



SOMERSET COUNTY

Dawn M. DiBlasi
County Administrator
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April 9, 2014

Diane Godin, Registrar of Deeds
Somerset County
41 Court Street
Skowhegan, ME 04976

Dear Diane:

I am writing to notify you that several employees and at least one member of the public have made a complaint against you for workplace harassment and creating a hostile work environment. Unfortunately, this is yet another in a series of complaints that have been made regarding your behavior in the workplace since August, 2013.

In August of 2013 your Deputy publicly announced that she would be running for the position of Registrar of Deeds in the 2014 election. In response to her announcement you immediately took away her and another employee's usual work and sent the Deputy to the basement to work. You told her that she would be no longer wait on public clients, take in documents or work within view of the public.

As a result of that behavior, you were given an oral warning in the Administrator's Office with the HR Representative present on August 28, 2013. At that time, you responded by stating "You think it was bad around here when an abstractor ran, you ain't seen nothing yet." Both the HR Representative and the County Administrator advised you that you had openly admitted that you were going to retaliate against your Deputy for running against you in the upcoming election. You were advised your actions were opening the County up to a lawsuit. Your response was that you did not care if your behavior was unlawful. You went on to state that you were going to be making substantive changes in the work load for each employee in the department. Again, you were advised that you could not make substantive changes in their duties in retaliation for their actions. I advised you that this behavior would not be tolerated.

Additionally, both the HR Representative and I advised you to continue the usual functions that you normally perform on a day to day basis and let everyone else continue doing their "usual" work. I advised that I had every intention of protecting the work force from any harassment or retaliation and would take further action to provide a workplace free of harassment if necessary. At that time, you agreed to go back to work and continue working in accordance with past practice.

On March 7, 2014 you began copying me on emails sent to the staff banning them from eating their lunches at their desk, a common practice among your staff for more than 15 years as the County does not have a designated lunch room.

In addition, both verbally and through an email you threatened the Deputy's position and the position of another employee in Deeds. Again, this is unacceptable behavior and cannot continue.

On March 24, 2014 you were provided with a written warning advising you to stop the retaliatory behavior. I once again indicated that further action would be taken if you continued to retaliate.

On Friday, April 4, 2014 the HR Representative and I were advised that your retaliation and bullying had escalated to almost a full scale physical altercation. A member of the public reported that things were worse than ever in the Registry of Deeds and complained that you were bullying the staff and you had created a hostile work environment. The public has a right to conduct research without being exposed to harassment and hostile working conditions. It is apparent that your personal feelings about your Deputy running for office against you are impacting the public as well as your employees. Your actions are having a negative effect on the operation of the Registry of Deeds.

Therefore, please be advised that the purpose of this letter is to put you on Notice of said claims alleging harassment and hostile working conditions. These complaints allege workplace harassment by you; including bullying and berating them in the workplace and in a public forum. Your actions are affecting them physically and interfering with their duties for the County. Myself and the employees involved, continue to be extremely upset by your actions.

Your actions with regard to these employees continues to be inappropriate and must cease immediately. The County has a clear legal obligation to ensure its employees, including myself as the County Administrator, a workplace that is free of harassment and intimidation. The County cannot and will not stand by and allow your inappropriate and unacceptable behavior to continue.

The County has engaged in progressive discipline in regard to these issues—you have been counseled and advised that your behavior was inappropriate; you have received oral and written warnings. Because none of the corrective action the County has taken has changed your behavior, you are advised that you are hereby suspended from work for the next three days. Please note that during the three day suspension period you are not allowed in the County building, nor shall you have direct or indirect contact with any County Employee regarding the matter.

I hope this will help you refocus on working in a productive manner and trust that there will be no further issues regarding workplace harassment and hostile work environment. However, you should know that your failure to correct your inappropriate behavior will lead to further suspension and disciplinary action.

Sincerely,



Dawn M. DiBlasi

cc: Lori Costa, H.R. Representative

Memo

TO: Diane Godin, Registrar of Deeds
From: Dawn DiBlasi, County Administrator
DATE: 03/24/14

- 1) 08/28/13 - In August, you were informed that your Deputy, [REDACTED] was going to run against you in the upcoming election for Registrar of Deeds. I spoke with you about this because the employees feared retaliation. When I spoke with you, you admitted that you were taking work back from [REDACTED], that you were threatened by [REDACTED] decision to run and that you were going to make them miserable. I informed you at that time that you COULD not do that and that any form of retaliation would be unacceptable and that it would have consequences, both legal and in house. You were very unhappy with this and stated, "You think things were bad when an abstractor ran against me, just wait." With that threat, Lori and I both advised you that not only is it illegal to retaliate, but that your actions were unacceptable. You were advised that you could not retaliate in any form against [REDACTED] or anyone else because of the announcement that she was going to run for the position. I have a duty to protect the employees and the County from a Lawsuit. It should also be noted that you can be sued personally for any actions perceived to be retaliatory. After much angst, you agreed that you would not retaliate and that you would go back to your office and continue your "normal course of business". You were upset but we were able to talk about it and things seemed to improve.
- 2) In March, you apparently ran into [REDACTED] at the local Town Office. Both of you were there to get signatures for the upcoming election. Since that time, your retaliatory behavior has escalated out of control. You began by stating that [REDACTED] will no longer going to be allowed to wait on clients, no longer able to take in documents and that you have found work for Laura to do in the basement out of site of the public.
- 3) Since the beginning of March, you have consistently gone out of your way to openly retaliate against [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] for supporting her, including banning the employees from coming in before their start time. I may have agreed with this but given that it was done purely to punish, it is unacceptable.
- 4) Next, you sent your employees an email stating that they were no longer allowed to eat their lunch at their desks because you found that it interferes with other employees who are working. You also cited that it does not look good to the public. In response to that you should know that there is no rule stopping your employees from eating at their desks and in fact I was told that [REDACTED] was in the back room, out of site eating her lunch as she has done for years when you decided it was no longer acceptable. We do not have a formal lunch room and this has been past practice for many many years. Because the County does not supply an adequate break room, the Employees will hereby be allowed to eat their lunch at their desks. In addition, I have been informed that you continue to eat at your desk and you have allowed [REDACTED] to eat at a desk while performing work. This singles out the other employees and is completely unacceptable. You cannot treat certain employees differently than others because you are mad and in particular because one of them is running against you in the upcoming election and one

of them supports her. It is clear that your behavior is purely retaliatory and again, against the law.

- 5) On March 19, 2014 you sent me an email indicating that you no longer need one of your employees as you have been completing the work by early afternoon leaving nothing for [REDACTED] to do. It is unacceptable for you to threaten that you will be the only one the public sees because you have removed their "normal" duties in order to gain an advantage with the public for the office in which you currently hold. This work has been done for years by your team of employees and should not change just because this is an election year and you have competition for the position. Your email indicated that you wanted to know if I had any work for [REDACTED] and I indicated to you that we needed to talk about this because I was concerned that the employees were not doing their "usual" work. I understand that you have gone to great lengths to remove work from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and that you have even moved the scanner to your office out of reach of the other employees. Changing the normal working routines merely because you are angry that one of them is running against you is unacceptable.
- 6) In addition, I have received numerous complaints about the way you speak to people from both county employees and the public at large. You have not been displaying a professional demeanor with your peers or with the public and given that you are the Department Head/Elected Official who is supposed to be setting an example, your behavior has been illegal, unreasonable and unacceptable.

Therefore, you will need to take immediate steps to remedy this situation by returning to your past precedence regarding work assignments. This is a formal written notice to advise you that if this retaliation continues you will be sent home and not allowed back into the building until you appear before the commission at our next commissioners meeting. [REDACTED] is to be returned to her desk, doing her "usual" work along with [REDACTED] also being returned to her usual work routine. If you are unable to comply, further action will result. If you cannot act in a professional and courteous manner, then we will take more permanent action to protect the Employees and the County from a lawsuit due to your behavior.

By signing this form, you can confirm that you understand the information in this warning. You also confirm that you and your manager have discussed the warning and a plan for improvement. Signing this form does not necessarily indicate that you agree with this warning.

Diane Godin, Registry of Deeds

Dawn DiBlasi, County Administrator

NOTE: I called Diane to come down and see me and she asked if she couldn't

Somerset County Register of Deeds Salary/Benefits Agreement
Diane Godin

Effective date: May 15, 2013 - December 31, 2014

NOW COMES Somerset County, acting through its County Commissioners (hereinafter referred to as "Somerset County") and Diane Godin, the Somerset County Register of Deeds, Maine (hereinafter referred to as Register of Deeds) and make the following agreement entitled "Somerset County Register of Deeds Salary and Benefits Agreement" dated May 15, 2013.

WHEREAS, Somerset County and Register of Deeds have agreed on their intentions at the time entering into this agreement that the Register of Deeds would have the following salary and benefits:

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the premises set forth above, Somerset County and Register of Deeds agree as follows:

1. **COMPENSATION:** \$40,400.00 annual salary effective immediately with a 1% increase on January 1, 2014.


2. **HEALTH AND DENTAL AND LIFE INSURANCE:** County shall provide insurance at the rate currently offered to non-union and management employees according to the County's personnel policy.

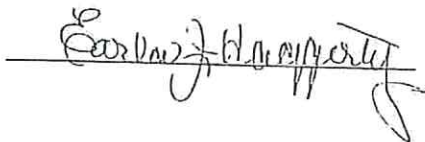
3. **RETIREMENT PLAN/DEFERRED COMPENSATION:** County will make contributions as appropriate to the 457 Deferred Compensation Plan which is offered by the County's personnel policy.

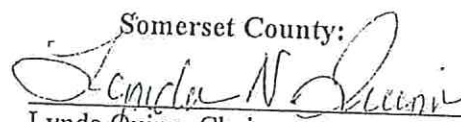
This agreement shall remain in effect until December 31, 2014.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, and intending to be legally bound, the parties have, in good faith, executed this Agreement the day and year above written.

Witness:





Somerset County:

Lynda Quinn, Chairman

Register of Deeds


Diane Godin, Register of Deeds

Contract
Somerset County Register of Deeds Salary/Stipend

Diane Godin
Effective date: January 1, 2015

NOW COMES Somerset County, acting through its County Commissioners (hereinafter referred to as "Somerset County") and Diane Godin, the Somerset County Register of Deeds, Maine (hereinafter referred to as "Register of Deeds") and agree to the following terms and conditions of my employment with Somerset County.

WHEREAS, Diane Godin and Somerset County hereby agree to the following:

- 1) That the Register of Deeds, Diane Godin will work one 8 hour day a month to perform the following duties in accordance with the statutory requirements set forth in 33 MRSA §603:
 - a) That the Register of Deeds, Godin will report to work on the first Thursday of every month from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM with an hour for lunch;
 - b) Office staff will run reports and the Register of Deeds, Diane Godin, will certify the reports in accordance with 33 MRSA §603. (This includes the Maine Revenue Service and the Board of Commissioners reports and any other reports requested by the Commission);
 - c) The Register of Deeds, Diane Godin will make payment to the Somerset County Treasurer for Maine Revenue in accordance with the amount due;
 - d) The Register of Deeds, Diane Godin will make payment to the Somerset County Treasurer for the Board of Commissioners in accordance with the amount due;
- 2) Compensation: Compensation shall be paid in the form of a five thousand, (\$5000.00) stipend per year to be paid out on a biweekly basis the following pay period after the registry of Deeds has completed her work for the month;
- 3) Benefits: No benefits shall be paid.

This agreement shall remain in effect until such time as the parties agree otherwise.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, on this ___ Day of December, 2014.

Witness:

SOMERSET COUNTY:

Robert Dunphy, Chairman

Diane Godin, Register of Deeds