

Ruben Santiago

From: Stefen Wynn
Sent: Friday, May 8, 2026 2:50 PM
To: Stefen Wynn
Cc: Matt Laiminger; Nicki P; Samira Vetter; Ruben Santiago; Ashley R; Daoine B; Kaden Heiniger
Subject: Notice of Intent Not to Renew Employment Agreement and Safety Concerns

Mayor Smith and Trustees –

I am writing to formally notify the Board of Trustees of my intent not to renew my employment agreement with the Town of Paonia upon its expiration in July 2026. This decision has not been made lightly. It is the direct result of an escalating pattern of harassment, intimidation, threatening conduct, and retaliatory behavior directed toward me and, increasingly, toward my wife and children.

Over the past several months, public hostility surrounding my role as Town Administrator and Treasurer has intensified beyond what can reasonably be considered protected political disagreement or criticism of public policy. Certain individuals have engaged in conduct that I believe has crossed into targeted harassment and intimidation that now raises legitimate concerns for the safety and wellbeing of my family.

This conduct has included repeated hostile public commentary, increasingly aggressive rhetoric at public meetings, coordinated social media activity, threatening public messaging, and behavior occurring within the community that has caused my family to fear for our safety. Recently, a poster depicting my image superimposed on King Leopold II with the phrase “Fire Wynn” was publicly displayed during a “No Kings” rally attended by numerous individuals from outside the community. More recently, social media commentary calling to “86 Wynn” has further escalated concerns. Given the common understanding of the phrase “86” as a call to remove or eliminate someone, I consider these statements deeply alarming within the broader context of ongoing harassment directed at me and my family.

I believe the Board is already aware of repeated public statements made by Pete McCarthy during Board meetings and other public forums. Mr. McCarthy has repeatedly referenced and associated himself with Kaja Bowman and others connected to these ongoing efforts. What the Board may not know is that my first interaction with Mr. McCarthy in Paonia occurred socially at the Bowman residence, and over time the overlap between these individuals and the escalating hostility directed at my family has become increasingly apparent.

Most concerning is that this behavior has now spilled over into my children’s educational environment. Despite safeguards reportedly being put in place by the school to prevent unnecessary interaction between my children and Mr. Zane Bowman, my daughter recently reported that Mr. Bowman entered her classroom. Rather than attend gym class, she went to the kindergarten classroom because she was fearful. She later told us she hid behind a book because she did not feel safe.

Her fear is not occurring in a vacuum. On numerous occasions, my daughter has overheard statements shouted from the neighboring property associated with Mr. and Mrs. Bowman, including statements such as “Fuck those kids” and references to “their little fucking retard.” As the father of a non-verbal autistic son who cannot independently communicate mistreatment or harm occurring at school, I can no longer reasonably trust that my children are safe in this environment.

When my family moved to Paonia, we believed this community genuinely valued inclusion, compassion, and acceptance. We believed discussions surrounding accessibility and inclusion meant our son would have an opportunity to thrive here. Today, that trust has been fundamentally broken.

I also believe it is important to note that Colorado law recognizes harassment, intimidation, retaliation, and threats directed toward individuals and their families as serious matters. Colorado Revised Statutes §18-9-111 defines harassment to include repeated conduct intended to alarm, threaten, or seriously annoy another person. Colorado Revised Statutes §18-8-704 through §18-8-706 further address intimidation and retaliation against witnesses, victims, and associated family members through threats, harassment, or acts intended to cause fear or retaliation.

While I am not making criminal accusations within this correspondence, I am formally documenting that the cumulative conduct directed at me and my family has created what I believe to be a credible concern for our personal safety and wellbeing. The continued escalation of rhetoric, public targeting, and direct spillover into my children's daily lives has left me with no reasonable belief that these conditions will improve.

Accordingly, my family has made the decision to withdraw our children from Paonia K-8 for their safety. I am also pursuing legal protections for my family, including seeking a civil protection order and documenting ongoing incidents with the appropriate authorities. Should the Board wish to discuss an earlier separation prior to the expiration of my employment agreement, there are provisions within my contract that may be invoked. However, I believe it is important for the Board and the public record to clearly reflect that my decision not to renew my agreement is based upon legitimate safety concerns for myself, my wife, and my children resulting from the increasingly hostile and threatening environment that has developed around my service to the Town of Paonia.

Serving the Town of Paonia has been one of the greatest professional honors of my career. I remain proud of the work accomplished during my tenure, including the advancement of critical infrastructure projects, long range planning initiatives, financial reforms, and efforts to position the Town for long term resilience. Unfortunately, no professional responsibility is more important than protecting the safety and wellbeing of one's family.

Respectfully,



Stefen Wynn, M.P.A.
ICMA-CM
**Paonia Town Administrator
& Treasurer**

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“Words or phrases cannot be read in isolation but must be read within the context of the entire statutory scheme.”

Thermo Dev., Inc. v. Central Masonry Corp., 195 P.3d 1166, 1168 (Colo. App. 2008).