

Mr. Kevin Kopetz
First Selectman
Town of North Haven
1 Church Street
North Haven, CT 06473

Charles DeMartino
27 Benedict Drive
North Haven, CT 06473

March 3, 2001

Dear Kevin:

For the past nine months, I have been concerned with what some people want to call technical deficiencies with our Town Code of Ethics and the Town Nepotism policies. What makes this stand out is the fact that our Community Services and Recreation Department is controlled by a husband and wife team and this runs contrary to our nepotism policy. I can not recall this ever happening in town history before and in talking to people from surrounding towns, I am lead to believe it has not happened in their communities nor would it be allowed to happen. I have acquired some documentation of records from the department to get a better understanding of what has taken place over the past six years and I am very troubled by what the facts reveal.

In summary of what I have learned, the director and assistant director created a personal relationship with each other some years back. In my opinion, a personal relationship between a department head and a subordinate also creates a "personal interest" between the two employees. The basic purpose of the Town Code of Ethics is to prevent unethical standards and to direct disclosure of financial interest and personal interest. The director was also involved in the transfer of his son, a part time employee, from the public works department to his control with a marital crisis in his first marriage taking place. During this time almost all of the overtime budget was spent on one employee, the assistant director.

It seems to me that in allowing a husband and wife team to control the day to day operations of a municipal department, we are taking a giant step backwards in establishing honesty and moral integrity for town government. Between state and town funds, these two employees control a budget of over one million dollars. The questions of self-interest and the abuse of power exist under this type of a situation and it fuels the opportunity for conflict of interest. For these reasons, I believe the Board of Selectman should appoint a by-partisan committee to investigate the conduct and behavior of the director and assistant director of Community Services and Recreation and the management procedures that they have been following for the past several years.

If government is to gain the trust of the people it governs, then elected officials must demand that even the appearance of conflict of interest be eliminated. It is wrong to allow town employees to feed their own self-interest at the expense of the taxpayer and it is wrong to allow a department head to conduct a personal relationship with a subordinate in

the same department. I believe the existing regulations in the Town Code of Ethics and the Town Nepotism Policy control the issue of not allowing a husband and wife team to be in charge of the same department. But if these policies have to be improved to spell it out more clearly, then let us make the necessary changes to do so. However, this unethical situation should not be allowed to continue.

Sincerely,

Charles DeMartino

cc: Al Cretella
Janet McCarty

Conclusion of The Facts as I see Them:

Joe Ierardi began his employment with the town of North Haven in 1974 working for the Community Services Department. He had a college degree. I believe he became director of the department in 1977 or 1978. Pat Hlavacek was hired in 1979 at a entry level position, in the same department, and I believe Joe Ierardi was already the director at that time. Pat was a divorced person with two small children. I believe she took advantage of the town's education program and went to school nights to get her college degree. Joe championed Pat and at some point in time she became his assistant director.

⁹² In December of 1993 or the beginning of ⁹³ 1994 Community Services was merged with the Recreation Department. The director of recreation became the Department Head of Public Works and Joe Ierardi was named the director of the merged department now called Community Services and Recreation. I will refer to this department as CS&R. Pat Hlvacek was made the assistant director of the new department. I have no documentation on CS&R for the year 1994. I was lead to believe that the town had records going back only five years for employees and only three years for suppliers.

In November 1995, Joe Ierardi changes his home address to Standish Avenue because of a marital crisis taking place with his first wife. Talking with employees of CS&R and other town employees, this came as no surprise. Many felt that a personal relationship had been going on between the director and assistant director for some time before the marital crisis. In the summer of 1995, the director was involved with his son Ken, a part time worker, being transferred from the Public Works Department to CS&R under his control.

In the year 1995, Pat Hlvacek's gross earnings are increased by four thousand dollars from overtime and probably on call payments. I have only overtime documents for that year on Pat, but the 53 hours of overtime doesn't add up to that amount of money. I received no documentation for on call payments for her that year, but that is my conclusion as to make the amount of gross earnings come up to that figure. From the years 1996 through 1999 her gross earnings are increased by eight to nine thousand dollars per year. I believe during this time the amount of state funds coming into the department was greatly increased from state grants. During the years 1995 and 1996, Pat received almost all of the overtime from the department. She even received over fifty per-cent of the overtime budget in the year 1997. Other department employees begin to get a better portion of the overtime expenses beginning in 1998.

Pat's position comes under the control of the supervisor's union. Although the department has four counselors, Pat still is taking part in a rotation for the on call payments. The counselors come under a different union. This represents favoritism to me and just another way of the director being able to raise her gross earnings.

In September of 1998, Joe Ierardi moves in with Pat at her home on Surrey Drive in North Haven. The story that I received from the former First Selectman, Tony Rescigno, is that Joe went to see him and told him that he was moving in with Pat for financial reasons and

would eventually get married. Joe asked the First Selectman if he thought it would cause a problem for him. The First Selectman talked to town counsel and they felt it would not be a problem. No written opinion was ever given and the former First Selectman claims this is the first time he realizes that Joe and Pat are a twosome. Town consul Bob Ciulla, the former First Selectman, the current First Selectman, and the Second Selectman are all members of the Republican Town Committee. The Second Selectman is also the Republican Town Committee Chairman.

OVERTIME DOCUMENTATION

Pat Hlavacek	1995	53 hrs	total hrs ?
Pat	1996	141 hrs	
Carol Blanco		2 hrs	
Richard Gaudio		13 hrs	total hrs 156hrs
Pat Hlavacek	1997	145 hrs	
Carol Blanco		20 hrs	
Richard Gaudio		10.5 hrs	
Nancy Cohen		12 hrs	
Dave DeMartino		10 hrs	
Andy Delvecchio		3 hrs	
Marge Bergin		16 hrs	
Cheryl Munro		21.75 hrs	
Eileen Pettit		19 hrs	total hrs 257.25hrs
Pat Hlavacek	1998	156 hrs	
Carol Blanco		54 hrs	
Richard Gaudio		18.5 hrs	
Nancy Cohen		8 hrs	
Andy Delvecchio		5 hrs	
Marge Bergin		4 hrs	
Cheryl Munro		66 hrs	
Eileen Pettit		13 hrs	total hrs 324.5
Pat Hlavacek	1999	170 hrs	
Carol Blanco		178.75 hrs	
Richard Gaudio		22 hrs	
Nancy Cohen		11.5 hrs	
Andy Delvecchio		5 hrs	
Marge Bergin		33.25 hrs	
Cheryl Munro		171 hrs	
Eileen Pettit		37.75 hrs	total hrs 629.25

The Town of North Haven does business with a supplier named Powers Inc. and this is handled by CS&R. This company specializes in silk screening and sports clothing with the

proper licenses for colleges and the NFL and other professional sport teams. Joe Ierardi has developed a side business that he was promoting from his office. I first became aware of this side business when my son David went to work for CS&R in 1994. One day I stopped in the office of CS&R to find where David worked out of in the building. I saw NFL shirts displayed in the directors office with price tags on them. David told me about the director's side business and said the department employees would even make sales for the director when he wasn't in his office. If members of the Board of Ethics questioned the employees of CS&R, I believe this would be confirmed.