

***INVESTIGATIVE REPORT AND FINDINGS***

***CONCERNING ALLEGATIONS***

***BY***

***LAVERNE McGEE & AISHA HASSAN***



***Submitted by Attorney Belvin Perry, Jr.***

***March 27, 2018***

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Pg. 3</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>Objectives &amp; Methodology</b>	<b>Pg. 3</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>Pg. 3-4</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Allegations</b>	<b>Pg. 4</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>Hostile Work Environment</b>	<b>Pg. 4-10</b>
	<b>i. Alleged Gender Bias</b>	<b>Pg. 4-6</b>
	<b>ii. Gender Bias-Hiring of Women Admin. Office</b>	<b>Pg. 7</b>
	<b>iii. Alleged Mistreatment of Single Women</b>	<b>Pg. 7</b>
	<b>iv. Alleged Improper Treatment Ms. McGee</b>	<b>Pg. 8</b>
	<b>v. Treated Female Admin. Staff as Harem</b>	<b>Pg. 8</b>
	<b>vi. Using Ms. McGee to Shield Involvement with Women</b>	<b>Pg. 8</b>
	<b>vii. Text &amp; Alleged Improper Conduct with Ms. Hassan</b>	<b>Pg. 8-9</b>
	<b>viii. Alleged Improper Conduct with Ms. Hassan</b>	<b>Pg. 9</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Findings on Hostile Work Environment</b>	<b>Pg. 9-11</b>
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Alterations of Document &amp; Improper Expenditures</b>	<b>Pg. 11-18</b>
	<b>i. Michigan Conference Hotel</b>	<b>Pg. 11-12</b>
	<b>ii. Curry Festival</b>	<b>Pg. 12</b>
	<b>iii. Layover Dallas</b>	<b>Pg. 12</b>
	<b>iv. Food Purchase MLK Parade</b>	<b>Pg. 12</b>
	<b>v. Car Rental Michigan</b>	<b>Pg. 12</b>
	<b>vi. Flags Purchase</b>	<b>Pg. 12</b>
	<b>vii. Car Allowance</b>	<b>Pg. 12-13</b>
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>ControlCam &amp; E-Ring Contracts</b>	<b>Pg. 14-18</b>
	<b>i. ControlCam Contract</b>	<b>Pg. 14-15</b>
	<b>ii. E-Ring Contract</b>	<b>Pg. 15-18</b>
<b>IX.</b>	<b>Overpayment of Vendor/Campaign Contribution</b>	<b>Pg. 18</b>
<b>X.</b>	<b>OCPA Employees &amp; Campaign Activities</b>	<b>Pg. 18</b>
<b>XI.</b>	<b>Allegations Re: Bhavish Patel</b>	<b>Pg. 19</b>
<b>XII.</b>	<b>Summary of Findings of Investigations</b>	<b>Pg. 19-20</b>

## **INTRODUCTION**

The undersigned was retained by the Office of The Orange County Property Appraiser (OCPA) on July 17, 2017, to investigate the allegations contained in an email/letter send to the Honorable Rick Singh on June 22, 2017. Prior to being retained by the Office of the Orange County Appraiser I met with the Orange County Property Appraiser, The Honorable Rick Singh, and went over the scope of this investigation. The investigation has taken an extended period of time due to the scope of the allegations; the need to coordinate interviewing witnesses; examining documents and the undersigned's own calendar demands and the goal of getting it right.

## **OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

The objective of the investigation was to determine the validity of the allegations contained in the email/letters of June 22, 2017, by Laverne McGee and Aisha Hassan. The major focus of the investigation was to determine whether there was a hostile work environment or illegal activity. Due to the vast scope of the allegations contained in the letter, the undersigned focused his attention on the major allegations contained in the letter.

The methodology used in conducting the investigation included interviews of the complainants, Laverne McGee and Aisha Hassan, Property Appraiser, Rick Singh, staff of the Office Appraiser (Dawn Benjamin, Minerva "Minnie" Deluca, Robert Grimaldi, Jason Henry, Barbara Jubran, Rajiv Pauray, Denise Reyes, Usha Tewari, and Tatsiana Sokalava), Bhavesh Patel and Raj Ra. I also reviewed various documents and affidavits submitted by the parties. All individuals that were interviewed were placed under oath and gave sworn statements with the exception of the complainants who requested that their statements not be under oath.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

After examining the allegations, taking statements and reviewing documents in this matter the undersigned could not find the existence of a hostile work environment created by Mr. Singh nor illegal activity as alleged. The allegations about the events surrounding the audit showed there was no attempt to falsify documents, but rather, to provide documents to further explain the expenditures and the actions taken by the OCPA. As noted by the audit done by the Office of County Comptroller in the executive summary: "We found the Orange County Property

Appraiser's Office P-card purchase were materially in compliance with the Office's policies and procedures, State rules and law, and best practices for government funds." The report goes on to discuss the opportunities for improvement in OCPA policies and procedures that were already in place when the Property Appraiser took office.

The other allegations contained in the complaint email/letter cannot be substantiated by any clear and convincing evidence. It is this writer's opinion that a number of the allegations were based upon the fact that Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan had a very different view of what the best practices, policies and procedures of the OCPA should have been. While the policies, practices and procedures of any governmental office, including the OCPA Office, are governed by State and County laws and rules, a number of practices are left up to sound discretion of the elected official. It is evident that the Complainants disagreed with those policies; however, there is no evidence they had any disagreement prior to their communication dated June 22, 2017. There was no evidence that established that Mr. Singh abused that discretion.

### **ALLEGATIONS**

The allegations contained in the complaint email/letter are summarized as follows:

1. Hostile work environment;
2. Alterations of documents for Audit & Improper Expenditures;
3. E-Ring Contract & ControlCam Contract;
4. Overpaying of Vendor for Campaign Contribution; and
5. Utilization of OCPA Staff for Campaign Activities.

### **HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENT**

#### **Alleged Gender Bias**

Laverne McGee and Aisha Hassan claimed in their email/letter of June 20, 2017, sent to Mr. Singh's private email that Mr. Rick Singh created gender issues that detrimentally affected their employment by speaking to them in a loud, aggressive and, oftentimes, profane manner. Ms. McGee also alleged that Mr. Singh requested her to pose as a "Hot Black Chick" in an effort to obtain information.

The genesis of the claim is that no other male employees were subject to this type of treatment and thus they were subject to a hostile work environment based upon their gender (female).

Ms. McGee in her unsworn statement of August 3, 2017, when asked to elaborate on the allegations concerning gender issues that detrimentally affected her employment indicated the following:

1. That Mr. Singh wanted women around and always hired mostly females more on the attractive side;
2. That Mr. Singh felt he could utilize females to run errands for him, that males would not do;
3. That Mr. Singh, if you spoke against him or questioned his authority, would often threaten you with your reputation or say nasty things in terms of you personally;
4. That Mr. Singh when his male friends would come to the office would show off his female employees like they were his harem. He wanted them to be very friendly to his friends and take care of them. (See McGee Vol. I, pg. 36-39).

Ms. McGee in explaining in detail what she meant by Mr. Singh wanting his female employees to take care of someone stated the following:

“He wanted us to be very warm, friendly instead of being serious and how we would normally be with customers or other employees. We were to be extra friendly and again, you know, get us coffee and do this and that kind of stuff. Thing that we ordinarily as professionals, directors, would never for anybody else. We would be expected to behave in that way.”  
(See McGee Vol. I, pg. 39).

Ms. McGee, in explaining in detail in her unsworn statement, that Mr. Singh specifically told her about taking care of someone she indicated the:

“It was not one conversation. It’s an ongoing.”

“For instance, I’m trying - - I mean I’m trying to think of a person, an instance where it happened. It was the CAMA, the guys who came in from CAMA and he wanted to make them very comfortable because he wanted money out of them for campaign donations, so he told me that I needed to be very – he’s like make sure you’re very sweet to them and make sure, you know, you make them feel as comfortable as possible and, you know, you need to have them warm up to you because he felt that – often told me that I was too serious and I needed to be more like – more sweet.” (See McGee Vol. I pg. 39 & pg. 40).

Ms. McGee in explaining in detail in her unsworn statement, that the “Hot Black Chick” in relationship to the gender issues as follows:

“Yes. So another example that was in the letter, his daughter was robbed, her home was robbed and he had the video, and a friend of his recognized one of the suspects and so he asked me to pose as a “Hot Black Chick” on Instagram and try to befriend one of the suspects.”

Ms. McGee in response to the question what did you tell him when he told you that, said:

“I said, how am I supposed to do that? I said, I don’t feel comfortable with that. And as usual, he said just do it. . . No, I did not do it.” (See McGee Vol. I pg. 42 & 43).

Ms. McGee, in explaining in detail in her unsworn statement, that he asked Minnie Deluca to disguise herself on Facebook/Instagram and that she gained this information from Ms. Deluca. (See McGee Vol. I, pg.43 & pg. 44).

Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan in their unsworn statements alleged that Mr. Singh made the following improper comments about elected officials, women (Including Ms. McGee & Ms. Hassan) and African-Americans in derogatory terms:

1. Commented “good girl” to Ms. Hassan; (See Hassan Vol. I, pg. 11: 4-9.)
  2. Spoke to Ms. Hassan in a rude manner during the Barcelona Hotel incident;
  3. Referred to an elected official as “a bitch”;
  4. Referred to an elected official “a skank”;
  5. Referred to an elected official as “old p\_ \_ \_ y”;
  6. Referred to a woman from a company as a “fat ass”;
  7. Referred to a news reporter as “black bitch, the n-word, ugly skank” on a regular basis;
  8. Referred to Ms. McGee and other women as “bitches, hos, and p\_ \_ \_ y”;
- (See McGee Vol. I, pg. 51 – 64; McGee Vol. II pg. 57-58; and Hassan Vol. II pg. 74).

Ms. McGee indicated that Mr. Singh has directed loud, aggressive, and profound behavior towards her and describes it as follows:

“Towards me on a regular basis he swears, yells, mother f\_ \_ ker this, just do what the f\_ \_ k I say, I don’t care about those mother f. . . . .”  
(See McGee Vol. I, pg. 58-59 ;).

These are just a few examples of what Ms. McGee considered to be examples of a hostile work environment created by Mr. Singh.

Mr. Singh in his sworn statement under oath denied ever making derogatory statements against women, news reporters and elected officials; denied speaking to Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan in a loud, aggressive and profound manner; and denied asking Ms. McGee to pose as a “hot Black chick.”

Ms. McGee in her unsworn statement stated that she and Minnie Deluca had discussions about Mr. Singh asking Ms. Deluca to set up fake Facebook profiles for him to use. Ms. Deluca at Mr. Singh request would put out negative information about others. Ms. Deluca denied in her sworn statement setting up fake Facebook profiles at Mr. Singh’s request or ever informing Ms. McGee that she had set up such Facebook accounts. Ms. Deluca maintains Ms. McGee is a person who created a hostile work environment towards others in the workplace.

### **Gender Bias – Hiring of Women for the Administrative Office**

As mentioned earlier, in Ms. McGee’s unsworn statement she alleged that Mr. Singh purposely hired women to work in the Administrative Section of his office because he believed that he could get them to run his personal errands and was able to speak to them in a manner that would not have been acceptable to men. Several OCPA employees testified that they never witnessed Mr. Singh display any gender bias against women.

Mr. Jason Henry and Ms. Tiwari, both OCPA employees testified under oath that they never witnessed any gender bias or gender discrimination against Ms. McGee, Ms. Hassan or any other female at the hands of Mr. Singh. Mr. Henry also stated he never heard Mr. Singh ask Ms. McGee to pose as a “hot Black chick.” Mr. Henry stated he was told that (“Hot Black Chick”) by Ms. McGee since he could not hear the other party on the phone and couldn’t verify that she was even talking to Mr. Singh. It should be noted that Mr. Henry is an African-American whose desk sits within feet of and in between Mr. Singh’s office and what once was Ms. McGee’s own office.

Denise Reyes, Rajiv Pauray, and Robert Grimaldi, all employees of OCPA testified under oath that they never witnessed Mr. Singh display any gender bias against Ms. McGee, Ms. Hassan or any female employees of OCPA. Lastly, Mr. Singh denied asking anyone at OCPA to run personal errands for him while they were on the clock for OCPA. Minnie Deluca denied such charges.

### **Alleged Mistreatment of Single Women**

Ms. Hassan's unsworn allegation alleged that Mr. Singh would call and text single women during odd hours but would not engage in the similar type of behavior with married female employees. Ms. Hassan alleged that she had a number of conversations with Ms. Usha Tewari concerning Mr. Singh's mistreatment of single women. Ms. Tewari in her sworn statement denied having any conversation with Ms. Hassan about the topic of Mr. Singh mistreating single women nor did she observe him mistreat any single women.

Ms. Hassan also alleged that Mr. Singh pulled Ms. Tewari away from attending a personal event to obtain her assistance in setting up a tent during the India Day Event. Ms. Tewari in her sworn statement stated Mr. Singh requested she give him her keys to the office at the India Day Event. This was due to another employee forgetting her keys to the office. She needed the keys to get an item that was needed for the event. Once she obtained her keys from home she was not asked to provide any additional assistance. Ms. Tewari went on to state she felt stalked by Ms. McGee on this day. It is stated that Ms. Hassan, for a period of time, served as an assistant to Mr. Singh in scheduling his calendar and handling under assistant duties. As such, she and others received texts from Mr. Singh as he works before and beyond the standard 9AM-5PM work day.

It is to be noted that Ms. Tewari during her statement under oath stated Ms. McGee was the only individual who made comments implying that Ms. Tewari had the ability to attend more OCPA outreach events than other employees given her status as a single woman.

### **Alleged Improper Treatment of Ms. McGee**

Ms. McGee in her unsworn statement alleged that Mr. Singh:

1. Swore at her on a regular basis;
2. Would yell at Ms. McGee approximately five to six times per week and that Jason Henry and Ms. Hassan heard him yelling at her.

Mr. Singh in his sworn statement acknowledged occasionally swearing a couple of times over three to four years during his discussions with Ms. McGee, but stated that his swearing was never directed toward Ms. McGee. Mr. Singh also stated that Ms. McGee regularly cursed during her conversations with him. During his statement Mr. Singh showed a text message from Ms. McGee which stated that if Mrs. Sokalava and Mrs. Jubran wanted to hold another teambuilding workshop, then they could "go f\_\_k themselves."

### **Treated Female Administrative Staff as a Harem**

Ms. McGee's unsworn allegation stated that Mr. Singh would show off his female employees to his friends as if they were his harem. She also alleged that Mr. Singh instructed her to make the guys from CAMA very comfortable, because he wanted to obtain campaign donations from them. Ms. McGee also mentioned that Mr. Singh told her to act very sweet to

them which was something she never heard him tell male employees. Mr. Singh denied telling Ms. McGee to act in any manner other than that of a professional and required this of all employees.

### **Using Ms. McGee to shield involvement with other women**

Ms. McGee alleged in her unsworn statement that Mr. Singh would ask her to serve as cover for him when he was in the company of other women. She also stated that Mr. Singh would bring women to the office after hours and that she served as decoy for Mr. Singh at bars. (Mr. Singh denied being involved with other women or ever having discussions regarding her being a decoy for him with other women.).

### **Uncomfortable Text and other alleged improper conduct with Ms. Hassan**

It was alleged by Ms. Hassan that Mr. Singh sent the following inappropriate text messages and other alleged improper conduct to her:

1. On Ms. Hassan's birthday, November 7, 2014, Mr. Singh arranged for her and her mother to have a reservation at an Indian Restaurant on Sand Lake Road in Orlando. Mr. Singh also invited her to an election victory party being held at his house as he did with multiple other employees. Mr. Singh in an unsworn phone interview to cover areas not covered in his sworn statement indicated that his family and a friend and his family were having dinner at this restaurant. That once she told him about this was her birthday he suggested this restaurant, made her a reservation and also paid for dinner that evening. Mr. Singh also introduced her to all family members at the table and the owner of the restaurant;
2. On December 21, 2014, Mr. Singh texted Ms. Hassan to ask her if she wanted to go to the Nutcracker. Mr. Singh in his unsworn phone interview indicated that he had several tickets to the Nutcracker and that he was unable to attend. He and his wife offered the tickets to her and others so the tickets did not go to waste;
3. On December 31, 2015, Mr. Singh sent Ms. Hassan a YouTube Video and wished her a Happy New Year. He asked her whether or not she had plans tonight and invited her to Mango's to join him, his wife, family and friends. Mr. Singh indicated in his unsworn phone interview that he was attending this event at Mango's with family, including his wife and had some extra tickets. It is to be noted that Ms. Hassan in her unsworn statement stated that she informed him that she was still not feeling well and wished she could attend. Lastly, she said she told him "have fun and give my love to Debbie, his wife." Also, invites were offered to other senior staff members.
4. On March 12, 2016, Mr. Singh sent a text to Ms. Hassan asking her if she was going to Azime's cousin's party. He told her that he would be attending the party with his wife

and family and asked her if she would be going alone. She also indicated that he would be going to the Blue Martini after the party. Mr. Singh in his unsworn phone interview said that he was going to Blue Martini that night with his family and that it was a ticketed event and he had exact tickets. He offered her a ticket along with other senior staff members.;

5. On November 12, 2016, Mr. Singh sent Ms. Hassan a text while they were at an OCPA Holiday Party and invited her to the election victory party being held at his house immediately after the agency holiday party. Mr. Singh in an unsworn phone interview stated that Ms. Hassan was invited just as other member of his senior staff.

### **Alleged Improper Conduct toward Ms. Hassan**

6. Ms. Hassan stated that Mr. Singh would stare at her in a manner that made her feel uncomfortable during their weekly finance meetings as she was going through the agenda which were behind closed doors. The meeting was in Mr. Singh's office and frequently joined by others. These meetings were usually 10-20 minutes per week and Mr. Singh, in his unsworn phone interview, denied ever staring at her during any meetings with her and treated her with the utmost professionalism. It is to be noted that when Ms. Hassan was asked why the text messages made her feel uncomfortable she stated that she felt the messages were advances of some sort towards her. Ms. Hassan also stated that Mr. Singh never touched her;

### **Finding Concerning Hostile Work Environment**

A review of the statements does not support the allegations that Mr. Singh created a hostile work environment. There is no independent evidence that Mr. Singh's workplace was permeated with discriminatory intimidation, ridicule, and insult that was sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter conditions of Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan's employment or created an abusive working environment. In fact, the evidence from witnesses who gave sworn testimony was that a hostile work environment did not exist at OCPA.

The only evidence of a so-called hostile work environment is the unsworn testimony of Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan. Even if you take their testimony as true, it is not enough to establish a hostile or abusive environment.

The sworn testimony of Robert Grimaldi, Rajiv Pauray, Minerva Deluca, and Jason Henry does not support the allegations of a hostile work environment, but in fact contradict the testimony of Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan.

It is to be noted that several of these individuals testified that Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan were the individuals who were responsible for creating a hostile work environment at the office. Minerva Deluca when asked whether there was a hostile work environment in the office toward

Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan said: “From what I know, they’re the ones that were making it a hostile environment for other people.” Mr. Grimaldi, an attorney, stated Ms. McGee repeatedly called him after being relieved of duty attempting to get him to agree to untrue statements.

Denise Reyes when asked whether she had any conversation with Ms. McGee about being mistreated by Mr. Singh stated:

“Mistreatment? . . . She was a very hard person. I personally tried to avoid her at all times. She just - - I didn’t deal with her that much.”

When asked about her use of the phrase – “she was a very hard person,” Ms. Reyes explained that Ms. McGee got very upset when an order of business cards come back missing the words “representing the Honorable Rick Singh”. Ms. Reyes was told to reorder the cards now as opposed to using those cards until they were all used and then place a new order with the desired language.

Ms. Reyes when questioned about whether or not Ms. McGee expressed to her that there was a hostile environment in the office, stated:

“I’m going to be honest; I did not talk much to Laverne. I tried to stay away from her pretty much. To me she wasn’t a nice person, so I tried to stay away from her.”

Ms. Reyes when asked why she thought Ms. McGee was not a very nice person stated:

“It’s just the way she was demanding, the way she would talk to people. I used to see how she would just talk to people and she was very rude, and I just - - it was during a time where I was having issues with my stomach and I didn’t want to add that to it, so I tried to stay away. Wherever she was at, I wanted nothing to do with it. “

Rajiv Pauray stated that Ms. McGee was not a very good person to work with sometimes because she was aggressive. He also stated that her employees would tell him she was very aggressive to work with and not a very nice person.

Minerva Deluca described Ms. McGee as very intimidating, malicious, and manipulative. She also felt that Ms. McGee was crazy. Ms. Deluca stated that Ms. McGee tried to appear that she had more than a work relationship with Mr. Singh.

In conclusion there is no evidence that supports the allegations of a hostile work environment created by Mr. Singh. There is evidence that supports the proposition that Ms. McGee created a very toxic working environment. Ms. Tatsiana Solvaka and Ms. Barbra Jubran both assert that were victims of what they believe was abusive behavior by Ms. McGee

## **ALTERATIONS OF DOCUMENTS FOR AUDIT & IMPROPER EXPENDITURES**

It is alleged by Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan that in a meeting prior to an Audit of the Orange County Property Appraiser's Office Procurement Card Usage being conducted by then Orange County Comptroller, Martha Haynie, they were instructed to:

1. Delay the auditors from starting the audit;
2. Alter and destroy documents.

According to the unsworn statement of Aisha Hassan the audit was to take place in June or July of 2015 and was not completed until February of 2016.

It is alleged by Ms. Hassan in her unsworn statement that the reason for seeking to delay the audit was because Mr. Singh wanted to review each transaction and its documentation. As a result of the review of the document Mr. Singh instructed them to alter certain documents and remove those documents. It is noted that Ms. Hassan represented to the County Auditors and to the Property Appraiser's private outside auditors that all was appropriate.

Based upon the unsworn testimony of Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan these were some of the documents that were improperly amended and backdated.

1. **Michigan IAAO Conference Hotel:** Ms. Hassan stated that Mr. Singh requested that she obtain a statement from his hotel stating that his room was not upgraded when it was likely upgraded. It is to be noted that in her statement she said that the hotel employee stated it appeared to be an upgrade request, but wasn't 100 percent sure due to the date of the transaction. (See Hassan Vol. I, pg. 32-35). But an email from Nicholas Remes, Assistant General Manager of JW Marriott Grand Rapids to Aisha Hassan dated February 2, 2016 does not support her statement about the upgrade of the room. The email in part stated:

“Aisha, Pertaining to the reservation we discussed it was booked at a regular non-discounted rate and was also not an upgraded category of room.” (See Email of Nicholas Remes Exhibit #2)

2. **Curry Festival:** Ms. McGee claimed that Mr. Singh justified his hotel accommodation by claiming that OCPA had a booth at the Curry Festival. Ms. McGee also claimed that after Mrs. Haynie's Office questioned the expenses for the Curry Festival she was instructed to obtain a letter from Dr. Ram P. Ramcharran thanking Mr. Singh for his attendance at the Curry Festival. It was alleged that the letter was back dated to 2013, even though the letter was not drafted until 2015. Ms. McGee also claims that OCPA's Vikaash Maharaj was asked by Mr. Singh to make a

- 2013 Curry Festival banner and take a picture of Mr. Singh in front of the banner to give the appearance that OCPA was at the Curry Festival. (See McGee Vol. I, pg. 95-113; and Hassan Vol. I, pg. 35-38);
3. **Doctor's Note to Support Layover in Dallas:** Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan alleged that Mr. Singh obtained a doctor's note from Dr. Patel to support his layover in Dallas. The doctor's note stated that Mr. Singh was unable to sit for long period of time. It was alleged by them that the real purpose was to allow Mr. Singh to stop in Dallas to attend a wedding. (See McGee, Vol. I, pg. 115-117; and Hassan, Vol. I pg. 39-40);
  4. **Food Purchase on 1/19/2013 for OCPA Employees for MLK Parade:** There was a food purchase in the amount of \$1,196.45, from 4 Rivers Restaurant for employees who took part in the Martin Luther King, Jr., Parade. Ms. Hassan alleged that documents were changed to add additional information supporting the payment request and she also alleged that the number of employees taking part in the event wasn't accurate. She stated that 100 employees did not attend the event. (See Hassan Vol. II pg. 55-58.);
  5. **Car Rental in Grand Rapids, Michigan:** Ms. Hassan in her unsworn statement testified that Mr. Singh arrived three days prior to the conference and used a rental vehicle to drive to Chicago. She states that while the document supporting his rental car indicated that he was sharing this car with other OCPA employees, he did not share the vehicle.  
(See Hassan Vol. 1, pg. 40-41);
  6. **Flags Purchased on 2/5/2013(\$144.00):** According to Ms. Hassan the altered document pertaining to this purchase deleted that the purchase was made at the request of Mr. Singh for purpose of the inaugural ceremony and that the order was an emergency order. The purchased items were flags of the State of Florida and United States along with the stands and poles for the flags. It was Ms. Hassan position that this purchase should have been paid by Mr. Singh's campaign rather than OCPA Office. (See Hassan Vol. II, pg. 58-62);
  7. **Car Allowance & Usage of Operating an OCPA Vehicle:** Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan alleged that it was improper for Mr. Singh to use OCPA vehicles while also collecting a car allowance. Mr. Singh in his response stated that his use of the OCPA vehicle was consistent with the prior property appraiser's policy and that he only used the OCPA vehicle when his personal vehicle was not appropriate for such events as parades, transporting multiple employees and inspecting agricultural properties. The unsigned does not find evidence to support the conclusion that this was improper.

Mr. Singh in his testimony denied asking his staff to alter or remove documents for

the purpose of the audit. Mr. Singh explained in his testimony that due to the fact he could not determine the scope of the audit, there was an exchange of emails between his office and Mrs. Haynie's office to determine the objectives of the audit. Mr. Singh consulted with the CPA Firm of Moore, Stephens, & Lovelace. He was instructed by that firm to gather and prepare any supporting documents that the auditor may need in conducting the audit. Present at this meeting along with Mr. Singh was Manish Bhatt, Laverne McGee, Aisha Hassan and Willis Perry.

Mr. Singh stated in his testimony concerning the Curry Festival that he had simply asked Ms. McGee to locate a thank you letter that he had already received from Dr. Ram Ramcharran and that he never asked her or anyone to create a new document.

In regard to the issue about the layover in Dallas before proceeding to Sacramento, California to attend the International Association of Assessing Officer Annual Convention, Mr. Singh testified that the layover was due to a medical condition. Mr. Singh denied stopping over in Dallas to attend a wedding nor is there any evidence of such. It is noted that the Alt. Director of Finance also signed off on multi-year audits and no knowledge of fraud/wrongdoing was found.

Audit Report Number 452 of the Orange County Property Appraiser's Office Procurement Card Usage, dated February 2016, by the Office of County Comptroller was the audit where it was alleged that certain alterations of documents took place. This audit was a review of OCPA Office procurement card transactions and related supporting documentation. The audit found that the P-Card purchases were materially in compliance but it also noted areas of improvement.

One of the areas of improvement noted in the audit was a more detailed policy dealing with meals and refreshments. The audit report specifically cited the lunch provided to office personnel during the Annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Parade, along with several others. The audit stated, based upon the examination of the contemporaneously documentation, sufficient evidence was not available to determine the business purpose of the expenditure.

The audit report states the office staff provided explanations of why they believe the expenditure met the office's policy. The audit report went on to state:

“However, because the policy is broad, these determinations are subjective and interpretations of the policy could vary from individual to individual.”

The purpose of visit to the Grand Rapids Property Appraiser's Office was to review their CAMA system. As the Grand Rapids' Property Appraiser was a host at the (IAAO) conference and was not available days leading up to the conference or once the

conference started, it was determined the trip was the only reasonable option to avoid another trip to Grand Rapids. As noted by the audit report travel costs dealing with the Grand Rapids trip did not appear to be necessary and if the meeting was warranted, the expenses could have been reduced by having the meeting during the event or the day after the event. The audit report recommended that OCPA supplement its existing procedures and controls to better ensure travel related expenses are minimized. In the action plan provided by the Office of County Comptroller which consisted of three items, two of the three were completed and the third was underway and is now completed.

Based upon review of the testimony and evidence there is no evidence to support that the allegation that documents were altered for the purpose of audit, nor is there evidence that support the proposition that any expenditures were made with the knowledge that they were intentionally improper.

### **CONTROL CAM CONTRACT & E-RING CONTRACT**

#### **ControlCam**

Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan in their unsworn statements alleged that Mr. Singh overcharged certain vendors for the purpose of those vendors being able to donate to his re-election campaign. It is alleged by Ms. McGee that David Friedman of ControlCam was told by Mr. Singh that ControlCam would be awarded the bid if they gave \$55,000.00 to his campaign. Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan also testified that before any alleged kickbacks could be given by Control Cam, Mr. Friedman was terminated by the company. (See McGee Vol. II, pg. 37-39 & Hassan Vol. II, pg. 51-53).

Control Cam was awarded the contract through a competitive bid process. Mr. Singh in his sworn statement testified that he was not involved in the ranking or selecting of Control Cam for the bid. (See Singh Statement pg.74-77). Denise Reyes who is involved in the bids process for vendors testified that Mr. Singh is not involved in the bidding process, nor has he ever interfered in the bidding process. (See Denise Reyes Statement, pg.7). Greenspoon Marder's review of the existing contract was to explore performance issues with the vendor.

A review of the bid material and a memorandum directed to Aisha Hassan dated June 30, 2016 from Greenspoon Marder concerning the aerial photography agreement with ControlCam, LLC, did not disclose anything that was improper or give credibility to the allegation of Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan. I was unable to contact Mr. David Friedman to determine what he knew about these allegations. Based upon the evidence the undersigned cannot find any evidence to support this allegation that Mr. Singh solicited a \$55,000.00 kickback to his campaign.

#### **E-Ring Contract**

Ms. McGee also alleges that Raj Radhakrisanan of E-Ring gave money to Mr. Singh's campaign in exchange for being awarded the CAMA bid. Ms. McGee when questioned about how she was aware of this request stated the following in her statement (See McGee Vol. II, pg. 31-36):

**Q How did you know he was willing to do that?**

A I met with Raj and Rick.

**Q To the best of your recollection, tell me what he said that led you to the conclusion that he was willing to pay money.**

A Raj told me that he would have to give him increments of \$20,000. And Rick wanted me to pressure Raj to make the amount higher than \$20,000 increments.

And Manish became involved because Manish worked - - actually worked directly and Manish was - - told me not to talk to them anymore. And so I didn't at that point in time.

**Q He was going to pay 20 - - in \$20,000 increments. Where was the money to go to?**

A To Rick Singh. To Rick Singh's campaign.

**Q Do you know whether or not this gentleman ever paid any money to Mr. Singh's campaign?**

A I did not see a check, no. So with the CAMA system, what happened is after they got the bid, the office - - people in the office started getting upset because work wasn't being done properly. They could never get ahold of them. There were no proper documents, and it kept coming up all the time because we had a person named Kim Brown who now works for the county and she - - she was in charge of the old system and she knew something was wrong and Rick kept trying to shut her out of it.

And Rick kept hanging on, even though we talked about the fact that how were we going to deal with this system crashing because E-Ring was not - - clearly could not really perform the work. But Rick said he wanted - - he didn't get all of his money from them and so he wanted to continue trying to - - trying to work, keep them on the payroll and keep the system going, and there is several emails of employee complaints and employee problems that were arising from this - - from E-Ring.

And during the election time, before the election time, before the election we started getting more inquiries about it and he wanted to give - - E-Ring got so upset because we kept pressuring them to give him money for the campaign E-Ring wanted to back out.

**Q Who was the principal that you were talking with in E-Ring?**

A Raj.

**Q Were you present when there were conversations between Mr. Singh and this gentleman Raj?**

A Raj.

**Q -- where they actually discussed paying money into Mr. Singh's Campaign as a campaign donation in return for them receiving the contract with the Property Appraiser's office?**

A Yes.

**Q Do you recall at this time what Mr. Singh said that led you to that conclusion?**

A He was on the phone with Raj at one point and then he turned to - - he put him on speaker phone so I could hear what Raj was saying. And he was telling me, like motioning to me to listen. And Raj was telling him that there was no way that he could - - he could give this money in lump sum, and that he didn't want - - he didn't want to deal - - he didn't want to deal with anyone in the office anymore.

And so Rick got off the phone with him and then he said he was going to have Manish try to deal with him.

**Q Was Manish aware of the fact that this contract was being offered to E-Ring in exchange for campaign contributions? If you know, you do. If you don't, you don't.**

A I mean, I didn't have direct conversations with Manish, but he was - - I know that Manish was very uncomfortable with Rick because Raj told me that Manish was Uncomfortable was uncomfortable.

Manish - - Raj said that he didn't want to deal with anybody from the office. He didn't want to deal with me because I had dealt with him a little bit in the beginning.

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The following things stand out about Ms. McGee's statement. How was Mr. Raj Radhakrisanan going to pay into the Singh campaign \$20,000.00 when the campaign contribution limit was \$1,000.00? Ms. McGee when asked whether the money was ever paid to Singh Campaign stated: "I did not see a check, no." An examination of Mr. Singh Campaign Report does not reflect any contribution from E-Ring or Mr. Raj Radhakrisanan. Mr. Radhakrisanan specifically denies this allegation.

Another issue is that she alleges that the E-Ring was told to come in at a lower bid in order to get the contract, but on the other hand E-Ring was to be an over-bid in order that they would have funds for a kick-back to Mr. Singh. This is totally inconsistent. This is what she said in her statement (See McGee Vol. II, pg. 35-36):

**Q Tell me what he told you that led you to the conclusion that he either provided them with information or told them to formulate a bid lower than the other two. The reason I ask the questions is I take it that all three bids were sealed bids that were submitted independent of each other. And I don't know whether they came in at the same time, different times. I'm just trying to determine what led - - what was it that he told you that led you to the conclusion that these bids were manipulated in favor of E-Ring?**

A Because he told me that what he was doing was he would give them extra money for them to pay him back. So if they came in with a bid of a certain amount, he would - - he would - - it would be over-bid so that they would use that money to give him back. Because they felt that they couldn't pay him as money as Rick wanted, so Rick would give them more with the intention - - with the expectation that they would give that money back to him.

**Q What I'm trying to determine what you've basically said, and correct me if I'm wrong, is that they overbid the project with the hope of kicking back some of the overbid, which is a little different than underbidding where they would be the lowest bidder.**

A Well, there was several different things going on - -.

**Q Okay.**

A -- with situation. So in order to get the company in because they didn't have the experience and they were this Indian company that people hadn't dealt with here or didn't know of.

**Q E-Ring was the Indian company?**

A E-Ring, yes, which is run by Raj. So in order for them to win the bid, they had to come in much lower and then - - but it had to be - - there had to be some padding there so that they would give the money back. So we were paying the money for the bid with the intention of them giving back some of this money.

In the end the contract between OCPA and E-Ring was terminated, and E-Ring refunded \$300,000.00, to Orange County. There was no evidence to support the fact that Mr. Singh attempted to obtain a kick-back from E-Ring in exchange for a campaign contribution.

Mr. Raj Radhakrisanan vehemently denied the allegations that he ever agreed or discussed any campaign contribution in exchange for campaign contributions.

Mr. Singh in his testimony denied these allegations and stated that E-Ring was selected by the former Chief Operating Officer after E-Ring came in with the lowest bid.

#### ***OVERPAYING OF VENDOR FOR CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION***

Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan alleged in their unsworn statements that certain vendors overcharged the OCPA for the purpose of diverting those payments to the Mr. Singh political campaign. Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan claim the following organizations were a part of the overcharging scheme: (a) Global Promo; (b) Global KTech; and (c) Orlando Furniture Company in which they gave money back to Mr. Singh campaign. But they also acknowledged that they had no personal knowledge of these allegations. Since they didn't offer any proof and suggested there was no evidence to support these particular allegations, this investigator chose not to go on a fishing expedition into the allegations. Thus, there is no evidence to support these allegations.

#### ***UTILIZATION OF OCPA STAFF FOR CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES***

Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan in their statements alleged that the following employees of OCPA worked in Mr. Singh's political campaign while they were on the clock for the office:

1. Laudi Campo
2. Rajiv Pauray
3. Usha Tewari
4. Indera Williams
5. Vikaash Maharaj
6. Kameron Sullivan

The undersigned was able to take the sworn statements of Rajiv Pauray, Usha Tewari, Minerva Deluca, and Denise Reyes who all testified that they didn't work on Mr. Singh's campaign during the times they were on the clock for OCPA. There is no evidence to support this allegation.

### ***ALLEGATIONS ABOUT BHAVISH PATEL***

Ms. Hassan in her unsworn statement of August 29, 2017, states that the expenditure of \$22,432.00, payable to the UPS Store owned by Mr. Bhavish Patel was not for the benefit of the OCPA Office nor did the OCPA use the items described in the invoices. This expenditure of \$22,432 consisted of the following invoices: (See Exhibit # 1)

1. Invoice # 5172016 dated 5/17/2016 for \$4,316.00;
2. Invoice # 6142016 dated 6/14/2016 for \$6,014.00;
3. Invoice # 8162016 dated 8/16/2016 for \$6,088.00;
4. Invoice # 1042016 dated 10/4/2016 for \$6,014.00

Mr. Bhavish Patel in his sworn statement stated that the four invoices mentioned above were quotes for proposed work rather than actual bills for work done. The quotes were a result of a request by Ms. Lavern McGee. Mr. Patel in statement explained that he did send past due invoices for work done in April for the OCPA. The invoices were for large envelopes, custom envelopes, custom letterhead and business cards. Mr. Patel goes on to explain that while in Atlanta at an event called his office manager and they attached the quotes. When he discovered the mistake, Mr. Patel called Ms. Hassan explained to her that there was a mix up and returned the check for \$22,432. The materials contained in the quotes totaling \$22,432.00 were never ordered by OCPA. The uncashed check in the amount \$22, 432.00 from Mr. Patel was found in Ms. Hassan Office by Mr. Ehab Azer, a temporary contract worker for the Finance Department several months after it was sent to her. I am advised Mr. Patel is contemplating pursuing a slander/libel claim over this allegation.

The evidence does not support that this expenditure of \$22,432.00 was for the benefit of Mr. Singh's campaign.

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF INVESTIGATIONS**

The major focus of this investigation was to determine whether or not a hostile work environment was created by Mr. Singh that was directed towards Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan. Based upon the statements of all witnesses there was no evidence Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan's workplace was a hostile work environment. The information and testimony obtained and considered during the review and investigation does not support the allegations made by Ms. McGee or Ms. Hassan.

The other allegations concerning alterations of documents, improper expenditures, contract awarded in return for campaign contributions and the overpaying of vendors in exchange for campaign contribution were also not supported by the greater weight of the evidence. It is to be noted that all the witnesses that gave statements under oath while Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan elected not to give their statements under oath. This was a factor in weighting the credibility of the testimony of all parties.

It was reported to the undersigned evidence of misconduct on the part of Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan that included but are not limited to illegal voice recordings of individuals, removal of Orange County Property Appraiser's material, and use of her position for personal gain by Ms. McGee and unauthorized GEO tab tracking of Mr. Singh's vehicle, misappropriations of Mr. Singh's social security number and health information by Ms. Hassan. As this was not in scope of the allegations made by Ms. McGee and Ms. Hassan, I did not investigate same. I disclose this so it is clear that I have investigated what I was requested to do.

Based upon the review of the testimony, documents and reports the undersigned does not find evidence to support the allegations contained in the email/letter dated June 22, 2017 by Ms. Laverne McGee and Aisha Hassan.

Dated this \_\_\_\_ of April, 2018.

Sincerely,

Belvin Perry, Jr.