



State of Washington
PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION

711 Capitol Way Rm. 206, PO Box 40908 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0908
(360) 753-1111 • FAX (360) 753-1112

Toll Free 1-877-601-2828 • E-mail: pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov • Website: www.pdcca.wa.gov

January 24, 2023

Sent electronically to Harry Bhagwandin

Subject: Complaint filed by Elizabeth Rohr, PDC Case 114223

Harry Bhagwandin:

Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) staff has completed its review of the complaints filed by Elizabeth Rohr against you, Mike Hadaller, Tracy Murphy, and the Lewis County News. The complaint alleged a violation of RCW 42.17A.235 and .240 by your 2022 Campaign for Lewis County Commissioner for failing to report an in-kind contribution from the Lewis County News on Summary Full Campaign Contribution and Expenditure report (C-4 report) for a political advertisement/editorial content that appeared in the publication during the 2022 election cycle.

As noted in the complaint resolution letter sent to Elizabeth Rohr, PDC staff found no evidence of a violation that would require conducting a more formal investigation into the complaint or pursuing any enforcement action in this instance.

The PDC has dismissed this matter in accordance with RCW 42.17A.755(1). Thank you for your cooperation and assistance in resolving this matter. If you have questions, please contact PDC Compliance Officer Kurt Young by e-mail.

Sincerely,

Endorsed by,

/s

Electronically Signed Kurt Young
Compliance Officer

/s

Electronically Signed Kim Bradford, PDC Deputy
Director for Peter Lavalley, PDC Executive Director



Public Disclosure Commission
Shining Light on Washington Politics Since 1972



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January 24, 2023

Sent electronically to Elizabeth Rohr

Subject: Complaint filed against Harry Bhagwandin, PDC Case 114223

Elizabeth Rohr:

Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) staff has completed its review of the complaints you filed on October 26, 2022, against Harry Bhagwandin Tracy Murphy, Mike Hadaller, and the Lewis County News.

Specifically, this complaint was filed against Harry Bhagwandin, a 2022 candidate for Lewis County Commissioner, alleging a violation of RCW 42.17A.235 and .240 by failing to report an in-kind contribution from the Lewis County News on Summary Full Campaign Contribution and Expenditure report (C-4 report) for a political advertisement/editorial content that appeared in the publication during the 2022 election cycle.

PDC staff reviewed the allegation listed in the complaints; the applicable statutes, rules, and reporting requirements; the C-4 reports filed by the Harry Bhagwandin Campaign; and the email response from Harry Bhagwandin to the allegations listed in the complaint, to determine whether the record supports a finding of one or more violations. Based on staff's review, we found the following:

- On May 19, 2022, Harry Bhagwandin filed a Candidate registration with the PDC declaring his candidacy for election to the office of Lewis County Commissioner, initially selecting the Mini Reporting option, and listing himself as Treasurer.
- Mr. Bhagwandin was granted permission to change from the Mini to the Full Reporting option in July of 2022. He previously sought election in 2014 to the office of Lewis County Commissioner under the Full Reporting Option, and as a candidate for Lewis County Charter Review Commissioner in 2018 under the Mini Reporting Option.
- Mr. Bhagwandin confirmed that his 2022 Lewis County Commissioner Campaign made no expenditures to either the LCN or Flannery Publications during 2022 for newspaper advertising or other services. He stated that Lynette Hoffman, a staff writer for the Lewis County News (LCN) contacted him about conducting a candidate interview sometime in early October of 2022.

- Mr. Bhagwandin stated Ms. Hoffman informed him he could submit an editorial for publication with information about his 2022 candidacy for Lewis County Commissioner. He stated that it was his understanding “the interview and/or my editorial would be published in the LCN to inform her readership” about 2022 local Lewis County candidates.
- Mr. Bhagwandin stated after his interview with Ms. Hoffman, he submitted an editorial written by him to the LCN “that included my concerns about local issues that I felt may be important to voters.” He stated that the editorial “was not intended to be paid advertising, but rather editorial comment from a candidate.”

Based on these findings, PDC staff found no evidence of a violation that would require conducting a more formal investigation into the complaint or pursuing any enforcement action in this instance.

PDC has dismissed this matter in accordance with RCW 42.17A.755(1). If you have questions, please contact PDC Compliance Officer Kurt Young by e-mail.

Sincerely,

Endorsed by,

/s

Electronically Signed Kurt Young
Compliance Officer

/s

Electronically Signed Kim Bradford, PDC Deputy
Director for Peter Lavalley, PDC Executive Director



cc: Harry Mr. Bhagwandin