

From: Matthew Morton
To: [Matthew Morton](#)
Subject: RE: Dated Letter of Concern
Date: Sunday, May 30, 2021 11:36:26 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

From: Gerard Forte <GForte@palmcoastgov.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 22, 2021 4:03 PM
To: jsalinas@flaglercounty.org; Jerry Cameron <JCameron@flaglercounty.org>
Cc: Matthew Morton <MMorton@palmcoastgov.com>; Bradd Clark <BClark@palmcoastgov.com>
Subject: Transparency

Good afternoon Sirs,

For the sake of transparency and full disclosure, I want to inform you of an interaction I had today with Commissioner Mullins at the Touch a Truck event in town center. To begin, I don't have serious confidence in most political figures today since they are not subject matter experts but they tend to speak in public as they espouse to be, this one included. My concern, which should also be yours, Mullins stated he feels strongly that Palm Coast should take over the County Fire Service and that I should be at the forefront of that leadership process. He further added that the current state of the County service is the entire reason Palm Coast should take over the county service and since there is change in the future City Council his 'friends will push to move in that direction. You should also know that this particular commissioner has suggested the same over the last three years and each time him brings it up to me, I remind him that he does not have the experience that we do as leaders and he should stay in his own lane. These past events occurred at Rotary Club meetings, Firefighter appreciation days, and an ELKS club event where Mullins outwardly criticize Fire Chief Bobby Pace...unwittingly, while he was standing in front of him. I can assure you there is no love loss I hold for Commissioner Mullins but he is not my problem until he becomes my problem. Reality is, I believe he is a wrecking ball and seeks to insight hostility to create confusion everywhere he goes.

This 'boys club' discussion is not new for this county and unfortunately, it will continue while simple minded people continue to run for office. I can further add that I have had a similar discussion with Council Member Barbosa in December when he suggested I speak with "his friend on the County Commission". Barbosa was told by me that the problem with the fire service happens when political hacks get involved in the growth process just so they can get their picture taken in front of a fire engine. Barbosa was further told by me that when he has 31 years of experience in the fire service, I will listen to his suggestion.

I consider both of these instances rantings of a politician and not worthy of further discussion, until a County Commissioner disgraces the hard working men and women of Flagler County Fire Rescue with venomous talk. You are also at a pivotal point in new leadership, planning future infrastructure in the fire department and building a program that you all can be proud of. I have always said our organizations need the autonomy that the citizens voted for 21 years ago and it is only now, through relationship building, that we are not afraid to share ideas and interests without the worry of reprisal. The future is uncertain with the Mayoral race that is about to take place, but you both should know my commitment to the success of the Flagler County Fire Department comes from my organization and not a political hack trying to score a point. Your staff need to know they are valued and not a pawn in a foul's game. Your next fire chief needs to have the support of a strong leadership team and their partner agencies in order to have success. Any planning that occurs in the region for fire protection will happen with subject matter experts and not on street in a City event.

Your response is not needed or necessary. I want you to be aware that my profession was discussed in a format that I was not comfortable with and any other discussion that are had without my being present do

not represent me our my organization.

Feel free to share this with anyone!

Respectfully

Gerard Forte, M.A.P.P.
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Questions or Concerns?

Register today at www.palmcoastconnect.com



From: Matthew Morton <pgceburg@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 29, 2021 5:49 PM
To: Matthew Morton <MMorton@palmcoastgov.com>
Subject: Re: Dated Letter of Concern

I forgot to mention in response to my resignation letter - after I told him trying to get me to hire perry was not appropriate - he sent an email essentially asking "why I resigned" and "all he was doing was trying to help me (sic) with garbage) - this clearly appears to me to be in response to my Tenet 10 reference in my letter.

On Sat, May 29, 2021 at 5:47 PM Matthew Morton <pgceburg@gmail.com> wrote:

May 29, 2021

Retaliation / Constrictive Discharge / Forced Resignation Timeline

I am writing this 29th of May, 2021 in advance I what I believe could be a retaliation/constructive discharge – certainly a resignation forced due to malfeasance of office and/or threats by Councilmembers Barbosa and Danko –

Cm Barbosa began his term in office frequently trying to either get staff fired (such as Barbara Grossman and Capt. Steve Garnes), or telling me to hire certain individuals such as Perry Mitrano (repeatedly) for garbage supervisor and also told me who he wanted to be Assistant CM and told me she would be a good fit.

My relationship with Cm Barbosa deteriorated, specifically after he was put on notice by me in an email dated February 10 wherein I put Cm Barbosa on notice for interference <https://flaglerlive.com/wp-content/uploads/VB-EMAIL-1.pdf> in respects to his code violation. He had asked me to get involved, to which I told him I would not and the process would treat him like any citizen.

This last week I called Mr. Barbosa (as I called all council members) to inform them I was going to pull the WastePro Bond. In VM and text Victor asked me to meet him at his shop as he was “on the other end of town” from City Hall. I arrived, he showed me his shop and then said come with me...we walked outside and we headed next door next door where he introduced me to Perry Mitrano. VB made it clear walking over, during the meeting the and after that I needed to hire Perry to solve the City’s garbage and fisher indicated that Perry was so well connected that if I did not the problem wouldn’t get solved. Scarily enough the next day VB called me and said “hey, perry says you’ve been calling around and it’s getting back to me”- Similarly that night VB invited me to attend dinner at the Palm Harbor Grill with a local garbage/recycler business (a friend of his and Perry’s). I told him I would go, but did not respond to his text to confirm, my attendance and I did not attend or make an attempt to attend. I was scared in the moment and was trying to de escalate the situation.

He is aware I have been considering a defamation case - to date I have made no substantive progress and had only inquired with one attorney

Since then CM Barbosa as late as Friday 5/28) was inquiring with the HR Director (Fuller) and Fire Chief (Forte) about “just firing him” or “how do we fire him” [reported to me as I was not at this meeting].

<https://flaglerlive.com/162393/barbosa-morton-defamation-claim/>

<https://flaglerlive.com/162261/barbosa-morton/>

<https://www.news-journalonline.com/story/news/2021/04/07/palm-coast-council-member-tries-fire-city-manager-matt-morton/7117329002/>

<https://www.palmcoastobserver.com/article/barbosa-presses-for-city-managers-firing-in-dispute-over-code-enforcement>

Ed Danko called me and is concerned about the “disgruntled citizen list”. While he has no problem with the list he said, once a trump guy was pictured in relation to the article now him and Alan Lowe must respond. Ed told me what I am (was) to say in regard to the list – that is was “hollands and Landon’s list” and he informed me Alan was going to do a “Santa video” as the naughty list. Danko made it very clear that if I did not follow his script hit would go very badly for me and that I was follow along.

I met Ed Danko for lunch (with Alan Lowe) again he mentioned the list and what I am to do – He also had a list of employees he wanted fired/gone among other things. I disagreed with almost all of his nonsense and told him he was wrong, clueless and a “political who’re” who has traded good governance for politics and would destroy this community.

Most troubling Ed Danko has been under an HR inquiry for harassment. Several employees came forward and requested action. He was furious with me. I am also concerned for the employees including Virginia Smith, Renina Fuller and the others named. HE seemed intent on revenge and says he will call for an investigation into the list as a means to get Renina Fuller terminated as the list resided in HR, and emails with her name are on them .

I was told the plan was to fire me, and if the voted did not sustain that to move to appoint Jerry Cameron (a connection of their moneymen Joe Mullins) to be an interim and that I would have to fill him in over the next few weeks --- this is purely rumor at this point – not sure if it is related but I am documenting it all .