

I am proud of my record and many accomplishments while in the capacity of Chief Deputy Auditor for Mahoning County. I feel that it is important to state my side of the issues at hand as I have been persecuted in the press without any opportunity to defend myself.

In my nine dedicated years of service with this County, I have worked tirelessly to effect improvement in the perception of County government and Mahoning County specifically. I was the driving force behind the more favorable bond rating of this region and our award winning financial reporting. I took my position seriously while maintaining the highest standards of my profession and with respect to my certification as a Certified Public Accountant.

In the days and weeks leading up to the events of March 4th, I worked diligently to prepare the office for the new auditor's arrival. I was aware of the raise firestorm brewing but I had no opportunity to

Speak with Ralph as he was in Spain on vacation. Ralph reported to work at 7:50 am with the Vindicator in tow. After the meeting took place, Ralph asked me to provide him with three pieces of information: A list and the PARS for the new raises, any new hires since January 1, and a copy of the union contract.

The union contract was the only original document in my possession. The raises and COLA adjustments were approved by Michael Sciortino and handed to me by our IT director. I was told to process the transactions and to not call Mike with any questions or arguments. My participation in the raises and bonuses issued by Michael V. Sciortino did not involve opinion, counsel or discussion. I have never once approved any such transactions in my career at the County without the approval of the Auditor. In preparing the documents for the Vindicator, I asked the Payroll Director to email me a copy of the PARS and documents. Upon reviewing the

documents, I realized that Mike had not completed the PARS correctly and that raises were written on a separate document related to the COLA's. Per our office public record policy, I redacted the documents to provide the Vindicator with the information that they requested and nothing more. Ralph did not ask me about any union or non-union COLA adjustments or the implications of the contract. He would not have had time as he was already holding press conferences. I did not tamper with any original documents as they are all on file in the Payroll department. Even Vindicator reporter Pete Milliken admitted that I had provided him exactly what was asked for as I have done a million times over the past nine plus years.

Upon being presented with the adjustments by the auditor, I immediately realized that the circumstances and timing were going to cause scrutiny on the office and my main concern was the impact these decisions would have on the office

after Mr. Meacham's term began. A formal briefing with Mr. Meacham never took place to discuss various matters in the Auditor's office. I provided what I was asked for and for this reason I am left with a clear conscience as I have replayed the sequence of events over in my mind. I have always exhibited fairness and transparency. I am the collateral damage of "politics as usual" while being told by the new Auditor that it would be anything but.

I want to thank my many friends and colleagues at Mahoning County for their continued support. I have had the opportunity to work with great elected officials and department heads and I am proud to have been associated with the hardest working staff. I love Mahoning County and have worked hard for the taxpayers. I leave here with my head held high.

Thank you.

*Paul L. McFall, CPA*