

Letter to the Editor: Have You Ever Heard of Suing Yourself?

Clifton has entered a new low with the suit that John Traier has filed against the Clifton Board of Education. Wait a minute, isn't John Traier a member of the Clifton Board of Education? So, in essence, John is suing himself and asking the Court to have the Clifton Board of Education (i.e. the Clifton taxpayers) pay his legal fees for bringing this suit?

What could be so important to have a school board member sue the board of which he is a part of? It seems the reappointment of the two BOE attorneys (D'Elia and Sciarrillo) is the issue. (Remember at the April BOE reorganization meeting, the board voted 5 to 4 to fire Sciarrillo as negotiating attorney and the motion to rehire D'Elia as general counsel failed in a 4-4 vote. So both attorneys were not rehired as attorneys for this new BOE.)

Why is a school board member going to such lengths to reappoint these two attorneys when the Clifton taxpayers have clearly stated in the last BOE election that they wanted the huge legal expenses stopped? I guess Mr. Traier forgot about last year's petition in which over 1,000 residents asked the Board to change the way they compensate these two attorneys. I guess Mr. Traier believes Clifton taxpayers should continue to foot almost \$500,000 in annual legal expenses for these two attorneys. Whose interests is Mr. Traier trying to protect these two attorneys or the Clifton taxpayers?

Under our legal system, the Clifton Board of Education must now defend itself and file an answer to Mr. Traier's complaint. Unfortunately, ignoring this lawsuit is not an option. So once again, the Clifton taxpayers are forced to pay for unnecessary legal expenses as we did with the \$300,000 frivolous ethics charges against Paitechell.

In the Board of Education's Amended Answers and Counterclaims to Mr. Traier's lawsuit, the board states that Mr. Traier can not bring this suit since he has violated NJSA.18A:12-2 and 12-24a which is he governed by since he is a member of the BOE. The Board also states that Mr. Traier is not entitled to have his legal expenses paid by the BOE "by reason of his unclean hands because although Plaintiff purports to be represented by the law firm of Failla & Banks, LLC. on information and belief Plaintiff has sought and/or accepted legal services from the Chasen firm (D'Elia's law firm) and/or the Lindaberry firm (Sciarrillo's law firm) in the initiation and prosecution of this action".

Read that again! These are serious allegations with serious ramifications if they are proved to be correct. The Clifton voters and taxpayers are entitled to the truth from John Traier and anyone else on the board involved with these allegations. If these allegations are proved to be true, then I will be the first person to demand the resignation of John Traier and any other board member who has been proved to also have had "unclean hands" in this unhandled, dirty lawsuit!

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