

A Better Elbert

Bringing Elbert County into the 21st Century


[Home](#)
[About Abe21](#)
[Blog House](#)
[News](#)
[Editorials](#)
[Letters](#)
[Lost & Found Pets](#)
[Concerts](#)
[Weather](#)
[Internet Links](#)
[BOCC MP3 Meetings](#)
[Contact Us](#)


On the afternoon of September 12, 2007 with only several minutes remaining in the regularly scheduled BOCC meeting, Commissioner Graeff came to the last item on the agenda. The item on said agenda said simply, "County Attorney." In the following two minutes, each and every one of the 23,000 residents of Elbert County contributed \$161 toward the cost of fixing the Elbert County Justice Center. To clarify: the remediation of the problems at the Justice Center is long over due and we certainly want to see the work done. That being said, it is our opinion that the BOCC has failed to follow the rules set forth by the State of Colorado on this matter, and we are once again left to question whether our Elbert County Board of County Commissioners is to be trusted.

The Colorado Sunshine Law, C.R.S. 24-6-402, entitled "Meetings - open to public," section (2) (c), state: "Any meetings at which the adoption of any proposed policy, position, resolution, rule, regulation, or formal action occurs or at which a majority or quorum of the body is in attendance, or is expected to be in attendance, shall be held only after full and timely notice to the public. In addition to any other means of full and timely notice, a local public body shall be deemed to have given full and timely notice if the notice of the meeting is posted in a designated public place within the boundaries of the local public body no less than twenty-four hours prior to the holding of the meeting. The public place or places for posting such notice shall be designated annually at the local public body's first regular meeting of each calendar year. The posting shall include specific agenda information where possible."

The agenda for the September 12, 2007 meeting of the BOCC did not mention that this item would be brought forward. It would take a mind reader of the stature of the iconic Madame Cleo to decipher \$3.7 million

contract to be decided on by commissioners from the words actually on the agenda, "County Attorney." In the statute it clearly states that the adoption of such a formal action needs to be advertised with specific information. Hmm, why would the State of Colorado require commissioners to advertise this type of procedure? Any person with a room temperature IQ could answer that question. It is not the commissioners' money that they are spending. It's ours! We deserve to know what they are doing.

The firm that has been awarded the contract to make repairs and complete construction on the Justice Center is the White Construction Group. This is a competent firm with over twenty years of experience in Colorado. If the company's reputation is any indication, any work they do will be correctly done. But this isn't the point. It is the earlier mishandling of the situation by the BOCC that has citizens wanting to be kept informed on how this next attempt at remediation is handled. Unfortunately, as long as our BOCC continues to operate the way it has, the public will always be kept in the dark. It appears that our BOCC does not appreciate the notion of a well-informed public.

The whole process has been cloudy from the beginning, so let us shed a few facts on the matter for purposes of clarity. The BOCC assembled a "Building Authority" in December of 2005 which in and of itself is not problematic unless you appoint people onto this committee who give the appearance to the public that there might be conflicts of interests. That is just exactly what they did by appointing Carl Cox, owner of the mold remediation company, Excel Environmental, and Al Perlman, the project manager for construction projects at the Elbert County Justice Center at the time. There was such a stir caused when this finally came to the public's attention, that the commissioners yielded to pressure and asked for the two men's resignations at the April 12, 2006 meeting of the BOCC. The commissioners went to some lengths to convince the public and the media there had been no wrong doing on the part of the BOCC and applauded both men for their good work. Appointing these men was, in our opinion, one of the best examples of poor judgment evidenced by the trio of Metli, Graeff and Stutz. How could anyone in authority not have seen the problems that this would cause? We have not seen any information that shows what transpired in these dealings which would have broken the threshold of inappropriateness, but once again, the public trust took a sharp blow to the head.

The following week, on April 19, 2006 at the regularly scheduled BOCC meeting, the commissioners received the sealed bids on the work from a list of qualified contractors. You would have only know this if, again, Madame Cleo was there to interpret the agenda which referenced the event under the two-word heading, "Justice Center." Presenting the information to the board was Al Perlman, the same man who was asked to resign the previous week. So even though the BOCC realized that appointing Perlman and Cox gave such a bad impression to the county that the BOCC said they had to resign, the message was, "You must resign. But finish the job that upset everybody before you leave." Hey, two good decisions in a row by the Board! The BOCC also stated for the record that they would review the contracts for the Justice Center before making a final decision with none other than...Mr. Perlman.

Two months later, at the June 28, 2006 meeting of the BOCC, the recommendation to accept the White Group bid of \$4.2 million (not \$3.7 million) was brought to the table by Al Perlman. The lesson here, we think, was that our commissioners will say just about anything, including that they want resignations from people they appointed, to get the public off of their backs. By continuing to use the services of Al Perlman to

make these presentations, they showed a complete disregard for public sentiment. Understand us when we say that Mr. Perlman may be the most competent and honorable person in the world. We have had reports that he is one of the good guys. The problem is not with Cox and Perlman, the problem is with our commissioners.

Fast forward over a year to the September 12, 2007 BOCC meeting. Again, the Justice Center is not mentioned in the agenda, but in the last two minutes of the meeting when no concerned residents are there in the audience, the Elbert BOCC authorizes the largest county contract since the 1980's with no questions or comments, not even from our commissioners. We would have liked to have been there. We would have liked to ask some questions. We are curious about why the contract dropped to \$3.7 million. We are curious about using the Justice Center as collateral on a loan of \$5.2 million to be paid off in 20 years. We would be curious to know where the remaining money totaling \$1.5 million is and how it will be used to benefit the citizens of Elbert Count. Maybe you know the answers. We don't.

[|Home|](#) [|About Abe21|](#) [|Blog House|](#) [|News|](#) [|Editorials|](#) [|Letters|](#) [|Lost & Found Pets|](#) [|Concerts|](#) [|Weather|](#) [|Internet Links|](#)
[|BOCC MP3 Meetings|](#) [|Contact Us|](#)