



CANYON COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Leslie Van Beek ❖ District I

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“The 8”

On January 31, 2022 at 11:00 p.m., eight elected officials in Canyon County conspired off the record, under a cloak of darkness, against a fellow elected official in what may go down as one of the most self-incriminating and politically damaging moves in the history of Canyon County government.

Led by the Board Chairman, the final decision to issue a letter of “No Confidence”, authored by the Board’s own legal counsel, was made. Their collective lack of foresight to assess the damage to their own personal reputations and political career is staggering. Also obvious in this failed debacle is a reckless disregard for the election process and a blatant disrespect for every voting citizen in Canyon County. A basic refresher in Government 101 reminds us that it is citizens alone who hold the power to put people into office...or take them out. The now highly publicized attempts to intimidate, bully, threaten, defame, and slander another elected official, should anger and drive citizens to the polls in droves on May 17.

For anyone not following this hair-salon drama, The 8 have yet to validate any of the defaming and slanderous alleged allegations despite repeated requests from citizen groups calling for evidence. The ball has been in The 8’s court for three months. They have had trouble dribbling. The actions of The 8 should raise serious concerns in the minds of taxpayers concerning ethics in government, open meeting law violations, and where the real abuse of power and mistreatment of employees lies. My message is clear and my oath remains intact: I do not...I will not capitulate to bullies. I will defend my country and my county against all foreign and domestic “terrorists” and I will continue to stand and faithfully discharge the duties of my office.

In the last article that ran in the Idaho Statesman, which was to be The 8’s “big reveal” on alleged misconduct, the Board’s chairman cites examples filled with half-truths and misinformation that at the most basic level do not hold water and leave The 8 drowning in an attempt to find validation for their unsubstantiated claims, which comes at an increasing and escalating cost to taxpayers.

It is a commissioner’s right and duty under Idaho code to review and examine all claims and expenses. I have denied claims which I believed did not qualify as legitimate expenses: valet parking when free parking was available, seating upgrades on airlines, expensive framed artwork. I will continue to do so even if that makes me a target. I am sorry if my insistence on getting the most of taxpayer dollars is a source of irritation to my fellow elected officials. Yet, that is important for our constituents, especially in today’s world.



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Most recently I denied a claim for out-of-county travel to a conference which was also being held in Boise. The additional cost at a resort destination was \$720. In an email dated April 25, 2022, I was told by the Board chairman that the two commissioners “already have the appropriate approvals” for their travel and that my approval was not necessary. It was also stated that I was “wasting her time” and that I should focus on “high priority work that the public is actually interested in.” This contradicts her statement made in a candidate forum on April 25 that an elected official’s job is “to spend every dollar as if it was their own.” Clarification is in order. I believe that if people are not going to do the job, they should not run for public office.

The Board of County Commissioners should model the highest level of professionalism and leadership in government. The call for stewardship and accountability is imperative in order to safeguard the trust of taxpayers. But where mischief abounds, it draws flies and fire.

A statement was recently made by the Board chairman that “the BOCC collectively is not set up to function as a working group”. I strongly disagree. The BOCC should function as one of the greatest models of teamwork, respectful negotiation and collaboration, particularly in light of its unique structure of shared and equal power in governance. Choosing who governs is still a function of the people. There’s some homework to be done between now and May 17.

Commissioner Leslie Van Beek, District 1/Canyon County



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