

From: [M Z](#)
To: [Elections, Ethics](#)
Subject: Re: Serious Conflict of Interest – Seattle Public Library
Date: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 2:18:23 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

CAUTION: External Email

I wish it to be stipulated to both the Seattle Public Library and the Seattle Public Library Board of Trustees that the Seattle Public Library and its newsletters are not to be used to promote the publications of members of the Seattle Public Library Board of Trustees or events which promote the publications of members of the Seattle Public Library Board of Trustees.

Matthew Howard

On Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:58 PM Elections, Ethics <ethicsandelections@seattle.gov> wrote:

Hello Mr. Howard,

Would you please confirm that this is the extent of the appeal that you would like on the agenda for the next Commission meeting?

Sincerely,



Chrissy Courtney

Democracy Voucher Program

Management Systems Analyst

City of Seattle - Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission

Office: 206-684-8576 [Website](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#)

From: M Z [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 1:43 PM
To: Elections, Ethics <ethicsandelections@seattle.gov>
Cc: Durkan, Jenny <Jenny.Durkan@seattle.gov>; Holmes, Peter <Peter.Holmes@seattle.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Serious Conflict of Interest – Seattle Public Library

CAUTION: External Email

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Barnett, Wayne <Wayne.Barnett@seattle.gov>
Date: Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 1:00 PM
Subject: Re: Serious Conflict of Interest – Seattle Public Library
To: M Z [REDACTED] >

You can use the same email address you used when you first contacted us:
ethicsandelections@seattle.gov

Best,

Wayne

Wayne Barnett

Executive Director, SEEC

206.684.8577 (o)/ 206.503.0632 (c)

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From: M Z [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 12:44:45 PM
To: Barnett, Wayne <Wayne.Barnett@seattle.gov>
Subject: Re: Serious Conflict of Interest – Seattle Public Library

CAUTION: External Email

Mr. Barnett,

What is the email for the "full Ethics and Election Commission?"

Thank you.

Matthew Howard

On Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:35 PM Barnett, Wayne <Wayne.Barnett@seattle.gov> wrote:

Hello Mr. Howard,

You can appeal my dismissal to the full Ethics and Elections Commission. You have 21 days — so Dec 22nd — to get us your written appeal. (An email will suffice if you'd like to go that route.) Please just tell the Commission what you think I've gotten wrong. It will be on the agenda for the next Commission meeting, currently slated for 1/6 at 4 pm.

Best,

Wayne

Wayne Barnett

Executive Director, SEEC

206.684.8577 (o)/ 206.503.0632 (c)

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From: M Z [REDACTED] >

Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 11:07:24 PM
To: Barnett, Wayne <Wayne.Barnett@seattle.gov>
Subject: Re: Serious Conflict of Interest – Seattle Public Library

CAUTION: External Email

Mr. Barnett,

The Seattle Public Library promoted an event promoting Mr. Chew's book. This indicates a lack of independence between the Library Board of Trustees and the Seattle Public Library, which the former is supposedly overseeing. To whom do I appeal your ruling?

Matthew Howard

On Tue, Dec 1, 2020 at 10:06 AM Barnett, Wayne <Wayne.Barnett@seattle.gov> wrote:

Dear Mr. Howard,

Thank you for your patience. The November 17 event featuring Mr. Chew was sponsored by the Seattle Public Library Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization that supports the library's mission but is a separate entity from the library. It has its own its own Board of Directors, and is not answerable to the Library's Board of Trustees.

We reviewed past SPL e-news communications, and spoke with communications staff at the Library, and learned that Foundation events are highlighted regularly. There is no evidence that Mr. Chew's inclusion in the e-news demonstrates preferential treatment for him from library personnel. The ethics code does not require that the Foundation event featuring Mr. Chew be excluded from the e-news.

I hope this responds to your inquiry.

Best regards,

Wayne

Wayne Barnett

Executive Director, SEEC

206.684.8577 (o)/ 206.503.0632 (c)

From: M Z [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, November 30, 2020 10:09 AM
To: Barnett, Wayne <Wayne.Barnett@seattle.gov>
Subject: Re: Serious Conflict of Interest – Seattle Public Library

CAUTION: External Email

Thank you, Mr. Barnett.

Matthew Howard

On Mon, Nov 30, 2020 at 8:23 AM Barnett, Wayne <Wayne.Barnett@seattle.gov> wrote:

We are reviewing this and will get back to you as soon as we are done, Mr. Howard.

Best regards,

Wayne Barnett

Wayne Barnett

Executive Director, SEEC

206.684.8577 (o)/ 206.503.0632 (c)

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From: M Z [REDACTED] >
Sent: Sunday, November 29, 2020 8:21:29 PM
To: Barnett, Wayne <Wayne.Barnett@seattle.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Serious Conflict of Interest – Seattle Public Library

CAUTION: External Email

Mr. Barnett,

Could someone in your office address the matter outlined?

Thank you.

Matthew Howrd

----- Forwarded message -----

From: M Z [REDACTED] >
Date: Sun, Nov 22, 2020 at 4:46 PM
Subject: Fwd: Serious Conflict of Interest – Seattle Public Library
To: <ethicsandelections@seattle.gov>

Could this matter be investigated by someone at Ethics and Elections?

Matthew Howard

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Sharifi, Ghazal <Ghazal.Sharifi@seattle.gov>
Date: Fri, Nov 20, 2020 at 2:50 PM

Subject: RE: Serious Conflict of Interest – Seattle Public Library
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Sharifi, Ghazal <Ghazal.Sharifi@seattle.gov>

Mr. Howard,

Thank you for your inquiry to the City Attorney below. To the extent there are ethics concerns that you may have, we direct you to the SEEC:

<https://www.seattle.gov/ethics>

Best,

Ghazal Sharifi



Ghazal Sharifi

Section Director

Government Affairs

Seattle City Attorney's Office

Civil Division

701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2050

Seattle, WA 98104-7095

Phone: 206-684-8217

Cell: 206-418-8781

FAX: 206-684-8284

ghazal.sharifi@seattle.gov

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this message was sent to you in error, any use, disclosure, or distribution of its contents is prohibited. If you receive this message in error, please contact me at the telephone number or e-mail address listed above and delete this message without printing, copying, or forwarding it. Thank you.

From: M Z [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 6:42 PM
To: Durkan, Jenny <Jenny.Durkan@seattle.gov>; Holmes, Peter <Peter.Holmes@seattle.gov>
Subject: Serious Conflict of Interest – Seattle Public Library

CAUTION: External Email

Mayor Durkan and Mr. Holmes:

I received an email from the Seattle Public Library the other day in which the library promoted a book and webinar of Ron Chew as shown below. Mr. Chew is a member of the Board of Trustees for the Seattle Public Library. The Board is charged with independently overseeing library operations. When the Seattle Public Library promotes a book and the webinar promotion of a book by a trustee member such as Mr. Chew, a clear conflict of interest arises. Please assign someone to investigate this matter and have them get back to me.

Thank You.

Matthew Howard

Featured Services and Events

The Seattle Public Library Foundation Presents Ron Chew: My Unforgotten Seattle

Join us to celebrate the release of local luminary Ron Chew's new memoir.

Registration required.

Tuesday, Nov. 17, 6 – 7:10 p.m. | Online

[View Ron Chew event](#)

To the Commission:

I am writing to appeal Mr. Barnett's decision that allows the Seattle Public Library to promote publications of Seattle Library of Trustees members, as it did in the case of Mr. Chew's book as shown.

The Library Board of Trustees is to oversee the library and its functions; consequently, there should be complete independence between the board members and the library itself. Such independence is lacking when the Seattle Public Library advertises and promotes events such as the Seattle Public Library Foundation's promotion of Mr. Chew's book.

In the past years the Library Board of Trustees has exercised very little oversight with respect to the Seattle Public Library. In an era where physical instrumentality is less and less important with respect to library functions (more and more of which are redundant in the age of the Internet), the Board of Trustees approved construction of a new \$165 million central library building, one which many find dysfunctional from the point of library services, where a horizontal rather than vertical structure is generally considered the most functional. Further, in 2015, the Board of Trustees allowed the library to pursue plans for an expensive name change from "Seattle Public Library" to "Seattle Public Libraries" until public uproar cancelled the planned move. The Seattle public was embarrassed by jokes from coast to coast on late night television and radio programs and the social media, such as in this youTube clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?>

[v=KYVSPSAjBiU.](#)

When the Seattle Public Library actually promotes the publication of a member of the Seattle Library Board of Trustees and the trustees simultaneously offer very little oversight (the Board actually approved a large bonus for Seattle Public Library Chief Executive Marcellus Turner in the year following the name change fiasco), it is not difficult to conclude that the relationship between the Board of Trustees and the library is an avuncular one, rather than one of independence, as required by law.

Matthew Howard