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August 19, 2016

Chairman Judith Whiteside  
And Members, Board of Selectmen  
Town of Wareham  
54 Marion Road  
Wareham, MA 02571

Dear Chairman Whiteside and Members:

I'm writing to respond to your letter of reprimand dated July 18, 2016 regarding allegations of "eavesdropping" against me. Included was an unsigned witness statement together with the supposed original complaint submitted to you dated Monday, June 20, 2016, by Town Administrator Derek Sullivan. Said complaint was then made part of his report to you at your next public meeting on June 21, 2016.

You discussed the allegations on June 21, July 12, and August 9, each time in public session without anyone from the town of Wareham ever contacting me officially to discuss the matter or giving me formal notification of the meeting. Let me reiterate that: the chief elected officials of the town of Wareham have discussed these allegations three times in public session without once asking for my side of the story or allowing me to respond. On August 10, I sent a letter by certified mail to you asking for an opportunity to speak at your next regular meeting. Yesterday, the agenda was published without that courtesy for your August 23 meeting.

It is evident to me that these allegations were concocted in retaliation for my criticism of the Community and Economic Development Authority (CEDA) Department. So let me begin by restating my concerns.

I was appointed to the CEDA Board by the Board of Selectmen in June, 2014 and since then, I've concluded that the office is in constant turmoil, we are squandering grant funds and missing grant opportunities, and doing a disservice to the low- and moderate-income families of our town. Most of the chaos is due to the continued interference by members of the Board of Selectmen and the administration. This problem has existed since 2004 when CEDA was created by an act of the state Legislature.

The legislation states that the office shall be "managed, controlled and governed" by the seven-member Board of Officers to which I was appointed. (See Section 1, Chapter 383 of the Acts of 2004.)

Instead, and because of sloppy legislation, the interpretation of who has authority has been dictated primarily by one man, namely Rich Bowen, Wareham's town counsel. Accordingly, over more than a decade, CEDA has had numerous directors, acting directors, interim directors, and consultants, none of whom have been able to correct the management problems.

The one common denominator for most of these years is the chairman of the Board of Officers, Jean Connaughton, who has actively stonewalled my attempts to get information about the operation, and I can only assume that she has done the same with other Board members over the years.

But I'd like to concentrate on the most recent year. A little over a year ago, the then director, Sal Pina, brought before the Board of Officers the idea of creating a new position of "senior program manager." The only real concern at the time was how we were going to fund the position. He convinced us that this new position's efforts would be to seek and secure additional grant opportunities, which would more than fund the salary. We signed on as a board and sought applications to fill the position.

This is when the politics interfered with the operations.

Of the applicants, the hiree had no grant writing experience. In fact, in a little over a year, I'm fairly certain that not one grant was obtained for CEDA while the full salary of nearly \$60,000 was paid.

There were thoughts politically that the person in this position might be promoted to that of director if ever the position became available. Lo and behold, Sal Pina was put on administrative leave with pay unbeknownst to the Board of Officers by your administration. The CEDA operations became like a rudderless ship on the high seas.

Your board and your administrator were not providing any information or any documentation as to a charted course yet you argued that you all had the "authority." Subsequently, an article was drafted and inserted by you into this past Town Meeting warrant by the administration to "reorganize" town departments by combining the planner's position with that of a CEDA director. Again it was all unbeknownst to the CEDA Board of Officers. There was no detail provided to the Board of Officers for said reorganization. In fact, the public hearing, as required by the Charter, was held just one business day before Town Meeting. And as it was all so very last minute the legal notice had to appear in the Standard Times because the deadline was missed for the local newspaper.

In my opinion that's hardly enough time for voters to make an informed decision, let alone the Board of Officers, who were never included in any discussions.

After several weeks during which Mr. Pina was still being paid with grant proceeds, your administrator hired a "consultant," again unbeknownst to the Board of Officers, to complete the application for the 2017 mini-entitlement grant.

Although, one problem that continues to plague our operations is that we are not being provided any information or any documentation as to our expenses/accounting. Any of what we've seen is fraught with errors. I, for one, as a Board member, have asked repeatedly since last December for the contracts executed for our consultant as he and his company is being paid from grant proceeds. It was finally just last week that they were made available.

Then not long after Sal was gone your administrator fired our housing rehabilitation inspector, who was told it was because of the lack of funds. Yet our interim director/consultant came with a housing rehab inspector friend of his own, who I'm sure is also being paid from grant proceeds. One problem is that he lives in New Hampshire and hasn't been in Wareham a half dozen times, which all in part explains why our housing rehab program is nearly two years behind. In fact, Wareham has had to ask for a second extension of time for the 2014 grant completion. Anyone familiar with grants knows that certain specific accomplishments must get met and be reported on.

To summarize, Wareham's CEDA department is being mismanaged, there is no documentation being made available to the Board of Officers, there are no financials being made available to the Board of Officers, yet we're being asked to tap into accounts and supplement our program's administrative expenses. To compound the dysfunction, you and your board recently gave the administration what you've assumed to be your "authority", which has been construed to mean the management of the CEDA department. I continue to contend that you don't have that authority to assign.

But stay tuned... the next big debacle is going to be the sale and development of 7.5 acres that CEDA owns at Bay Point. I feel strongly that the residents of Onset Village and other interested parties should be a part of the public process for the planning and development of the parcel so as to maximize its value on behalf of our town.

But to the point of this letter: You and your administration erroneously chose to publicly state that I'm guilty of some wrongdoing. I contend that I've done absolutely nothing wrong. I was in Town Hall, a public building, actually looking for the chair and vice-chair of our Board of Officers after I saw that both their vehicles were in the Town Hall parking lot. Upon entering our CEDA office, which I am fully within my right to do, I was told that Peter Sanborn, our consultant, was in a meeting upstairs. So I headed up to the conference room where we usually meet. At the top of the stairs behind a closed door I heard Jean Connaughton's voice (chairman) and then Mike Fitzgerald's (vice-chairman). I stood outside for possibly two minutes contemplating entering. At no time did I ever have my "ear pressed" anywhere.

As a follow up, I asked of the chairman to report to the rest of the Board of Officers on the meeting. It's that simple. And that's an important point: participants knew I overheard the meeting **because I told them so**. As of today, now more than two months later, there is still no report, which is symptomatic of much of what ails CEDA: a chairman who thinks she has absolute authority and chooses not to communicate with Board members.

As you know, the CEDA board voted 5-0 on August 18 to recommend that you remove me. Surely the wording of their agenda left no question in the members' minds, given that the sole agenda item was the foregone conclusion: "Discussion and Vote to Recommend Removal" of me. I question the appropriateness of this language, and I question the means by which their "complaints" against me were solicited. However, I suspect that is a topic best addressed by authorities other than yourselves.

I will not accept any longer your public humiliation and defamation of my character, not to mention any lost opportunity this drama will cause my business here in town, in order to serve a board from which you have removed any meaningful role or function.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Brady