

Second Letter to Community

May 23, 2018

Hello everyone,

We are writing in response to the ongoing criticism directed at your Select Board and our Administrative Assistant by the Nelson Town Clerk/Tax Collector. We wish to address the concerns that have been raised by providing the following information.

Fostering a Good Workplace Environment for All Town Employees and Officials.

Please understand that we are extremely proud of the work of our employees and contracted staff who work in our Town Office. Their good work contributes directly to the success of our town. One of our highest priorities is to do everything that we can to assure all of them a safe and pleasant workplace environment.

We take seriously any and all concerns raised by any town official or employee when it comes to workplace environment and are aware of claims by the Town Clerk/Tax Collector of an unfair workplace environment and harassment. We object strongly to such a claim. It is not harassment when an employee's work performance requires review, and is reviewed, by those responsible for the success of the organization.

All town employees and officials are expected to professionally and diligently execute the requirements of their jobs. When the Select Board becomes aware of potential failures to execute one's duties, we have always provided notice, offered open communication, and encouraged additional training necessary to correct any deficiencies. We followed each of these steps in our present situation involving the Town Clerk/Tax Collector. Providing employees and officials with such notice and support is not harassment, but a positive way to ensure that your Town government is properly serving its residents.

Knowledge, Authority, and Responsibility

Your Select Board is responsible for safeguarding the collection, management, and use of all public funds. We have professional staff in our office who advise and assist us in this effort. We only take steps to improve policies, or procedures, or an individual's performance when a careful review of the information provided to us supports the need for those actions. We take very seriously our responsibility to you, the people of Nelson, to assure, to the best of our ability, that all taxes, fees, and interest due the town are paid, properly accounted for and deposited in the bank accounts of the town. A partial-year audit was conducted last year identifying issues regarding the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's duties. The results of this audit are available for inspection at the Town Office.

Legal Consultation and Communication to Resolve Concerns

We have been asked, "Why would you involve attorneys in your attempt to resolve concerns regarding the performance of an employee or an official of the town?" Anyone involved in town government will quickly realize that it would be foolhardy for any Select Board to become involved with issues related to the performance of employees or officials without consultation with attorneys for professional advice. Failing to act properly exposes the Select Board and the Town of Nelson to the potential of costly litigation. Further, our need to involve an attorney arises primarily from the need to respond to legal threats and demands made to us by the attorney retained by the Town Clerk/Tax Collector.

Unfortunately, all of our attempts at resolution have been unsuccessful.

In Closing

Please allow us to reiterate the fact that your Select Board has absolutely no motivation to create conflict among officials and employees of the town. We work very hard to make sure that our employees and contracted staff can experience an amicable and productive workplace environment. We are blessed with an incredibly capable staff, department heads, and contractors who work very hard to contribute to our town. We are proud of all of them and try to do our part to make sure that they all have a good place in which to work. We hope you understand that your Select Board has not created a hostile workplace environment for the Town

Clerk/Tax Collector. But, please also understand that we never have, and never will, turn a blind-eye to concerns that come to our attention regarding the conduct of anyone who works for the Town of Nelson.

The issues we are dealing with have caused extreme distress to this Board and all who work in the Town Office, as well as causing discord and distrust among, well meaning, townspeople. We do not, we must not, take these matters lightly. Therefore, it is with determination that we continue to seek a path toward resolution. We are disappointed that the harmony and trust that we have worked so hard to achieve, both in our Town Office and in the Nelson Community, is being threatened. We are determined to resolve this difficult matter by applying the same principles of excellence, fairness, and compassion that we have demonstrated over the years. All of us in your Town Office, Select Board members, Town Treasurer, Administrative Assistant, Financial Compliance Accountant, and IT Administrator, agree that we remain willing to support and assist Ms. Lennon toward improving the accuracy of her accounting, the completeness of her records, and her compliance with state laws.

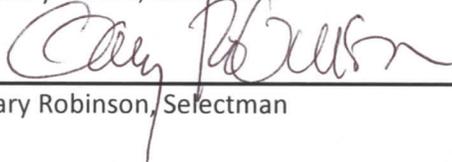
Sincerely,



David Upton, Chair



Maury Collins, Selectman



Gary Robinson, Selectman