Taxpayers group: Fire Crisp

Attorney says it's a personal vendetta by Richard Bosa

By Rose Dodge
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BERLIN—The Taxpayers Association wants City Attorney Jack Crisp's hide for what they call legal malpractice. Crisp feels the group's action is nothing more than a personal vendetta orchestrated by Dick Bosa, an association member.

The taxpayers have written City Manager

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LEGAL FEES BERLIN
(Fiscal Year - May to May)

NAME OF ATTORNEY	88/89	89/90	90/91	91/92	92/93	6 mo period 5/93-12/93	TOTAL EXPENDITURES
JACK CRISP	$40,[illegible].96	$39,355.00	$42,659.14	$97,323.02	$86,382.24	$41,673.58	$354,[illegible]
DEVINE (Smith v. Berlin matter)	$ 9,161.59						$ 9,161.59
MERRILL & BRODERICK (Smith v. City of Berlin)		$34,196.[illegible]					$ 34,[illegible]
DONOVAN & DESJARDIN (Mary Poppins Day Care)	$ 1,142.80	$ 200.00				$ 170.00	$ 1,512.[illegible]
KIDDER, Sweeney	$ 560.50	$ 3,150.50	$ 3,705.80	$13,670.20	$ 2,872.40	$41,614.70	$ 25,57[illegible]
[illegible]	$44,366.45	$[illegible]	$[illegible]	$[illegible]	$ 2,346.00		$ 55,[illegible]
UPTON (James Riv. Boiler Case)	$ 4,949.35	$ 974.70				$[illegible]545.00	$ 10,47[illegible]
WADLEIGH [illegible]	$[illegible]	$[illegible]	$[illegible]	$[illegible]130.63	$13,655.70	$ 3,774.7[illegible]	$ 61,[illegible]
DONAHUE [illegible]			$ 320.00				$ [illegible]
GALLAGHER [illegible]				$[illegible]*	$20,[illegible]	$[illegible]	$ 22,45[illegible]
JOHNSON (Sub-contractors [illegible])				$ 2,200.00			$ 2,2[illegible]
SHEENAN				$ 32.01			$ [illegible]
WIGGINS & NOURIE						$ 13,652.00	$ 1[illegible]
TOTALS	$113,207.99	$87,[illegible]	$52,902.[illegible]	$147,075.16	$126,021.30	$71,271.52	$ 597,[illegible]

* including settlement agreement (2 checks) one for $45,000, the other $131,235.00 [illegible] indicates that this was a confidential settlement agreement [illegible] the state paying 20% and the federal government paying 75% of the costs. RE: Anderson-Nichols Company

Prepared by Berlin Taxpayers Association

$600,000.00 x

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Mitch Berkowitz a letter asking him to fire Crisp and sue him for legal malpractice. They contend that the attorney has steered the city wrong in its dealing with lawsuits against the city, especially the Richard Grondin case. Claiming the city has paid far too much to the attorney in the last five years which was, by their estimation of $354,743.94, is more than half of the $600,000 it has paid to lawyers in that time period. They will meet with the city manager next Wednesday afternoon and will be demand some hard and fast answers to their questions about the lawyer's handling of the city's legal business. They especially question the handling of the Grondin case, indicating he has botched it, thus costing the city hundreds of thousands of unnecessary dollars in legal fees. A statement Crisp notes doesn't take into account the number of law firms at have been involved in the decion making process throughout the case.

The group plans to ask why Crisp didn't immediately bring the arbitration issue in the Grondin case before ruled in favor of Grondin's request for an injunction when the city tried to fire him in 1991. The city's recent petition to the courts to withhold the officer's back pay while the issue of whether or not the court had that right to do so or whether or not the matter should have gone to arbitration, they feel, is rather late in the game and they question why it wasn't done at the time. They also want to know why the arbitration has gone on so long, who hired the other attorneys involved in the case and if any of those law firms questioned the arbitration issue. They also want to know why Crisp's legal bills to the city are not referral fees; why the city pays for Crisp to talk to the media and they want to know who is responsible for not hiring the correct insurance companies to cover some lawsuits brought against the city.

The group blames Crisp for much of the city's legal woes. They feel he has cost taxpayers money that could have gone to fund other city services at a time when services were being cut and they feel he has to go.

Group board member Dick Bosa in day said, "You don't have to be a legal scholar to know the city is going broke on legal bills."

He said the group is asking the city to be accountable to the high legal costs and questions the mayor and city council approving such costs without looking into the matter.

Berkowitz said that he is willing to meet with the group and listen to their concerns. He will, however, not discuss the city's legal strategies publicly, he said, adding that to do so is not his legal right and could lead to legal problems in and of it self.

Both Berkowitz and Crisp said yesterday that they could not confirm or deny the taxpayer association's $354,000 figure because they did not know how the group arrived at that figure and had not researched it. Berkowitz noted that the legal vouchers were made available to the group but he was not sure what calculations they used to arrive at the figure. He was not, he said, going to do any group's legal research. He, as well as Crisp, pointed out that the total of what the attorney's law firm has been paid in the last five years was for many different legal services such as sewer litiga-

OVER – $600,000 U.S.D

BERLIN POPULATION 19,000