

CASCADE COUNTY

State of Montana

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Joshua A. Racki

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121 Fourth Street North – Suite 2A

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October 6, 2020

Jeni Dodd
PO Box 6373
Great Falls, MT 59401

In re: Complaint of Conflicts of Interest and Ethics Violations

Dear Jeni,

The Cascade County Attorney's Office received on August 27, 2020, your correspondence requesting the county attorney investigate possible conflicts of interest and ethics violations in the use of county resources by Cascade County Commissioner Jane Weber as relates to her involvement as chair of the Big Sky Country National Heritage Area, Inc. (BSCNHA). Further, you requested that the county attorney investigate both Bill Bronson (for activities during his board service with the City of Great Falls) and the City of Great Falls' involvement with BSCNHA.

Section 2-2-144(1), M.C.A., provides that a person alleging a violation of the Code of Ethics by a local government officer or local government employee shall notify the county attorney of the county where the local government is located. However, pursuant to M.C.A. § 7-5-2711, the county attorney is the legal adviser of the board of county commissioners and shall defend all suits brought against the county. As your complaint concerns a Cascade county elected official and member of the board of county commissioners, the county attorney's office has a conflict of interest and, in order to avoid any appearance of impropriety, declines to make a review or otherwise conduct any investigation into your complaint regarding Cascade County Commissioner Jane Weber. Accordingly, pursuant to M.C.A. § 7-4-2718, by copy of this letter I am forwarding your correspondence to the attorney general's office.

With regard to your request regarding former Great Falls City Commissioner Bill Bronson and the City of Great Falls, please be advised that in 2017, the City of Great Falls adopted Ordinance 3169 which established a panel to review complaints alleging violations of the Code of Ethics by officers and employees of the City of Great Falls. Pursuant to M.C.A. § 2-2-144(5)(b), because the City of Great Falls has an ethics committee, you must address your complaint to the panel

CENTER OF MONTANA'S LIVESTOCK AND FARMING AREAS