

Letter to the Editor: The Tangled Web They Have Woven

Have you ever walked into a spider's web and felt like you couldn't get out of it? Well, John Traier and Company (Renta, St. Clair, Tahan & Fraulo)'s lawsuit against the rest of the Clifton BOE is just like one of these spider's web which they can't get out of. Here's why!

It appears that the two ex- BOE attorneys that Traier and Company were trying to rehire back were working behind the scenes drafting the lawsuit against the rest of the BOE. First, according to the counter complaint and signed affidavits filed with the Passaic County Superior Court, Karen Perkins (Board Secretary) under direction from Traier faxed a copy of the failed resolution that attempted to re-appoint the Sciarrillo firm as interim Board Counsel but failed to receive the required two-thirds vote to Sciarrillo without the knowledge of the board President. This was a violation of the Board's By-law #0146 (no board member shall as an individual command the services of any school district employee. Additionally, according to Jim Daley's signed affidavit, Perkins is accused of stamped President Jim Daley's signature on this resolution (without his knowledge and authorization) violating Board policy that requires actual signatures on all resolutions. The public deserves an explanation from Ms. Perkins.

Second, in all the Court documents filed by Traier and Company (the Complaint, Order to Show Cause and Amended Complaint) included a case file code on the bottom left hand corner which is substantially identical to that used by the Sciarrillo law firm in previously filed papers when they handled special education cases for the BOE.

Third, employees of the two law firms that Sciarrillo and D'Elia work for notarized the verifications and affidavits of Traier and Company. Traier's first verification in the original complaint was notarized by Christine Masquera who is Anthony Sciarrillo's secretary. Traier's second verification in the amended complaint (in which the other four members enjoined) was notarized by Sheila Porter who is an employee of D'Elia' law firm.

Fourth, not only were the affidavits of Renta, St. Clair, Tahan and Fraulo) also notarized by Sheila Porter (the employee of the D'Elia law firm) but in the case of Renta, St. Clair and Fraulo their affidavits were not notarized in front of them as required by law. How do I know this? After I read the counter complaint and saw the involvement of these two law firms and how Traier and Company stated to the Court that they brought this lawsuit "in the public interest" I was outraged and called Renta, St.Clair and Fraulo. All three admitted to me that they did not know who Sheila Porter was, did not know where, when or by whom their affidavits were notarized by and they had never met or spoke with Sheila Porter in connection with these affidavits being notarized by. As you may be aware, before a notary public may notarize a document, the document must be signed in the notary's presence and the notary must receive proof of the affiant's identity and that to do otherwise would be committing false swearing. In fact, Mr. Fraulo stated to me that he "had no idea" how his signed affidavit went from the offices of the Failla firm to the offices of the D'Elia firm; and he admitted that if it turned out that his affidavit had been notarized by an employee of the D'Elia firm, this would not "look good" and public would be "upset". Both " St.Clair and Fraulo admitted that it would be a blatant conflict of interest if either of those firms had any involvement with a lawsuit against the Board".

Therefore, I submitted an affidavit to Passaic County Superior Court attesting to “the false swearing of the plaintiffs” and to alert the Court that as a taxpayer of Clifton that I was outraged by the fact that the plaintiffs had the audacity to contend they initiated this lawsuit “in the public interest” and claimed to be represented by independent counsel. Clearly, this lawsuit was brought “solely to benefit their friends in the law firms which formerly represented the Board ...and since Mr. Traier’s action is not in the best interest of the public, as a taxpayer, I strenuously object to Mr. Traier being reimbursed for attorney fees” as he requested of the Court. The tangled web that was woven!

The residents, taxpayers and children of Clifton deserve some immediate answers from the four commissioners (Renta, St.Clair, Fraulo and Tahan) that so willingly allowed themselves to become entangled in Traier’s web! Why were these four so willing to rehire the two ex-attorneys who made over \$1.7million in the last four years? It is time these four commissioners realize that they are there to protect the interests of Clifton taxpayers and children and not the interests of these overpaid, high-priced attorneys! I guess it is just like former Commissioner Mary Kowal stated in her parting remarks “it is all about the money and getting jobs for people”!

Finally, true to my word when a few weeks ago, I stated that if the facts prove that John Traier had unclean hands in this lawsuit I would be the first person to call for his resignation. Since the facts clearly prove that John Traier had unclean hands in this dirty, underhanded lawsuit, I call for the immediate resignation of John Traier as a BOE Commissioner. I call on Mr. Traier to finally once and for all do the right thing for the Clifton taxpayers and Clifton children and resign from the Clifton Board of Education. It is clear that you have violated the School Board Code of Ethics and have lost your independent judgment and are using your position as a School Board Member for your own personal gain. It is clear you have lied to the residents and taxpayers of Clifton. This board can only move forward if you resign!

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