



STATE HEADQUARTERS OFFICE

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October 12, 2012

City of Port Townsend, Office of City Manager
Attn: David Timmons, City Manager
250 Madison Street, #2
Port Townsend, WA 98368

Dear Mr. Timmons,

I am in receipt of your letter dated August 15, 2012 in response to our "Case Study" of Fort Worden. I appreciate the opportunity to respond. There are numerous points in your letter that require some perspective and clarification.

By way of introduction, I am the Executive Director of an organization that represents nearly 40,000 state employees and taxpaying citizens across Washington State. In my experience I have found that when an individual or group of constituents are ignored or feel that their views are being suppressed they find a way – often very publicly – to make their views heard. To make a public statement based on data, facts and core principles is, in fact, not irresponsible. On the contrary, it is our duty.

You assert that certain public statements are "truly damaging and irresponsible". I do not concur. That there are those who find our publications damaging, in my view, is demonstrative of our publication's validity and the obligation to share, publicly, that data. Let me assure you our actions have not been those of some rogue element in the Federation. Our union would not permit an individual staff member or members to undertake studies which are to be released publicly without approval of the union leadership. Furthermore, our actions have been embraced by a broad cross section of organizations and individuals in the Pt. Townsend community.

Repeatedly in your letter, you reference "attacks" and inaccurate, misleading, and damaging, statements by the Federation "to undermine the process to build a working partnership between the FWPDA, State Parks, and the Federation to carry out the potential, and vision of a Life Long Learning Center at Ft. Worden". If you wish to characterize our actions – position

paper, testimony, case study – as “attacks” you may do so. What we are engaged in is a process to fight off, what appeared to us, was a naked power grab to first transfer control of Ft. Worden to the FWPDA and, when that failed, to at least maintain, management control of the Park. We are aware that almost all parties understand that Ft. Worden is a tremendous public asset of the State of Washington, but we are also very aware that Ft Worden is viewed by some as an asset to be developed for private gain. Moreover, while we are accused of many things in your letter, I see few, if any, examples to substantiate them.

Another misconception is that the Federation’s only interest is in preserving jobs, however few that may be. The Federation, AFSCME International and Labor as a whole have many decades of history of taking positions on a wide variety of matters of public concern. Yes, we care deeply about the preservation of skilled, experienced state workers. But our members statewide care deeply about Ft. Worden as a state park as well.

Our members and staff have been advised that Fort Worden is operating at a deficit of over \$700,000 per year. Recent updates indicate the deficit has grown to \$1.2 million per year. Considering the substantial loss of revenue Parks as a whole has experienced, operating any park in a deficit directly impacts our members that work in Parks. From loss of jobs, loss of pay and loss of resources needed to serve the public it is not palatable to our members to simply accept these cuts without examining opportunities to offset the cuts. It is in this spirit that our members and staff, in collaboration with local community citizens and businesses, started to question the conditions and reduced leases at Fort Worden. It is well within the scope of our members’ concerns to do so.

It is obvious on its face, that the on-site vendors at Ft. Worden have lease arrangements considerably below what the market should bear. Given the operating deficit, we would be remiss if we did not underscore that Parks management might consider raising the lease amounts for vendors who currently have a very good deal and have benefitted from that arrangement for many years.

Regarding our assertions that the “Port Townsend Police Department (PTPD) has formally expressed concern over a lack of compensation for police response...” I find that to be a completely accurate statement. I think that is the conclusion that a reasonable person would draw from the attached June 8, 2012 memo you sent to the Chief of Police referencing a June 7th PTPD internal memo that very clearly cites a need for a memorandum of understanding outlining Park expectations and an arrangement for cost reimbursement to the City.

The Federation has formally acknowledged the significant interest of the City of Port Townsend through the FWPDA as a valued partner in our position paper of March 2012. We have stated all along that the City's interests and contribution over the years have been beneficial and continue to be a vital element of any potential success at Fort Worden. However, we do not believe that the city, through its' PDA should have a management role at the park. As stated in our March 2012 paper, Fort Worden has significant statewide historical significance that is not exclusive to Fort Worden, it is one of three forts in the "Triangle of Fire" and any plans for development should be vetted publicly not just in the local community but on a statewide basis.

I hope I've been able to adequately dispel your allegations of misrepresentation and mischaracterization in the WFSE's "case study". Should you have additional concerns or if you would like to speak with me directly I would welcome a more open dialogue.

Sincerely,



Greg Devereux

Executive Director

Washington Federation of State Employees

AFSCME Council 28, AFL-CIO

cc: The Hon. Governor Chris Gregoire
City Council
FWPDA Board
Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission
Senator James Hargrove
Representative Steve Tharinger
Representative Kevin Van De Wege
Michael McCarty, CEO, AWC
Brian Sonntag, State Auditor

