

Fact Check #10

Corruption in local government

By Dr Bill Ullery

Why bother?

Why should I bother with audits and investigations of government at the county and city level? And, then pay the price for the columns I publish? Well...it's kind of complicated.

Like...why did I bother to investigate a former city manager and his city finance director? You remember...the Havasu city official that paid his DUI fine in Kingman with a city credit card?

Like...why did I bother to file a series of lawsuits against the county on the open meeting law violations with the new county admin building in downtown Kingman? They advocated expanding and concentrating county government in downtown Kingman as a way to rejuvenate that area. Yup...and with our tax dollars!

Like...why did I bother to investigate that Kingman-based college and file an ugly RICO lawsuit? (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations laws.) That was the administration with an 18-year track record of open meeting law violations. And, the elected board that took trips with spouses to Hawaii and other popular vacation spots...all expenses paid with public monies.

Like why did I bother with the lawsuit against the county for gerrymandering voter districts? I lost that case in the Appeals Court and was ready to take it to the Supreme Court. But, somehow, the county fixed the problem without ever admitting any violations of law.

Like...some of my more positive efforts to incorporate HFHE and help bring a university to our town. At least my wife and daughter thought those years of work (and a lot of DBU funds) were a better reflection of my personal commitment to public service.

So, *Why bother?* Yes...it's kind of complicated and there's nearly a quarter century of history to it all for me here in Havasu..But, it's what I do.

Understanding my town

Last spring, I commissioned a series of scientific polls of Havasu voters and published in this space, a series of columns on my findings. The findings in one study included; 91% of the surveyed Havasu voters agreed that changes must be made to reduce current sewer fees. Moreover, 73% would vote for a "sewer flat-rate" not tied to water usage. 70% preferred multiple methods of fees and taxes to reduce monthly sewer fees. 67% wanted everyone including those not hooked up to the system, to share the burden of paying for the sewer project.

Just a few days ago, I published a column on sewer fee increases from a July issue of the Fitch Report. Yes, it was a bit shocking. And, my criticisms of public officials have not been kindly received in some quarters. But, it's what I do.

I'm getting political?

One local elected official in several TV and radio interviews claims my columns are "*paid political advertisements.*" Time and time again, he makes that claim in public forums.

Good heavens, I've never run for or held a political office in my life. In that regard, I'm a total amateur, a rank neophyte, a Neanderthal, stupid (got that from a relative), crazy (got that from some folks who thought nothing

would ever come of that university project), and the Don Quixote of Havasu tag (from Speak-Out host Steve Cleverly). But, I must admit, I'm thinking about doing some really stupid stuff...**like getting political!**

For those government officials who are inclined to cross swords with me, think about the advice of the sage Benjamin Franklin; "*Beware of the guy that buys ink by the gallon.*"

Ok...so I'm irritated with our "*do nothing*" city council and its sewer rate fiasco. And yes, I think, "*do nothing*" is a terrible city management strategy. And yes, I have intentions of "*doing something*." And that includes killing the hated current system of fluctuating monthly sewer fees tied to water usage.

I need help with a "*stop the sewer fee nonsense*" effort. To volunteer, please contact me: Cell 928.716.3014
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