

May 4, 2021

Gardnerville Town Board Members,

Town of Gardnerville Health and Sanitation has lost 5 tenured CDL sanitation drivers and 1 (20+ years) supervisor of Public Works since Erik Nilssen has been the Town Manager. Mr. Nilssen is coming up on 2 years employment for the town. I think it's important you understand why so that this does not continue to occur. Mr. Nilssen and his Superintendent, Geoff LaCost, are inefficient, ineffective managers. They lack the skills to properly operate the Town of Gardnerville Health and Sanitation nor do they seek to gain the skills necessary or listen to or trust their employees.

For example, now that there's only one remaining CDL trained sanitation employee to perform the trash duties, they are unable to be working managers to accomplish these tasks. Geoff LaCost has moved his entire Public Works staff over to Health and Sanitation to fill the vacancies. Mr. LaCost didn't obtain his CDL until 6 years after he had been hired when the job requirement was to obtain it within 6 mos/1yr of employment with the Town. The delay in obtaining his CDL didn't allow him to operate the trucks and therefore wasn't able to be trained until after his CDL certification. Even after he obtained his CDL, he failed to be properly trained. Even after almost 7 years now of employment Mr. LaCost has to resort to using his Google app to locate some accounts when he's on the trash route. That could have been eliminated had he simply rode the routes with the tenured CDL drivers before he lost them to other employment. Now when Mr. LaCost did operate a commercial vehicle recently, he hit a town resident fence in Gasoline Alley and didn't stop to report it, tell the homeowner so they knew, or file the proper paperwork to include the required drug screen and the required accident report. Simply stating to the CDL driver in the passenger seat at the time, "we'll come back later and fix that". Mr. Nilssen also drove one of the county pickup trucks #607 into the Town Health and Sanitation building, knocking loose several stone blocks off the building, he also failed to follow proper protocol. Mr. Nilssen stated to the eyewitness at the time when asked about a drug screen following the accident, "no, that would be a waste of time". The application of the rules are not appropriately applied equitably. Now that Mr. LaCost is forced to learn the trash duties, he is changing some processes to suit his untrained needs. For example, he is no longer performing the green waste procedures where it used to be delivered to Bentley Biomass in Minden for recycling. Now, all Green Waste goes to the Carson City Landfill. The CC Landfill charges the Town for green waste however, this Green Waste is simply dumped in the Public Dump there. CC Landfill only has a grass clippings pile and a separate pile for wood/branches. The Towns loads of Green Waste have grass and branches all mixed together, forcing the Town driver to dump at Public Dump, which everything is simply buried. Green waste produces 30-35 thousand pounds per week to deliver to Bentley which is local. Now, it goes to the Landfill which is an hour + further per truck (always 2 trucks) which increases costs and eliminates recycling. This new procedure to Caron Landfill is to avoid having to remove trash out of the truck that isn't green waste due to Mr. LaCost not wanting to have to get up into the truck multiple times to remove the trash. This is negligent, a frivolous use of town budget, gives the residents a false sense of recycling, negates the green waste day, and negatively impacts Bentley's bio mass operations which benefits the environment.

Another example is the lack of urgency when resolving a recent workplace violence incident. One of the temporary employees hired by Mr. LaCost for Health and Sanitation duties physically assaulted one of the permanent employees of the Town. A complaint was given verbally to Mr. LaCost and also at the time, Ms. Christine Vido of Human Resources at the Gardnerville Station on March 4, 2021 at 8:00am. This exposed the permanent employee to safety concerns daily for 3+ weeks. This caused the permanent employee anxiety and therefore compromised his physical health. It also resulted in loss

time due to the permanent employee calling out. 10 days later, March 14<sup>th</sup>, a text to Mr. LaCost from the permanent Town employee stating Workplace Violence had occurred 10 days prior and no action had been taken, the temporary employee stayed on the same schedule for 3+ weeks then was let go after he was no longer needed by the Town.

The human resources process is inequitable and needs to be amended to afford employees more rights. As the current county code is written, it doesn't allow an employee to challenge or appeal any disciplinary action below a 5 day suspension. This doesn't afford employees the right to defend themselves to ensure accurate information is being used and the proper discipline is being administered.

Yearly performance reviews for Town employees are administered by Mr. LaCost. Mr. LaCost rates each employee on their performance for the entire year however, he is not present the majority of the time to know how or what an employee has accomplished or not accomplished in a year. I was employed by the Town for 4.5 years. I resigned from the Town April 23, 2021. Mr. LaCost has determined all four of my reviews. My first two reviews under then Town Manager Tom Dallaire, Mr. LaCost always showed meets or exceeds expectation. The last two reviews under now Town Manager Erik Nilssen, have showed very little positive entries and mostly all negative entries.

I implore you to conduct your own investigation to uncover the improper management by Mr. Nilssen and Mr. LaCost. As a member of this community, I care about it's residents, it's businesses, and it's environment. Thank you for your consideration to investigate their activities, or lack thereof, in order to provide a more professional, moral, and ethical work environment for the future employees of the Town of Gardnerville Heath and Sanitation.

Troy Wandler

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**Louthan, Carol** <CLouthan@douglasnv.us>

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**From:** Nilssen, Erik <ehnilssen@douglasnv.us>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 4, 2021 3:08 PM  
**To:** Louthan, Carol <CLouthan@douglasnv.us>  
**Subject:** FW: Agenda item 16: Health and Sanitation Buget

**FYI Public Comment Item No 16**

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**From:** julie duda  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 4, 2021 2:14 PM  
**To:** Nilssen, Erik <ehnilssen@douglasnv.us> <EHNilssen@douglasnv.us>  
**Subject:** Agenda item 16: Health and Sanitation Buget

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Budget challenges may have solutions that involve not only increasing revenue, but also looking for potential expense reductions.

Erik has detailed revenue increase options in great detail. That leaves the potential for expense reduction side of the solution.

Safe to say the challenges of Health and Sanitation will be with us for the long run. We may want to consider options like getting the community involved and requesting suggestions from the frontline H & S workers who are in the position of "insider" knowledge.

With landfill expense budgeted at \$285,000, this item is a stand out for research. Because Earth Day is in the very recent past, education and motivation come up as suggested topics. The historical saying Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle had an impact and remains relevant today.

Showing the Town's customers that Town staff and board members have looked for options to mitigate a double-digit rate increase will help with good public relations. Our community includes people who are knowledgeable on this topic and also many who want to care for the planet even in a small way.

My appreciation to Town staff, Carol and Marie, for supplying agenda information and to Erik for his willingness to be open to discussion and possible community involvement.

Julie Duda