

April 10, 2024  
Victoria, Texas

To Whom It May Concern:

On April 9, 2024, City Manager Jesus Garza sent an email to all Library Advisory Board (LAB) members. In this email, he acknowledged the board bylaws give the chair, currently Dr. Jill Fox, the authority to call a special meeting. Mr. Garza also acknowledged that Dr. Fox first emailed staff, explaining her intent to call a special meeting and asking for their collaboration and cooperation. He further acknowledged there was a public notice of this meeting.

Mr. Garza went on to state that he is not allowing the Library Director to attend the special board meeting on April 10, that he “will direct staff to not have any communication/interactions with you or any library advisory board member for the foreseeable future,” that he “will direct staff to not facilitate any upcoming quarterly meetings,” and that he plans to “recommend bylaw changes to City Council.”

Dr. Fox and the rest of the Library Advisory Board have followed the bylaws, have used Roberts Rules of Order, have worked to collaborate and cooperate with library staff, have maintained an open flow of communication with library staff, and have treated others with dignity and respect. Mr. Garza is working feverishly to block this open flow of communication. Now he freely admits he will not even allow his staff to listen to the advice from their advisory board.

Why does Mr. Garza not want the Library Advisory Board to meet?

Why is Mr. Garza so vehemently opposed to his staff hearing the board’s perspective?

Why is Mr. Garza preventing his staff from participating in conversations with the board?

Why is Mr. Garza so committed to changing the board bylaws now and removing policy making from the board now, after he previously supported and facilitated this function of the board?

Why is Mr. Garza directing his staff to ignore the bylaws and not facilitate any board meetings, at the same time that he claims to follow the bylaws?

Why is Mr. Garza planning to violate the bylaws by making changes to them, even though they can only be altered, amended, or repealed by “a majority of the Board members present at any regular or special meeting of the board?”

Why does Mr. Garza believe it is appropriate to speak to our board chair, or any other citizen, in such a disdainful and contemptuous manner?

This is an attempt to silence all conservative voices in our city. We will not be silent. As Library Advisory Board members, our role is to speak for the regular citizen, the taxpayer, the library patron. We bring their perspective to every meeting we attend. We are not only board members, but we also are citizens, taxpayers, and library patrons ourselves. We each have a unique community within Victoria and we listen to feedback and concerns from other citizens. We love Victoria, we love the library, and we love the role that reading can play in the development of an individual and a society. We want to improve our local library for the benefit our entire community.

We were duly appointed to this board by our elected officials, and we are operating within the functions given to us in our bylaws. We are volunteers with jobs, families, and other commitments. We

have made great investments of time, research, energy, and community interaction in order to fulfill our roles on the board. We serve as volunteers in other arenas and know how much value volunteers bring. In any other organization or business, this level of participation and interest from an advisory board would be greatly appreciated and welcomed. It is shocking to see how the board's contributions are being treated with complete contempt.

We are not being listened to or heard because Mr. Garza has ordered city staff to have no contact with the board. One unelected bureaucrat should not be allowed to silence the voice of citizens in their local government.

Approved and Adopted on April 10, 2024

Members of the Library Advisory Board