

From: Jackie Craine

Date: June 29, 2020 at 6:56:20 AM CDT

To: Subject: Fraud, Waste, and Abuse within the Kansas Division of Emergency Management

To All Republican Kansas Representatives:

I am writing this letter in hopes that someone will investigate the Fraud, Waste and Abuse of Power and self-serving management at the Kansas Division of Emergency Management (KDEM). I tried to resolve this in house by requesting a meeting with The Adjutant General (TAG) of the State of Kansas Major General David Weishaar, but he declined to meet with me. Therefore, as a concerned taxpayer, I am sharing my first-hand knowledge while working for the Kansas Division of Emergency Management in response to COVID-19.

In March 2020, at the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Kelly approved a significant pay increase for KDEM salaried managers that increased their base salary by 35-40% on their current salary.

- Deputy Director, Angee Morgan went from a base salary of approx. \$93,000 to an increased rate of approx. \$140,000.
- Response & Recovery Branch Director, Jonathon York went from base rate of approx. \$83,000 to approx. \$124,000.
- Planning Branch Director, Byran Murdie went from a base rate of \$78,000 to approx. \$119,000.
- Adjutant General, Agency Comptroller, Micheal Neth who was assigned to support KDEM, also received a similar raise increase. I did not have direct knowledge of his exact salary and increase, but it was implied by Michael himself that he did receive an increased salary amid the COVID-19 pandemic response.
- Preparedness Branch Director, Terri Ploger-McCool was not included in the initial pay rate adjustment as she was not actively working in support of the COVID-19 response, until mid-May in which she was called in. Management had no intention of including her in the pay raise, until word got around that she was the only Branch Director who did not receive an increase. After which Terri received a back-pay adjustment in the amount of approx. \$6,700 in June of 2020.

While each of these managers received their 35-40% pay raises, they continued to only work M-F shifts, while mostly remaining on standby during the weekends and not reporting to the office. While most KDEM staff, County/City Emergency Managers, and Agency Emergency Support Officers worked 7 days a week with little to no relief.

To circumvent the approval process management alluded that funding would be available via federal grant. In which they charged 1/3 of their salary to the FEMA Disaster Public Assistance (PA) Grant. However, under FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG) “for Permanent Work, both straight-time and overtime labor costs are eligible for both budgeted and unbudgeted employee hours. However, for Emergency Work, only overtime labor is eligible for budgeted employee hours” (44 C.F.R. § 206.228(a)(2)(i)). All of the management positions above are “budgeted” permanent employees and the raises were an increase to their regular base salary, therefore reimbursement for their salary would be unallowable under the grant and

therefore would be charged to the State General Fund. Additionally, Michael Neth's position which is budgeted under the State General Fund, proceeded to charge 100% of his increased salary to the federal grant, even though he only worked about 50% of the time supporting KDEM, while the other 50% was spent working his normal Comptroller duties.

When other agencies and county personnel questioned if they could obtain additional compensation for exempt staff under the FEMA PA grant, Michael Neth informed officials that exempt personnel were not authorized overtime and therefore their salary could not be reimbursed under the grant. Which directly contradicts the actions of management by charging the increased portion of their salaries to the Federal grant.

Besides the pay increases Management also spent over \$100,000 on food catering by the Topeka Country Club and spent thousands more on snacks, candy and beverages for all staff working in response to COVID-19. On weekends the Deputy Director, Angee Morgan abused her authority by having interns bring her catered meals to her hotel for over three straight months and would have those same interns deliver groceries to her husband and children. Management also used the grant funding to purchase new iphones, ipads, and new laptops for all KDEM staff, to include staff not working in response to COVID. Management also purchased apple ear pods for all KDEM managers and mission assigned staff, claiming they were a "gift from the disaster grant" because they deemed them a personal item.

All of these claims are based on my direct knowledge and access to actual salaries and purchases made by the agency. All salary adjustments and purchases can be corroborated through an agency investigation and/or Kansas Open Record Act (KORA) request.

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