

City of Hartford Ethics Commission
550 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103

March 25, 2015

RE: Request for Opinion regarding Internal Audit Report

Dear Members of the Ethics Commission:

I am requesting an opinion from the Commission regarding allegations made against me in a report by the Internal Audit Commission concerning the hiring of a number of individuals. Specifically, I am requesting an opinion as to whether I violated the Code of Ethics, the Nepotism Policy or any other Policies of the City as the report suggests, because the individuals named in the report were hired by the City at a time during or just after I held a high ranking position in the City. I will first provide you with some background on my employment and then I will provide information that I am aware of on each of the individuals separately.

I was hired by the City of Hartford as Corporation Counsel on or about the 3rd week of July, 2010 and served continuously until January 31, 2015. During my tenure I was also called upon to serve as Acting Chief Operating Officer from late August 2012-October 2013 upon the resignation of David Panagore. I also served as Acting Human Resources Director from May 2013-October 2013 upon the resignation of the Director. I held all three positions during that latter period.

The audit was originally initiated based upon a complaint involving the hiring of Thomas Baptist in the Department of Public Works. It was alleged that I allowed Mr. Baptist to become a candidate for a Public Works Superintendent job without properly submitting an application. In fact, I had no role whatsoever in the hiring

of Mr. Baptist. Contrary to the allegations, Mr. Baptist never submitted an application, resume or any documentation to me. Mr. Baptist was also not hired by me.

Garrett Borges is my son. He first worked for the City of Hartford Department of Public Works as a seasonal employee in April 2008, 2 years prior to my return to the City. The seasonal position was again posted in 2010 and he again applied and was rehired. He worked continuously from his date of rehire until October 2012 when he was hired permanently as a result of a 9/25/12 Agreement with Local 1716 concerning the utilization and hiring of seasonal employees.

Terrence Waller first worked for the City as a part-time seasonal employee in 2008 and again in 2010. He was rehired as a part-time seasonal employee in 2011. and worked continuously until he was hired permanently in October 2012 as a result of a 9/25/12 Agreement with Local 1716 concerning the hiring and utilization of seasonal employees.

Arthur Moniz was first hired as a part-time seasonal employee in 2011. He was hired permanently in April 2013 as the result of an amendment to the Agreement with Local 1716 dated 9/25/12 concerning the utilization and hiring of seasonal employees.

Roderick Waller was hired as part-time seasonal employee in October, 2012. He served continuously in that position until hired permanently in April 2013 as the result of an Agreement with Local 1716 concerning the utilization and hiring of seasonal employees.

Nertalia (John) Borges applied for the "Open Competitive" position when it was first posted as a part-time position in June 2014. She later reapplied for the full-time position when it was re- posted. She took the requisite test like all of the other candidates and received her rating. In fact, she was not offered for an interview and received a letter of rejection along with all the other candidates not rating high enough on the HR certification list at that time. When another position

opened up she was notified that she was being reconsidered and was later interviewed, although another candidate was selected. It was only after that candidate who was selected quit after only a few weeks that Nertalia was hired as the next qualified candidate in line. Nertalia did not formally receive all of the necessary documents to change her name until early 2015. She and Garrett were married in May 2014.

The Internal Audit Report suggests that I hired or in some way inappropriately influenced the hiring of all of the above individuals. In reaching your determination I offer the following additional information for your review and consideration:

None of the individuals were supervised by me or worked in the same Department(s) I worked in.

I was not responsible for making sure any of the individuals had proper documentation on file at the time of their hirings (ie., applications, resumes, etc.). Upon information and belief, the documentation for most if not all of the individuals hired during this period were also not in order since there was no applicant tracking system. There is still no applicant tracking system.

There is no system or documentation available to determine how any of the individuals on the list of 408 were selected regardless of their initial score. The Audit report did not examine the scores of any other individuals hired during the period in question in an effort to determine why they were selected over another candidate.

Human Resources informed Internal Audit that once on the list, any individual in the band may be selected regardless of rating or score. I had no role in determining the score, rating, candidate certification, selection or otherwise for any of the individuals in question or any others hired at the same time as those individuals.

There were 4 separate Agreements concerning the utilization and hiring of seasonal employees between 2011 and the end of 2013. I was aware of, but had no role in negotiating those Agreements with the Union. They were signed by either the HR Director or the Mayor and the Union President.

Parks and city-wide beautification and cleanup was one of the Mayor's top priorities in years 2011-2013. Initially the Mayor wanted to hire 100 seasonal employees but agreed to 70 instead. The Union would only agree if no full-time employees would be laid off as a result of hiring seasonal employees as had been done in the past. The 4 Agreements allowed the Mayor to hire up to 70 seasonals and required that a set number of those seasonals that had previously been hired become permanent employees.

Each member of the Mayor's cabinet was responsible for making sure that the target number of employees were hired as soon as possible and for making sure the work got done. In fact, despite all of our efforts, only 50 were hired. Of that 50 most were hired permanently and remain employees today.

I was never the hiring or appointing authority for any of these employees. Any sign off by me as alleged was done solely in my role as Acting COO or Acting HR Director where my sign off on the Form A was required.

All of the positions (not individual or names) were existing or vacant, budgeted positions and were approved by the Position Review Committee (PRC) to be filled. I was one of 5 members of PRC during the periods in question.

City employees at all levels of government have relatives who also work for the City, in many cases in the same department.

All of the employees referenced were City residents at the time they applied or were hired with the exception of Thomas Baptist.

Terry Waller and I are engaged, not married.

Sincerely,

Saundra Kee Borges

CC: Mayor

Councilmembers

Henri Alexandre

Henry Burgos

Darrell Hill

Internal Audit Commission

Steven Goode

Tom Condon