


Regarding the possible appointment of Mr. Coyle to the Sewer & Water Commission

Jason L. <jaylach@gmail.com>

Wed 2/14/2024 5:54 PM

To:First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>;Rosemary Coyle <rcoyle@colchesterct.gov>;Art Shilosky <aShilosky@colchesterct.gov>;Denise Turner <dturner@colchesterct.gov>;Cliff O'Donal <codonal@colchesterct.gov>

 2 attachments (821 KB)

Stephen Coyle's Removal Result Notification.pdf; Stephen Coyle Removal Letter.pdf;

Reappointing Stephen Coyle to the Sewer & Water commission would be not only a huge mistake, it would also be a massive slap in the face to the people of Colchester. Mr. Coyle was removed from the Sewer & Water commission for abusing his power, interfering in personnel matters, and going so far as to instruct an employee not only to be insubordinate but also to take time off work without her boss's approval. Disagree with the previous First Selectman's approach to handling the matter or not, these complaints are well documented. Rather than rehash all of it, I have included the documents in with this correspondence.

During the February 1st, 2024 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen, Mr. Coyle began his interview by stating that the previous First Selectman "wanted me to step down.... and I stepped down" (this can be heard at roughly the 19:30 mark of the Feb 1 meeting recording which was uploaded to the Town's website). While I had never heard that Mr. Coyle resigned from the commission, I understood we removed him, it would not have been the first time the previous First Selectman withheld information. Naturally, I immediately submitted FOI requests for Mr. Coyle resignation letter sent either to the First Selectman, the previous Board of Selectmen, or any member of the Sewer & Water commission. To my surprise, First Selectman Bernie responded to both my requests that there were no responsive documents. In other words, Mr. Coyle never actually stepped down from the Sewer & Water Commission. He was, in fact, removed.

Mr. Coyle's claim that he stepped down from the commission after the First Selectman asked him to is a verified lie, one he willingly made to the people of Colchester through our chosen representatives (the Board of Selectmen). This, alone, should immediately disqualify Mr. Coyle from consideration. On the commission he would be in charge of overseeing a vital service required by thousands of Colchester citizens while having control over its direction, costs, etc. One who cannot be honest with the people of Colchester cannot be trusted to have a say in how to operate a service required for basic human essentials.

Furthermore, Mr. Coyle's previous stint on the Commission left a lot to be desired by the ratepayers of Colchester. As one example, he served on the Commission since 2010 (and before that when it was founded back in the 70s) and under his oversight the rate payers were picking up the tab for water they didn't use, such as at Town Hall and the splash pad. He was also instrumental in changing the mind of previous town employee Pam M regarding the bill owed by the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees. When I first spoke to Pam as a Selectman about the issue, she told me Bacon 100% owed the bill and should be made to pay it in full. She later told me that, after speaking with Mr. Coyle, she now thinks the right move is to forgive the bill. Without her support it was impossible to do anything other than forgive the bill – again straddling the ratepayers to cover the cost of the water lost due to the leak.

While I understand Mr. Coyle claims to be a ratepayer because he has to cover unpaid bills by his tenants, FOI requests show those bills equate to less than \$100 a year. His choices don't affect his bottom line, and the above actions prove that. The purpose of the 50% ratepayer provision was to ensure that those who rely on Sewer & Water for their day-to-day lives had equal voice at the table. It wasn't intended to be filled by those whose only buy-in with Sewer & Water is to help them generate further profits through commercial ventures.

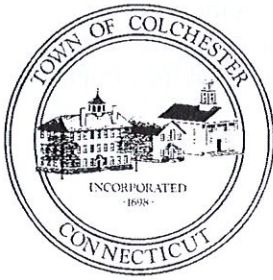
Any member of this board who votes to appoint Mr. Coyle to the Sewer & Water commission is admitting that not only is it ok to lie to the people of Colchester, but if you know the right people and have the right last name – you'll be rewarded for it. We deserve to know that those who are put in positions of oversight over such vital services such as Sewer & Water can be trusted with such responsibility. Mr Coyle's willingness to so callously lie to the people of Colchester makes abundantly clear he can't be.

Please ensure this correspondence, along with the attached documentation, is included in the meeting agenda packet for the February 15th, 2024 Board of Selectmen meeting.

Thank you,

Jason LaChapelle

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Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Andreas Bisbikos, First Selectman

May 17, 2023

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL

Stephen Coyle
23 Deer Run Dr.
Colchester, CT 06415

Re: Removal from the Sewer & Water Commission

Dear Mr. Coyle

This letter serves as notification that the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Colchester intends to remove you from the Sewer & Water Commission, pursuant to Article VII, Section C-706 of the Charter of the Town of Colchester (attached).

The grounds for removal:

- 1) Ordering a Town Employee to close the office of Public Works to have a confidential personnel meeting. Both actions were not authorized by the Town of Colchester, nor did you have such authority in your capacity as Sewer & Water Commission Chair.
- 2) Authorizing a Town Employee to both take time off and to work from home over whom you had no supervisory authority over.
- 3) Refusing to release FOI able items to the public. This includes:
 - A) Not making the proposed Sewer Budget increases, Water Budget Increases, and the Proposed Fee Increases available in a public meeting which you voted on to move forward to a public hearing.
 - B) Instructing a Town Employee to not make the rates available to both the First Selectman and to the public until the day of the public hearing.
 - C) Instructing Town Employees to keep rate payers in the dark about their billing long after the rate hikes have gone into effect.
- 4) Cronyism
 - A) Unilaterally pushing through a job description and elevating an employee's status without consulting the Sewer & Water Commission
 - B) Requesting Emergency Board of Selectmen Action on False Pretenses to blackmail the Board of Selectmen into a decision.
 - C) Creating a job description that is so restrictive that it can only be filled by one person and that it creates package of perks for said employee.
 - D) Interfering in a personnel matter when an employee was put on paid administrative leave.
 - a. This interference included the utilization of two Board of Selectmen members: Rosemary Coyle & Denise Turner. In fact, based on text messages secured by company phones they were "all over it."
 - b. Selectman Jason LaChapelle testified at the Thursday, May 4th Board of Selectmen meeting that both Rosemary Coyle and Denise Turner lobbied him to overturn the paid administrative leave without any instance of what transpired.

Pursuant to Article VII, Section C-706B of the Charter of the Town of Colchester, you shall be ineligible to perform the duties of your office effective Monday, May 22nd until such time as the Board of Selectmen initiates final action. If you desire a hearing, please notify the Board of Selectmen in writing within seven days of this notification of the grounds for removal.

Should you have any questions, you may contact me at (860) 537-7220.

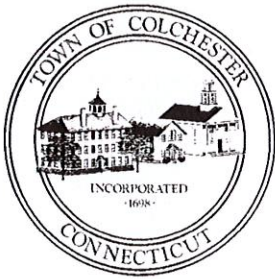
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Bisbikos', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andreas Bisbikos
First Selectman

Attachment: Town of Colchester Charter, Article VII, Sections C-701 through C-707

Cc: Board of Selectmen
Sewer & Water Commission File



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Andreas Bisbikos, First Selectman

June 20, 2023

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL

Stephen Coyle
23 Deer Run Dr.
Colchester, CT 06415

Re: Removal from the Sewer & Water Commission

Dear Mr. Coyle

This letter serves as notification that the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Colchester voted at their Regular Meeting on Thursday, June 15th, 2023, to formally remove you from the Sewer & Water Commission.

Should you have any questions, you may contact me at (860) 537-7220.

Sincerely,

Andreas Bisbikos
First Selectman

Attachment: Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting Minutes, Thursday June 15th, 2023

Cc: Board of Selectmen
Sewer & Water Commission File

February 15th FOI Log

Michael Dubreuil <dubreuilm@gmail.com>

Wed 2/14/2024 6:11 PM

To:First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>

Cc:Rosemary Coyle <rcoyle@colchesterct.gov>;Denise Turner <dturner@colchesterct.gov>;Art Shilosky <aShilosky@colchesterct.gov>;Cliff O'Donal <codonal@colchesterct.gov>;Taryn Scott <tscott@colchesterct.gov>

Hello Bernie,

I have reviewed the meeting material for the February 15, 2024 Board of Selectmen meeting. I have a concern with the FOI Log entry for my request dated 12/30/2023 with a request of "Any and all communications from the First Selectman's office to any union representative regarding the Finance Director position and/or Mary Williamson sent between 11/20/2023 and the date this request is fulfilled."

In the Responsive Documents column it should be noted that this request was in fact not fulfilled. Responsive documents were identified and were exempt from disclosure in accordance with Sec. 1-210. (Formerly Sec. 1-19) (9) Records, reports and statements of strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining.

Please ensure the FOI Log is updated accordingly and this email finds its way to correspondence for the February 15th meeting. Thank you.

- Michael Dubreuil
Colchester

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Sewer & Water

MICHAEL Hayes <michaeldh@yahoo.com>

Thu 2/15/2024 10:03 AM

To: Bernard Dennler <BDennler@colchesterct.gov>

I support the reappoint of Steve Coyle to the Sewer & Water Commission. Steve has served about 20 years on this commission before the previous administration removed Mr Coyle from the Sewer & Water commission. Steve has the experience needed to serve on the Sewer & Water Commission. Please reappoint Steve Coyle back to the Sewer & Water Commission.

Michael Hayes
Board of Finance Member

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

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