

OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR



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January 4, 2019

Horry County Council
1301 Second Avenue
Conway, SC 29526

Dear Horry County Council,

It is my understanding that today's special called meeting, with the only item listed being an executive session, concerns my employment with Horry County. I request any such conversations follow state law and be held in open session. I will not have my integrity attacked without means of defense in public. I should add that this effort appears to have been initiated by some who are the subjects of what is being investigated.

I have also been told that there have been private discussions among council members about placing me under some form of suspension. I have done nothing wrong to be punished in such a way. Doing so damages my career and makes me a target of retaliation.

As to the events that have created this situation, Horry County Attorney Arrigo Carotti accurately summarized them in his privileged attorney/client memo. I believe Mr. Carotti acted correctly in providing this information to County Council and myself. I provided the memo to County Council in its entirety via email. I wanted each of you to receive the exact same information. Relaying it by any other means would not ensure this.

I want to be clear that I wanted no part of any controversy. Even so, once the MBREDC Director shared information on her meeting with Luke Barefoot and Johnny Gardner and that there was a recording of the meeting, I asked for a

copy of the recording numerous times. Included in that pursuit were emails, a scheduled meeting at MBREDC offices where the individuals did not show and, finally, a playing of a select 3-4 minute portion of what has been said to be a 90 +/- minute recording. It had been my hope that what we listened to on Wednesday, December 19, 2019 at 10 a.m. would put things to rest. As outlined in the Horry County Attorney's memo, it did not.

Once the memo was shared on the evening of December 19th, I was encouraged by some Council Members to report the matter to the South Carolina State Law Enforcement Division. Regardless, it was my responsibility to do so. I do not know what, if anything, the investigation will conclude. That is clearly a responsibility of law enforcement.

As you know, I am a Credentialed Manager with the International City/County Management Association, with more than 21 years of local government experience. In all of those years, I have served as a city or county administrator. And as an ICMA member, I pledge to uphold the tenets of the ICMA Code of Ethics. Following that code of ethics is included in my employment contract. Among those tenets are:

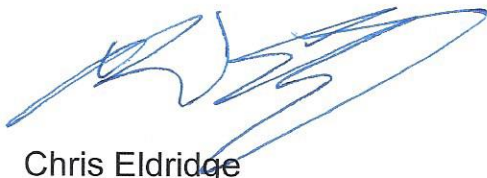
Be dedicated to the highest ideals of honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships in order that the member may merit the respect and confidence of the elected officials, of other officials and employees, and of the public.

Resist any encroachment on professional responsibilities, believing the member should be free to carry out official policies without interference, and handle each problem without discrimination on the basis of principle and justice.

Let me be clear. I have never possessed a copy of the recording of the meeting. I have no idea what is on the rest of it, having only listened to 3-4 minutes of what has been stated to be 90+/- minutes long.

I wish to continue to fulfill my duties as Horry County Administrator and serve the people of this great community. I have enjoyed serving Horry County Council and look forward to continuing to accomplish great things for the citizens of the Independent Republic.

Sincerely,



Chris Eldridge
Horry County Administrator