



## Fwd: Wagmor confrontation emails

2 messages

Lorna Esparza <Lorna.Esparza@lacity.org>

Wed, Nov 15, 2023 at 6:40 AM

To: Verna Riparip <verna.riparip@lacity.org>

For the file,thank you

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]  
Date: Tue, Nov 14, 2023 at 3:23 PM  
Subject: Wagmor confrontation emails  
To: <lorna.esparza@lacity.org>

Please note the bold text is her replies to my statements, and my initial email is at the very bottom for reference. Please feel free to reach out for clarification

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject: Re: Follow up from our phone call yesterday**  
**Date:** September 19, 2021 at 6:19:24 PM PDT  
**To:** [REDACTED]

There is a lot to unpack here. I simply do not have the emotional energy to address the false accusations being made against me, nor do I wish to go back and forth about the complaints the current and former staff have had about you in exchange for the supposed complaints they have had about me. I've always defended you though when those complaints have been raised, and I'm hurt to know you don't feel the same loyalty to me.

I informed you last week that my father was deeply ill, and I had to go home. I informed you how dire the situation was. Not because I feel the need to tell you every detail of my life as an excuse as to why I can't keep up with my job, but because I was hoping for some understanding and compassion. I was told not to worry, everything would be handled. Within 72 hours 3 staff had quit, hours were cut, and decisions were made out of nowhere that immediately impacted me. I received over a dozen calls and texts from the staff. Some in tears, some angry at me, because they assumed I was involved. I was cc'd on customer complaints, and asked to handle payroll issues and other trivial issues. I was in the hospital with my family, and I was having to leave to fix time cards, and handle terrified and upset staff. I came back Wednesday night. My father passed Thursday early morning. I got the call at 5am. Before I could even come out of that daze I was on back to back calls with you and [REDACTED]. From there, it's been changing and wishy washy plans. When I left I was planning to come back to the rescue manager role. That was what I was preparing for. When we had lunch Thursday, I was suddenly to be focused solely on the hotel, and you acknowledged I was stretched too thin trying to do both. Now it's suddenly back to exactly how it was before I left. And while some of my concerns are being addressed, there's no collaboration to make these things sustainable. There's no accountability for other management staff who haven't been pulling their weight. There's more being put on the staff, with little organization, input, or incentive. And I'm being asked to monitor expenses and spending, and then being severely chastised for taking the initiative to review our actual budget.

On top of all of this, I have not been allowed any peace in this time of grieving. I've been pushed around, gaslit, and treated like I am the root of our issues in many cases.

I will be taking a leave of absence to properly heal and grieve without the stress of being the scapegoat and bad guy, and constantly fighting an uphill battle. Maybe during this time you will find that I truly am the bad guy. Maybe you'll find that I was always the first to step up to fix a problem before it was an emergency. I will use the remainder of my PVT and sick leave, and decide if I need more time from there, or decide if this is really the sort of environment I want to remain in.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Date:** September 19, 2021 at 7:05:16 AM PDT  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Follow up from our phone call yesterday

Safety issues at VV being raised, and not rectified. (Lights in grooming and iso, lights in small dog pass, broken gate from small dogs to window room, etc these issues are not new)

**Agreed and as soon as there is money to spare we will be renovating many things in that space**

Illegally unpaid overtime, and the justification of it (former employees, and the statements of "they agreed to not being paid legally due overtime." I know personally, as a daycare attendant, I worked multiple 12 hour shifts, some even longer, and one 18 hour shift, and was never given the option to "opt out" of my legally due overtime. So maybe some people agreed to this practice, but from my personal experience, not everyone did. And the practice is illegal, even with consent from the employee.)

**Well this isn't an issue anymore since people are clocking in and out. But I do feel like this needs to be something you look at and try to keep to a minimum.**

Asking that staff leave the dogs completely unattended to do walks. (This is a violation of our service agreement, and not safe for the dogs.)

**But the staff is not leaving dogs alone if front desk is there. But I agree that if it's just one person in the entire place they shouldn't leave with the dogs for walks. And if that means all vboarders get 1 walk that is it.**

Not paying full groomer tips. (Illegal) I was told the groomers agreed to splitting their tips with the house, and [REDACTED] actually was unaware of that policy, and when she noticed it, demanded full payment of tips, was very upset, and used the term "stealing" in reference to the situation.

**I am going to talk to [REDACTED] about this because her and I did her checks together until you started doing them. She obviously knew we were splitting any credit card tips because her and I always did the math together. So she definitely knew and was fine with it. If she is not fine with it anymore that is a different story.. But in no way did she not know that.**

Rescue dogs being left in isolation for long periods of time with no timeline for assistance. Even the few who can be rotated out should have a plan, fosters should be looked for, and staff should be directed on signs of kennel stress to be aware of, potential enrichment activities to help, etc as their emotional and physical well being is clearly deteriorating.

**This is no one's intention and every dog in Iso gets several walks. Q is waiting for an opening at training and we all are working on fosters for each of them daily. [REDACTED] was and now [REDACTED] is working on fosters for all of them. I above all people never want any dogs in iso ever. I also think we need to be very careful about the dogs we are taking.. we don't really have the ability to isolate. It's unfair to them and I am open to suggestions to correct. Super stumped on what more to do.**

Intakes are often dangerously unorganized and the appropriate management staff does not assist in this process effectively. To the point that dogs aren't registered in our tracking software, don't have proper vaccinations within an appropriate amount of time, and dogs reproductive status is improperly noted in the system. (we currently have a dog that has been with us for nearly two months, who JUST received medical and spay, and was never actually put into petestablished or Monday.) This applies to both puppies and in house adults.

**We are working on this and with the addition of Susan we are in much better shape with getting in dogs to the vet asap. We have a small group we just rescued and she is putting them in the system, getting them in for spay/neuter before they even arrive at Studio City and is already sending docusigns for fosters. From the 11 we took from Coachella only 2 are not fixed. And they are scheduled for monday!! Adults will not come in until we have these new dogs adopted and out. All puppies have been arriving already vaccinated. We also just set up a vet in bakersfield and if dogs need to stay with [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] for more than a couple of days they will be going to the vet there. [REDACTED] set that up last week. His prices are very comparable to somis. [REDACTED] could not seem to organize our intake properly. He was often confused about dogs, how many, separating litters no matter how many times we told him, showed him or even how we presented it to him. We have not had a huge intake yet but Susan is much more organized already. Demetrio even let fosters leave without signing. [REDACTED] is sending out documents before the puppies are even on their way to us**

Medical needs are not followed up on by the appropriate management staff. The daycare staff have to push for follow up on basic needs, and updates are not made in our notes to share with adopters, or to be sure we're following up appropriately. (When a dog goes on meds for an ear infection, skin issue, injury etc, no one is asking for status updates. Are the meds working? What does the wound look like today? Are the ears looking better? Etc it happens upon occasion, but rarely. Typically the only follow up is when the staff notes a med sheet is done.)

**Agreed I actually am implementing a weekly system that I hope will help with this. I just put it together this morning when I thought about how to correct the chi chi situation. That cannot happen.**

Major medical issues, such as Molly's fast spreading cancer, and Jeffrey's painful growths that cause eye damage, etc are not adequately handled in a timely manner by the appropriate management staff.

**Agreed. Hopefully above will take care of this and me being present on shiloh days.**

Daycare staff are not properly educated on basic health and safety needs of the dogs, and are not effectively guided or trained by the appropriate management staff.

**Agreed. I really don't think any one has been trained properly. And that is something that needs a solution. We are teaching as we are going. I have spoken to [REDACTED] about coming in and doing basic medical training once a month or every other month. I may even ask her to come in and just do shots in house, like bordetella if needed.**

Some dogs are adopted out before they have received any medical clearance.

**Agreed That has been addressed and will not happen moving forward. Now that it is just [REDACTED] doing adoptions it should be better.**

The proper management staff are not following up to make sure dogs on medication are going home with medication. And adopters are not always informed of any current medical needs, even if it's a minor medication, before adoption.

**Agreed and feel with the addition of pet established that should improve.**

Puppies are not always given a proper two week quarantine hold at a safe foster.

**The only group that ever left right from [REDACTED] was that last group. That was under the suggestion of [REDACTED] because he could not find fosters and they all had been at her house for several weeks.. Obviously poor judgement and will never happen again.**

When concerns about health and safety, such as the issues brought up with puppy palooza, or [REDACTED] fostering, are shared, they are often ignored, or downplayed, until there is an emergency.

**Agreed.... Puppy Palooza actually turned out to be a non issue. The dogs that got parvo contracted it in the foster home. The foster had a puppy that died of parvo a few months prior . This was discovered later. [REDACTED] was not versed in this and made a lot of uneducated decisions. He simply didn't ask her and when she was told one of the puppies died she told us very nonchalantly. This was due to lack of training. Thank god no dogs at puppy palooza got parvo. I think events like that can happen as long as all dogs have been quarantined for 2 weeks prior. But again this should be discussed further before doing it again.**

Multiple dogs have died, and even been stolen, without the entire management team being informed, and without their statuses being appropriately updated in the system. There are no follow up procedures regarding unexpected death and potential exposure to other dogs with fosters and staff. There should be a standard response anytime any dog dies from anything unexpected that insures the facility, van, supplies, and foster home are safe and no other dog can be exposed.

**Agreed**

There are no follow ups with spay and neuter obligations, rabies vaccinations, or if adopters have even kept the dog after adoption. There is often no follow up on medical dogs after adoption either. If we are not following up, we are potentially contributing to the problem of pet over population. We receive calls and emails on a daily basis from people who have gone well beyond the 6 month deadline, sometimes going over a year.

**Agreed. Can maybe pet established notify us when it is time to do this so we can follow up? I am not sure but can ask [REDACTED] if he has an idea for this. Maybe even a google calendar?**

Dogs in house are out of date on vaccines. The proper management staff has not entered their vac dates appropriately into the system, so there are no alerts and reminders. My estimate is that 50% of our in house dogs are out of date on their bordetella, and at least one is out of date on rabies, bord, and DAPP. In our group facility, bordetella boosters must happen to help prevent waves of kennel cough. And out of date rabies vaccines could lead to fines or other legal issues with the city.

**[REDACTED] said he updated all shots of in house dogs and said all are up to date?? Whether that is true or not I am not sure. But Hopefully the above forms I implemented will solve this issue quickly.**

Regular wellness checks are not performed on long term in house dogs. Once initial medical is done, they are mostly ignored beyond what the staff is capable of seeing on the surface. Dogs with long term issues, such as heart murmurs, chronic ear or eye infections, allergies, etc should have regular wellness checks, completed by the staff, as well as veterinary follow up to monitor for changes in condition. And all dogs should be receiving in house wellness checks of all the basics on a regular basis, that are properly documented and

reviewed by the appropriate management staff. (Eyes, ears, nose, mouth, skin, nails etc)

### **Agreed Again hoping above will help**

When concerns are raised by reputable rescue groups, they are, in essence, laughed off, without proper reprimanding of the staff responsible. (Re: ChiChi-staff should have noticed her ear infections and embedded claws. Period. They did not. That is a major issue. And it will happen again if there isn't appropriate follow up with the staff.) We lost a very useful asset in START. And they, as well as their rescue partners, will not be silent about our perceived wrongs, and how we responded to their concerns. Threats of legal action have been made by multiple parties.

**Agreed this should not have happened. I have spoken to every person at Start. Every person at spokanimal and I also reached out to wall flower. There was no laughing this off. It's bothersome and upsetting and needs to be corrected. However I don't feel yelling at staff makes a difference in their behavior. Figuring out how to make sure it doesn't happen again is my approach. I feel like telling people they didn't do a good job shuts them down. I also assumed [REDACTED] was dealing with meds ect. Which again I guess we should not assume. So moving forward we will fix it.**

Employees working "under the table" are not covered by our workman's comp insurance, and do not qualify for charity one insurance, as they are technically not employees, nor are they volunteers.

**Anyone in the facility even if given a stipend for being there is covered by charity one as well as our limited liability insurance. I checked on that. Most of the dog hotels either pay the overnight a cash stipend or they put the dogs in crates and have no one there overnight. The latter is actually legal if cameras are set up. I don't agree with doing that but I also think paying \$200-\$250 a night for an overnight is crazy.**

Illegally threatening to withhold pay from employees who clock in early or clock out late. Employees can be written up for those offenses, but correcting time cards to avoid paying for time that was actually worked is illegal. And saying so much in writing, to the entire staff, is illegal.

**I never threatened to not pay anyone for working. I simply said no one is authorized to work outside of their hours without approval. No one is authorized to clock in early unless asked to come in early by management. That is a huge difference. People come in and sit in the office for 20 min after clocking in. Same with after their shift. If they are working fine. But sitting and playing is not something I will pay them for.**

Our financial situation is not on the up and up. I'm not sure how a financial advisor is viewing it as such, but an audit could bring potential charges of tax evasion for undeclared income, in the form of back end spending drastically exceeding the declared taxable income. Most business owners take a salary, with minimal discretionary spending on the back end that could be justified as business spending in the case of an audit, that would not increase their taxable income in a significant way. That is not our situation. And when the non-profit money is mingled in gray areas, we are also at an even higher risk of audit, and charges of fraud.

**First of all, how I use the company's money is really none of your business. You were never authorized to look in the bank account. I won't tolerate your suggestions or discussion of it. I have owned businesses for 18 years. As a corporation I can use company money for whatever I want. That is why I chose a c corp. There is no back end spending. I am the sole owner and can spend whatever I want. Almost every person I know runs a small business and most do not take salaries. NONE of the non profit money is intermingled or used for anything other than the non profit All**

**donations go to a separate account. I went over this with Eoin to make sure all donations go to the right account and indeed all have always gone to the proper account. Minus those meet and greet fees which have been reworded since square will not allow him to move them. Adoption fees are not donations and the non profit has an agreement with the for profit for adoption fees.**

With all the above said there is a lot that needs to be worked on and I am willing to listen and do that. But, we need to also address the concerns that I have.

Your behavior and aggressiveness towards the staff has to be toned down. I have been told and warned by several people who quit and also several people who stayed on that you are very demeaning and cruel to them. I have emails and texts addressing this. And it very well could lead to a lawsuit. There have been several threatened and all have said that they choose not to do it because they don't want to hurt the dogs. I understand the frustration and stress but you simply cannot be cruel and mean to people. Ask people to do things. Never yell at them in front of others. The same goes for the group text. Please be respectful of others.

As the director of operations your job is to look at the profitability and costs involved in our day to day. I expect moving forward you will keep an eye on overtime. Scheduling and shift changes. Check in with sales. And make sure both of these things are managed properly. Every single person said they have had no guidance or management. If someone is really screwing up, set up an hour refresher with them with you or Nico. If you are at one facility and there is an issue at the other facility and it is not your job just don't do it. Say please reach out to [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. That way you can concentrate on things that are important for you that day.

Customer service. You need to make sure that all of the employees understand the quality of service we want to give our clients. Photos need to go out daily. Customers need to feel like they are getting personal touches and experiences for their dogs. The staff at the rescue needs to know who to ask questions too. They need to know how to utilize volunteers and what to ask them to do.

I expect you to be at the rescue 2 days a week from 9-5 and at the hotel 2 days 9-5. Those days are dedicated to that location. As a salaried employee you should be available to answer questions on the other days. On your work from home day you should be helping with productivity, fundraisers, ideas for the hotel, scheduling issues. I am here to help and if you can't get to something tell me about it and I will do it.

Spending decisions can not be made without my approval. That goes for supplies, bonus and any other things that are bought with company money.

For Daycare. We can hire more people. Maybe we hire one floater that simply picks up shifts at both locations? I have a few good resumes that I can reach out to if you think that is helpful.

As for Front Desk.

I will put [REDACTED] at the front desk at the rescue one day a week and at vv one day a week. Brendan 4 and you 2. That way [REDACTED] can cover either. Rescue will be you 2 days, [REDACTED] 1, [REDACTED] 1 and [REDACTED] 3.

When someone is hired before they even step inside the office all paperwork needs to be signed. They need to be added to all and any apps they will be using. You must send that before any training begins.

I need you to understand that I am the boss. I am a problem solver. Yes, I do things very spontaneously and have ideas that I want to try. And sometimes because of that things get missed. But that is what I do. Who I am and how I have built several companies. At this moment my financial status is not great



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By having my name on this business as a member of upper management, I can be held partially responsible in potential legal and civil action against the company. It is known, as has been known for the majority of the above listed items, that I am aware of these issues. I do not feel comfortable lying to law enforcement or government agencies regarding these issues, and I will not take full responsibility for the company on these issues if such legal matters arise. I have to protect myself, and I have tried to protect all of us. I am sounding the alarm that things need to change, and I am continuing to ask for your support to do so. It is my contractual, and ultimately moral obligation to address and fix these issues, and if they are not corrected, or I am not permitted to correct them, I am unsure how to proceed any further.

Sent from my iPhone

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