

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

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**FINDING IN THE COMPLAINTS OF
JOHN MCCOWN, CANDIDATE FOR POUND RIDGE SUPERVISOR,
AGAINST KEVIN HANSAN, ALISON BOAK, AND ERIN TROSTLE,
CANDIDATES FOR POUND RIDGE GOVERNMENT, AND ROSLYN
STONE-POLLOCK, CHAIR OF THE POUND RIDGE DEMOCRATIC
COMMITTEE**

Tarrytown, NY (November 06, 2023) - The Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee met via Zoom on November 06, 2023 to hear the complaints of John McCown (Pound Ridge Party), candidate for Town Supervisor, against incumbent Democrats Kevin Hansan, candidate for Town Supervisor, Alison Boak, candidate for Town Board, Erin Trostle, candidate for Town Clerk, and Roslyn Stone-Pollock, chair of the Pound Ridge Democratic Committee. All candidates attended the Hearing. Roslyn Stone-Pollock attended the Hearing as chair of the Pound Ridge Democratic Committee.

COMPLAINT #1: Mr. McCown complained that in electronic mailers sent out on October 30, 2023 and November 3, 2023, statements were made that were not factually supportable.

FINDING: UNFAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICE

The Committee questioned the candidates about statements in the two electronic mailers. Some were considered fair or normal political discourse. However, several allegations were made without any evidence and were, therefore, deemed misleading. For example, the statements that the opponents wanted to “eliminate the town attorney (who protects us all)” and “end Food Truck Fridays” were made without any documentary support. In addition, the statement that Mr. McCown wanted a town-wide revaluation because “Most of us believe that his real goal is to reduce his and his HOA’s property taxes” was an ad hominem attack on Mr. McCown.

The Committee contends that including false or misleading statements in the electronic mailers, even if some of the statements are fair, violates the following FCPC Principle: “The candidate will not use or condone any campaign material or advertisement that misstates, misrepresents or distorts material fact or any communication that misleads the public.” Also, personal attacks violate the following FCPC Principle: “The candidate will neither engage in nor be involved with false or misleading attacks upon the character of an opponent...”

COMPLAINT #2: Mr. McCown complained that a town-wide mailer prepared by the Pound Ridge Democratic Committee and delivered several weeks ago included a bar chart depicting fund reserves that were materially inaccurate because they were shifted forward one year.

FINDING: FAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICE

The bar chart included the labels 2018 through 2024, and did not specify whether the values reflected in the chart were as of the beginning of the year or as of the end of the year. The values presented were as of January 1 for each year.

Committee Members: Susan P. Guma, [Chair], Jennifer Mebes Flagg [Coordinator], Elizabeth Bermel, Gisele Castro, LaRuth Gray, Kyle-Beth Hilfer, Lee Kinnally, Robert C. Kirkwood, Carole Princer Levy, Don Marra, Paul Bennett Marrow, Joy Rosenzweig, Susan Schwarz, John Stern, Evelyn M. Stock
Party representatives (ex officio): Republican Party, Democratic Party, Working Families Party, Independence Party, Green Party

The purpose of the Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee is to help set an acceptable standard for political discussion by offering a forum for identifying unfair campaign practices and promoting a climate in which candidates conduct honest and fair campaigns. The Committee encourages candidates to conduct campaigns openly and fairly, to focus on issues and qualifications, to refrain from dishonest and defamatory attacks, and to avoid the use of campaign materials that distort the facts.

The Committee accepts written complaints from candidates about alleged unfair campaign practices. The Committee may then hold hearings to determine whether the action complained about is indeed unfair or whether it falls within acceptable political discourse. Among other things that the Committee will consider to be an unfair campaign practice is a misstatement of a material fact or any communication that misleads the public.

The Committee has no power to compel anyone or any group to stop doing what it has found to be unfair, nor does it have the authority or power to enforce election or other laws.

If the Committee acts on a complaint, it will release its findings to inform the public. The Committee may choose not to consider a complaint; in that case, a hearing is not held and the parties to the complaint are notified.

Statement of Principles of the Committee, as stated in its Manual, is available at www.faircampaignpractices.org. The Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee believes that candidates should conduct their campaigns in accordance with the following principles:

- The candidate will conduct a campaign for public office openly and fairly, focusing on issues and qualifications.
- The candidate will not use or condone any campaign material or advertisement that misstates, misrepresents or distorts material fact or any communication that misleads the public.
- The candidate will neither engage in nor be involved with false or misleading attacks upon the character of an opponent, nor in invasions of privacy unrelated to fitness for office.

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- The candidate will not participate in or condone any appeal to prejudice.
- The candidate will clearly identify by name the funding source of all advertisements and campaign literature published and distributed.
- The candidate will not abuse the Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee process in order to obtain political advantage. This includes, but is not limited to announcing that he/she has filed a complaint, or quoting from the Committee's Findings unless the individual Finding cited is quoted in its entirety. The Committee considers selective quotation or misrepresentation of its Findings to be an unfair campaign practice.
- The candidate will publicly repudiate materials or actions made on behalf of their candidacy that violate this Statement of Principles.