



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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CRANSTON DEMOCRATIC CITY COMMITTEE
CAMPAIGN FINANCE INVESTIGATION

Investigation Conducted By: Richard E. Thornton, Director of Campaign Finance

COMPLAINT FILED:

On June 21, 2018: Common Cause Rhode Island ("Common Cause") filed a verified complaint with the Rhode Island Board of Elections ("Board"), alleging violations of campaign finance law by the Cranston Democratic City Committee ("CDCC").

ALLEGED VIOLATIONS:

In 2014, the CDCC maintained a campaign headquarters at 40 Sockanosset Cross Road, Cranston, RI, but paid no rent to the property owner, Carpionato Properties ("Carpionato"), resulting in the following alleged campaign finance violations:

1. The CDCC failed to report an in-kind contribution from Carpionato for uncompensated use of space in 2014, in violation of RIGL 17-25-11.
2. The CDCC received an illegal corporate contribution (in-kind) from Carpionato for uncompensated use of space in 2014, in violation of RIGL 17-25-10.1(h)(1).

CAMPAIGN FINANCE INVESTIGATION:

Michael Sepe, Chair of the CDCC, and Gerald J. Petros, Atty for Carpionato, acknowledge that in 2014:

- There was no rental or lease agreement by and between the CDCC and Carpionato;
- There was no amount charged to and/or paid by the CDCC;
- There was no refund or return of rent or lease payment to the CDCC; and
- There was no request by Carpionato to the CDCC for rent/lease payment or request by the CDCC to Carpionato for a bill or invoice for rent/lease.

ACTION:

As a result of the investigation, on June 25, 2018, the CDCC issued a check to Carpionato for \$750.00, to pay rent (\$250.00/mo.) for the three (3) months (August, September and October) it occupied its headquarters at 40 Sockanosset Cross Road, Cranston, RI in 2014. The check was post to Carpionato's bank account on July 6, 2018.

RECOMMENDATION:

A warning be issued to Cranston Democratic City Committee against future violations of a similar nature.

BOARD ACTION:

On August 22,2018, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Recommendation and issue the Cranston Democratic City Committee a warning against future violations of a similar nature.