

KANAWHA IN REVIEW

Publication: THE CHARLESTON GAZETTE

Published: Wednesday, April 14, 2010

Page: 22

The following Metro West-related news and feature items were among those published in recent editions of The Charleston Gazette, Charleston Daily Mail, Saturday Gazette-Mail and Sunday Gazette-Mail:

Nitro treasurer responds to fireboat bid allegations

A growing debate over the validity of a bid to paint Nitro's fireboat was addressed Tuesday, April 6, at **City** Council's regular meeting.

Treasurer John Young issued a formal letter of rebuttal to the allegations of misconduct regarding the restorations of the city's recently acquired fireboat.

In late 2009, Nitro's fire department was tasked with painting the fireboat that was donated by the **city** of Charleston. According to activist Wanda Carney, the project to paint the boat had not been properly bid under **city** rules and was instead given to a man who would paint the boat for \$3,475 - just under the city's expense cap of \$3,500 that would require an official bid and approval by the **Nitro City Council**.

Carney thinks the firefighters knew the cutoff for the bidding project and that they made up documentation to make it look like proper bids were taken, as previously reported by The Gazette.

According to the letter of rebuttal, "There are no falsified documents, but making statements to the contrary appears to have grabbed much attention. A fireman was told by the Fire Chief to get quotes for cleaning and painting a boat that was given to the **City of Nitro** by the **City** of Charleston. The fireman, trying to save the **City** money, went to individuals he knew to get the best price to facilitate this activity.

"He received three verbal quotes and the **City** issued a purchase order to have the boat sandblasted and painted; the cost of this activity was paid out of the Tire Fire Settlement Funds. Those are the facts plain and simple," Young wrote in his letter.

A discrepancy over how many quotes the **city** actually received was based on a misunderstanding among **city** officials involved, **Council** member Craig Matthews said after the meeting.

Mark Roberts, owner of Rocky Fork Enterprises, was at last week's meeting to clarify the validity of his business license, which was issued in 2004 according to the West Virginia Secretary of State Business Organization Information Web site.

The unusual spelling of "Enterprises" in the business name led to some confusion about his business license, Roberts said.

In other business, **council** approved the appointments of a nine-member Board of Directors for the city's recently established Convention and Visitors' Bureau.

The board includes Councilmen Bill Javins, Craig Matthews and Bob Fields; Treasurer John Young; Mayor Rusty Casto; Leonard Wamble; Norma Helms; Tom Brewer and Leigh Ann Bright.