

On Jul 17, 2013, at 10:53 AM, Alex Torpey <atorpey@southorange.org> wrote:

Sheena,

First off, you are violating the OPMA by sending your email to the whole Board, cc or bcc, doesn't matter which one you do if you are having a conversation on a policy. Why you thought you had to cc all the trustees on an email exchange happening between the two of us again shows your lack of interest in process when it supports your own opinions. BCCing an email that otherwise would be a violation, does not make it not a violation. Please call Steve Rother if you have any confusion about this.

I am being defensive because what you did here is underhanded and totally inappropriate. You are not interested in having a full and open discussion, you are interested in pushing your opinion forward, and doing so however possible. You were not involved in discussions a year ago, so how could you possibly suggest that you didn't approach Andrew in a totally biased way. You did not ask for ANY INFORMATION about the history or decision making that was involved, the vetting that took place, the research of best practices, and conversations with many different groups, including the Rescue Squad. You did not ask him to reach out to ask for more information. You asked him to write a letter, which of course, supports your position. Had you wanted to have a full and open discussion, as you continue to claim, you would have likely asked for a conversation, and a history, not just pushed someone into writing a letter. And by doing it the way you did, you put Andrew in an awkward position, because he did not have all of that information to make the statements that he did.

What you seem to be missing, is that there is a difference between the Board soliciting an opinion from a Board advisory committee, and the Board soliciting an opinion from a staff person (paid or not). Additionally, you do not have the authority to request items on behalf of the Board, without discussing publicly and soliciting the Board's opinion first.

The "Board" did not solicit Andrew's opinion, you did, personally, as one trustee, which is totally underhanded. You cannot claim to represent the Board when you have not discussed the item publicly and asked for the Board's feedback. Again, as an individual trustee, you do not have the authority to speak for the entire 6 member Board and ask people to do what you did. Why you didn't approach me, Barry, Adam or your entire 6 member Board, and did this completely on your own, I do not understand, and make it seem like you have personal interests in mind. It does not follow what we agreed to in our planning meetings to follow procedures that help make work and decisions more efficient, understandable and transparent,

it is counter productive to those goals, and unfair to someone like Andrew, who volunteers his time to serve South Orange's OEM to put him in the position you did.

This is not the Wild West, or maplewood online. This is not open ended, and everyone doing whatever they want all the time. That is not the tenet of a functional government.

And you know this from your work at (b) (1) (A), but you need to be able to apply those same principles here, understanding that you are not the CEO here, but I am, and you are a board member. What if one of your Board members at (b) (1) (A) went around you in this fashion? There are rules, procedures and processes that we all try our best to follow so that we can all understand how decisions get made, and specifically to AVOID these kind of confusing problems in the future so everyone can feel part of the process, and everyone can understand how decisions were reached. However, one trustee going off on their own soliciting opinions from staff (paid or not) does not help this. Had you followed any of the proper processes, or simply reached out and asked a question instead of trying to get a letter to support your own opinion without anyone else finding out until it was "too late" is exactly the kind of problems that were caused by former trustees who didnt understand the process, and slowed progress, and made issues more complicated and opaque for us and for the public than they need to be.

I do hope you will be more considerate and thoughtful about trying to follow processes that don't just help your own position, but help all of us better understand the issues that we have to decide on.

On Wednesday, July 17, 2013, Sheena Collum wrote:

Alex,

I completely resent this whole "trumpet your own misguided opinions" - that's utterly ridiculous. And to even suggest "asking him to write a letter supporting your opinion" What are you talking about?

I really have no idea why you're being so defensive. Mr. (b) (1) (A) runs our shelters and does this professionally. I, along with Walter, have worked with him as CERT members. I asked him what he thought about a proposed use of a shelter above the new rescue squad facility. I like things in writing so I can SHARE information with everyone and we're all working with the same information. I don't need leading questions or push polls -we need honest answers and people to provide guidance and participate. Someone's professional opinion is THEIR opinion - this goes for all of our advisory committees, volunteers, and working groups, etc. They have a right to give an opinion and the BOT should be soliciting people's opinions on a regular basis. Had he said "great use of shelter space, we really need this, etc." - that's a good

point of information for the BOT to have. Similarly, had he said "Make the facility even larger because the need is there" - we would consider expanding scope to meet demands of what serves the community's best interest.

This boils down to a shelter coordinator basically saying this isn't a good/necessary use of a new rescue squad facility. That being said, that doesn't suggest that other proposed uses aren't necessary or worthy of discussion or something the BOT may support. This is ONE data point from a volunteer who brings a good perspective to an issue that we're going to be voting on.

Now I do have to get back to work. See you tonight.

Thanks,

Sheena

On Jul 17, 2013, at 9:58 AM, Alex Torpey <atorpey@southorange.org> wrote:

You are getting respect. However you show NONE by ignoring all chains of command, and trying to use people Andrew to trumpet your own misguided opinions, without approaching myself (his superior) or even having a discussion about all the facts before asking him to write a letter supporting your opinion. You need to step up here as a trustee, you're no longer a resident, your a public official, and that means you need to follow proper procedures, not play these games.

Village President

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