

March 30, 2016

Governor Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton St.
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor Haley,

I am writing to you for your assistance in correcting what many citizens in Greenwood, Laurens and Newberry Counties feel is a gross misuse of taxpayer monies.

Several years ago Greenwood County imposed a Greenwood lake encroachment dock fee of \$50.00 on anyone possessing a dock on Lake Greenwood. Even though lake property owners were given permission to encroach with a dock permit prior to the passage of this fee it was still imposed. While most citizens living on the lake in the counties of Greenwood, Laurens and Newberry did not object to this fee as it was intended to increase the budget of the Lake Greenwood management office for operation and maintenance of the lake.

About two years ago we found out that Greenwood County was paying the dock fee for those residents of Greenwood County and as of this date it has surpassed the \$1,000,000 mark. We feel that this use of taxpayer funds for fees on privately owned property is illegal based on state law which states "South Carolina law does not allow use of public funds for the primary benefit of private parties". These payments only benefit the owner of that property and not the citizens as a whole. The attached e-mail from the Greenwood County confirms the budget office thinks it is improper. While any lawyer can come up with ways to avoid compliance with laws we think in this case it is a total miscarriage of justice.

We contacted the County Administrator who indicated he would provide documentation on this issue. However, we were stonewalled by his assistance and after four months we had not been provided with anything. We then filed a Freedom Of Information Act request and we never received any response thereto. Finally, after talking to the State Attorney's Office we were told to resubmit and indicate legal action would be taken if not complied with. Several weeks later we met with the County attorney who provided several hundred pages of county budget documents. There were no e-mails, memorandums or other documents provided.

We were also told the funds used by Greenwood County to pay these fees were provided by the State Treasures Office. Later, we were told that the funds were from the taxpayers of Greenwood and neighboring counties. Regardless of the source we feel it is illegal as it does not comply with the previously mentioned law.

A recent meeting with legal representation to discuss a class action suit on this issue concluded that when County and City governments do not comply with State law then the State is responsible to take necessary action to stop the illegal act not the affected citizens.

Numerous articles over the past year in the Greenwood Index Journal stated the county cannot afford additional necessary ambulance, fire and other services that the total citizenship of the county deserves, yet they have spent over one million dollars on privately owned docks! While the

42-8543
+942-8724 fax

From: Lisa White [mailto:lwhite@greenwoodsc.gov]
Sent: Monday, February 25, 2013 5:15 PM
To: Sharon Setzer
Subject: RE: lake property owners - greenwood county

Included in the ordinance which created the lake fees was a clause that said that Greenwood County would cover the fee. I think it also states that Laurens and Newberry could cover the fees on behalf of their residents. Maybe you could send them that ordinance.

From: Sharon Setzer [mailto:ssetzer@greenwoodsc.gov]
Sent: Monday, February 25, 2013 5:04 PM
To: Lisa White
Subject: RE: lake property owners - greenwood county

A Newberry taxpayer was asking why Greenwood County lake property owners didn't pay like they did with a fee.

Sharon Setzer, CGFO
Greenwood County Auditor
528 Monument Street, Room 107
Greenwood, SC 29646
864-942-8543
864-942-8724 fax

From: Lisa White [mailto:lwhite@greenwoodsc.gov]
Sent: Monday, February 25, 2013 4:42 PM
To: Sharon Setzer
Subject: RE: lake property owners - greenwood county

* \$97,000 is transferred annually from the Lake Greenwood Development Zone (LGDZ) holding fund into the lake operations fund on behalf of the Greenwood dock owners to cover their dock fees. Please note that I just left a meeting with Stephen Baggett about whether or not the LGDZ is a valid MCBP So not sure of why you were asking but we may have to figure out another transfer source.

From: Sharon Setzer [mailto:ssetzer@greenwoodsc.gov]
Sent: Monday, February 25, 2013 1:10 PM
To: Lisa White
Subject: lake property owners - greenwood county

Lisa,

How or do Greenwood County residents pay the \$50 encroachment fee?

Sharon Setzer, CGFO
Greenwood County Auditor
528 Monument Street, Room 107
Greenwood, SC 29646
864-942-8543
864-942-8724 fax

amount being spent is a small percent of the total budget it would be better spent on legal projects. The majority of Greenwood County residents do not know that taxpayer funds are being used for this purpose.

The county has passed a new tourist tax, increased property tax, additional penny sales tax to increase revenue. While this may be a necessary action appropriate spending would also help.

In conclusion, if taxpayer funds are being provided by the State which is being used for the above purpose please discontinue this practice. If Greenwood County resident's and surrounding counties taxpayer funds or being used, then we recommend the State attorney's office, SLED, Solicitor's office, Greenwood County Sheriff's office or any other appropriate State Office conduct an investigation and stop this illegal act. We have been told that only a judge can make this decision so let the process begin.

Please provide a WRITTEN response to this inquiry.

Thank you for your time, interest and action in this matter.

Sincerely,



Dan R. Hoskins
1197 Summerset Bay Dr.
Cross Hill, SC 29332
864-998-3510

Enc: Copy of two Greenwood County e-mails.

Cc: State Attorney's Office
SC Law Enforcement Division
Solicitor's Office
Greenwood County Sheriff's Office