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Subject: Re: Per conversation

John thanks so much you knowledge and help guiding all this as a world expert in the VCB , Chamber and travel tourism industry . Your guidance has proved to be very valuable and myself as well as our local government should be so grateful for your help confirming all this. I am sure based on this, local authorities will have no choice but to get involved now .
I also included David Tigges in this email a SC lawyer who is involved and behind fighting full transparency .

What I find disturbing as you and a growing number of others now know is how Tom Upshaw , Bill Miles . David tigges and few others involved completely refuse to be transparent and openly debate this . All they do is keep denying and trying to keep others off balance when facts are presented . I agree totally this only means one thing . We need to fully investigate many and perhaps go back 5 yrs including big grant recipients like Jane Upshaw and others and like you said no more monies to anyone until everyone meets demands for full transparency .

I think we all now understand this is all coming to an end . Thx

Sent from iPhone excuse all typos / misspellings 80% mobile

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On Sep 22, 2014, at 1:43 PM, John Buchanan <jtwg50@yahoo.com> wrote:

Hi, Skip. Per our conversation this weekend, these are the pursuits I would suggest you focus on at the meeting with Drew Laughlin tomorrow (and I hope Mike Alsko will indeed be there, since he is key to the process, as well as the Town Attorney, so that he can understand first hand the legal implications of all this).

And per your point in our conversation, these demands are based on facts of the matter, not opinions or groundless allegations.

1) Bill Miles and Tom Upshaw must be asked to resign from their posts at the HH Chamber/VCB immediately. And I agree with you 100% that once they are properly investigated by law enforcement, especially after a multi-year audit, there is an excellent chance they will go to jail, as have other CVB abusers around the country. As I have told you many times now, as a 44-year-veteran journalist, one thing I know for sure is that when organizations or individuals repeatedly refuse requests for transparency, it is invariably because they have something to hide. And in both instances where my own work put public officials in jail -- which as I said are by far the proudest moments of my career -- it happened in both instances because records that had initially been refused to me later surfaced and became public.

2) Per the Packet editorial in May, the Chamber and VCB must be separated into two organizations, with all public funding being allocated specifically to the VCB and not the Chamber.

3) The HH Chamber/VCB -- including the newly bifurcated entity -- must submit to full transparency and an independent, multi-year audit immediately. If they do, then they will receive 50% of the available public funding for next year and the new HH VCB will receive the other 50%. If they do not agree to complete transparency and an audit, then they will be defunded and the new VCB will receive 100% of available public funding -- as a fully transparent and publicly accountable organization.

4) For the ATAX Committee and Town Council, the underlying issue is one of fiduciary responsibility. If they continue to ignore the abuses of the Chamber/VCB and its ongoing refusal to submit to FOIA law or voluntary transparency, in addition to the fact they have clearly failed in their mission since HH tourism has been down since 1998 peaks even though their funding has increased, then they in turn have violated their own public trust and should be held fully accountable.

5) If they refuse funding to the new HH VCB and also refuse to demand transparency and accountability from the Chamber/VCB, then I think Micah and your other attorneys should look into the possibility of seeking an injunction against their ability to distribute the 2015 funding until these issues are resolved in court -- especially the matter of fiduciary responsibility. Once again, the facts suggest a case that could set an important legal precedent for the rest of SC and possibly the country, since CVB abuses and their lack of accountability are becoming so well known.

6) I have made some off the record calls to people in HH and I am told that Drew Laughlin is on shaky ground for his re-election in November, partly because of his blatant failure to acknowledge his role as a paid witness in the condo case. This Chamber/VCB matter could easily blow up in his face if he fails to do the right thing.

I agree with what you said this weekend -- that it's time to adopt a firm stand against the ongoing abuses there. Enough is enough.

The only question now is which side the ATAX Committee and Town Council will come down on. All you or anyone can do is give them a fair chance to do the right thing. If they fail, then I agree you have an ethical responsibility to make sure they, too, are held fully accountable.

Thanks. Keep the faith. Right is might.

John Buchanan

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