

Complaint Description

Daniel White reported an issue (Tue, 8 Jan 2019 at 10:11 PM)

Improper use of public funds to promote a ballot measure.

These documents were difficult to come by as they were discovered with the use of a public records request.

Daniel White replied to "PDC Support" <pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov> (Wed, 9 Jan 2019 at 5:30 PM)

Here are the invoices paid by the Peninsula School District for political advertising in the last bond election.

I recently became aware that this is illegal after reading about the PDC fine on the Library board.

Please let me know if you need anything else.

Dan

What impact does the alleged violation(s) have on the public?

Public funds that were desperately needed for school enrichment/maintenance and other pressing needs were squandered on an advertising campaign.

List of attached evidence or contact information where evidence may be found.

Public funds from the Peninsula school district were used to promote a ballot measure for school bonds on the Pierce County April 24, 2018 ballot. The ballot measure was commonly called Resolution No.18-01 for \$220,000,000 in school bonds. Attached are the following: Invoices for Facebook/Instagram Ads from Elan Financial SVR of St Louis,MO \$2,500 and DS Political of Washington DC for a Digital Campaign, \$8,500.

List of potential witnesses with contact information to reach them.

See invoices attached

Complaint Certification:

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that information provided with this complaint is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

| |
|-------------------|
| PO DATE |
| 10/04/2017 |

| |
|------------------------------|
| PURCHASE ORDER NUMBER |
| 5151700017 |

PRINTED 02/28/2018
REPRINTED PO

INVOICE TO:
PENINSULA SCHOOL DISTRICT
ATTN: ACCOUNTS PAYABLE
14015 62ND AVE NW
GIG HARBOR WA 98332
(253) 530-1051 PURCHASING
(253) 530-1027 ACCTS PAYABLE

VENDOR KEY : ELAN FIN000
SHIP DATE : 10/03/2017
FISCAL YEAR : 2017-2018
ENTERED BY : COLLENIC000
ORIGINAL REQ # : 0000125992

VENDOR:
ELAN FINANCIAL SVR INC
ACCT: 4715110301-47-9643
PO BOX 790428
ST LOUIS, MO 63179

SHIP TO:
PENINSULA SCHOOL DISTRICT
14015 62ND AVE NW
GIG HARBOR, WA 98332

ATTN: NICOLE COLLETTE

| QUANTITY | UNIT | DESCRIPTION OF ITEMS OR MATERIALS | UNIT PRICE | AMOUNT |
|--|------|--|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | | Open PO for 2017-18 Facebook/Instagram Ads | 2500.00000 | 2,500.00 |
| ACCOUNT SUMMARY (FOR INTERNAL USE) | | | | |
| | | ACCOUNT NUMBER | ACCOUNT AMOUNT | |
| | | 10 E 530 9778 15 7052 001 0000 0000 * 9200 | 2,500.00 | |
| NOTICE TO VENDORS: | | | | |
| 1. THIS ORDER IS SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION UNLESS ACKNOWLEDGED, OR FILLED WITHIN 90 DAYS OR AS STATED ABOVE. | | | | |
| 2. VENDOR CERTIFIES THAT THEY ARE NOT PRESENTLY DEBARRED, DECLARED INELIGIBLE, OR VOLUNTARILY EXCLUDED IN TRANSACTION BY ANY FEDERAL AGENCIES. VENDOR WILL PROVIDE WRITTEN NOTICE SHOULD THIS EVENT OCCUR. | | | | |
| *****PO TOTAL RECAP***** | | | | |
| | | | | Subtotal of PAGE TOTALS |
| | | | | 2,500.00 |
| | | | | Other Charges |
| | | | | 0.00 |
| | | | | Tax |
| | | | | 0.00 |
| | | | PAGE TOTAL | 2,500.00 |
| | | | TOTAL | 2,500.00 |

TAX EXEMPTIONS: DISTRICT IS NOT SALES TAX EXEMPT.
NOTE: NO SUBSTITUTIONS OR ADDITIONS
WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION FROM PURCHASING

PURCHASE APPROVED BY:

FINANCE DIRECTOR

| |
|-------------------|
| PO DATE |
| 03/13/2018 |

| |
|------------------------------|
| PURCHASE ORDER NUMBER |
| 5151700033 |

INVOICE TO:
 PENINSULA SCHOOL DISTRICT
 ATTN: ACCOUNTS PAYABLE
 14015 62ND AVE NW
 GIG HARBOR WA 98332
 (253) 530-1051 PURCHASING
 (253) 530-1027 ACCTS PAYABLE

VENDOR KEY : DSPOLIT000
 SHIP DATE : 03/12/2018
 FISCAL YEAR : 2017-2018
 ENTERED BY : COLLENIC000
 ORIGINAL REQ # : 0000136023

PRINTED 04/16/2018
 REPRINTED PO

VENDOR:
 DSPOLITICAL LLC
 1250 H ST NW STE 200
 WASHINGTON, DC 20005-5932

SHIP TO:
 PENINSULA SCHOOL DISTRICT
 14015 62ND AVE NW
 GIG HARBOR, WA 98332

ATTN: NICOLE COLLETTE

| QUANTITY | UNIT | DESCRIPTION OF ITEMS OR MATERIALS | UNIT PRICE | AMOUNT |
|--|------|---|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | | DS Political - Insertion Order for Digital Campaign | 8500.00000 | 8,500.00 |
| ACCOUNT SUMMARY (FOR INTERNAL USE) | | | | |
| | | ACCOUNT NUMBER | ACCOUNT AMOUNT | |
| | | 10 E 530 9778 15 7000 001 0000 9200 | 8,500.00 | |
| NOTICE TO VENDORS: | | | | |
| 1. THIS ORDER IS SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION UNLESS ACKNOWLEDGED OR FILLED WITHIN 90 DAYS OR AS STATED ABOVE. | | | | |
| 2. VENDOR CERTIFIES THAT THEY ARE NOT PRESENTLY DEBARRED, DECLARED INELIGIBLE, OR VOLUNTARILY EXCLUDED IN TRANSACTION BY ANY FEDERAL AGENCIES. VENDOR WILL PROVIDE WRITTEN NOTICE SHOULD THIS EVENT OCCUR. | | | | |
| *****PO TOTAL RECAP***** | | | | |
| | | | Subtotal of PAGE TOTALS | 8,500.00 |
| | | | Other Charges | 0.00 |
| | | | Tax | 0.00 |
| | | | PAGE TOTAL | 8,500.00 |
| | | | TOTAL | 8,500.00 |

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 NOTE: NO SUBSTITUTIONS OR ADDITIONS
 WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION FROM PURCHASING

PURCHASE APPROVED BY:

 FINANCE DIRECTOR

A Facebook post paid for by the Pierce County Library System as part of a recent levy election earned it a fine from the state's Public Disclosure Commission.

The \$150 penalty, paid by the library system's marketing and communications director Mary Getchell, was the result of a violation of using public resources to promote a ballot measure.

In September, Getchell, paid Facebook \$250 to promote a post featuring a Sept. 15 News Tribune editorial that endorsed passage of a property-tax levy to benefit the library system. The post thanked the editorial board for its support.

The posts/ads ran on Facebook Sept. 17-22.

Conner Edwards filed a complaint with the PDC about the post on Sept. 29. The PDC completed its review Dec. 19.

"By spending \$250 to boost the post of the TNT endorsement of the PCLS levy lid lift, Ms. Getchell used the facilities of the Pierce County Library System to support Proposition No. 1, in violation of RCW 42.17A.555," the PDC determined.

Getchell told The News Tribune via email Wednesday in response for comment: "As many organizations do, including the Pierce County Library, we boosted or paid for a wider distribution of the post.

"As a public organization, we should not have thanked the newspaper for its endorsement or show any pro or con support of the ballot measure."

After payment of the fine, the case was dismissed.

The editorial board operates separately from the news division of The News Tribune.

The ballot measure restored the levy rate to its full amount of 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value. It passed in one of the county's closest outcomes on the November