Ruling 'Challenge' Creates A Rift Among Supervisors

The first "challenge" of a ruling by the chairman of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors in at least 12 years also has brought the first discernible rift between the two new members of the Board.

Supervisor Rodney J. Diridon, sworn into office last Jan. 7, "challenged" a ruling by Chairman Dominic Cortese during a parliamentary duel Wednesday. Subsequent research revealed that there is no such thing as a "challenge" in Robert's Rules of Orders.

Supervisor Geraldine Steinberg, an attorney who was nominated to the Board of Supervisors three months ago, said after several minutes of the verbal sparring that "it might be correct to challenge the chair, but this is ridiculous."

The parliamentary flurry began when a motion was made (regarding hiring of more welfare workers) and was seconded by Diridon. After discussion, Cortese asked Diridon if he intended to amend the motion. Diridon replied he did not.

On a call for the question a clerk read the title of the ordinance, and the roll call of votes began. In mid-vote, Diridon proposed an amendment to the motion he had seconded. It was to include more workers in a different work category.

Supervisor Sig Sanchez pointed out the necessity of getting at least the first group of welfare workers hired, and that any additional could be added by a second, separate motion. Diridon persisted.

Cortese ruled the amendment out of order per parliamentary proceedings, since the voting had begun. Diridon "challenged" the ruling Mrs. Steinberg called Diridon "challenged" the ruling. Cortese called for the vote and the issue passed.

Diridon got the added position on the separate motion that Sanchez had suggested.

It was the latest in what appears to be a series of "power plays" for control of the board majority.

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