

After recently circulated city employee embezzlement rumors led the Red Boiling Springs City Council to vote to contact the State Comptroller's Office last month to inquire about a city audit, Dennis Dycus, Director of the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury, Division of Municipal Audit, responded via E-mail to the city's request.

Dycus' response, which was presented to the council during its regular Nov. 13th meeting, is as follows:

'As you already know, the city's financial affairs are audited by a public accounting firm which contracts through our office to perform said audits. With a staff of only 19 people, I do not have the personnel or financial resources to perform financial audits of local governments in Tennessee. The only types of audits we do perform are those related to fraud, waste and abuse. Unless there is specific evidence of such, I must respectfully decline your request for the reasons stated above.'

Following the sudden death of former RBS Vice Mayor Tommy Spivey, the city council elected councilman Bobby Etheridge to take over the title and also voted unanimously to ask the RBS Election Commission to hold an election on April 25, 2009 to elect a City Mayor, three council members to serve four-year terms and one council member to serve a 2-year term.

During the meeting, a presentation was made by Roger Roark of the Hillwood Auto Parts store in Red Boiling Springs

After a heated discussion took place a couple weeks ago between Red Boiling Springs Mayor Kenneth Hollis and Roark, the RBS City Council was approached by Roark to request that his store regain the city's business.

The dispute began after Mayor Hollis directed city employees to no longer purchase any city parts from Roark's business due to his store's and employees alleged involvement in the distribution of Spring Cleaning, a publication by Jack Pelham that openly attacks the Red Boiling Springs government.

" . . . a series of allegations were made toward me, myself and my business; NAPA Auto Parts. I

apologize to anyone I offended when I found this out and came to City Hall last week,” Roark told the council. “As the owner of a business in Red Boiling that generates tax dollars for our city it’s very disturbing that the mayor has directed all city employees to drive city vehicles to another town, such as Lafayette, and not buy anything from Hillwood Auto Parts . . . (the mayor) has accused me of contributing to and possibly writing some of the stuff about him . . . I don’t think that anyone can find my signature on any of that.”

“What I said was that you were handing them (Spring Cleaning publications) out up there (at Hillwood Auto Parts),” Mayor Hollis responded.

“I have handed none out, they were laying on my counter just like they were at numerous other stores in this town. I personally have not handed one to anyone,” Roark shot back.

Facing the council, Roark then stated, “I’m asking city council to please address this situation and correct these playground antics without retaliation from any city employee.”

Hollis admitted that he and Roark “had a round” and city council members Lawrence Hollis and Shelly Dean voiced their concerns about spending city funds outside the city unless a better deal, that would cover the cost of gas, was found.

“I agree that we should keep as much money in the city as we can,” Hollis said. “. . . but I just don’t think it’s right that they’re handing out papers about the city. If you want the city’s business, you need to work with the city.”

Following the discussion, the council voted against Hollis’ decision to no longer purchase city parts from Roark’s business.

Another complaint was presented to the council by Red Boiling Springs part-time resident Michael Williams against Police Officer Junior Fields and RBS Chief of Police Terry Tuck.

Williams, who reported a noise complaint against a neighbor's dog last March, said Officer Fields responded to his call and, because the neighbor was a Macon County Sheriffs Department Deputy, was told (taken from the official complaint against Fields and Tuck) "that even though there was an evident violation of the City's noisy dog Ordinance, he could not do anything because Chief Tuck had advised that he was not to involve himself in 'inter-departmental matters."

Five months after the incident, Williams received a speeding ticket from Fields and, while he admits to speeding, felt that there was a "difference in actions taken by the police department based on who you are (or are not)."

Fields, who denied that Tuck had anything to do with his decision not to write Williams' neighbor a ticket for the noise violation, responded to the complaint against him.

"In this situation, being that the dog was a K-9 and property of the Macon County Sheriffs Department, I said it would be best for him to contact the sheriff . . ." Fields told the council. "I'm not going to write a citation to a deputy sheriff for a K-9 that is part of his equipment for his job. I never told him Chief Tuck directed me in any way. I've been an officer for almost nine years, it's my discretion . . . not Chief Tuck's and not the city council's."

"A dog barking is not as dangerous as somebody going 20 miles per hour over the speed limit in a residential area. There's a lot of difference there. It's up to me. You don't have to like it sir," he told Williams. "But it is up to me."

After hearing both sides, the council did not contest Field's decision.

In other business:

- Ordinance #08-9, which amends the 'holidays' section of the municipal code, was passed on first reading. The ordinance adds Christmas Eve and the day after Thanksgiving to the list of paid holidays for city employees.

State Comptroller's Office Declines Request for RBS Audit

Tuesday, November 18, 2008

- Ordinance #08-8, Sewer Pretreatment, was passed on second and final reading.

- The council voted for RBS Police Officers Doug McDonald and Junior Fields to stop personally paying for gasoline to drive their city vehicles home due to the drop in gas prices. The City of Red Boiling Springs will begin payment again.

The Red Boiling Springs City Council meets on the second Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. at the RBS City Hall.