

Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department

Minutes of the Board of Health Special Meeting

Friday, December 7, 2012 –11:00 am

Benzie Community Resource Center -6051 Frankfort Highway
Benzonia, MI 49616

Chairman Richard Nielsen called the Special Meeting to order at 11:00 am. Other board members in attendance were Marcia Sobie, Anne Damn, David Marshall, and Mary Tonneberger. Also in attendance were Attorneys Brian Graham of Young, Graham, Elsenheimer and Wendling, P.C. and Lisa Vogler of Cummins, McClory, Davis and Acho, P.L.C., representing the Health Department

Members of the audience included William Crawford, former director of the Health Department and his attorney, Nicholas Roumel of Nacht, Roumel, Salvatore, Bainchard, and Walker, P.C. Approximately 50 members of the general public were also in attendance.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The Agenda was approved as submitted.

Dr. Nielsen read a statement outlining the procedures of the Name Clearing Hearing for William Crawford (attached).

Roumel thanked the Board of Commissioners for holding the hearing and accommodating his schedule. His main purpose is to formerly object to the demotion of Bill Crawford and his current circumstances surrounding the sexual harrasment charges. No witnesses will be called based upon the guidelines established.

Roumel provided two handouts for the public record – one a compilation of letters of support for Crawford from family members and friends; the other an analysis and legal opinion by Attorney Marla A. Linderman of Linderman Law, P.C. Roumel is acting as the moderator today in defining the Name Clearing Hearing. Its focus is to protect the reputation of the accused. He is asking the board to have an open mind and take another look at what has happened. He will speak to Crawford's character and raise questions as to how the investigation into the complaints unfolded.

Roumel indicated that the audience is unwavering in its love and support for Crawford. They are in attendance and have written letters; he reviewed Crawford's church affiliation and activities. Eight people in the audience will read letters that are in the packet provided. He asks the Board to re-examine this "public shaming". Roumel then turned to members of the audience who read their letters and spoke. (see attachment)

1. Cheryl Gross
2. Peter Read
3. Ingrid Murray
4. Pastor Rick Stieve
5. Mary Dykstra
6. Keith Krahnke
7. Kathy Krahnke reading for Kathleen Cudney
8. Pat Salagovich
9. Dendra Best
10. Liz Crawford

Crawford then took the floor to read from his prepared remarks (see attachment). He thanked the attendees for their support. At the conclusion of his remarks, indicated he does not feel that he is a victim, rather that he has been treated unfairly. "One word would have sufficed" to correct the misperceptions. He does question some employees' motivations for this. This is an opportunity to make this right.

Roumel turned to the legal issues. The fact that no one reported this over a period of time to anyone is a policy violation. When Crawford was apprised of the complaint, he indicated that was "genuinely surprised." Roumel reviewed the timetable for the investigation. The complaining witness contacted Jenifer Murray, her supervisor on June 6, 2012 at 2:50 pm; he questions why write to Murray? Subsequently on June 8, 9, and 11 other witnesses from the Benzie office gave Murray statements in writing.

Policy advisors were not appointed to work with the attorney who interviewed the employees who complained. Why was no one else interviewed? Five females and two males were named but only one male spoke out. Females in the Leelanau office were not interviewed. This points to flaws in the investigation..

Roumel reviewed some of the complaints- chest staring, serving coffee, walking the complainant to her car. He brought up the fact from Crawford's optometrist that Crawford is six feet tall and the complainant is less than five feet, contributing to the fact that he looked down at her and he is near-sighted.

Roumel brought up the fact that Crawford is an "at will employee" and the Board could have fired him at any time. Did the Board "rush to judgment?" He asks that the Board re-examine its decision. "Did you ask critical questions? He reviewed sexual harrasment actions and feels that not a single case here remotely shows sexual harrasment. Again he asks the Board to reconsider its action- "take time to reflect" ". Can we sit down and solve this?"

Public Comment.

James Rich, whose letter is in the packet, asks the Board to consider each letter and examine the reason this situation happened.

Roumel commented that what he and his client are asking for is a formal retraction and a restoration of benefits.

Adjournment. There being no comments from Board members, Chairman Nielsen adjourned the meeting at 12:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Tonneberger
Board Member and Acting Secretary

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