

# Cheyenne Herald

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## LCCC disgraced former president Darrel Hammon did not jump. He was shoved.

by Dave Featherly

It never ceases to amaze me how stupid elected officials think the citizenry is.

That disrespect was put on full display again Monday night when the Laramie County Community College (LCCC) board of trustees conducted a carefully orchestrated "business meeting" to pretend to accept the resignation of Darrel Hammon. There were so many things wrong about that charade that it's hard to know where to start.

But start I must.

First, there could be no justification for rushing through a huge payment to a failed college president when the primary movers on the act were recently rejected by voters and would leave office within hours. You can't fault the trustees that voters said to take a long walk off a short pier, the ones to blame are the five others. One of those was in concert with the two denied another term but the other four have no excuse. They should never have been "played" as they were. Their lack of courage and integrity once again shows just why things are as they are at the pasture college. Spineless.

Many in the City rose up in indignation when the Mayor suggested gifting city employees with a \$150.00 Christmas present. \$150.00! Yet, another handful of elected officials chose to gift a disgraced college president twenty-four hundred times that amount, \$360,000.00!!!!

That is disgusting.

Three hundred sixty thousand dollars for bringing ridicule, shame, humiliation and embarrassment upon a once proud campus and county.

Next, there was no way that this drive-by meeting could have been held as it was without violating state statute. The skids had been

greased for this one-act play to be performed as it was - **GREASED BEFORE ANY TRUSTEE EVER SET FOOT IN THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING THAT NIGHT!**

I am reliably informed that the meeting was so short that some members of the public were still entering the facility and had not gotten seated before the meeting was over.

There is no way in God's green earth that something that should have been as complicated and as controversial as paying a guy like Darrel Hammon \$360,000.00 for failing could be legitimately resolved in a few minutes.

That means that the trustees had "met" - by e-mail or telephone call - and decided this subject before any public words would be spoken. That, even the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle and Wyoming Press Association know, is illegal.

Imagine, the trustees are now put in the position of having to provide a legal defense for themselves by saying that the amount of \$360,000.00 was not previously agreed upon - that Darrel Hammon or one of his braying trustees threw the number out and all of the others said, "sounds fine to me." Horse hockey!

Where is their conscience? Two of the trustees just won re-election. Do they seriously think voters would have supported them had they known the trustees would roll over like a water show seal for older, louder men?

They broke the law. And actions taken in an illegal meeting - one actually conducted before the "show" meeting held that Monday night - are not only voidable, they are, as we near the legal profession like to remind miscreants, **VOID AB INITIO**. Void from the beginning.

This transaction is void ab initio.

No one wants to see Darrel Hammon out of LCCC more than I do. From my first investigation into his behavior on the Costa Rica trip, I knew he was not fit - and not a fit - for LCCC.

Even with this fake "resignation," he displayed an arrogance seldom seen in this small town.

The normal lie told when an executive is forced from his position is that he "wants to spend more time with his family" and is resigning to do that. Hammon used his credit card and free travel to take with him, or rendezvous at his destination, family members whenever and wherever he wanted. He couldn't spend much more time with them. He didn't even try that line.

He said LCCC trustees wanted to "go in another direction." The direction he knew they had in mind for him was "out" so he arranged with his allies on the board to be paid almost his full salary for leaving two and a half years before his contract expired - **BEFORE HE WAS FIRED!** He knew he would be fired. And, the weak-kneed trustees, instead of representing the taxpayers of this county, chose to stand with an incompetent college president.

The payment was exorbitant. It was worth *something* to be rid of Darrel Hammon. A strong group would have given him two options. "We will offer you six months salary if you resign, resignation effective in thirty days. Or, we will fire you tonight and all you will be paid is your unused vacation. You have one hour to give us your decision."

In thanks for the trustees gifting him so much public money, Hammon gave them one day. One day! He will not pass along any information to successors. There is nothing - repeat, **NOTHING** - about this parting of the ways that smacks of a resignation. He was fired. And he reacted defiantly to that firing. Good riddance.

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