

From: Greg Burt
To: Karen Benker
Cc: karen.benker@ci.longmont.co.us
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2009 4:08 PM
Subject: I'm getting ready to publish a story about you

Ms. Benker,

I have been doing some freelance investigating into some funding anomalies with how Longmont city money was bid out to HOPE even though HOPE missed the strict application deadline back in 2007. The story will also mention how you happened to be on the HOPE board at the time. I also plan to show how you broke state statues by advocating for HOPE funding as a city council member while you still were a member of the HOPE board. This is clearly a violation of 24-18-109(3)a. But before I publish this information and give it to various press organizations, I wanted in fairness to give you a chance to explain your actions.

So here are a few questions I need answered:

Colorado Revised Statues state the following: (3) (a) **A member of the governing body of a local government who has a personal or private interest in any matter proposed or pending before the governing body shall disclose such interest to the governing body and shall not vote thereon and shall refrain from attempting to influence the decisions of the other members of the governing body in voting on the matter.**

On January 10, 2008 you attended the LHHSAB meeting and asked the board to vote to fund HOPE. Council Member McCoy was a member of the LHHASAB and in attendance that evening. I also had several people tell me you spoke on HOPE's behalf at a city council meeting while still a member of the board. How are these instances not a violation of the state statue quoted above?

Did you ever talk to Gordon Pedrow, Karen Roney, or any other staff member about setting up a RFT for homeless (search and save) outreach services in 2007?

I heard you are no longer a member of the HOPE board. When did you remove yourself from the board? Why did you remove yourself as a board member?

If you would like to respond to these questions by email, that's fine or we can talk over the phone. But I need your response by this coming Friday morning.

Just let me know.

Greg Burt

From: Karen Benker [mailto:karenbenkerlg@earthlink.net]
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2009 12:23 PM
To: gsburt@netzero.net
Cc: Gordon.Pedrow@ci.longmont.co.us; City_Council_&_Mayor@ci.longmont.co.us; karen.benker@ci.longmont.co.us
Subject: Re: I'm getting ready to publish a story about you

Mr. Burt,

I have heard from several members of the community that you are being paid to "investigate" me in case I decide to run for reelection and have emails from folks that substantiate that statement. I understand you are a former employee of Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave's office and were responsible for much of the negative campaign material coming from her campaign in the last election. It's too bad that LIFT and Katie Witt are going negative in this upcoming campaign and do not want to talk about the important issues that the city currently is facing.

When Boulder County Cares began to provide outreach service to Longmont 's homeless in October 2006, I decided to join the effort because I did not think Longmont had a homeless issue and I wanted to see this for myself. I quickly learned that Longmont has a serious issue with individuals being homeless and sleeping on the street during the coldest nights of the year. I realized that we had very few services serving this population. I continued to volunteer with Boulder County Cares serving Longmont 's homeless because I felt that as a city council member, it was important for me to serve ALL residents of the city, including the poorest. When HOPE started in 2007, I was asked to be a volunteer, unpaid board member. I agreed because I felt that I always need to remember to serve all sectors of Longmont and I want to be reminded what it's like to be poor and do not have a place to sleep or not have food to eat. An elected official can easily forget the true needs of their community because we are surrounded my many folks that are well off and ask for special consideration on selected projects. But who speaks for the poor?

I continue to volunteer with HOPE one night each month so I will not forget how difficult it is to survive when one has a mental disability, dementia, lost their family, have substance abuse problems, or lost their job. Each homeless person has their own unique story. We bring food and clothing to the homeless, and when it is really cold out, we work with 3 local churches that will house them during cold nights. My time as a former board member and current volunteer for HOPE is unpaid and I receive no reimbursement of any kind for my work. I resigned on September 28, 2008 because I did not want to hurt the HOPE organization and felt that certain members of council were going to make my association with HOPE a political issue. How unfortunate.

And as a reminder, our former City Attorney notified city council last year that council members may vote on the budgets of organizations and non-profits that we serve on, but we can not vote on their city contract. (for example, Roger and I serve on the Longmont Area Economic Council, and we are allowed to vote on their city appropriation; Mary Blue serves on the Special Transit board, etc.)

You will have to do your own research regarding your questions. I hope you will be honest and be truthful.

So what individual or group has hired you? What are the terms of your contract? and How much are you getting paid to investigate me?

Karen Benker

From: Greg Burt [mailto:gsburt@netzero.net]

Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2009 1:21 PM

To: 'Karen Benker'

Cc: 'Gordon.Pedrow@ci.longmont.co.us'; 'City_Council_&_Mayor@ci.longmont.co.us'; 'karen.benker@ci.longmont.co.us'

Subject: RE: I'm getting ready to publish a story about you

Ms. Benker,

I'm sorry you have chosen not to answer my questions. I hope you will reconsider. If you have an explanation for why you tried to influence the LHHSAB board to give HOPE \$10,000 in violation of state statues, I promise to include your explanation in my article. I do plan to be honest and truthful with the story I will publish. Your work with the homeless is commendable, but I hope you aren't inferring by your detailed account of your work with the homeless that state statues don't apply to you because you are working for a noble cause. I think the citizens of Longmont might have a problem with that.

You are correct about the fact that I ran a congressional office in Longmont for four years for Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave, but I had very little to do with her campaigns besides volunteering to make some phone calls around election time. But prior to working for Musgrave, I was a newspaper reporter and I have quite a bit of experience investigating government corruption.

As far as who I work for, I keep that to myself.

I hope you will reconsider and answer my remaining questions otherwise my article will simply say that we have been in contact, but you refused to answer the questions regarding your behavior. If you've done nothing wrong, then why not explain yourself. If you refuse to answer, it will look like you are acknowledging you did something wrong. It's up to you.

Greg Burt