

Oct. 30, 2006 - City clerk finds Boulder Economic Council campaign violation

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City Clerk Alisa Lewis today announced her finding that campaign contributions made by the Boulder Chamber of Commerce's Boulder Economic Council (BEC) to the "No on 2A" campaign violated the city's campaign laws. The contributions have been refunded and no penalties will be assessed.

Boulder City Manager Frank Bruno stated that the city will cancel its current contract with the BEC and will not pursue negotiations towards a new contract until the city's ability to contract with other agencies or entities that are involved in political activities has been clarified.

"I will not allow any appearance of improper political influence in city elections," said City Manager Frank Bruno. "I have directed the city attorney to review the ordinance in light of this situation and to make recommendations to the city council and myself regarding possible changes in the ordinance and the city's contracting practices."

City campaign laws prohibit any contributions from city contractors to political committees on city ballot issues. These violations occurred because the BEC was under contract with the city to provide consulting services as an independent contractor on the economic vitality work plan and economic incentives program. The Boulder Chamber/BEC has made a total of three contributions -- two \$5,000 contributions on behalf of the BEC and one \$2,500 contribution on behalf of the chamber. Because the BEC is an entity of the chamber, all three contributions are in violation of 13-3-3 of the Boulder Revised Code, 1981.

"I wrote the chamber and the BEC in August to begin discussions about reducing the scope of work that the city would require from the BEC given the hiring of a new city business liaison and the completion of the business assistance and incentives program," said Bruno. "Given the current confusion that has come up regarding the chamber's and the BEC's political activity, I believe it is in the city's best interest to terminate its current contract with the BEC."

Bruno acknowledged the fine work provided by the BEC, specifically former BEC Director Sean Maher, in advancing the goals articulated in the city's economic vitality policy.

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