

Mary Helprin

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Robert Batsel
1531 SE 36th Avenue
Ocala, FL 34471

Dear Rob,

I am reaching out to seek your assistance in addressing a matter of significant concern within our city administration. The City Manager, Douglas Baber has been engaging in demeaning behavior not only towards staff but also in interactions with other professionals.

To provide specific instances, I witnessed Mr. Baber raising his voice in a rude manner during a conference call with Attorney Brian Koji regarding a city labor issue. Despite Mr. Koji's expertise in Labor Law and his articulate explanation of the procedural aspects the City would undertake in addressing the issue, Mr. Baber appeared displeased. Similar behavior was noted during a meeting with FEMA, where Mr. Baber abruptly took control of the proceedings.

In another instance, the City was having a conference call regarding interrogatories and discovery, I was replying to the attorney, and Mr. Baber raised his voice and said I was wrong and he started speaking over me. Anytime Mr. Baber does not like a statement, this is typical behavior of his.

As both a recipient and witness of such behavior, I felt compelled to bring these instances to your attention. In a personal encounter, I expressed my concern to Mr. Baber about my inability to complete a task within the proposed timeline. However, in response, I received an email insisting that I work weekends and nights to meet the deadline. Additionally, Mr. Baber informed the Council that the HR Manual would be updated by October 1st without prior discussion with me or consideration of practicalities. In a directors' meeting, Mr. Baber discussed confidentiality and the Council, creating the impression that Directors should refrain from direct communication with the Council. Several other directors shared my sentiment.

I requested something from Mr. Baber regarding my salary, he stated at the end of the conversation the reason I could not get an increase at this time was because of politics. I was floored, since an employee who had been with the City for less than a year had just received an 8% raise. There are other salary issues, both assistant Directors have come in at much higher salaries than some directors.

The constant urgency in the agendas of both Mr. Baber and Mr. Manning, Assistant City Manager, is affecting the staff's ability to perform their duties. When deadlines are not met, dissatisfaction from the City Manager follows. I have received emails and text messages this needs to be done asap, when in fact it does not.

Turning to staff concerns, as the Human Resources representative, I find myself without recourse to address the inappropriate behavior exhibited by Mr. Baber. It is disheartening to witness the

stress and unhappiness on the faces of our employees. Before the Christmas Holidays, two employees confided in me that this job is adversely affecting their health. The Public Works Department is experiencing both physical and mental strain. In the past week, three employees have resigned, and there is a likelihood of more to follow. Notably, Kevin MacDonald, who previously loved his job at the City and significantly improved team continuity, and Jon Ieslin, an almost 10 year City veteran, who stated in his resignation letter he is no longer happy working here at the City of Crystal River. I also was shown a text by Troy Slattery where Mr. Baber questioned his dedication to the City, suggesting that another team could be sought if his team couldn't meet expectations. Troy, and Kevin, actively work alongside Maintenance employees, and their dedication and hard work should not be in question.

It is imperative to address these instances of unprofessional conduct to foster a healthy and respectful work environment. Your assistance in navigating this matter is highly valued, and I would be appreciative of your guidance on potential courses of action.

Sincerely,



Mary E. Helprin