

BG pushing for audit: Mayor, clerk seeking records of \$6 million

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Beech Grove's top administrators have requested a State Board of Accounts audit they hope will reveal records and a paper trail for \$6 million in previous city expenditures.

Mayor Dennis Buckley and Clerk-Treasurer Dan McMillan asked for an audit when they took office in January because, according to Buckley, that's common practice for new officeholders. One week later, McMillan, who is responsible for the city's finances, discovered some records he was seeking were missing.

Buckley wants an audit to trace revenue flow and to help with forecasting. Buckley added that he wants to refinance bonds and save thousands of dollars for the city of Beech Grove, but it's hard to do without records.

"The paperwork tells us where we're at and I'd like to know where the spending went in the Redevelopment Commission," said Buckley.

Buckley and McMillan are awaiting a formal response from the State Board of Accounts. The mayor said he was told by phone that the city would be placed on a schedule for an audit, likely this summer. However, Buckley would like to see a quicker audit because of the documents that have since been discovered missing.

"I have sent a letter to the State Board of Accounts requesting an audit our first day in office, and the request for audit was denied since we couldn't have an outside agency and they'd be out at the regular time for an audit," said McMillan.

"About two weeks ago, we sent them a second letter because we couldn't find any paperwork to go with bond statements. There was one statement complete from beginning to end from 2002 and the rest had just bits and pieces."

Buckley is not alleging any illegalities; he wants to fill in the gaps with supporting paperwork. He said Redevelopment Commission records from 2006-08 are missing. Buckley said the city is paying back five bonds, but he and McMillan have only found paperwork for one.

McMillan said pre-2008 records for city employment, attendance and payment are also nowhere to be found. The missing records should include how the Redevelopment Commission spent \$6 million, he said.

“We want to find out where the money went and tell the public,” said Buckley. “I just think that we’re on top of it and I think that once we realize what’s happened, we’re gonna inform the public. I told them when I was elected that I was open, accessible and honest, and that’s what I’m gonna do.”

The State Board of Accounts will be able to differentiate what happened before and after Buckley and McMillan took office. McMillan said State Board of Accounts employee Charlie Pride said Summer Cannon would be his field officer, but she has yet to contact him. McMillan also sent a letter to Barnes & Thornburg requesting bond information. Representatives of the law firm reportedly told McMillan this week that they would begin gathering information, costing 15 cents a page plus a delivery fee.

McMillan said he has continued to seek help from the auditors, but wanted the public to be aware of the city’s pursuit.

“They (State Board of Accounts staffers) said they would just send someone out when the annual audit was due,” said McMillan. “I don’t know when the annual audit time is, and they said they wouldn’t make a special trip. We’re just trying to get some clarification. There are some things I feel that are out of line and they would be addressed during our audit.”

McMillan alleges bits and pieces of records are missing from 2004 to present, including 90 percent of the Redevelopment Commission’s history, including meeting minutes.

“We’re kind of in a holding pattern,” said McMillan. “We’re just doing the best job we can do and work around the circumstances. We’d just like to get this resolved and let the public know where we stand, but it’s hard to do that when we don’t know where we stand.”

A representative from the State Board of Accounts declined comment, citing that it is against state law to speak about pending and ongoing audits.

