



Monday, June 30, 2014

Unauthorized Billing Characterized as Bidder Animosity



The *Standard Times* news team boiled legitimate concerns about Republic Services' unjust enrichment from commercial customers as animosity from a sore loser. In

contrast the paper's editorial staff called [for a delay](#) in approving the new trash/landfill contract so long term, unauthorized billing concerns could be properly investigated and addressed.

City Manager Daniel Valenzuela [anticipates](#) contract approval tomorrow. Daniel believes Republic can investigate itself and will do the right thing.

There is no evidence the city ever audited Republic's bills to insure they were in compliance with the contract and city ordinance.

The city lacked contractually required documents on complaints made to Republic for the last five years. The contract specified this information would be submitted annually.

I expect tomorrow's council meeting to be like [Daniel's first](#), which included the unauthorized purchase of over \$100,000 in furniture for the Water Department. That act violated city purchasing policies and state law.

Valenzuela promised a thorough investigation which did not include interviewing two of the [major players](#) in the Furniture Fiasco, Interim City Manager Michael Dane and former Assistant City Manager [Elizabeth Grindstaff](#). Both will be in council chambers tomorrow for the trash/landfill contract decision. City Councilwoman Grindstaff will vote on the matter.

Nearly two years ago Council decided they were in a [tough spot](#) and needed to approve the furniture purchase to help the local vendor, as the furniture had been delivered and installed. Similar charity has the city, which owns the commercial waste franchise, allowing Republic to [investigate itself](#) and refund overcharges, seemingly without penalty.

The City failed to ensure Republic Services lived up to their [expiring contract](#), yet they deserve a new ten year deal?

Both waste collection and the landfill are city's franchise to govern. Staff proved their unwillingness or inability to hold Republic to their obligations, therefore City Council should.

That may be a different level of animosity, seen in City Councilman Rodney Fleming's interaction with Valenzuela two meetings prior. Might that have been over Republic's long term overcharging of commercial customers? Some think so.

Fireworks could come early this year. Look for them in Council Chambers on July 1, especially if overcharged commercial customers turn out in droves. They may wish to

do business with someone who didn't overcharge them over a fourteen year period.
And they may not trust the city that allowed that to happen.

by PEU Report/State of the Division at 7:42 PM 0 comments 