

County manager resigns

Gil de Rubio leaves amid 'tensions' with the commission

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NEWPORT — Against a backdrop of escalating political infighting and a \$2.2 million budget deficit, Sullivan County Manager Ed Gil de Rubio announced his resignation Monday, Dec. 3.

Gil de Rubio, who has held the top administrative post in Sullivan County for five and a half years, said his resignation, effective Jan. 1, will allow the Sullivan County Board of Commissioners to take the county in "a different direction."

"The commissioners and I have a different direction as far as the day-to-day operations (of various county departments) and I respect that, but I also know what kind of manager I am, and I think it's time for me to leave so

they can get on with their vision," Gil de Rubio said.

Sullivan County finished the last fiscal year \$2.2 million in the red, partly due to anticipated nursing home revenue that never materialized and partly due to \$1.2 million in capital expenditures that were unexpectedly charged to the fiscal year 2007 budget, Gil de Rubio said.

"We thought it was safe to spend those funds, but we found out during the audit that that was not the case," he said. "... I was relying on the accountants and the auditors to figure it out."

Gil de Rubio characterized his resignation as a mutual decision made with the commissioners, who were in the process of reviewing his job performance last week.

Sullivan County Commissioner Ben Nelson said the three-person board has now formulated an "interim approach" to county government in which the nursing home administrator and the director of the department of corrections will report directly to the commission.

Greg Chanis, who has been the county's director of facilities and operations for about three years, will be appointed to replace Gil de Rubio, Nelson said. Chanis doesn't have an accounting background, but the commissioners plan to bring in financial experts to help him.

"We basically see this as streamlining and cutting away a layer of bureaucracy," Nelson said.

Nelson was reluctant to pin all the blame for the county's financial crisis on Gil de Rubio.

"The budget was scrutinized by a lot of folks," he said. "There's a lot of blame to go around, and I don't want to single out any one person."

State representatives from Sullivan County said they weren't surprised by the news of Gil de Rubio's resignation, given the tensions, personality conflicts and financial troubles that have plagued the county and its leaders in recent months.

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State Rep. Tom Donovan, D-Claremont, said it wasn't until a month before the end of the fiscal year that delegates found out the county was millions of dollars, rather than a few hundred thousand dollars, in debt.

"There's a lot of unanswered questions, and we've been trying to get information for a long, long time from Ed and the administration, and I just hope he doesn't take that with him, and leave us to

uncover the remnants of certain things," Donovan said.

In particular, Donovan said, he and other delegates question the administration of certain grant funds and payments to Genesis Health Care, the private company the county hired to run its nursing home in Unity. The county commissioners severed ties with Genesis earlier this year and recently hired Ted Purdy as nursing home administrator.