

34 Questions that suggest there is more to the “corrupt school board” story than has been reported

- 1) How did the corrupt board get secret blanket PO's and contracts past the other 2 board members, the superintendent, and the CFO, when year after year, they were all there when the board voted to approve them? Over the span of several different school boards, including Max Smith, Dee Masters, and Keven Rondot?
- 2) How did the corrupt board direct questionable invoices to be paid without the CFO's knowledge and approval?
- 3) Why would the board present Dr. Sisney's personnel file as an exhibit in his defamation case if it only proved that he was right about them firing him abruptly for trumped-up reasons? Even the idea that the board terminated Sisney to hide their crimes doesn't make sense. Why would they think getting rid of him would keep it quiet? Especially considering he had already filed his court case against them, alleging these crimes?
- 4) Sisney's claims of bypassing procedures and paying fraudulent invoices, when none of his examples show anything out of the ordinary, show that either he doesn't know how his district works or he is trying to make something innocent and normal look suspicious. Which is it?
- 5) Why would Ms. Flippo state in a press conference that Sisney had committed a felony if he hadn't? That would be slander and defamation of character. She was already stepping down from the board – why would she take this risk to tell a lie with no benefit to her?
- 6) If there was a conspiracy, and BA administrators were using the established blanket PO system for the purpose of defrauding the district, and were paying invoices that shouldn't have been paid, why did Sisney not implicate the CFO, Trish Williams? How could she not have known that these things were going on? It is curious that she left in June 2008, to be replaced by Anne Wade, who came from the Claremore district but had worked in the Bartlesville school district at the same time as Sisney.
- 7) When Sisney “discovered” the conspiracy with AA and the board, why did he not take his evidence to the authorities? A defamation case might serve to get him some money and clear his name, but it would not address the corruption on the board. It was four months between the time he brought up the issues to the board and when he filed his defamation case, and seven months before he filed a police report. Why, if he was not getting satisfactory action from the board, did he not take the evidence to the police, OSBI, or state authority? Shouldn't a superintendent with legal counsel be able to figure out how to get corruption on the board investigated?
- 8) Where did the payroll records come from that Rep. Reynolds based his accusations of “illegal sick pay” on? Who breached employment confidentiality and provided this information to him? Why did he single out Dr. Gerber and Cheryl Kelly – right before the school board election she was a candidate in? Is there a connection with Mike Ritze, whom Reynolds works with frequently, and who is on Dr. Sisney's witness list?
- 9) What happened to the four signatures that were removed from the Taxpayer Demand? How could the Kitchens sign it if they had never seen it, as they claimed later? Why did the Ledger not ask Richardson to explain?
- 10) Why did Richardson pretend not to know the explanation for the typo in the Sequoyah invoice – when he had filed the explanation with his original defamation petition? Why did the Ledger not ask Richardson to explain?
- 11) Why did Sisney make a show of returning to the ESC the night he was suspended? He knew the vote was coming – he could have taken anything he wanted (evidence, personal items) beforehand.
- 12) Why has Dr. Sisney not released his personnel records, or at least portions, like performance reviews, to prove that the board had no issues with him until he began his investigation?
- 13) Why did Richardson and Lare file a taxpayer demand and then fail to provide the associated information – without which nothing could be done? The repayment amount that was demanded was the full amount of

AA's services. Surely at least some of that was legitimate. How could the board determine how much was fraudulent with no evidence?

- 14) Why did Sisney waive his right to his hearing, knowing that it would eliminate his chances of being able to win a wrongful termination case? If he was truly trying to expose corruption, why did he not take steps to protect his legal "whistleblower" status? If the board truly fired him solely because he was onto them, why would he not want to present his evidence in a hearing, and allow the public to see that they had no evidence against him?
- 15) Why does the Ledger refuse to publish certain comments that are relevant to the article and are not offensive? Examples: 2/26/2009 – Jolie tried three times to point out an announcement on BAPS website called "Superintendent comments on recent media reports". 2/27 – Forgery rumors debunked – 612 tried 4 or 5 times (at least) to refer readers to the TW article that had information that the Ledger did not have in its article – that the Kitchens had stated that they had never seen the letter and did not want to be part of the action. The Ledger left that information out of their article and refused to publish the comments pointing it out – even when submitted without mention of the TW article.
- 16) Why are Sisney supporters not interested in questions around Sisney's behavior? Why do they sneer and call names when someone brings up an alternative to their point of view? Why do they not want to know if Sisney blackmailed Maryanne Flippo? Why don't they want that investigated? Doesn't that change the whole story, if it's true? Jolie, 3/6/2009: "Allegedly, in July of 2008, Dr. Sisney had already threatened Maryanne Flippo..." Ledger commenter: "You make it sound like he threatened to 'beat her up'..." Blackmail is a felony. Is this person ok with people committing felonies, as long as the victim is someone they have been led to distrust? Does that make it ok?
- 17) Why did the Ledger print – at least twice – that Sisney filed his defamation lawsuit after he was fired? The story was by Bob Lewis, who had been involved from the beginning and certainly knew better. Why did the Ledger print twice that Chris Tharp had been trying to get RFR's billing details for 2 years – when they had only been representing the board for 1? The second time was after they had already corrected their first article after the error was pointed out in a comment (which they didn't publish).
- 18) Why did Ms. Updike claim to have "no idea" why the board would vote to suspend Sisney? Even if they trumped up the charges, they would have had to document them and address them as a board – which would have included Ms. Updike. If she lied about that, what else has she been lying about?
- 19) Why did Ms. Updike claim that she didn't believe anyone had been prevented from putting items on the agenda or that anyone had been denied access to legal counsel? Ms. Flippo is quoted in the Ledger on 8/18/2008 saying that Stover and Sisney refused to place items on the agenda for discussion. Ms. Updike certainly had to have heard the claim about access to legal counsel. Her statement makes it sound like she just hadn't heard of it. But since she had heard these complaints, she is claiming they are lying. Why do Sisney supporters believe Ms. Updike unconditionally and doubt Ms. Flippo unconditionally – in the absence of any proof? What if Ms. Flippo was telling the truth and Ms. Updike was lying?
- 20) Why did the board members feel they needed to hire legal representation, if, as Sisney claims, they already had it? Why did Sisney and Stover refuse to let the board discuss having Doug Mann review board policies? Preventing board members from putting things on the agenda is a violation of policy.
- 21) Why the fuss over the changes in the audit? There were no significant changes. Why would Sisney claim there were?
- 22) Why did Sisney file a doomed federal lawsuit for wrongful termination? The federal court's only job is to make sure he gets his hearing. He waived his right to the hearing. If they decide he didn't get a fair chance, the only thing they will do is make the BA board offer him another hearing. His attorney has to know this. Sisney's objective can't be to win. So what is it?
- 23) Why did Sisney file his defamation case with the 3 co-conspirators unnamed? There is no legal advantage to this. His attorney should have been astute enough to know that it made it look like manipulation.

- 24) Why did Bob Lewis point out the “delay in extending the superintendent’s contract” in a Ledger article on 8/8/2008? “Obviously, something is amiss here that needs to get resolved.” That was certainly true, but it was not anything the public could know about or do anything about. The article paints a glowing picture of Sisney, including such phrases as “a glittering record of success”. Why did Bob Lewis think it was appropriate to tell the public that there were issues that needed to be resolved – that they couldn’t know about - but they should be on Sisney’s side? Highly biased, and gives the appearance of prepping for things to come, at the request of Dr. Sisney.
- 25) Where is all the evidence of Air Assurance overcharging and billing for work not done? Why are the totals paid for Air Assurance not significantly higher than what the district pays now for a comparable level of service, after adjusting for the fact that no maintenance is being done?
- 26) Why did Sisney claim that on May 8, 2008, Mike Rampey had “absolutely, without warning” terminated future service to BASD? In the days just before May 8, Mike Rampey had made several attempts to meet with Sisney to discuss the accusations Sisney had made against Air Assurance. Sisney refused. Almost two weeks later, 5/22, Sisney met with Rampey about the issues he had discovered. Why did Sisney leave out of his defamation suit the accusations he had previously made against Rampey and Air Assurance?
- 27) Why did Ms. Updike make the accusations against the other board members in June 2009? What was her purpose in stating that some teachers’ positions had to be cut directly because they fired Dr. Sisney? And why did anybody support her in making those comments? In addition to being inaccurate, it’s also divisive and against board policy – unlike Ms. Flippo’s comments, which did not violate any of the provisions in the code of ethics and have not been shown to be inaccurate. Why was Ms. Updike willing to say these inaccurate and inflammatory things about people she has to continue to work with? Was she prompted – or coerced? This was two weeks before she filed her bankruptcy case. Was there a threat of making that public?
- 28) How much credibility do we give Ms. Updike when she chastises the other board members by saying, “I have said many times that actions have consequences...”, and two weeks later files for bankruptcy because she is four million dollars in debt?
- 29) Why did Sisney send an email criticizing the board members to all Broken Arrow staff? His stated intent was to address their concerns regarding the conflict with the school board. Instead of providing constructive information to staff, the letter encourages them to take sides, draws them into the controversy while pretending to keep them out of it, and appears to set the stage to guide their perception of future events to his benefit.
- 30) What happened to the fire, that some were so sure was set by AA in an attempt to destroy evidence? There were predictions of arrests. No arrests made have been made, and no charges have been filed. Who informed the Ledger that Air Assurance rented a unit there? EGI, the owner of the storage facility? Is it common practice to inform the media of the tenants’ identities? Presumably not Mike Rampey, who said he had almost forgotten they still had a unit there. Or someone else, who had something to gain by making it look like AA was trying to destroy evidence? At the time AA’s office was near the storage facility, they are said to have had several units. Were these previously occupied units the target? About 25 units were destroyed; the one rented by Air Assurance was only damaged by smoke and water. If the fire was AA’s attempt to destroy evidence, they apparently didn’t know where their own unit was. If it was someone else’s intent to implicate AA, it seems to have worked in some people’s minds.
- 31) Where did the Tulsa Beacon get the material for its 10/9/2008 story on Sisney’s suspension? It references a letter from Sisney to Doug Mann; this letter is not in the lawsuit filings. It goes into detail on the “revelation” that invoices were paid without corresponding work orders, and claims that this was against procedure (it wasn’t). This is the same claim that showed up on the affidavit for the police search of AA’s storage unit after the fire. It also includes Sisney’s claim that BAPS paid for work done at Dr. Hudkin’s office – a claim that had already been disproven by Rampey’s letter, included in the very documents that Sisney filed in his defamation case a month earlier. Why does this article report extensively on Sisney’s lawsuit – which was a month old by

this time – and not include any information that could show any other side to the controversy? Was the information provided by Sisney? Was the article written by or on behalf of Sisney?

- 32) Where is the proof that the board had a conspiracy with Air Assurance? There is supposedly proof in the police report filed on 12/17/2008; it is referenced in the affidavit for a search warrant after the fire at the storage unit. Is this the extent of his proof of a conspiracy? This proof shows that blanket PO's were unanimously approved by various boards over many years, in public meetings with the superintendent and CFO present; that procedures that didn't yet exist weren't followed, and that end-of-fiscal-year invoices were handled in the same way they were handled every year. Is there anything that actually shows wrongdoing?
- 33) If there were "issues that rise to the level of criminal behavior", "carefully calculated actions that violate statutes and board policies", "a massive cover-up scheme", and it it was true that "criminal activities involving the expenditure of public money have taken place in the school district since at least the 1990's", why did the audit find no hint of intentional wrongdoing?
- 34) Why did Sisney think it was a good thing to run a district with nearly 16,000 students with access to legal counsel so severely restricted? His 8,501.18 in legal fees for FY 2006-2007 allows for only 7.1 hours per month, at a modest \$100/hour. What would superintendents of other comparable-sized school districts have to say about that? Union, with 14,573 students, budgeted 170,000 for FY 2007-2008, or 141.6 hours per month. What needs was legal counsel fulfilling for Union that BA was doing without?

It seems extremely dangerous and negligent to conduct the business of a large school district with practically no legal counsel. How much have we been paying since then because of mistakes made that opened the district up for litigation? Of course any fallout from that fiscal year would have gone into the legal fees incurred in 2007-2008, which Sisney was blaming the board for in his email.

Because of the extreme irresponsibility of this policy, it seems unlikely that saving money was the motive, except in the very short term. It suggests that Sisney was intentionally shutting out legal counsel, in order to impede the board's ability to properly handle legal challenges in the district, while at the same time setting himself up to point out the drastic reduction in legal fees he had achieved. Was he positioning himself to criticize the board for hiring appropriate legal counsel, knowing that of course the costs would go up (to something more reasonable), and setting the stage to lead the public to blame them for the increased costs to taxpayers that are really due to his own actions?