proposal on the citizens of southeast Sandoval County. This acrimony did not have to happen.

I try to imagine a world where Chief Eric Masterson had come to our citizens and our fire department in good faith, in a spirit of respect and open collaboration and said "I think I may have a way to make your 911 service even better. Here are my ideas. What do you think? Could we work together to make this happen?"

In that world I have absolutely no doubt that Chief Masterson would have encountered little resistance. I would have been on board, and probably the majority of the La Madera VFD and our citizens would have been on board too. There would certainly have been some regrets, but most of us would have united as a community in planning a bright future. Instead, Chief Masterson declared war on all of us and attempted to deal us a killing blow in the middle of the night. I expect he thought the La Madera VFD would be dead and gone before anybody even knew what had happened. So now here we are. In a war none of us wanted, and entirely because of Eric Masterson's actions. We deserve better leadership from our county fire chief.

I was a volunteer firefighter and EMT for 15 years. A very wise fire chief once taught me a valuable lesson: "When you're running toward that burning house with your axe over your shoulder, and your adrenaline's pumping, and you're just about to swing the axe right through the front door, STOP! ...and try the doorknob."

Chief Masterson broke a basic rule of firefighting: He didn't try the doorknob.