

Email Response from Pat Myers/Lewis County News to Elizbeth Rohr Complaint
Copied/Pasted into Word Document by PDC Staff
PDC Case 115402

6 days ago (Thu, 12 Jan 2023 at 7:02 PM)

To:"pdc@pdc.wa.gov" <pdc@pdc.wa.gov>

External Email

Hi Kurt,

Sorry about the delay. I thought that I sent it last week but found it just now in my Drafts folder. Here are my responses.

- Did Ms. Hoffman or you contact Mr. Emerson, Mr. Snaza or Mr. Brummer about submitting a short bio or candidate information for the LCN publication?

I did not . Had the named three submitted an editorial it would have been published per our policy. Per our policy, we have always had an open invitation to the public to submit Letters to the Editor or Guest Editorials to the paper for consideration and publication provided they adhere to our policies. This is common in most if not all newspapers.

- If yes, when did those conversations or email exchanges take place, what was the nature of the communications, and did any of the three candidates submit any information?

Ms. Hoffman told me that she did attempt to contact Sheriiff Snaza prior to the election but did not get a response.

- Did Ms. Hoffman or you make any statements or assurances concerning the possibility that the candidate "bio's" may be published in a future LCN edition?

I do not understand the question. I can say this, if anyone submits an op/ed piece that follows our policy guidelines and provides our readership with useful information we would run it.

- Did you, the LCN or Ms. Hoffman categorize her candidate contacts as an interview?

No, this company would consider these pieces to be guest editorials. We welcome these from the general public as is our our standard mode of operation and they would have run without a charge.

- On page 3 of the October 19, 2022, edition of the LCN that was provided by the complainant, there were three "articles or bio's" that provided information about three 2022 candidates, that you stated in a prior email you would classify as "editorial" content. However, you indicated that Flannery staff did not provide any of the content in any of these "articles or bio's", and each of the three articles seem to be reprints of the three candidates talking points, with each written using the first person "I".

These pieces were guest editorials, again, a regular part of our business.

- Please explain how these “articles or bio’s” qualify as editorial content when it was not written by LCN staff, but instead by each of the candidates.

When I responded in one of the last volleys, I said that I would classify this as editorial. This company defines both a Letter to the Editor and a Guest Editorial as editorial.

- Finally, if this was paid advertising undertaken by a candidate, what would be the fair market value of each of the three “articles or bio’s”?

We have never charged a submitter for an editorial. They have no billable value.

It is the position of this newspaper that no candidate received free advertising during the 2022 campaign cycle. As a result, there was no requirement to declare a sponsor as is a requirement pursuant to RCW 42.17A.320. It is this newspaper's job to help inform our readership of any and/or all pertinent information and guest editorials are just one of the multiple ways that we use to do that. It is standard operating procedure. We have a long standing policy on the matter.