

# A very-low-profile grand jury investigation



Contra Costa Board of Supervisors, May 2017

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MARTINEZ — It was an unusual and erroneous way to refer to one’s “favorite politician,” and Jim Mellander got the attention of those in the room as the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors on June 23 discussed how to go about replacing District Attorney Mark Peterson.

Mellander, the foreperson of the 2016-17 panel of the Contra Costa Civil Grand Jury, spoke to the supervisors about the need to ensure the applicants to replace Peterson have the utmost integrity. Mellander told them it was the grand jury’s report in May recommending Peterson’s removal for improper use of campaign funds that set the wheels in motion for a broader investigation and, ultimately, Peterson’s June 14 resignation (hours before pleading no contest to one felony count of perjury).

There was a little mix-up with the names, though, on June 23. “It was my privilege,” Mellander said, “to serve as foreperson of the grand jury that brought the accusation forward against John Gioia ...”

Gioia, on the dais in front of Mellander, reacted with surprise. “Wait — I’m your supervisor!” said Gioia, feigning shock. Fellow Supervisor Candace Anderson jumped in: “And now we’re going to have it revealed!” she said in jest. “We’ve been waiting for this ...”

Of course, Mellander meant to say “Mark Peterson” instead of “John Gioia.”

“Freudian slip there, John,” Mellander said as the laughter died down. “(Gioia’s) probably my favorite politician.”