



ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER
HON. STEFAN I. MYCHAJLIW

February 26th, 2021

Marie Cannon
Erie County Commissioner of Social Services
95 Franklin Street
Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear Commissioner Cannon,

Troubling information has surfaced concerning your intent to fill the position of Special Assistant to the Commissioner, Step 15, with Mr. Randall Hoak. Numerous times during your statements to the Erie County Legislature on February 18th, 2021, you stressed an urgent need to fill the position to assist your response to COVID-19. You also mentioned there were 19 other applicants that were interested in that position.

Now it has come to light that the individual you decided to hire plans to quit this job in ten months. Erie County Board of Elections employee and Town of Hamburg Democratic Chairman Terrence MacKinnon told a local newspaper that Mr. Hoak has no intention of working in this position and will quit by the end of this year:

"MacKinnon said if Hoak were to win the election he would be a 'full-time Supervisor' and leave his other (Special Assistant to the Commissioner) job."

Source: Terrence MacKinnon, Hamburg Sun, February 26th, 2021

This solidifies the belief that Mr. Hoak's appointment by the Poloncarz administration with a \$100,000 Managerial Confidential position with a \$22,000 raise to run for public office was transactional in nature. Knowing Mr. Hoak plans to quit a job you deemed urgently necessary to fight Coronavirus in Erie County raises even more serious questions:

- Why would you hire someone for such an urgent need knowing they planned to quit in ten months?
- Did you know Mr. Hoak had planned on quitting prior to offering him this position?
- As far as the 19 other applicants go, did any of them notify you they would only work for ten months, then quit?
- Why would a manager hire an employee for a critically needed position if that person planned to quit less than one year after being hired?

Other serious questions remain, specifically, it appears Mr. Hoak's start time in our SAP computer system was February 10th, 2021, the day before the Erie County Legislature Committee item was on the agenda for Thursday, February 11th, 2021, and a full week before the Legislature approved this position on Thursday, February 18th, 2021. The suspicious, highly questionable, and secretive circumstances surrounding this patronage hire were called "illegal" by Erie County Legislator Hon. Joseph Lorigo. Considering this new information that the individual you plan to hire wants to quit in ten months, it warrants further federal and state scrutiny, considering the position is partially paid with state and federal funds.

Sincerely,

Stefan I. Mychajliw, Jr.
Erie County Comptroller