



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION

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October 18, 2021

Sent electronically to Marsh Maguire at [mmaguireb3@gmail.com](mailto:mmaguireb3@gmail.com) and Karen Hogan at [karenholgan@me.com](mailto:karenholgan@me.com)

Subject: Complaints regarding Mayor William Armacost, PDC Case 97026

Dear Ms. Maguire and Ms. Hogan:

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) has completed its review of the complaints you both filed on July 29, 2021. The complaints alleged that William Armacost, the incumbent Mayor of the City of Sequim, may have violated RCW 42.17A.555 by using public facilities to promote candidates for five city council positions that are up for election in the City of Sequim.

PDC staff reviewed the allegations listed in the complaints to determine whether a formal investigation or enforcement action is warranted. Staff reviewed all attachments submitted with the complaints, the relevant statute and rules, email communication between City of Sequim employees/officials, specifically between Mayor Armacost and Interim City Manager Deschenes, and Mayor Armacost and Karen Abbott, Administrative Assistant; PDC Interpretation 04-02 "Guidelines for Local Government Agencies in Election Campaigns," and the August 10, 2021, response from William Armacost, Mayor of the City of Sequim.

To efficiently use PDC resources, both complaints have been combined into one complaint resolution/disposition letter and addressed herein.

Based on staff's review, we found the following:

- On July 23, Mayor Armacost, in his official capacity as the Mayor of the City of Sequim, drafted and sent at least two emails, using his City of Sequim computer, email address, and time, to request that the City of Sequim Council Chambers be reserved for a candidate forum, on behalf of an Independent Advisory group not affiliated with the City of Sequim or performing official City business, to promote five candidates for vacant city council positions available at the City of Sequim. Specifically, Mayor Armacost sent an email to Karen Abbott, Administrative Assistant in the Interim City Manager's office on July 23, 2021, stating: "Hi Karen, the times for renting the Council Chambers would be from 6:00 To 9:00

PM. We would be having a candidate forum. We used the chambers for the same event two years ago when myself and Deputy Mayor Ferrell were running for office. With five council seats up for election the public will appreciate the opportunity to hear from the candidates.”

- Staff noted that prior to the July 23, 2021, email from Mayor Armacost to Karen Abbott, on July 22, 2021, Mayor Armacost received an email from Karen Abbott stating: “Good afternoon. I see you would like to reserve the Council Chamber for August 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> and again on October 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. Are these full day rentals? And, what is the event?”
- On July 26, 2021, Charisse Deschenes, Interim City Manager, sent an email to Mayor Armacost, stating: “Good Evening William, per our conversation earlier and in accordance with RCW 42.17A.555, elected officials cannot use or authorize use of City facilities for political purposes, I sent information to Donnie Hall describing the rental process. I also encouraged him to just reach out to Karen Abbott directly to continue the ball rolling.”
- On July 28, 2021, two days after the email she sent to Mayor Armacost, Charisse Deschenes, Interim City Manager, sent another email to Mayor Armacost and cc’d Karen Abbott, stating: “Hi William, I wanted to follow with you on this. As an hour ago the IAA has not contacted Karen Abbott to reserve a City facility for their forum. There are fees involved for rentals and they must be paid to reserve the room. As Karen Abbott mentioned, she thought you were requesting to reserve the room as a City Council related event. Staff must follow appropriate procedures and cannot hold rentals without the fee being paid. As you know we cannot treat City Council requests differently from our other facility rental requests if it isn’t for City business. If the IAA wishes to book the room, they must follow the appropriate steps.”
- In his response to both complaints, received by PDC staff on August 10, 2021, Mayor Armacost stated: “I had inquired about renting our Council Chamber for a Canidate [sic] forum, as Mayor of Sequim, we have five Council seats up for election, this is a first, to have so many seats up for grabs. As all our Council seats are all non partisan, no party affiliation. My intent was to give our consistent [sic] a chance to get to know there [sic] choices for City Council.”

PDC staff’s review found that Mayor Armacost used his City of Sequim computer, email address, and time, to request that the City of Sequim Council Chambers be reserved for a candidate forum, on behalf of an Independent advisory group not affiliated with the City of Sequim to promote five candidates for vacant city council positions available/up for election at the City of Sequim, in violation of RCW 42.17A.555.

While staff found that Mayor Armacost violated RCW 42.17.555, Mayor Armacost was under the impression that it would give the City of Sequim constituents “a chance to get to know their choices for City Council.”

Pursuant to WAC 390-37-060(1)(d), Mayor Armacost will receive a formal written warning concerning his failure to adhere to the statutory requirements/prohibitions delineated in RCW 42.17A.555. Mayor Armacost will be informed the Commission will consider the formal

warning letter in deciding on further Commission action if there are future violations of PDC laws or rules related to the use of facilities – RCW 42.17A.555.

Based on this information, the PDC has dismissed your complaint in accordance with RCW 42.17A.755(1)(a).

If you have questions, you may contact me at (360) 586-2869, toll-free at 1-877-601-2828, or by e-mail at [erick.agina@pdc.wa.gov](mailto:erick.agina@pdc.wa.gov).

Sincerely,

Endorsed by:

s/\_\_\_\_\_

Erick Agina, Compliance Officer

s/\_\_\_\_\_

Peter Lavalley, Executive Director

cc: Mayor William Armacost, City of Sequim

