

# Milwaukee Co. Board of Supv Chair Lipscomb: Pattern of Poor Judgment Revealed by String of Departures

Posted on Tuesday, Sep 19, 2017

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MILWAUKEE – County Board Chairman Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., spoke out Tuesday regarding a rapidly growing list of departures by high-level managers in the Abele administration under a cloud of questionable judgment or outright unethical behavior.

“If true, the allegations against the County Executive’s airport director are extremely troubling. Violations of ethical standards are not just wrong, they undermine the trust that taxpayers have placed in us as public servants,” said Lipscomb.

The most recent allegations of unethical behavior by his airport director come just a few months after an investigative reporter showed that County Executive Chris Abele’s appointees at the Behavioral Health Division awarded a sweetheart contract to a recently departed top administrator. The Administration even defended the nearly \$100,000 contract as a favor. Abele’s spokesperson later argued that County ethical standards didn’t apply, prompting supervisors to call upon the County Mental Health Board to adopt a code of ethics.

In February, Abele’s pension director was forced out after repeated inquiries from Chairman Lipscomb revealed an IRS report hidden from the public that detailed massive pension errors with a price tag of millions of dollars. That incident prompted supervisors to adopt a policy requiring public disclosure of any Voluntary Correction Plan filings with the IRS. Just prior to being fired, she had recently been

rewarded by the Administration with a pay raise.

In July of 2016, Abele's risk management director Dennis Dietscher, pled guilty to two counts of felony misconduct in public office related to an elaborate kick-back scheme, in exchange for prosecutors dropping four other felony charges. Not long before being fired, he was lauded and publicly praised as an indispensable member of the Administration's team.

"The recent allegations are not an isolated incident. They fit within a growing pattern of poor judgment by some members of Abele's administration. This disturbing pattern raises questions about the management culture that County Executive Abele has established," said Lipscomb.

"If good government practices like transparency and accountability were prioritized, I think we would see fewer examples of unethical behavior that tarnish the reputation of everyone who works for Milwaukee County government."

The Finance and Audit Committee will consider the recent fraud investigation involving personnel at the Airport Division on Wednesday, September 20, at 10:30AM.