

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF ELECTIONS

CAMPAIGN FINANCE AUDIT

DINA T. CERRA

CAMPAIGN FINANCE AUDIT



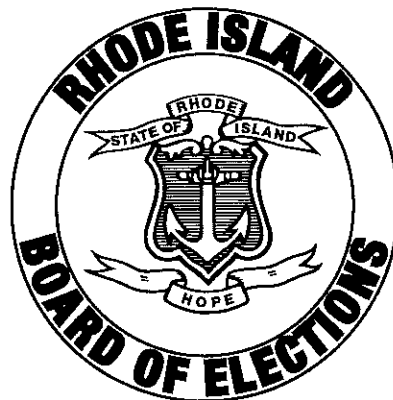
Audit Conducted By: Richard E. Thornton, Director of Campaign Finance

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

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2000 Plainfield Pike
Cranston, Rhode Island 02921
(401) 222-2345 (401) 222-4424 FAX

www.elections.ri.gov
Email: campaign.finance@elections.ri.gov

Dina T. Cerra

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Dina T. Cerra

INTRODUCTION

Audit Authority

Pursuant to Rhode Island General Law §17-25-5(a)(8), the Board of Elections is authorized to perform any duties that are necessary to implement the provisions of Chapter 25 of Title 17. Without limiting the generality of this provision, the Board is authorized and empowered to: Conduct compliance reviews and audits of campaign accounts as necessary, and in a manner consistent with the provisions of Chapter 25, Title 17.

Audit Purpose

Campaign Finance audits assist the Board of Elections with enforcement of campaign finance laws, provides a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of those laws and the campaign finance reporting process, verifies the accuracy and propriety of campaign finance receipts and validity and legality of campaign finance expenses and helps provide timely and accurate information to the public.

Campaign Finance audits assist and encourage candidate compliance with campaign finance reporting laws and promotes candidate accountability and integrity.

Dina T. Cerra

Scope: Review campaign finance reports and supporting documentation for the period January 1, 2018 through September 30, 2021.

Methodology: Review Contributions:

- Compare contributions received to bank statement deposits
- Compare contributions received to contributions reported on campaign finance reports
- Verify there are no prohibited contributions
- Verify contributions do not exceed aggregate annual limit

Review Expenditures:

- Compare expenditures made to bank statement checks/debits
- Compare expenditures made to expenditures reported on campaign finance reports
- Verify there are no prohibited uses of campaign funds
- Verify campaign expenditures are valid and legal.

History: Dina T. Cerra (“Cerra”) ran successfully for Smithfield Town Council in 2018. She did not seek re-election in 2020.

In November 2021, the Board of Elections (“Board”) initiated an audit of the campaign account of Cerra pursuant to R.I.G.L. §17-25-5(a), due to Cerra’s failure to submit a copy of her 2019 and 2020 campaign bank account statements pursuant to R.I.G.L. §17-25-11(c)(2) and failure to file three (3) campaign finance reports, required pursuant to R.I.G.L. §17-25-11(c)(1).

On December 8, 2021, the Board received via subpoena served upon the bank of Cerra’s campaign account, campaign depository account bank statements for the period January 1, 2018 through April 30, 2021, when the campaign bank account closed.

Findings: The following are Findings of campaign finance violations discovered during the Audit Review of Cerra’s campaign account and supporting documentation:

Dina T. Cerra

Contributions:

- Campaign contributions totaling \$2,910.00 were received from allowable sources.
- Six (6) contributions were attributed to the wrong individual on campaign finance reports filed with the Board, in violation of R.I.G.L. §17-25-11.

Expenditures:

- Expenditures totaling \$2,472.08 were paid from the campaign account, appear valid and were reported accurately on campaign finance reports filed with the Board; however
- Campaign expenditures totaling \$60.00, representing three (3) transactions were paid from the campaign bank account but not reported on campaign finance reports filed with the Board, in violation of R.I.G.L. §17-25-11.

Summary: The Audit Review of Cerra's campaign account and supporting documentation for the period January 1, 2018 through September 30, 2021 demonstrates:

- All campaign contributions (\$2,910.00) were received from allowable sources however six (6) contributions were attributed wrongly on campaign finance reports filed with the Board.
- All expenditures (\$2,532.08) appear to be true and valid campaign expenses however three (3) campaign expenditures (\$60.00) were paid from the campaign bank account but not reported on campaign finance reports filed with the Board.
- Three (3) campaign finance reports were not filed.
- A copy of Cerra's 2019 and 2020 campaign bank account statements were not submitted.

Auditee Response: Cerra indicated the errors were inadvertent and authorized the Board to amend her campaign finance reports to accurately report campaign receipts and expenditures and to dissolve her account.

Action: Consent Order (to follow)

State of Rhode Island
Board of Elections

CONSENT ORDER

In Re: Dina T. Cerra

Dina T. Cerra ("Cerra") hereby agrees to the entry of this Order and to each term and condition set forth herein:

1. At all times relevant hereto, Cerra has been subject to the reporting requirements set forth in Title 17, Chapter 25 of the General Laws, pertaining to campaign contributions and expenditures.
2. In November 2021, the Board of Elections ("Board") initiated an audit of the campaign account of Cerra due to Cerra's failure to submit a copy of her 2019 and 2020 campaign bank account statements in violation of R.I.G.L. §17-25-11(c)(2) and failure to file three (3) campaign finance reports in violation of R.I.G.L. §17-25-11(c)(1).
3. The Board conducted a full review of campaign finance reports, supporting documentation and bank records obtained via subpoena to verify the accuracy and propriety of campaign receipts and expenditures. The review determined the following:
 - All campaign contributions (\$2,910.00) were received from allowable sources however six (6) contributions were attributed wrongly on campaign finance reports filed with the Board.
 - All expenditures (\$2,532.08) appear to be true and valid campaign expenses however three (3) campaign expenditures (\$60.00) were paid from the campaign bank account but not reported on campaign finance reports filed with the Board.
 - Three (3) campaign finance reports were not filed.
 - A copy of Cerra's 2019 and 2020 campaign bank account statements were not submitted.
4. Cerra hereby acknowledges that she violated several provisions of Title 17, Chapter 25; and authorized the Board to complete her campaign finance reporting and dissolved her account.

