



Mason Conservation District
450 W Business Park Road • Shelton, WA 98584
Phone: (360) 427-9436 • FAX: (360) 427-4396

MEMORANDUM

To: Amy Hatch-Winecka

From: 
John Bolender, District Manager

Date: February 5, 2016

SUBJECT: WRIA 14 LE Program

The purpose of this memo is to inform you, as of this writing, the district is terminating your involvement and responsibilities in the WRIA 14 Lead Entity program. The district's responsibilities for this program are reassigned and will be performed by others. You are not authorized to perform any work or incur any expenses under this program without my prior approval.

You are again directed to deliver all records, including electronic, relating to the WRIA 14 Lead Entity Program to the district office immediately.

You may contact me to schedule an appointment to discuss this matter further.

Cc: Financial Accountant
 Personnel File



Mason Conservation District
450 W. Business Park Road • Shelton, WA 98584
Phone: (360) 427-9436 • FAX: (360) 427-4396
www.masoncd.org

February 23, 2016

Re: Loudermill Notification

Dear Ms. ~~Hatch~~ ^{Winecka} Winecka:

Please be advised that the District is considering disciplinary action against you, up to and including termination of employment, based on the conduct set forth below.

You will have the opportunity to present your perspective related to the issues set forth below in the meeting with me set for Thursday, February 25, 2016 at 3:30 p.m. in the District office.

A summary of the allegations against you follows:

- On February 1, 2016, while reviewing the common calendar (known to staff as the work schedule 2016), I became aware that you had made plans to attend the River Restoration NW conference in Skamania February 2-4. Not having received a request from you for authorization to attend, or authorization to pay for registration, I reviewed recent statements for the credit card issued to you by the district. I discovered you had charged over \$600 on the district credit card for registration to this conference, without your having requested or received prior authorization to do so. Further review of the credit card statements revealed additional charges for lodging in excess of \$400, for overnight travel, again without requesting or receiving authorization to do so.
- You requested reimbursement for airline travel from Washington D.C. Neither this travel nor expense of nearly \$300 had been discussed in advance or authorized.
- Another issue of great concern emerged recently during the WRIA 14 Lead Entity contract renewal with RCO. In response to my inquiry to RCO staff regarding the status of the contract renewal I was informed by them you were in the process of preparing the contract documents. As you will recall, during the contract renewal for the previous period you were specifically instructed to provide draft documents to me for review, prior to submission to RCO. Further, you were informed of your specific role and responsibilities in district contracting. I had expected you would adhere to previous instructions by providing draft documents to me for review and discussion, prior to submission to RCO for the final contract. That did not occur. This again shows a complete disregard for district personnel policies and specific instructions provided to staff.
- As the end of the last contract period approached you requested authorization of payment to a subcontractor for expenses incurred within a PSAR funded task in the RCO contract. I informed you contracts had expired, in the absence of information from

you regarding status and progress toward meeting milestones, and payment could not be made outside of a contract. I further instructed you to provide me with information necessary to support progress having been made and/or further work to be done on these subcontracts to determine if contract extensions were appropriate. I received no response from you to that direction. I was later informed by the District Accountant that you had contacted her while I was on annual leave, and directed her to pay an invoice from that subcontractor, which she dutifully did. Your instructions to the District Accountant to pay the subcontractor after I told you not to was insubordinate and caused the district to make an illegal payment of public funds to this subcontractor.

- Soon after the renewal of the RCO contract for the last biennium we met and discussed expectations going forward into the new contract period. Two specific areas of focus were discussed. First, the importance of and need to substantially increase community outreach activities to demonstrate that substantial efforts were being made to address the important requirement of establishing a Citizens Committee with diverse representation. The importance of this was also emphasized many times by Lloyd Moody in his communications with Lead Entity Coordinators, and has again been an area of importance by his successor Sarah Gage. This has clearly not happened and was evident in last year's funding round. Further, WRIA 14 Lead Entity progress reports provided to RCO seemed to characterize broad representation was being achieved. However, after personally contacting many of those reported to be participating, I found all of those contacted to be very surprised they were being characterized as such since they hadn't been involved for some time. Review of Lead Entity sign-in sheets created additional concern when those reported to have been participating have not been in attendance. This has further been noted as a concern by RCO.
- A second expectation we discussed was the importance of committing to the regular meetings that you and I had had in the past, but were now being displaced by both of our increasingly busy schedules. As stated, these meetings were valuable in keeping management and the board updated on the progress achieved in priority areas. Although our schedules in the office frequently overlapped you made no effort to fulfill this direction.
- After a review of activities you have reported over the past year it is evident outside extra-curricular activities have been a higher priority for you than your primary job duties involving activities necessary to meet public expectations and the legislative intent of operating a community based Lead Entity program. This was recently reinforced by an email from you suggesting an inability to meet with me in a timely manner to discuss critically important concerns, due to other priorities.

The following District policies were violated:

- **7. Employee Conduct**

The Mason Conservation District does not tolerate conduct that interferes with District operations. Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner...

The list below sets forth conduct that is prohibited, and intended to be illustrative only, meaning that certain conduct may be prohibited that is not explicitly listed below. This list

is not intended to be all-inclusive or to otherwise alter the Mason Conservation District's at-will policy.

* f. Insubordination including refusal to follow management or supervisor instructions concerning a job-related matter or failure to cooperate with management or co-workers with respect to District matters.

* h. Falsifying District records.

* j. Violating federal, state, or local laws or District policies, including but not limited to safety rules.

• 9. Travel / Travel Expenses and Allowances

The District reimburses employees for allowable expenses incurred while traveling on District business that is approved in advance by the District Manager or his/her authorized designee.

* Travel Authorization

The District Manager must approve all travel and related expenses in advance. The District Manager must also approve all out of state travel. To request approval, employees should complete District approval processes before incurring any costs (seminar registrations, airline tickets, or other costs). All costs (actual and estimated) should be listed.

* 12. Ethics and Conflicts of Interest

Employees are expected to use good judgment, adhere to high ethical standards and avoid situations that create an actual or perceived conflict between their personal interests and those of the agency.

You will be provided an opportunity to present your response to the above allegations, or otherwise raise issues that you believe are related to the above allegations. I will consider your comments before deciding whether discipline is warranted.

Please be advised that you are being placed on paid administrative leave beginning February 25, 2016 and that paid leave will continue until further notification. You may not be physically present at the worksite until further notification, with the exception of our meeting on Feb. 25, 2016.

Regards,



John Bolender
District Manager