

Koch, Erika

From: Denechia Powell [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 09, 2015 11:16 PM
To: Koch, Erika
Subject: Re: Following up on my discrimination case - Denechia Powell vs. The Tenants Union
Attachments: Grievancenotes.pdf; Lettertoboard.pdf

Hi Erika,

Thank you for the reminder! Below is contact information for my two witnesses and attached to this email are two pieces of evidence that I will explain during my interview.

Best,

Denechia

Witness contact information

- Elaine Agoot, former co-worker at the Tenants Union, [REDACTED]
- Jose Camacho, former co-worker at the Tenants Union [REDACTED]

On Wed, Sep 9, 2015 at 11:23 AM, Koch, Erika <Erika.Koch@seattle.gov> wrote:

Hi Denechia,

This is just a reminder that your rebuttal interview is schedule for tomorrow, September 10th at 1 p.m. here at SOCR. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you!



Erika Koch

Civil Rights Analyst

City of Seattle | Office for Civil Rights

810 Third Avenue, Suite 750

Seattle, WA 98104-1627

Grievances

1. Withholds decision making. Must always ask him if we can spend money, instead of giving us a budget to work with.
2. Jeopardizing funding: HSD, making stuff up for Margola grant reporting
3. Missed appointments and meetings. Having meetings when he is ready or decides to show up.
4. Asking for campaign contributions. Asked for contributions at the office during staff meeting.
5. consistently adds responsibilities to each person's roles at the TU. Does not have clear understanding of workload.
6. has not been transparent about salaries for new positions.
7. transferred supervisory roles to other people. supervises no one (?).
8. does not validate feelings of workers. says sorry about behavior but does not change them
9. acts defensively when someone tries to question him or give him feedback. During staff retreat snapped at Denechia in front of other co-workers
10. Tokenizing POC's. giving POC's titles of leadership for the purpose of funding.
11. Will only answer some emails and will ignore others. Same with calendar invites.

We demand

- Jon step down as ED *and Liz Etta become ED interim*
- recognition for our work in the form of liveable wages
- work loads be reasonable
- staff and board engage in race and social justice training, similar to City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative
- hiring consultant to conduct organizational restructuring

Next steps:

- 1) flush out grievances
- 2) Set time for when we would like to see action from the board
- 3) Decide on further action, we don't have to tell the board, but discuss amongst ourselves

Dear Board of Directors,

We write to you during this great upheaval to express our feelings, hopes, concerns and needs moving forward as we transition into a new chapter of the Tenants Union. These past months have been difficult for staff but united in our dedication to the struggles of tenants, we have endured.

We come to you, during this time, as People of Color, queers, the children of working class immigrants and displaced people, and as members of the marginalized communities we serve and represent. Working in an environment which was not prepared to nurture the leadership of People of Color, and honor our struggle, has been tokenizing and disrespectful. The toxic environment bred by an executive director who lacked leadership and accountability, and by staff who refused to acknowledge their white privilege has made for a traumatic work experience. Now that our white counterparts have left the organization, we feel empowered to advocate for the necessary change within the TU's culture, structure and values, in order for this organization to grow and thrive at a time when tenants are facing more housing crises than ever.

In order to continue working at the Tenants Union we demand the following:

- A livable wage, meaning a base pay of \$45,000 for all organizers and \$50,000 for the Organizing Director
- anti-oppression training for all staff, VISTA's, interns, board members, or anyone working with the TU for an extended period of time
- the board will hire a consultant to restructure the TU to ensure the work of the TU is in alignment with its values
- exploration of volunteer led tenant counseling program coordinated by Education Coordinator
- current counselors will conduct AM hotline and PM walk-ins until VISTA organizers and Education Coordinator are fully trained
- elimination of Lake City clinic and exploration of new clinic options for evening hours moving forward
- staff conducting Spanish education will not conduct more than 5 hours of education in English. Once VISTA organizers and Education Coordinator are fully trained, Spanish counselor will conduct no more than 2-4 hours/week in English education
- 60% of the people on hiring committee for new executive director will be staff

If demands are not met, the staff is prepared to take further actions. We look forward to working with the board and resolving this issue by April's board meeting.

Sincerely,
Elaine Agoot
Denechia Powell

José Camacho

1 BEFORE THE SEATTLE OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

2 INTERVIEW STATEMENT

3
4 INTERVIEWEE: Elaine Agoot
5 ADDRESS: 7628 39th Ave S.
6 Seattle, WA 98118

7 PHONE

8 **NO PERSON MAY RETALIATE AGAINST YOU FOR TESTIFYING IN THIS INVESTIGATION**

9 The Seattle Fair Employment Practices Ordinance and the Seattle Unfair
10 Housing Practices Ordinance as amended, prohibit discrimination or retaliation
11 against a person who assists in an investigation by the Seattle Office for Civil
12 Rights. If you experience discrimination or retaliation because you testified in
13 this investigation, please contact the Seattle Office for Civil Rights at (206) 684-
14 4500.

15 In most circumstances, you have a right to a private interview with SOCR. If you
16 want another person to be present during the interview, please discuss that
17 request with the Investigator.

18 I give the following statement as a response to questions asked of me regarding
19 this case by the Seattle Civil Rights Investigator, Erika Koch, in a telephonic
20 interview on October 30, 2015:

21 Introduction

22 My name is Elaine Agoot. I was the Membership Organizer and also the
23 Operations Coordinator, so I held two positions. Initially I was hired as the
24 Operations Coordinator, and maybe the Membership Organizer came after a
25 year of being there. Toward the end of my employment I became solely the
26 Membership Organizer. I would say for about two to three months. I started with
27 the Tenant's Union in July 2013. It was mostly coordinating Tenant Union events,
28 the membership meeting that happened yearly, there was also a bbq,
membership meetings, also coordinating the membership newsletter, various
bulk mailings, managed volunteers, maintained the organizational calendar,
preparing logistics for meetings, also handling volunteer inquiries, this is all a
hodge podge of those two positions. It was kind of not really a set line of where
my Operations Coordinator hat was worn, and when my Organizing hat was
worn. Initially I reported to Jonathan Grant, who was the Executive Director of the
Tenant's Union, but also didn't mean... I was also supervised by another

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SOCR15PE026

Interviewee Initials _____

1 Organizer, Stina Jansen, she left in 2014, prior to both Denechia and Jose
2 starting. I believe Denechia might have taken over Stina's job; she was hired to
3 take on some of her responsibilities. [Who managed you?] John was a very
4 loose supervisor, but I would say it would have been Eliana Horn. When Eliana
5 left it became Denechia because Denechia took over Eliana's position as the
6 Organizing Director.

7 Denechia's Promotion

8 Eliana told me that she was going to leave. I want to say I found out through
9 Denechia. I felt fine with the promotion, I thought it was the next person in line. I
10 also felt very confident of Denechia's ability to be the Director of Organizing; to
11 me it was like a no brainer.

12 I think that's when I became solely the Membership Organizer. I would say it was
13 Johnathan Grant that decided on this. I had talked to Jonathan expressing
14 frustration that I was having difficulty juggling the roles in the organization, and I
15 wanted to focus on Membership program because I really felt attached to that
16 position and recognized the need to grow that program. From my understanding
17 Liz Etta, who I believe was like, this is where things get really weird. Liz Etta who
18 was an intern she was then promoted before me into the Operations Director and
19 like a Development role. So she kind of had dual roles. She became the
20 Operations Director, and I still remained the Operations Coordinator. So when I
21 became the Membership Coordinator I started to give some of my duties to her,
22 and then John was fired, or John was let go from the organization.

23 Liz then became the Interim Director and then I kind of picked up the Operations
24 Coordinator, once more, and you know juggled the Membership Organizer
25 position again.

26 [Did you train Liz Etta?] I did train her. There was a transition period where I
27 was slowly training her, but that transition never fully happened. Maybe right
28 when things went... when she was taking more of the Operations that's when
John got let go, then there was a shortage of people. I volunteered. I saw there
was a need to take things off her plate, so she could assume this interim role.

I remember Liz Etta was expressing a lot of frustration that Jonathan Grant was
putting a lot of responsibility on her and she was experiencing some micro-
aggressions. He would forget meetings, or just not show up to them, or show up
late to them, and she was getting frustrated that he wasn't acknowledging and
making these appointments. He was really dropping the ball on the times they
were supposed to me. So she was really frustrated and this was around the time
he said he was going to run for City Council. I think we were all wondering what
was going to happen with the organization. I think we were also thinking this was
really unfair because we felt like we were doing a lot of the work, it's three
women of color, for a white male, an Executive Director that was absent for his

1 work most of the time. We were holding the organization together, and it just felt
2 really unfair he was going to be glorified and our work was not being recognized.
3 I think also we were feeling like we didn't have a lot of control at the same time of
4 the organization. We were doing a lot of work organizing, making connections
5 with the tenants, really pushing forward this rent control campaign we were
6 working on, and there was this lawsuit. So we started talking with Norma
7 Timbang, who is like an elder in the community that has a lot of experience
8 working with different organizations. We started meeting with Norma to let her
9 know what was going on and to seek counsel. We began to meet probably in
10 November or December of last year. Just to voice our frustrations we had
11 working at the Tenant's Union. There were just a lot of abusive patterns that we
12 needed to talk to someone about because we felt really powerless.

13 It was a continuum we still felt the need to express we felt underappreciated and
14 it was very hard to work within an organization that was predominately white. The
15 organizing was happening, we were organizing a lot of low income people of
16 color, and we felt that had to take front and center. We thought that the
17 organization was going to... we felt a resistance in the organization by a lot of
18 members and board members.

19 When John left I think we were confused. I think this is kind of what we had
20 wanted. John wasn't particularly a strong supervisor/leader. He didn't understand
21 the organizing component of the organization. He was really good at talking to
22 City officials, and that side of changing legislation, that was his forte. But then
23 you have the organizers building it from the grassroots up, he was more the top
24 down. That was the conflict we didn't feel supportive by him, and it was like the
25 organization was going in two different ways and we couldn't find a good place
26 between the organizers and him. We wanted to do more organizing and he
27 wanted to take our energy into rent control. So when he was let go, we were
28 wondering what do we do. Oh no, rent control, this is great you know, but we can
do more things beyond rent control and we can push the envelope even more.

When Liz became the Interim Director we weren't shocked. I personally felt Liz
you can do this, and I was going to support her anyway I could. Developing her
as a leader was important to me. As a woman of color I also identified to her, just
being new to the non-profit world, I just knew she didn't have all the skills that an
Executive Director had, you know she was just an Interim. I know she was going
to have some challenges and I was going to be as supportive as I could for her.

Interim Executive Director

When she became Interim, I was supportive, but I knew she didn't have a lot of
experience supervising and managing people. So that was also really scary, also
knowing Liz on a personal level, she had said things to me that were kind of red
flags. She had said to me and Denechia "I don't like people." I remember when
John was let go she went through his personal email and was really frustrated,

1 and it was kind of a malicious vibe from her. It was like I'm going to go through
2 his email and check out the dirt, and I was like I wouldn't even go there.
3 We were definitely feeling underappreciated and undervalued monetarily and we
4 are doing a lot of work in the community. You know building up to this rent control
5 campaign, there was a lot of... we also felt we were understaffed and we were
6 taking on more responsibility each day. For example, Jose had to do more and
7 more tenant counseling shifts, and I think Denechia had to do tenant counseling
8 shifts, which were in her job description. But, I know for Jose that was not only
9 supposed to be his only job. He was supposed to organize south king county. I
10 think where I came in I was witnessing how frustrating and burnt out everyone
11 was really feeling, and something needed to happen. I had also been there the
12 longest out of all four of them. So I knew more of the organizational history of
13 what was happening. I knew that John also had some kind of conflict with the
14 staff that had just left, meaning Eliana, Stina, Emily, who was the Deputy Director
15 at one point, so I knew that John had conflicts with those folks. I felt that the
16 same problems were arising where John was again not really supporting the
17 staff, and the organizing that was happening and trying to lead the organization
18 more toward a top down campaign versus a grassroots campaign.

12 Letter to Board

13 We still went ahead with the letter because we still felt really hurt the organization
14 was not supporting us. Liz, Denechia, and I were meeting with Norma because
15 we wanted something in the organization to change. We were consulting with
16 Norma because we wanted to go through an anti-oppression training with the
17 organization. The way the organization was carrying out its value of anti-racism,
18 anti-classism, was not showing up in its membership and with its board.

19 So I think we recognized we could be doing all of this organizing work, but unless
20 the leadership of the Tenant's Union did not see the value of what we were doing
21 it would not help the vibe of the organization. From the stories I heard, the people
22 of color were used of news stories, and to get more clout of the Tenant's Union.
23 As organizers we wanted to build an analysis within the board and within the
24 community. The organization needed to go through another... we needed to
25 question who we were as an organization and evaluate our impact because if we
26 weren't living through our values we would be doing further damage of our
27 community. So that's why we were meeting with Norma. We were experiencing
28 these micro-aggressions, by our white Director, and I know that Denechia was
29 feeling a certain way with Eliana, and then I was also feeling under minded by
30 the Education Program person, who is Kylan Parks. She would often... she didn't
31 really treat me as a peer. We had a friendship, but she treated me more like I
32 was her daughter, so I felt there was ageism toward me. I felt she talked down to
33 me. I tried to talk to her how I felt race was playing in the organization, and she
34 tried to... not validate my feelings. She said I think its classism. She tried to tell
35 how to feel, and she tried to tell me that race wasn't everything, and was
36 generally not supportive.

1
2 Also, the fact that those three white people held position of power. Kyran was the
3 Education Program Manager, Jon was the Executive Director, and Eliana was
4 the Organizing Director, and the rest of us weren't in these positions and there
5 was a clear dynamic of what was happening, and we felt we were felt were
6 bottom.

7 We wanted to go forward with the letter because it's important as an organization
8 to talk about these things. Just because you chopped one head off of an eight
9 headed monster, doesn't mean the problem was solved. It was also about the
10 board and how they were going to support us after John left. There was a
11 disconnect between the board and the organizers, which having experience
12 being on a board of directors, the board should represent who you are
13 organizing. It should represent the community that you are working with, and the
14 board was not representative, and that was clear. They have a lot of white folks
15 on the board, and were tokenizing the one person of color, and not really
16 engaging her.

17 They did not provide a response to the letter. We said we would like a response
18 by this time. From what I remember was that they didn't want to. They said we
19 don't have a response and I think they kept pushing back when they would
20 respond. When I was fired they only met with Jose, who was the only remaining
21 person who wrote that letter. I don't know how that went.

22 We wanted to work with the board and wanted to talk about why we wrote the
23 letter. When we went to the board to present it, we didn't want to take questions,
24 we wanted to let it settle. We did want to start a dialogue between the board
25 members. We were trying to hold people with compassion, but we got a lot of
26 backlash.

27 After the letter had been put out the board Director, I forgot her name, Corey had
28 emailed us back with very abrasive language. I would say me, Denechia, and
29 Jose, and Liz might have not been on there because I think she might have
30 wanted to stay out of that. I just remember feeling like oh no Corey just stop
31 talking already because you are doing so much damage. Because she really
32 wasn't hearing the hurt that we were experiencing and I just don't think she had
33 the capacity either for handling this kind of situation, and she was taking on all of
34 the responsibility. At that point we didn't want her solely speaking... she was very
35 reactionary instead of taking time to consult with a committee. She took it upon
36 herself to just respond on behalf of the whole board. I'd say yea at the point she
37 really should have had a mediator come in.

38 Also, Lynn Sereda, who you know Denechia and I had worked with. She has
39 been a long-time activist and a long-time supporter of the Tenant's Union. We
40 had a meeting with Lynn, Denechia, and also Rebecca White, who was a newer
41 board member, and myself. It was supposed to be about something and it was

1 not supposed to be about the letter or anything. Lynn comes in and says I'm
2 really hurt about the letter. She basically went off, and made Denechia cry, and
3 made everyone feel really uncomfortable I just remember thinking oh my god
4 Lynn. It was just not the appropriate place. I think folks didn't think she was going
to be so emotionally charged, and we were just all caught off guard. I don't
remember at this point now why she was so upset or exactly what was said.

5 **[Why do you think your employment was terminated?]** I feel like it was
6 because of the letter. I felt like the walls were coming in on me. I felt that my, all
7 my actions were under a microscope and that like, I felt like it was only amount of
8 time they would get me. They were out to get me because until then I had no
9 problems with leadership; like I have never been reprimanded for anything. I
10 think the culture of the Tenant's Union we held anti-oppression values, and we
11 talked about the work that we do, criminalizing people of color. We weren't trying
12 to put a lot of restrictions on people because in order for them to do this work we
13 had to hold them with a lot of compassion and dignity. Micro-managing is another
14 form of oppression. That is one thing about John he did recognize that value, and
15 he put a lot of power to the people he was supervising and the people he was
16 working with. When Liz came into the Interim position within a week or two I
17 already had been talked to, and I just felt like either she had something out for
me. She wanted to ensure that she was going to have the Operations job after
she gave up the Interim position, she also had a friend she wanted to bring into
the organization, and that person was not... we weren't really certain about that
person. It just seemed she had her own agenda. I question the reason I was let
go because of that. Until that point my work was good. No one had ever talked to
me about the quality of my work, and it was a shock, but I also felt that Liz was
taking the organization into an entirely different direction and I probably did not fit
in that direction.

18 I think that it was hastily made decision, and I don't think that it is reflective of the
19 values that the TU's had. It did more harm to our community because Denechia
20 had a lot to offer the organization, and treated her this way was really
disrespectful and I don't think it was right.

21 **[Do you feel Denechia was demoted in retaliation of submitting the letter?]** I
22 did feel like it was an act of retaliation because who was going to take her place.
23 There was still going to be organizing that would be happening, and even it was
24 going to be just her and Jose, she would still need to supervise Jose. I don't think
25 that Liz would have the capacity to do that. I also think it didn't seem like a
26 decision that was made with the counsel of the other people involved, the other
27 staff involved. It's such a small staff, it sounds like Liz made that decision and
28 didn't consult with the other staff how this would affect their work. Anytime that
there has been a change in someone's position, I know that John has consulted
with those people. Like I said John was supportive in that way he gave people
the power, and allowed to voice this is where I'm at and this is where I want to

1 be. I think Liz came in and started making decisions that was not considerate and
2 it was just made really quickly.

3 Because we addressed the board in the letter and then they made the decision to
4 demote her. I see that as a conflict of interest. You know we are calling the board
5 to come to the board, and then they refused to or hold off in responding, and
6 weren't really talking to us. Well Corey was the only one talking through email. It
7 didn't leave us confident that we were going to have a good relationship, which is
8 ultimately what we wanted for bringing up those things in the letter.

9 I'm just really sad and upset it had to go down this way. I think our only intention
10 was to be accountable to the people that are organizing. If we are going to look
11 at this class we have to look at race, class, and oppression, even if that means
12 looking within the organization. I'm sad the leadership did not see that, and they
13 didn't have the capacity to meet our needs. It's also really sad because they lost
14 two really good people that were dedicated to the mission of the Tenant's Union.

15 I CERTIFY UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY UNDER THE LAWS OF THE
16 STATE OF WASHINGTON THAT THIS STATEMENT IS TRUE AND CORRECT.

17 _____
18 Date Signed

19 _____
20 Elaine Agoot

21 _____
22 Location (City and State)

23
24
25
26
27
28 INTERVIEW STATEMENT - 7
SOCR15PE026

Interviewee Initials _____

BEFORE THE SEATTLE OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

INTERVIEW STATEMENT

INTERVIEWEE: Corey Snelson
ADDRESS: 915 16th Ave.
Seattle, WA 98122

PHONE

NO PERSON MAY RETALIATE AGAINST YOU FOR TESTIFYING IN THIS INVESTIGATION

The Seattle Fair Employment Practices Ordinance and the Seattle Unfair Housing Practices Ordinance as amended, prohibit discrimination or retaliation against a person who assists in an investigation by the Seattle Office for Civil Rights. If you experience discrimination or retaliation because you testified in this investigation, please contact the Seattle Office for Civil Rights at (206) 684-4500.

In most circumstances, you have a right to a private interview with SOCR. If you want another person to be present during the interview, please discuss that request with the Investigator.

I give the following statement as a response to questions asked of me regarding this case by the Seattle Civil Rights Investigator, Erika Koch, in a personal interview on October 29, 2015:

Introduction

My name is Corey Snelson. I was the Chair of the Board of Directors. I was in this role for 2 and half years, as the Chair. I was a board member since October 2012. I was on the board for about four or five months before I was made Chair. My duties were to bring policy changes to the board. So there was no structure to the board, prior to me coming to the board , and I did a lot of work. My real role was leading strategic planning, overseeing policy. I did all of the work of the Secretary too, and presiding over meetings. My role was to facilitate the oversight of Jonathan Grant and Elizabeth Etta now. Everything was about Jonathan. So I would receive complaints about Jonathan or about their management. We were also supposed to approve any job description changes, any kind of changes or hierarchy or structure in the organization, if job description was added or removed, and any changes to the organizational structure. I had no role in hiring, firing, or discipline. That was either Jonathan Grant or Elizabeth Etta, or the Executive Director. I've assumed the role of

1 strategic advisor, but I'm not the Chair any longer. I don't have voting power. This
2 was effective September 2015. It has nothing to do with this case. It has
3 something to do with being a person in an organization particularly a leader, and
4 being a white person for that amount of time doesn't jive with my values. I don't
5 believe personally that someone with my education and my privileges needs to
6 be leading for the long term groups of disempowered individuals. I believe in
7 leadership transition for that group. While I came on as a tenant leader, it is my
8 job to do what I needed to do, and make space for a person for that role. My role
9 as Strategic Advisor is really mentoring the current board chair.

7 I was supposed to work with the Executive Director. It was the Chair of the
8 Personal Finance Committee to work with the Executive Director to bring that to
9 Committee and Committee to bring that to the rest of the board. Liz Stonehill was
10 the Chair of the Personal Finance Committee. We did a major board restructuring
11 at the beginning of 2014. Richard Harrison was the Personal Finance Committee
12 prior to Liz.

11 Promotions by Former Executive Director

12 I got a phone call from Kylan Parks claiming that Denechia had been promoted. It
13 was a really angry phone call, without an open hiring position. She was promoted
14 to a position that wasn't open to everyone else. I found out she was promoted
15 officially I think through her. No, I found out through Kylan because Kylan was
16 really upset and that was news to me. Jonathan Grant promoted her. He sent an
17 email promoting her, then an hour later he sent an email asking to promote her,
18 then we wrote back. Then I got a phone call from Kylan that Jonathan told the
19 staff that the board had approved all of their positions and this was news to me. I
20 learned during the same time the promotion that he gave to the Charging Party,
21 he also promoted to Elizabeth Etta to another Director position then he promoted
22 Kylan to another Education Manager position, which was already what she was.
23 Neither Elizabeth Etta's promotion nor Kylan's position, neither of them got an
24 increase in salary. Denechia got a promotion in salary. She was raised from
25 \$37,000 to \$40,000. Elizabeth stayed at \$37,000 and Kylan stayed at \$37,000
26 plus or minus any longevity bonuses that had accrued at the point. Eliana Horn
27 was in that same position at \$37,000. But there was weirdness there too. The job
28 description, I don't think Eliana had a job description, and Denechia was given
the ability to give her own job description after she was promoted.

23 **[There is evidence that Director of Organizing was already previously voted**
24 **on by the board, and Denechia was promoted to that existing role.]** Director
25 of Organizing was brought to the board sometime in the summer in 2014. Mr.
26 Grant approached the board and said this person has been doing this amazing
27 amount of work, and she's investigating this triad lawsuit, and she is effectively
28 doing an Organizing Director position with Denechia Powell and Jose Camacho.
So I feel that she deserves a raise and change in title. We approved her position
at \$40,000 but she accepted the title and declined the raise, it was in the summer

1 or early fall. There was no meeting announcing Denechia's promotion. He
2 promoted her on the 21st of January, and she called me on the 22nd and I'm
3 guessing it was the day after he announced it at an all-day staff meeting. The
4 same framework that he sent to us for approval on the 21st, he sent to the staff.
The staff did see the same document and that's why I got a phone call from
Kylan, it was an unofficial complaint.

5 **[There is evidence that Denechia's promotion was discussed at a board**
6 **meeting, prior to the announcement. Do you recall this?]** I can look at all my
7 stuff, but the meeting we had in January did not have anything to do with
8 governance. It was about getting to know board members. I have to look it up. In
January we had a meeting that elected all new officers. I need to look in the
minutes. I can't say anything until I look at the minutes.

9 **[Were there other promotions?]** I think Elaine Agoot might have changed too.
10 Yes, I think basically everybody changed, except for Terry who is in Spokane. I
11 can't remember if Elaine was made Membership Organizer before this, I think
she was. She might have been given a title at the same time, but I'm not sure.
But no pay increase.

12
13 Elaine and Terry were at .75 hours and Elaine I believe was at .9, and I believe
they were both brought to full time. Terry might not have been, but I have to look.
14 So the pay is based on salary, and so they were assigned more hours. Terry was
15 making \$37,000, but Terry was working .75 FTE hours. Terry had progressively
16 gotten hire, and she was brought on as .5 FTE, and then she was brought up to
17 more time incrementally, but her starting salary was \$37,000. I think Jonathan
18 got a pay increase when everybody else did. Before Denechia was even hired
Organizers made \$35,000 a year or \$36,000 a year. We do an annual
19 compensation investigation, and during the last investigation he got an increase
before Denechia was even hired. Elaine was hired a month before we did an
investigation across the board.

20 I think you got an email from me to Liz Stonehill. I just found out that Jonathan
21 promoted everybody without our knowledge, and we didn't know what to do at
22 that point. We were going to go forward with what happened procedurally. When
we got that budget from him he just expecting that we would rubber stamp it,
23 except he was proposing and an entire organizational restructure. We had
concerns, and he used real weird calculus to do this. I emailed him and said this
needs to go through the Personal Finance Committee. He wrote back okay that's
24 fine I'll let the staff know. The meeting was on February 22nd, I said we will wait
until February 22nd. I had an email to Liz, I think you have it. Liz was shocked.

25 March Board Meeting

26 That meeting there were a bunch of events that happened, we were going to put
27 Jonathan Grant on administrative leave for the events that happened. We never

1 sent him the letter, but it was pretty heavy concerns about him leading the staff
2 while during the campaign and some ethical concerns along with that. We
3 separated before I could give him that letter. In that letter we addressed he had
4 given raises and promotions to people without our knowledge.

4 They submitted a letter three days after Jon's official separation. They came in
5 and they basically... they read a speech, then the letter, and then left. Before
6 they left I was able to tell them what they had done was truly brave, we would
7 take it seriously, and they should look forward to hearing from us in the future, I
8 think we told them the end of June. We had a lot of things going on at the same
9 time. So it was difficult to address it on the time frame they wanted. On March
10 13th they wanted resolution by the end of April. Being an all-volunteered board it
11 was difficult to make a response in that time frame. In your RFI you have the
12 letter that we compiled, but we weren't able to give that to them in that time
13 frame.

10 There were no verbal responses to the letter, not to them. People were very
11 stunned, but not all of them. What they did was a classic organizing technique
12 this is what Organizers do is write demand letters. I think some people were
13 concerned about the amount of money they were requesting. We didn't address
14 those kinds of things in the meeting. Some board members, this is what
15 Organizers do, and some were upset, this was counter to their values of being
16 very low-income people so some of the low-income people felt slighted to some
17 of the higher demands. The ask for money was high. No one had comments
18 regarding any of the other asks. Ask for anti-racist training in an anti-racist
19 organization is not surprising. Some of the other asks weren't up to us. Some of
20 the asks were to lower the hours on the education line, and that wasn't really up
21 to us. So some of the asks weren't things we could do. I think there were things
22 we didn't have much say over, it was really up to them. I think the salary increase
23 was what everyone was upset about.

19 There was a conversation between Lynn Sereda and Denechia Powell and
20 Elaine Agoot that I was not present for. I got a phone call that told me what
21 happened. That Lynn had an emotional outburst in public that was several
22 months after they had submitted the letter. It was before I was going to give them
23 the letter. I know it was before the end of June. When I got a call from the Chair
24 of the Policy and Advocacy Committee describing what happened and
25 immediately I wrote to everyone that was on the Personal and Finance
26 Committee, and everyone present for the outburst, Jose Camacho, Denechia
27 Powell, and Elaine Agoot and apologized profusely for that outburst. If you do a
28 third RFI you can get this email. The feelings of this particular board member are
not the feelings of the rest of the board. We do not do this kind of thing, that
made me angry. I was horrified, just horrified. Denechia also wrote me back and
said thank you for your apology, and so there was an acknowledgment that she
did receive my email.

1 But, at that point we were talking about how we were going to respond to it. To
2 be honest Lynn had some issues with the salary ask, and for years I was trying to
3 control Lynn's temper. She has been sanctioned later about her outbursts. So the
4 discussion at the retreat of her ask of the salary doesn't matter, but what they
5 were asking was an investigation of our compensation analysis and that was a
6 reasonable ask. A lot of this discussion is around the way he worked the staff up
7 against the board. He created a lot of animosity between us and that was not
8 okay.

9 Really the discussion was to investigate what the hierarchy looked like what
10 Jonathan put in place so there were four Directors for seven staff members, and
11 everyone thought that seemed kind of top heavy. So we were trying to decide
12 how to address all of this. We were already getting complaints to Kylan that the
13 restructure was unfair to her. I heard rumors never concrete that Denechia didn't
14 want this job, and it didn't make sense to have all of these Directors. We actually
15 heard that Denechia was preparing to ask for her old job back. I heard this from
16 Elizabeth Etta, and I might have heard it from Eliana, but I'm not sure. Kylan sort
17 of petered out because she was the only person that new Education really, while
18 Jose was being trained. She was there on an hourly basis for a long time. I don't
19 know the answer when she finally left, but it was months later. She was a
20 contractor, she was contracted I think at \$21.00.

21 I don't think there were concerns about the pay. We did talk about what it would
22 like to raise everyone else up, that's what I was advocating for. But, to be honest
23 I had so much going on myself, personally, and dealing with the separation from
24 Mr. Grant, and a lot of this happened when I wasn't paying much attention. I think
25 at the time Lynn hadn't had her outburst.

26 Charging Party's Position as Organizer

27 I don't want to use the word demoted because she was never promoted. We had
28 never gone through the process of what Jonathan did. He went rogue and just
29 did this himself. I would say we were trying to make the organization fairer for
30 everybody, so when we decided to do... I wouldn't call it restructuring. This was
31 more going back to what it used to be before Jonathan. This was about equal
32 pay. For one person to supervise other person was ridiculous. The number would
33 be five people. So until we have five organizers we weren't going to have a
34 Director of Organizing. Same with the Education Director, until we had five
35 Education Organizers we weren't going to have a an Education Director.

36 At the time, I was getting complaints from people this wasn't fair, so I heard from
37 the grapevine that Denechia didn't want this role anymore, and it's what I heard
38 she asked that she didn't want these duties, I should have asked her now that I
39 think about it. I don't know if you saw the chart that Jonathan made, but it had all
40 of these circles it was crazy.

Board Retreat

1
2 If I couldn't raise any more money for Kylan's position, I wanted to bring Kylan's
3 position to the same position as Denechia's because Denechia had only been
4 there for 6 months and Kylan for four years plus. I think when we had the retreat
5 we knew Kylan was going to leave, and we didn't want to hire for that position.
6 We decided to get rid of the management position for the Education program
7 because we wanted to leave the door open to hire another person so most of the
8 money that came in was for the expressed person of doing Tenant Counseling.
9 What we really wanted to do was be more responsive to meeting the needs of
10 the Education program. So to meet the needs was to hire an Education
11 Coordinator to replace Kylan, and another person for Education that was part-
12 time and raise money to bring them full-time. And this was part of the problems
13 we had with the way Jonathan allocated money.

14 I think there was a little more conversation of salaries. We wanted to get back to
15 what was more equitable, and no one had a supervisory role. There was no
16 discussion with the staff about structure. No because we didn't know what they
17 knew. There was no discussion before because he plopped this on us, and said
18 approve. What we had asked for was a clear understanding of how he expected
19 to remain in the Executive Director position when he was running for City
20 Council. We were talking about structure or promotions. He said he would
21 document my time for the campaign this way, and my time for Tenant's Union
22 here. But, that's not what he did. He instead sending all of these promotions to us
23 with the pay increases, he said he wanted to go down to part time, or even go on
24 administrative leave. He wanted these positions in case he won, and in the
25 instance he lost he wanted his job back. He wanted to promote these people to
26 these positions in case he was gone so the Tenant's Union can still run. So
27 basically when he promoted Liz Etta he gave her all of his Operations duties,
28 grant writing, policy and analysis, basically what he wanted to retain his
connection to City government and County government. So he basically wanted
to keep his connections to City government, and give everything else to Liz Etta.
The way he was drawing salary, it was the way he wanted the things he wanted
to do, and the rest was for Liz Etta and that he didn't want to do anymore. So
essentially he had already given Liz Etta the Interim Executive Director position.
There's an email I have concerning all this to Liz Stonehill and I think you might
have gotten an email from me two days ago.

23 The retreat gave us a little time to think through these things. After the retreat we
24 had a Personal and Finance Committee where this structure was approved. At
25 the April meeting the entire board approved it, and it didn't occur to me after this
all surfaced that would put Liz in a terrible position, unwittingly.

26 I was going to write the letter, I was going to draft. It's part of the second RFI, the
27 draft the letter, and that I would send it out to the board for approval. I think the
date of Lynn's outburst was the day I sent it out to the board to approve it. I got

1 emails back from everybody who said it was fine, except an email back from
2 Lynn that said we should be harder on them, and I responded no, more or less.

3 The letter wasn't because all of this happened within the same day. So I sent the
4 draft to the letter to the board that night, then the outburst happen, then I think a
5 few days letter before we had the opportunity to give our response to them Elaine
6 Agoot had left, and Denechia quickly after.

7 **[Why was Elaine's employment terminated?]** I know Elaine was terminated for
8 related funds. But, I didn't know until after. I knew there were charges on the
9 credit card prior to Elaine leaving. I know that Liz sat down with Elaine how to
10 appropriately use the Tenant's Union's resources. I don't think Jonathan gave
11 anyone a talking to about how to use their resources appropriately. I mean this is
12 donated money.

13 The day Elaine left, Denechia called to tell me Elaine had been fired prior to that.
14 Denechia was upset but at that time it was a sealed personnel record so
15 Denechia had no right to know. I think she wanted to know but Liz told her no
16 because it was a sealed personnel record. **[The Charging Party contends that
17 Elaine reported to her, and she did not learn of her termination until after it
18 happened.]** My understanding is not that Elaine reported to her. She was
19 actually reporting to her, there is no mentioning to the Organizing Director
20 overseeing Elaine. In Jonathan's chart, I think it was the Policy Director
21 overseeing Elaine because the Policy Director was overseeing Elaine's work. I
22 don't have any idea what that structure means, it's so confusing. Elaine reported
23 to John the Executive Director prior to the Policy Director.

24 It was two weeks later when she resigned. My understanding is that she came to
25 Liz Etta and requested a medical leave of absence because the job was too
26 much for her. Then Liz said well maybe you will be happy I am offering your old
27 job back at your old salary, with no managerial responsibilities she accepted the
28 job and quite two hours later.

29 I CERTIFY UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY UNDER THE LAWS OF THE
30 STATE OF WASHINGTON THAT THIS STATEMENT IS TRUE AND CORRECT.

31 _____
32 Date Signed

33 _____
34 Corey Snelson

35 _____
36 Location (City and State)

37 _____
38 INTERVIEW STATEMENT - 7
39 SOCR15PE026

40 Interviewee Initials _____