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202 Walnut Avenue • Cranford, New Jersey 07016

December 3, 2008

Ann R. Rubin, Esq., Assistant Prosecutor
Union County Prosecutor's Office
32 Rahway Avenue
Elizabeth, NJ 07202-2115
VIA EMAIL AND CERTIFIED MAIL

RE: Open Public Meetings Act violation by Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders

Dear Assistant Prosecutor Rubin:

Attached is a typical catering bill for Union County freeholder meetings. The board routinely meets for dinner prior to the start of their agenda and regular meetings. These meetings are generally catered for 25 – 35 people. One could reasonably assume that an effective majority of the members of the Board of Chosen Freeholders may be present along with key county employees.

N.J.S.A.10:4-8. b. "Meeting" means and includes any gathering whether corporeal or by means of communication equipment, which is attended by, or open to, all of the members of a public body, held with the intent, on the part of the members of the body present, to discuss or act as a unit upon the specific public business of that body. Meeting does not mean or include any such gathering (1) attended by less than an effective majority of the members of a public body, or (2) attended by or open to all the members of three or more similar public bodies at a convention or similar gathering.

c. "Public business" means and includes all matters which relate in any way, directly or indirectly, to the performance of the public body's functions or the conduct of its business.

From all of this, I conclude that the Freeholder Board routinely violates N.J.S.A. 10:4-13. As a result, the public is deprived of any knowledge of the topics that the Freeholders are privately discussing with county department heads and employees during these dinner meetings held prior to public meetings. Further, if business is not being conducted during these dinner meetings why are the taxpayers forced to pay for the catering? In 2006 these meeting catering bills came to \$10,510 for 27 freeholder meetings. That averages out to \$389.29 per meeting, \$43.25 per freeholder.

Our Mission

The Union County Watchdog Association, Inc. is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c)3 organization working on behalf of residents and taxpayers to monitor Union County government and advocate for the elimination of waste, corruption and incompetence. We believe that good government can only be achieved through a system of checks and balance - a system that includes the watchful eye of the people.

As you are aware, the Open Public Meetings Act N.J.S.A. 10:4-17¹ empowers your office to enforce the Act. We assert that the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders has and is violating the Act and ask that you investigate and take whatever enforcement action you deem appropriate.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to learning the results of your investigation and what action, if any, that you have elected to take.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tina Renna", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Tina Renna
President

Enclosure

¹ We specifically reserve our right to also enforce the Board's future compliance through the civil remedies provided by N.J.S.A. 10:4-16.

Front Street Smokehouse & Saloon

1 South Front Street
Elizabeth, New Jersey 07202
908-354-1818

INVOICE

INVOICE # 139
DATE:SEPTEMBER 27, 2007

TO Marla Oakle - Union County Court
(908)558-2576

SALESPERSON	JOB	PAYMENT TERMS	DUE DATE
BK	Catering Take Out	N/10	10/10/2007

QTY	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	LINE TOTAL
	5 Whole chickens cut into 1 tray	\$10 per chicken	\$50.00
	5lb Brisket in 1/2 Tray	\$13 per Pound	\$65.00
	6 Racks Baby Back Ribs cut single bone in 1 tray	\$18.95 per rack	\$113.00
	1/2 Tray Stuffing	\$25 per 1/2 tray	\$25.00
35 Adults	1/2 Tray Home Made Red Potato Salad	\$22.00 per 1/2 tra	\$22.00
	2 Qts Candied Sweet Potatoes (In 1/2 tray)	\$5.50 per qt	\$11.00
	2 Qts Spanish Rice (In 1/2 tray)	\$5.50 per qt	N/C
	1 Tray Garden Salad	\$22 per tray	\$22.00
	1/2 Tray Pickles	\$5.50 per qt	N/C
	3 dozen Corn Muffins	\$3.25 per dozen	N/C
	1 qt Front Street BBQ Sauce	\$6.50 per pint	N/C
Total			\$308.00
DEPOSIT(50%)			\$0.00
BAL DUE			\$308.00

**FORMS OF PAYMENT ACCEPTED AS FINAL PAYMENT: CASH OR BANK CHECK.
NO PERSONAL CHECKS WILL BE ACCEPTED AS FINAL PAYMENT UNLESS RECEIVED 10 DAYS BEFORE EVENT.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS!**

1. 1
 ALL TO: Clerk of the Board
 UC Administration Building
 10 Elizabethtown Plaza
 Elizabeth, NJ 07207

SHIP TO: UC CLERK OF THE BOARD
 UC ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
 10 ELIZABETHTOWN PLAZA
 ELIZABETH, NJ 07207

VENDOR: FRONT STREET SMOKEHOUSE SALOON
 1 SOUTH FRONT STREET
 ELIZABETH NJ 07202

Vendor #: FRO13

PURCHASE ORDER / VOUCHER

THIS NUMBER MUST APPEAR ON ALL INVOICES,
 PACKING LISTS, CORRESPONDENCE, ETC

PURCHASE ORDER NUMBER 07010014

ORDER DATE: 10/05/07
 REQUISITION NO: 07009963
 DELIVERY DATE
 STATE CONTRACT
 F.O.B TERMS

INJCP

PAYMENT RECORD

PO NUMBER: 07010014
 VENDOR: FRONT STREET SMOKEHO
 DATE PAID: 10/26/2007
 AMOUNT: 1 900.52 = \$308.00
 CHECK # 173023

#139

QUANTITY/UNIT	DESCRIPTION	ACCOUNT NO.	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL COST
1.00	REFRESHMENT FOR F/H MEETING TOTAL: \$308.00	7-01-20-703-010-326	308.0000	308.00
			TOTAL	308.00

Trinidad Lopez

DEPT. OF FINANCE
 COUNTY OF UNION N.J.
 2007 OCT 23 AM 9:48

Vendor supplying goods or services, the total cost of which during a one calendar year period will exceed the public bidding threshold (N.J.S.A. 40:11.5) must comply with the requirement of N.J.S.A. 10:5-31 (N.J.A.C. 17:27) (on reverse)

DEPARTMENT ATTEST

DELIVERY SLIPS RECEIVED AND CHECKED

10/22/07 *N. DiRado*
 DATE SIGNATURE

FOR PAYMENT - SIGN AND RETURN TO ABOVE "BILL TO ADDRESS"

SIGNATURE BELOW MUST BE ORIGINAL PLEASE MAKE COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS

PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF SERVICE RENDERED OR RECEIPT OF MATERIALS, SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

DATE SIGNATURE

VENDOR'S CERTIFICATION AND DECLARATION

I DO SOLEMNLY DECLARE AND CERTIFY UNDER PENALTIES OF THE LAW THAT THE WITHIN BILL IS CORRECT IN ALL ITS PARTICULARS, THAT THE ARTICLES HAVE BEEN FURNISHED OR SERVICES RENDERED AS STATED THEREIN; THAT NO BONUS HAS BEEN GIVEN OR RECEIVED BY ANY PERSON OR PERSONS WITHIN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THIS CLAIMANT IN CONNECTION WITH THE ABOVE CLAIM; THAT THE AMOUNT THEREIN STATED IS JUSTLY DUE AND OWING; AND THAT THE AMOUNT CHARGED IS A REASONABLE ONE.

10/12/07 *[Signature]*
 DATE SIGNATURE

COUNTY COPY