

school year. Moving forward, MA is looking at increasing testing for middle school core subjects at the beginning, middle, and end of the year so it

has data to make decisions.

- Vice President Lindsay Clinton noted that the board election applications were due March 31,

and there were two applicants at the meeting: Matt Ross and Ryan Graham.

The MA School Board meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thurs-

day of each month. The next regular board meeting will be on Thursday, April 13, at 6 p.m. at the East Campus. See more information at see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

COUNTY
(Cont. from 1)

Shecter said, “Ms. Bremer, you and Ms. Geitner and Ms. Williams all received over 32% from that developer and his affiliates. El Paso County adopted the rules and procedures of the State of Colorado Independent Ethics Commission which defines, quote, ‘Appearance of impropriety means conduct perceived by a reasonable person to impair the ability to carry out official responsibilities with fairness, impartiality, objectivity, and integrity’ unquote.”

Shecter stated that he had requested the commissioners and county attorney place the issue on the agenda for a public hearing to create a process when an appearance of impropriety is evident and a quorum is not possible. He said the request had been refused and asked, “What are you afraid of?” He said that although campaign contributions are legal, when they come from a developer and his affiliates and are a substantial percentage of total contributions, such as 15% or greater in his opinion, and the developer then brings a matter for the commissioners’ consideration, that commissioner needs to be automatically recused to avoid an appearance of impropriety. He suggested a possible solution would be to maintain a list of commissioner volunteers to hear the matter for fairness to all parties in such circumstances.

Williams did recuse herself from the sketch plan hearing, stating she had had a conversation that gave her concerns about her ability to hear the matter fairly. Shecter said, “Given the appearance of impropriety of Mrs. Geitner and Bremer, you both should have recused yourselves from the Nov. 15th sketch plan hearing which would have prevented a quorum and required another process.”

He continued, “I’m asking you to set aside the approval decision of the sketch plan. I’m asking you to reset a hearing de novo after you create a process and procedure to follow when an appearance of impropriety occurs and a quorum of three commissioners is not possible.”

Shecter said that responses he had received from Williams and the county attorney made it appear as though it was unilaterally decided that these percentages of campaign contributions are not appearances of impropriety. He commented that this was not a decision for one or two people to make and called again for the matter to be addressed at a public hearing. He said he had also informed the

Contribution Analysis by Individual Commissioner

Source of Contributions*	Bremer	Geitner	Gonzalez	VanderWerf	Williams	Total
Flying Horse North (FHN)	\$48,400	\$13,000	\$4,200	\$13,870	\$48,400	\$127,870
Not affiliated with FHN	\$102,417	\$27,465	\$25,945	\$112,508	\$82,945	\$351,280
Total	\$150,817	\$40,465	\$30,145	\$126,378	\$131,345	\$479,150
FHN Percent of Total	32.09%	32.13%	13.93%	10.98%	36.85%	26.69%

*Excludes Self Contributions

3/28/2023 Source of Data: TRACER - Home (colorado.gov) Data as of: December 2022

Above: Slide shown by Shecter at the Feb. 28 meeting. Shecter said it was prepared by others in the community who analyzed the public records and created the chart.

commissioners that they could request an advisory opinion from the Colorado Ethics Commission but that, at the time of speaking, no request had been made.

Responding to Shecter, Kenneth Hodges, county attorney, told him he had received his answer as far as the matter not being scheduled as an agenda item. Shecter said, “But the community wants this heard. What are you all afraid of?”

Three members of the public spoke in support of Shecter’s views and citizens stood up in the audience at his behest to show their support. Joe Hall, a county resident, said, “It screams at me, ‘What the heck is going on?’. How can you guys not be recusing yourself when you’re receiving campaign contributions in proportions that you’ve received from the developer.” He added, “I’ve been in the development business for 30 years. This is nuts!” Scott Riebel, a Black Forest resident, commented, “I can’t in my mind reconcile the fact that it can’t have some influence on how you’re making decisions with regards to some of these developments.”

Geitner said she was not sure how Shecter had got to the numbers displayed in the contribution analysis because corporations are not allowed to give contributions. She

commented, “There’s obviously some conglomeration or some assumption or connection that have been made so it would be difficult for me to accept this as accurate for that reason.” She continued, “I have a responsibility to decide if I can be impartial. That is what the choice becomes when we make a decision to recuse from a topic. Those are conversations that we have, and we do have an attorney we consult with. It’s not as if what seems to be being presented is that this is not a consideration or there’s some big coverup.”

She added that at a quasi-judicial hearing “not only do I have the responsibility to determine whether I can be impartial, but I am to be impartial and that means that I don’t just count the number of people in the audience who are for and against something and vote that way and that is because it’s done on the merits. It’s done based on criteria.”

Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez commented, “First Amendment. If developers want to donate money, the rules are the rules, but it does concern me. It does look like they are getting some outside influence in determining the outcomes of elections. That does not necessarily mean that is biasing elected personnel. But it does concern me, the amount of money that is influencing election out-

comes locally.”

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