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EDITORIAL: Tri-City rings up hit, misses

By the North County Times Opinion staff

The din and fury surrounding Tri-City Medical Center's administration continues, as do the lingering doubts about the coastal public hospital's future. By our count, the board has one hit, two misses.

For those who are keeping track, here's what the revamped board of directors has been up to recently. In short, with little additional board comment, it has:

-- Reached a nearly \$1 million settlement with former CEO Arthur Gonzalez, who had been on leave for still largely vague reasons since mid-December, when a new majority on the seven-member board punted him from his post. Part of the pact is that each party agrees to only talk nice about the other.

By our reckoning, the board (and hence the district's taxpayers) got off cheap with the Gonzalez settlement ---- the \$1 million package represents less than two years of earnings and benefits he would have received working under the year-by-year contract he held. And the figure is far less than he would have received had he balked and taken the issue to court.

-- Fired, with little reason other than "for cause," a large chunk of Gonzalez's management team. Those fired said relatively minor issues were presented to them as reasons for termination. If true, that would make a fishy situation smell even more.

The reasons aired seem specious at best, leaving the large possibility that any financial break gained from Gonzalez's settlement will be rapidly sopped up by the costs of what could be a potential eight separate lawsuits from his dismissed management team.

-- Tabled, until its next meeting, a proposal by its medical staff just to study all possible alternatives to its current governing structure, including the existing system. The board's rationale for delaying the discussion? It wanted to hear the other side.

The board's reason for tabling the discussion still has us scratching our heads and wondering, "what is the 'other side' of everything?" Or did the new board majority really just want time to prepare its own self-defense?

But it is Tri-City after all; the hospital on the hillside. We're just hoping it doesn't all come tumbling down.

Stay tuned.

Additional information:

[OCEANSIDE: Attorney says Tri-City administrators fired](#)

[OCEANSIDE: Gonzalez parts ways with Tri-City](#)

[OCEANSIDE: Tri-City board punts doctors' proposal](#)