

On February 10, 2009, the Lafayette City Council met with citizens to discuss the upcoming charter measure, and other city affairs. What followed was more than an hour of the councilors spewing fabrication and threats regarding this charter initiative. They told citizens the passage would shut down the city for six months, that all staff positions would be vacant, and it will raise your utility rates. Now, while we have recourse for their statements and threats (according to law, a threat to make someone vote a certain way is a felony offense), you can't un-break an egg. So, if you have one of these people come to you and tell you information about what the charter will or won't do, ask them to prove it to you.

I've gone through the attorney's 'opinion', which reads more like an editorial full of the same misinformation being passed by the council. There are so many items that are untrue in that opinion; I won't burden you with the line by line. It irritates me that they have spent over \$2,000.00 on something that contains a lawsuit waiting to happen. And for that amount of money, you would think that they could accomplish simple math, but they even got that wrong. They don't own a calculator? Some of the sections they picked apart were not even changed from the current charter. Some sections they say may be unenforceable are currently being used in other cities. Many of the statements made are ignorant and sarcastic. And for this, the city has spent your money. In fact, to date, the city has spent over \$6,000.00 (and counting) on fighting this charter initiative.

We weren't going to campaign for the charter. We were going to let people continue to educate themselves. And, we still are. We expect people to inform themselves. The council had a right to do the same, but they chose to use city resources, staff time and public records to distribute their lies. So, we felt obligated to at least provide an alternative resource. We are a legally filed committee with the state.

Bob Cullen keeps saying the charter is meant to punish people. I think the charter is set up to provide a forum for citizens to decide how the money is spent and accounted for. But, since Bob Cullen has a business in Lafayette, with no business license, it seems that it would be personal for him. See, it is a violation of the city code to have a business with no license here. He's been without a license the entire time he's lived here, since 1992. A request was made to the city code enforcement officer (the Yamhill County Sheriff's Office). They advised the city administrator told them not to enforce this particular code. Then the complaint disappeared, with some explanation of how it is up to the city administrator regarding what codes get enforced in Lafayette. But, this city administrator receives her evaluations from Mr. Cullen. So, it's in her best interest to make the whole thing go away. And, the current council? They feel it is not up to them to be involved in this matter. Requests for their intervention have gone ignored. So, who is it personal for?

The council contains some from the 'old' and some from the 'new'. During the town hall, they made promises of all the changes they were planning on making to include citizens. But, when the council meeting came, the decision they made was to exclude citizens. Citizens no longer have the right to be placed on the city agenda. Now, if you want to speak to council on the agenda, you contact a councilor, and if they deem your statements worthy, then they will arrange for you to be on the program. Otherwise, you get your time during non-agenda items and no decision is allowed to be made.

There are so many things wrong with what they are doing, I could type for hours. But, that would be redundant. The people familiar with the goings on in Lafayette already know many of the issues that are here. And they know that access to **accurate** information will solve many of those issues. Prevention of the closed door dealings that are going on will improve the situation here. The charter will accomplish that. The current Mayor promised a new Lafayette with his term. But, the council continues to play the same old games.

Will things get challenged? Of course. We counted on some of it. But, we did not count on the council authorizing the city administrator to change the employee contract once they realized the charter might actually pass. So, these people tasked with protecting the city resources set the citizens up to face a challenge when asking city staff to work on a schedule that was convenient for citizens. But, that speaks volumes on the council state of mind. They don't represent you. They represent the city. And that needs to change.

We keep hearing about how the council tells people the city will never find a city administrator to replace Ms. Rink's. Is that an announcement of resignation? The new position will pay approximately \$30,000.00 a year for 24 hours a week. While there is no vacation time accrued while the position is part time, there is no limit on the council providing: medical, dental, PERS and other benefits. So, do you know anyone who has the ability to write, organize and do math that currently lives (or would live within six months) in Lafayette for that amount? I know five. And I'm not related to any of them. And, while the charter requires the CA to pursue professional accreditation, it does not require it to be from a specific source. There is a bonus if it is from the ICMA, because they have standards that require them to uphold a code of ethics. This accreditation is not something our current city administrator has.

Another opponent of the charter? Former Mayor Don Leard. Isn't it hilarious that the new council, portending to be the new face of the city, would be sitting on the same side as all the old garbage? As of February 14, 2009, Mr. Leard, while actively campaigning against the charter, does not have on file

paperwork with the State of Oregon for finances. That's another violation complaint for him. But, from what he put into the voters pamphlet, I get the feeling he isn't reading from the same charter the rest of the voters are reading anyway.

You may ask: why is the council doing things that appear to be so obviously a violation of law? Well, here is my opinion, and only an opinion. First, from what they've said, they think these rules do not apply to them. Second, the city administrator's requirement is that she informs the councilors of affairs of the city. It is not her job to educate them. And it is apparent that she has not. It is their job to educate themselves, because they will have to answer for their actions. Many of the people sitting on the council, two years ago, were clamoring for accountability, to no avail. So, from where I sit, the city administrator must be having a ball. And her liability in all this? She filed a conflict of interest statement regarding this charter, and they told her to work on it anyway. So, what's a gal to do? Tell them no? If she were smart, she will file her complaint now. But, while she's thinking about that contract she has that never expires, she must realize that neither of the last two councils have ratified it. According to Oregon's interpretation of the constitution, the contract is no longer valid. And if the charter reduces the hours of the position, that isn't the same as the council doing it. So, she will be protecting herself soon. And you will hear some spin on it that makes it all about the charter. But, I think it will have more to do with an ax to grind than anything else.

They city has gone out of their way to campaign against this charter and access to information. They let legally required timelines lapse. They used city resources and staff time to campaign their own positions. They have used the city attorney (who also filed a conflict of interest statement, but apparently that only applies to complying with the law, not for billable time) to accrue several thousand dollars in charges.

So, who is looking out for you? And, what guarantees do you have that the rules will not continue to be violated. Make the changes needed to protect you. Every time the opponents talk, they make a case for passing the charter. No more deciding who gets what depending on who you are. No more promises from people who have already broken them. No more destruction of public records. No more councilors using the resources for their own needs. No more missing and inaccurate accounting information. Time for some rules that you choose, not as the city chooses.

Oh, and one of my favorite of their reasons you should not vote for this charter? Because they are going to write a charter. They are going to form a citizen group to review the charter and write a new one. Because, they admit, the current city charter is quite flawed and needs to be changed. Well, citizens wrote this charter. But, the council said, the rules on the

proposed charter limit how they account for the resources, and they don't like that. How long, you may ask, until this happens? Well, when pressed, they decided it could be at least 6 months until their charter might be ready. And then there is the process of getting it on the ballot. Not quite the process Darrell had, what with the city bypassing timelines, and going door-to-door and talking to over 500 people. The council just decides to put it on the ballot and there it goes. So, you could wait for theirs or you can get the access now.

Remember, Your City, Your Money, Your Voice.

Questions: contact Angela at angela.flood@gmail.com