

Katrina Fay
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Laurens, SC 29360
864-684-7682

Ricky Chastain, Laurens County Sheriff
PO Box 68
Laurens, SC 29360

Subject: Complaint for SLED

Sheriff Chastain:

Pursuant to instruction from the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, I am submitting these complaints to your office for submission to SLED. The subjects of my complaint are Mr. John Martin, Treasurer of Hickory Tavern Youth Recreation Association, and Mr. Ernie Segars, Administrator of the County Council.

Copies of my separately submitted complaints to the Secretary of State, and to the State ethics commission are attached for your reference. Should any agency need to subpoena pertinent records, your office may be involved in service, if it hasn't already been. I am sure you are aware conflict of interest issues and concerns with changes in staff in this jurisdiction's Solicitor's office mandate investigation by SLED, who can enlist the services of a Solicitor outside local jurisdiction.

SCSOS chief of staff Ms. Dunlap can confirm the SC Secretary of State is looking into the matter of my complaint on Mr. Martin. However, the SCSOS does not have jurisdiction to investigate my complaint on FOIA and ethics violations.

Thank you in advance for forwarding my complaint to SLED.

Sincerely,


Katrina Fay, Laurens County resident

Summary Complaint

1. FOIA requests and responses, investigator affidavit, emails, property documents, contracts, pictures, and all other supporting documents can be downloaded from www.laurenscountycitizenwatch.com/investigations. Click on the investigation summary relating to the subject respondent. Complete details and documents are posted on the subject's page.

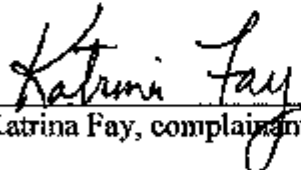
Respondent 1, Mr. John Martin, Treasurer, Hickory Tavern Youth Recreational Association, a registered non profit charity.

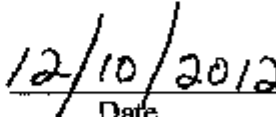
2. Mr. Martin violated mandatory written provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, state ethics law, and state non-profit corporations Act as follows (documents supporting each allegation on website)
 - a. Used company assets for his political campaign.
 - b. Personally controls and expends HTYRA finances for personal purpose
 - c. Refuses to disclose bank records and other company financial records.
 - d. Collects: public fees to use company property; retail concession stand sales; and donations, on behalf of the company, but didn't disclose any company record of this revenue.
 - e. Organizes activities on company property for activities he advertises for charity, collects above fees, payments, and donations. Didn't disclose any company record of the donations.
 - f. There is no business record of HTYRA's involvement in the activities Mr. Martin conducts for the revenue he personally collects and manages.
 - g. On his statement of economic interests, didn't disclose his position as sole controller and private beneficiary of funding from County Council. The County gives Mr. Martin exclusive rights to use the HTYRA property for revenue, such operating the concession stand for retail sales. The County pays electricity, insurance, and maintenance for the Park, including the concession stand. Mr. Martin is signatory representative on the County's contract to pay these costs. According to state law, public purpose can't be speculative, it must be proven by facts. Mr. Martin hasn't disclosed any documentation showing the expenditure of the revenue he makes with public funding under the contract he signed, meets HTYRA's purported business purpose as a registered charity.

Respondent 2, Mr. Ernest Segars, Laurens County Administrator

3. Mr. Segars repeatedly entered the County in contracts to develop, improve, and fund a recreational facility on HTYRA's land. These contracts provide public funding for private revenue generation of the contract signatory recipient, Mr. John Martin.

4. Mr. Segars entered the County into these contracts without vote of approval by the County Council.
5. Mr. Segars' decided to commit County funding to Mr. Martin's revenue generation without approval of the Council. There is no record of legislation determination that funding Mr. Martin's private revenue generation returns a public benefit equal or greater than the value of the revenue Mr. Martin receives.
6. Mr. Segars supervises the County's receipt of PARD grants from the SC Parks and Recreation Department. The County commingles these grants with County funds for HTYRA's property improvement. The primary beneficiary of these funds is Mr. Martin's receipt of private revenue at public cost. The County doesn't meet contract terms SCPRD requires to receive the funds. SCPRD's lack of oversight doesn't authorize Mr. Segars to use state funding for private purpose.
7. Although the County contract with HTYRA requires Mr. Martin spend the revenue on facility maintenance, for undisclosed reason and without Council authority, Mr. Segars allows Mr. Martin use the publicly funded revenue at his personal discretion.
8. There is an appearance Mr. Segars and/or other members of the County are realizing personal benefit from this arrangement. There is a presumption Mr. Segars and the Council understand what constitutes legislative authority and public purpose. Since Mr. Segars continues to spend County monies without authorization of Council and allows Mr. Martin to keep the revenue in violation of the County contract, it is reasonable to presume he does so for private benefit, as there is no record of public benefit returned in kind for the revenue Mr. Martin receives. There is a presumption Mr. Segars and the Council are minimally competent to understand the appearance, if not fact, to a blatant disregard of public trust this arrangement presents.


Katrina Fay, complainant


Date