

A Better Mt. Pleasant: Questions grow about Foxconn project manager's hourly pay

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With no job description, supervision or performance evaluations, Claude Lois has banked nearly \$1.23 million in public funds from the failed development."

MOUNT PLEASANT, WI DECEMBER 22, 2021 – When the Village of Mount Pleasant needed a Project Director for the newly announced Foxconn mega-factory, local leaders looked no further than former part-time Burlington mayor, Claude Lois – the only person they considered to steer the \$10 billion factory project.

A Project Director Agreement was quickly drawn up between the village and the construction engineering firm Kapur and Associates for Lois' services, briefly described in the contract as "pertaining to project management and administrative services." Lois would be paid \$175.00 per hour for the initial one year contract.

Over each of the last four years, as the Project Director Agreement was renewed by the Village Board of Trustees, it grew to include overtime pay of \$150.00 per hour and an hourly increase to \$200 per hour in 2022. Meanwhile, no essential job description of skills, responsibilities, duties and requirements was ever established by either the Village of Mount Pleasant or Kapur specific to his position.

The Project Director Agreement offers no benchmarks for success and evaluation or chain-of-command for daily and hourly supervision. Lois is not required to submit call reports or meeting summaries which describe how he spends his days at village hall. Descriptions of services are never included in the invoices which Kapur sends to the village each month – garnering Lois \$25,000 per month – nearly \$1.23 million overall.

“No one knows what Claude Lois does everyday. No one knows what Claude Lois is supposed to do everyday,” says Kelly Gallaher of A Better Mt. Pleasant. “He has no supervisor or job description. It is outrageous that the Village of Mount Pleasant has failed to establish any form of accountability beyond the 10 words mentioned in the original agreement for a position that pays twice the salary of the Wisconsin Governor.”

Perhaps even more concerning is information from a recent Wisconsin Public Radio story from Corrine Hess, which states that Lois’ timecards and village calendar do not match:

On Nov. 1, Lois’ calendar indicates one 90-minute meeting with Foxconn from 1:30 to 3 p.m. The calendar indicates the rest of his day was free, but his time card shows he billed for nine hours of work. The next day, Lois had one director meeting on his calendar from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m., with the rest of the day free. His time card said he worked 10 hours that day. Some days Lois’ calendar is filled with meetings, and he bills up to 13 hours. Other days, like Oct. 28, Lois has nothing on his calendar and bills for eight hours, according to the records obtained by WPR.

In response to questions regarding the discrepancies, Mount Pleasant Village Administrator Maureen Murphy said that Lois is “working all the time,” despite the lack of any documentation which would support such a statement.

Murphy also stated that Lois has “acquired and developed thousands of acres of land,” but no property has been acquired by the Village since 2018 and no new construction has begun since 2019.

“Claude Lois bills the village for the same amount of time he did when Foxconn was actually building something and they were acquiring properties,” says Gallaher. “Mount Pleasant already has a village administrator, a community development staff, and we have a contract with the county economic development organization whose sole focus is economic development. Nothing is happening at Foxconn, and now we learn that Lois is working for another Wisconsin village? It just doesn’t add up.”

Gallaher added, “Foxconn represents the largest failed publicly funded economic development project in U.S. history. Does it really come as a surprise that Mount Pleasant has allowed contractors like Claude Lois to continue to drain public funds with zero accountability? It is completely unacceptable.”

A Better Mt. Pleasant is requesting an independent audit of Foxconn financial records, specifically of Claude Lois’ pay records. If the village refuses, a Better Mt. Pleasant will forward an official request for investigation by the Wisconsin Department of Justice.