



Edit Referral

H-24-453 Referral Information

Hotline ID: H-24-453

Date of Submission: 10/8/2024

Entity Type: Local

Entity Category Type: County

Entity: Jefferson County

Sub Entity Name:

Category: Conflict of Interest/Ethic Laws

1-2 sentence description of concern: This audit is requested to address the potential conflict of interest, possible misuse of position to secure special privileges for the Chamber by Jefferson County Commissioner Greg Brotherton.

Report Issued: No

Reporting Type: Hotline Letter

Report Number:

Investigation Contracted: No

Contract Number:

Contract Name:

Billing Time Code:

Costs:

Public Records Request: No

Flag For Annual Report: No

Substantiated: No

ARRA: No

Action: Referred to Audit Team - Consider Next Audit

Audit Team: Port Orchard

Audit Team Contact: strzalkaa@sao.wa.gov

cc:

Referral Date: 10/8/2024

Action Taken: No

Response Date:

Report Date:

Follow Up Date:

Date Closed: 12/11/2024

H-24-453 Contact Information

Hotline ID: H-24-453 **Date of Submission:** 10/8/2024

Submission Method: Web

Submission Type: Citizen **Staff:**

Author(Last, First): Short , Jessie

Address: PO Box 557

City: Chimacum **State:** WA **Zip:** 98325

Home Phone:

Work Phone:

Mobile Phone:

Email: email@jessieshort.com

Contact Preference: Email

Waived Confidentiality: No

H-24-453 Referral Details

Hotline ID:

H-24-453

What state or local organization is involved?

Please identify the specific concerns you are hoping the audit will address.

This audit is requested to address the potential conflict of interest, possible misuse of position to secure special privileges for the Chamber by Jefferson County Commissioner Greg Brotherton.

Please provide a detailed description of the assertion or outstanding achievement, including who, when, where, what, how and how much.

· Conflict of Interest: The commissioner who proposed the designation of the North Hood Canal Chamber as Jefferson County's official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) is also a board member of the Chamber, potentially violating RCW 42.23.030, which prohibits municipal officers from having a beneficial interest in contracts or decisions they oversee. · Misuse of Position: The commissioner's actions may also violate RCW 42.23.070(1), which prohibits using one's official position to secure special privileges or exemptions for themselves or others, as the Chamber could benefit financially or operationally from the designation. During the September 23, 2024, Board of County Commissioners meeting, Commissioner Brotherton presented two memos to the other commissioners without prior notice or the topics being listed on the agenda. The first memo proposed designating the North Hood Canal Chamber as Jefferson County's Destination Marketing Organization (DMO). The second memo provided direction to the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) on how their funds should be allocated during the upcoming grant cycle, after the RFP was approved by the LTAC and publicly noticed. While no official vote occurred on the DMO memo, the discussion remains ongoing. This audit is requested to address the potential conflict of interest, possible misuse of position to secure special privileges for the Chamber, and the absence of a transparent and competitive process for selecting the DMO. In addition to the concerns previously outlined, there is a broader issue related to the redirection of funds proposed in the memos presented by Commissioner Brotherton. These memos appear to be part of a coordinated effort to funnel funds in support of a Public Facilities District (PFD), a task force of which Commissioner Brotherton is also a member. His involvement with the task force raises further concerns about conflicts of interest, particularly in how the LTAC funds are being influenced. During the same meeting, Commissioner Brotherton admitted to writing the LTAC funding applications on behalf of both the county and the North Hood Canal Chamber, raising additional questions about impartiality. By directing LTAC funds towards initiatives that would benefit the Chamber, the PFD, and other entities where he holds influence, the commissioner is creating an ecosystem of interconnected funding benefitting projects he is personally involved in, while bypassing competitive processes like RFPs or RFQs. Additionally, it is important to note that Commissioner Brotherton was previously a member of the LTAC (Lodging Tax Advisory Committee). In an apparent move to avoid a conflict of interest while still influencing the funding process, he redirected Commissioner Kate Dean to take his position on the LTAC. This allowed him to submit the LTAC applications himself on behalf of the county and the North Hood Canal Chamber without being directly involved in the advisory committee's deliberations. This maneuver raises further concerns about transparency and ethics. By stepping away from LTAC and positioning himself to draft and submit applications for both the county and the Chamber, Commissioner Brotherton may have sought to avoid scrutiny while still exerting substantial control over the allocation of funds. His dual role in drafting applications while influencing how LTAC funds should be allocated (via memos) underscores the risk of self-dealing and using public resources to benefit organizations with which he is personally affiliated.

How did this issue come to your attention?

Viewing the video recording of the meeting.

What employee(s), contractors, etc., were involved in the assertion or achievement? Please include employee titles if possible.

Commissioner Greg Brotherton, District 3 Jefferson County

Please provide the names of any witnesses to the assertion or achievement, if possible.

Please provide any additional details or comments that would help us understand your assertion or achievement.

H-24-453
Activity
Log

Hotline ID: H-24-453

Entry Date ▼	Log Entry
12/11/2024	Referral updated by 'JEANA Gillis (gillisj)'.
10/30/2024	Referral updated by 'AMY Strzalka (strzalkaa)'.
10/30/2024	Sent citizen a copy of the hotline letter (email and letter attached in supporting documents). We also sent a copy of the letter to the County, with citizen info removed. --strzalkaa
10/14/2024	Emailed citizen to let them know we would consider concerns as part of current audit. --strzalkaa
10/08/2024	Referral updated by 'JEANA Gillis (gillisj)'.
10/08/2024	Task assigned to 'strzalkaa@sao.wa.gov'. Team notification email sent to: strzalkaa@sao.wa.gov
10/08/2024	Referral updated by 'JEANA Gillis (gillisj)'. Action changed from (not set) to Referred to Audit Team - Consider Next Audit.