

August 17, 2018

Office of the City Manager
990 Palm Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-3249

To: Derek Johnson, City Manager

From: Richard W. Ferris
2146 Parker Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Re: Failure to seriously address or even consider the serious problem with San Luis Obispo City Fire Department leadership tactics and integrity

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I was initially excited upon receiving your 8/13/18 email. I thought, "Wow – He is responding to my questions and is going to help with alerting the community to the truth about SLO City FD's refusal to promptly go inside endangered structures and just put the fire out."

Thank you for acknowledging we had a fire. How about acknowledging it was arson and there was a cover-up? There certainly was no serious investigation. You can review the final report for yourself. Although not issued until almost December, it states they were done investigating before they were "allowed" access to the building; Some investigation without access!

I have sent few, if any, letters expressing my discontent. I am trying to alert you, City leaders, and the general public that for the last ten years or so, SLO City FD has refused to promptly go inside endangered structures and put the fire out.

You are in error in your statement that we have exhausted all options. The court of public opinion is still open to us and, since you will not act responsibly and investigate our accusations, we hope to eventually find someone or some group to help us fix the SLO City FD. If nothing else, all citizens need to know that they do not have actual fire protection should they have a fire!

You state our opinions are not factually supported, yet, you have not seriously looked at our facts. To our knowledge, not one fact we presented has ever been addressed and investigated. I again ask you to let us know about any fact that you feel is not correct. The two reports on our website from professional arson investigators back our position – maybe you should read them.

You state that your letter is not about evaluating our "comments" (actually our research and studies). When will you give an honest and serious evaluation of our specific and enumerated issues?

It is very sad and disappointing that you are refusing to look into and actually evaluate the material you are being presented with before sharing it with the accused parties.

You seem alarmed at our statements but show no concern about the underlying problems we are addressing – the actual problems!

Try a mental exercise – Pretend you have finally realized we are essentially correct on what we are saying. What does that make you and your actions appear to be? If taking 34 minutes to go in to save the Bahia fire victim was not enough to wake you up, what will you say to us on the next death or the one after that? SLO City FD leadership is unlikely to cure itself.

As long as they can fool you, they are safe. There will be more fires and more chances for you to pay attention in the future. Next time, please consider what we have been trying to inform you of when you evaluate their actions and comments.

- Did they actually go promptly inside and try to put out the fire? (No)
- Did they cut large holes in the roof **not** near the seat of the fire? (Yes)
- Did they use the master stream from the overhead ladder truck to extinguish the fire once the roof had burned through? (Yes)
- Was the result total destruction? (Yes)

This is not firefighting or fire management. It is arson under color of authority as a semi-official City policy.

If you do not feel SLO City FD has an obligation to actually fight fires and that these actions and policies are approved by the City, please let me know so I can stop trying to inform you about the actual situation.

Next (in your letter), while pretending to acknowledge my free speech rights, you again threaten me with legal action. I believe I am being as truthful and accurate as possible and if you will point out any factual errors, I will promptly address them.

Speaking of our “rights,” we feel that City/County have denied us most of our civil rights on this issue.

- 1) We are 100% sure it was arson and demanded an arson investigation, which is our right. We were denied an investigation. We wanted to put up a reward.
- 2) We asked to speak and show our facts to the local Police Chief, but we were told we had no right to show our evidence because the City Attorney had told the Chief not to talk to us.
- 3) Following is a list of some of our efforts to have our right as citizens and victims of a crime respected. So far, we have failed to have any of our rights respected by SLO “City.”

The Sub Fire Investigation Requests with City and County Officials as of February 2017:

- 1) 2/9 – Contacted Commander Nix at SLO Sheriff Department. Told him we think The Sub fire is arson and were informed he would take it to his superiors.
- 2) 2/9 – Informed by City Attorney they would like to see our presentation of arson but were not able to schedule until a future date could be set.
- 3) 2/10 – Texted SLOFD Chief Olson’s text line to ask for a meeting re: The Sub fire. No response.
- 4) 2/11 – Left a voicemail to Chief Olson re: The Sub fire and wanting to meet with him. No response.

- 5) 2/13 – Left a message on Chief Olson’s voicemail asking to meet with him as a victim of a fire within his jurisdiction.
- 6) 2/15 – Received a text from City Attorney that meeting with SLOFD Chief is going to happen but not for two or more weeks due to scheduling conflicts. Replied, “Thank you” and sent with schedule for availability.
- 7) 2/17 – Told by Commander Nix he has no jurisdiction in this case and to contact Lt. Bledsoe of the SLOPD. Called Lt. Bledsoe and left a message with reference to being referred by Commander Nix.
- 8) 2/21 – Contacted by Lt. Bledsoe at 8:19am and told that the City Attorney will not let him speak because of a pending lawsuit and to contact the City Attorney for any further questions.
- 9) 2/21 – Called the SLOPD Chief and talked to her Administrative Assistant, Sue, and asked to meet with the Chief re: The Sub fire and arson.
- 10) 2/21 – Left a message for Lt. Bledsoe to inform him there is no pending lawsuit against the City. Also asked to get his statement in writing. He called back at 2:47pm and was informed he does not want to send written statement but that all calls to SLOPD are available as digital file. Requested through PRR to get a copy of his call. It arrived the next day. Also contacted the Attorney General Investigation Unit to talk to them about The Sub fire arson via email. No response.
- 11) 2/23 – Received a phone call from Captain Smith stating the SLOPD Chief will not meet with under guidance from City Attorney and to contact City Attorney to set up meeting with SLOFD Chief. Captain Smith stated that City Attorney had not received acceptance of meeting as of 2/21. He stated the City Attorney informed him to refer all requests to meet through their office.
- 12) 2/23 – Sent an email to City Attorney stating again willingness to meet with them. Also re-iterated there was no pending lawsuit against the City. Received acknowledgment of sent email but that they are very busy and will get back.
- 13) 2/24 – Called the SLO District Attorney to report The Sub fire as arson. After being put on hold for several minutes, was told to contact the State Attorney General as this was a conflict of interest with both SLOPD and SLOFD being under their jurisdiction. The DA would not give out who was talking or a record of conversation.

I see you have noticed the Beta version of our website where we hope to finally show what two years of research, studies, and professional interviews have uncovered. It is not currently open to the public as we are still debugging it.

We are not using innuendo – We are outright accusing the people who do wrong with the wrong they are doing while showing it being done on video. If that embarrasses or makes SLO City FD look bad, it should!

On 8/3/18, I sent you a detailed written list of what procedures they did not follow. Why do you act like you do not know the specifics of my allegations?

People who burn down buildings they could and should save deserve a reduction in their perceived professional standing down to a level that accurately reflects their skills and abilities (or lack thereof).

Thank you for quoting the paragraph on BC-1 Berryman. It is true and accurate as far as I know. I have spent 2-½ years to arrive at this conclusion. You are merely circling the wagons and have not done your due diligence or by now you would be realizing SLO City FD leadership

no longer goes into buildings on fire and quickly puts the fire out. You reject my statements with extreme prejudice but have put little effort into actually evaluating my claims.

My wife was already afraid of violence from Fire Department personnel. So when she saw how you were so considerate of our safety by sharing every nuance of our accusations with those we are accusing, she became paranoid and afraid. She is constantly worried SLO City FD members will harm us or burn down our home. I tell her not to worry, but you certainly are not helping.

Perhaps you do not know the harm that they could do, or maybe you are "sicking" them on us as yet another threat considering they re-hired John Mason, the SLO firefighter who attacked and almost killed a fellow in the bathroom of Pappy McGregor's Bar & Grill. My wife feels she has grounds for fear.

I think it would be okay to appear in court with any of the fake firemen. The ability to present facts that back up my accusations and see them defend the actions that they are guilty of would be interesting and informative.

Have you had time to review actual City policy on fighting fires? Have you read the manuals yet?

When can I expect an answer to the questions asked in the letter mailed August 3rd?

Sincerely,

Richard W. Ferris
Square Deal Recordings & Supplies

Encl: John Kabala fire investigation report
Clyde George report
SLOFD Fails to Follow Its Own Rules
San Luis Obispo City Fire – Emergency Operations Manual
IAFC 10 Rules of Firefighting
Bravest Act or a Cowardly Evil Act?