Dear Mayor Berdie, April 1, 2023

I would like to start by saying that I worked towards being a City Manager for years and aspire to run for County Commissioner someday. Taking this position at the city was a very important step into my career's future. I was committed to a challenging position, but nothing prepared me for the difficulties the city faces. Since starting in Yachats, the job has been very different than I thought it would be. I knew it would involve resolving conflict but never in my wildest thoughts did I believe it would be such a consistent flow of aggressive confrontations from so many directions. I have managed large organizations with many departments that had staffing challenges but never have I had to litigate so many ongoing claims.

After spending a year defending the city against allegations of a toxic workplace, where Katherine is named as one of the culprits, I have started to realize a pattern of discontent from her. No one outside City Hall can understand what is happening there. Since I started, Katherine has worked against me and openly shares a dissent towards the city itself. It wasn't until the last two weeks that I truly realized the depth of her dysfunction and the detrimental effect it has had on the staff and community at large.

Over the last month, when Katherine was told her contract as Interim City Manager was ending, I observed unnecessarily aggressive behavior from her. For weeks she has spread lies about this transfer back to her position and has created a mob like mentality at City Hall against me. Currently I feel it is unsafe for me to continue to work at City Hall with a group of women who are ganging up together to publicly spread misinformation about their positions at City Hall. I am alarmed at the attention they have commandeered from the council. The council's lack of understanding of their role in staffing undermines my leadership.

My job is to manage city operations, making difficult and commonly unpopular decisions with the support of the council. But after watching last week's behavior of certain councilors and staff, I no longer feel I can effectively lead this city and I am at great risk of being tied into another claim against the city.

I am left with two choices. To start another investigation against staff who are creating a toxic workplace for several other employees, including myself. To be honest, I do not have the energy to do so and at this point the current claim against the city has more support than ever for their case, which I find truly depressing.

So that leaves me the other option, to resign. For the interest of my health and my future career, I think it is best that I fulfill my contract by writing this letter giving my 60 day notice, making May 31, 2023 my last day serving Yachats. I am happy to assist with the transfer to the next city manager but remain reserved that I am at great risk of being accused in future claims against the city. I have been in conversation with the city's HR consultant and CIS attorneys, who have been consulted and supportive of my decisions but also have recommended that I proceed with great care after the display of actions taken by openly angry employees over the last month.
Now that the council has postponed ending Katherine's contract another two weeks, I am concerned that certain council will want to reinstate Katherine's contract upon hearing of my giving notice. I believe we are both aware how damaging that would be to the city. I would like to meet with you privately, away from City Hall, on Monday to discuss how you think it would be best for the council and I to proceed in the next two months. After last week, I have little trust in the council's ability to keep city business confidential, which is not helping a very volatile situation.

Sincerely,

Heide Lambert