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Subject: W.S. 18-3-853 (b)

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Good Morning,
Natalia, Mark, Wes and Alyssa

From the start I believe that you all supported me and the very difficult work you asked me to do as your fire chief. Without question or hesitation, I did what was asked of me. For whatever reason, Gregg Epstein simply would never talk to me unless he was flogging me in public. I have nothing to say about Luther Propst, his actions speak for themselves.

You all knew I had an uphill battle from day 1, and you all knew it would take longer than 1 year to change the culture of entitlement, wasteful spending, fraudulent overtime claims, unapproved spending and disparate emergency response times that existed prior to my arrival. Knowingly or unknowingly you paid for at least a portion of the Gannon Report, a report that contains deficiencies that beg immediate action; and I was taking that action as your former fire chief refused to do after encouraging the assessment. You provided that report to each candidate interviewed for the fire chief position and you told each to review the report as it represented the challenges ahead. I embraced the report, and the serious deficiencies identified in it as your mandate to ensure safe, effective and affordable emergency services and my superior agreed. I followed each and every direction of my superior and briefed all of you as requested, which remarkably was not often.

You could have provided me different instruction at any time, and you did not. You could have quietly asked me to resign and provided the severance package recently agreed upon prior to hosting, advocating and encouraging (3) unprecedented public tribunals that resulted in coast to coast media coverage that has destroyed a 35 year career and my ability to provide for my family that

includes to (2) toddlers. The unprecedented public attacks were well planned and intentionally directed to flip one of the three of you; and it succeeded. I have the proof, by preponderance of the evidence or beyond a reasonable doubt and I am certain you have seen it all as well; in general, it is all public record or contained in email correspondence.

It is my intent to request Governor Mark Gordon review this matter, and the overwhelming evidence that exists that at least one member of the Board of County Commissioners must be removed from office under W.S 18-3-853(b) for:

- a. knowingly, deliberately and intentionally violating my rights to due process of the law by encouraging, facilitating and hosting multiple public complaint sessions, privately and illegally deliberating on the information obtained in those sessions and making disciplinary decisions based on that information and never allowing me to provide rebuttal or self testimony in public or private
- b. retaliating against me for making a complaint against the sheriff for harassment and sexual discrimination of my superior Alyssa Watkins; to date the BCC has not acted upon or provided me a response, hearing or remedy
- c. retaliating against me for not supporting one commissioner's personal desire to stop a previously approved master plan at Grand Targhee
- d. retaliating against me for attempting to bring attention to an illegal special property tax being collected by the county for fire protection and then forcing me to expend those funds
- e. the use of multiple illegal executive sessions to plot, deliberate and plan action against an employee beginning on November 6, 2023
- f. fraudulently representing for 13 months of my employment that only the Board of County Commissioners Administrator could hire or terminate the fire chief
- g. failure to acknowledge, protect and respond to a known threat against an employee that was designed to intentionally harm, destroy and prevent my ability to obtain future employment
- h. misleading me on December 18, 2023 and for several weeks after that date, through statements and actions, that I would be retained as Fire Chief for the

coming year, then without notice again, forcing me to accept a settlement agreement or face termination after yet another public hearing where you took testimony from individuals against me without allowing me to refute, rebut or defend myself

You all know me to be a reasonable employee, leader and human and I won't stop being any of those, ever. However, I am not going to allow my family, career and personnel integrity to be further destroyed by the actions of the Teton County Board of County Commissioners, especially those that deliberately sought to eviscerate me to achieve their own personal agenda.

I'm done communicating through your personal opinion based legal counsel. Mr. Gingery is a facilitator and enabler of bad actions and unethical behavior as indicated by his less than timely attempt to justify the unprecedented public tribunals, after they occurred with an unrelated set of case law and his vale attempt to convince me that federal whistleblower protection does not apply to Teton County employees; like somehow Teton County isn't part of the United States of America and federal law doesn't apply here.

I would like to meet with each of you, today, and discuss my side of the story and allow you the opportunity to know what I know, and perhaps then you may make a wiser, more prudent decision as it relates to my employment. I deplore the absolute embarrassment that we will all continue to suffer by failing to take responsibility as prescribed by our oath of office and duty to the entire community, not simply the self interest mob that is controlling your every move. I ask you all to be leaders and stop being led by those that only care about themselves.

Alyssa Watkins is my superior and I respect her greatly. I ask you to do the same and use her to facilitate discussion with me today with the goal of achieving what is best for the community and restoring what you have all participated in taking from me and my family.

I respectfully ask for your immediate attention.

Thank you,
Stephen