

**From:** lharvell@cstx.gov  
**To:** Bryan C. Woods, Karl Mooney

Good afternoon, Mayor...I would like to take a few minutes of your time to clarify my application to the reality TV show, "Worst Cooks in America." This is one of my favorite cooking competition shows because it's just fun to watch and I've always enjoyed the antics of the contestants.

Towards the latter part of December, there was a particularly funny episode on and at the end of the show, one of the hosts said, "if you want to apply to be on Worst Cooks in America...here's how." On a total whim, I made an online application.

In early January, I received an email from one of the casting producers that they liked my application and would like to take it a step further by interviewing me over the phone. Before I even replied, I immediately sent an email to Carla, you and the City Manager asking if there would be an issue with me participating on the TV show. Unanimously, all three of y'all agreed that there wasn't a problem since this was not a city-related activity.

At that time, in my communications with y'all, I indicated that if I were selected and won the competition, I would donate half of the proceeds - \$12,500 - to the Fun for All Playground. I'm already a Park Fellow, having personally donated to the playground, and I knew this was a city related project that is near and dear to everyone's hearts.

I participated in the phone interview and several days later, I received another phone call taking the application process a step further, with a different casting director wanting to interview me using Facetime.

I once again notified y'all that it appeared I was being considered as a potential contestant. I was specifically asked to do the interview using Facetime on my desktop computer - which after unsuccessfully trying to figure out how to upload the program on my Windows 7 computer - I asked Jay Socol for help. It never crossed my mind I was asking city staff to help me on a personal issue, I just knew if anyone knew how to do it, the Communications Department would.

Jay sent Mark Beal over to help me with Facetime on a late Wednesday afternoon. When the casting director called at 4:00 pm, Mark chose to stay and listen to the interview. I was told that I had to do a cooking video and that it had to be videotaped and turned in to them by Friday afternoon, not even a day and a half later.

Mark said he could come over Friday and do the taping. For the first segment, he was at my house for a little over an hour and a half. He then went back to the office for nearly three hours, coming back over around 4:30 to wind up the taping. When he left, I gave him all of the leftovers

and over \$70.00 worth of spices and seasonings that I had to purchase for the recipe. He loves cooking and I knew he would make much better use of them than I ever would.

He then uploaded the video to the Food Network's private YouTube channel.

On the following Tuesday, I received another call and was informed that I was a serious contender and I was asked to sign an agreement of confidentiality, which I did. Up until today, I have told no one about my application to the TV show, not even my children, except for the Mayor, the City Manager, Carla Robinson, Jay Socol and Mark Beal.

Last week I was interviewed again, this time by one of the Producers. I have absolutely no idea if I'll be asked to be one of the contestants or what their time frame is but I suspect they will soon wrap up their selection process.

This has all happened so very quickly, all within just a few weeks time frame, which started shortly after the beginning of the New Year. It never occurred to me that by asking for assistance from the Communications Department, that I was asking a city employee to help me with something that could financially benefit me personally, i.e., the other half of the prize money, or help me with something that was personal. I never gave it a thought, as I wasn't doing this for the money. I just got caught up in the excitement of this entire application process.

I very unintentionally used poor judgement, and I apologize. For the purpose of full disclosure, I would appreciate it if you would share my email with my colleagues on the City Council. I realize I have options but I respect the opinions and input from my fellow council members.

If accepted as a contestant, I can continue with the competition with the understanding that should I win the prize money, all \$25,000 would be donated to the Fun for All Playground. Or, I can notify the producers and withdraw my application. This is something I would need to do very soon because of the time frame in their selection process.

Just as a reminder, that at this time, I have signed a confidentiality agreement with the Food Network. Obviously, if I move forward everything would change once filming started. And as a side bar, having a marketing background, my participation would definitely showcase College Station nationwide.

I am so sorry and apologize for asking the Communications Department for help, it was never my intention to put them in an awkward position. If you have any questions or need any further clarification, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Linda

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