

Parties at center of Attorney General's investigation of Harrisburg incinerator deeply involved in LCSWMA deal

By Bill Keisling

Some of our biggest criminal cases, past and present, involve the startling question: Why didn't they call the cops?

This was driven home this week when Pennsylvania Attorney General Kathleen Kane acknowledged that her office was investigating the finances of the Harrisburg incinerator, nearly 18 months after being asked to do so.

It was indeed alarming last year when Harrisburg's state-appointed receiver, David Unkovic, called the cops.

Days before he resigned as Harrisburg's receiver in late March 2012, Unkovic wrote the Office of Pennsylvania Attorney General, and the U.S. attorney, requesting a criminal investigation of the Harrisburg incinerator's financing...

At his March 28, 2012 press conference, Receiver Unkovic described the failed Harrisburg financing as a "joint venture" involving, as he saw it, several parties, including former Harrisburg Mayor Steve Reed, Dauphin County (particularly, he said, GOP Commissioner Jeff Haste), and bond insurer AGM..

These same well-heeled, and well-connected parties were pushing to undercut Receiver

Unkovic, he said, to have themselves unfairly bailed out, at the expense of taxpayers.

Receiver Unkovic's replacement, William Lynch, is about to announce the Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Agency's (LCSWMA) purchase of the Harrisburg incinerator with a fresh bond issue — this time backed by Lancaster ratepayers.

On June 22, 2011, LCSWMA head Jim Warner told his board that the original \$45 million price tag of the incinerator had swollen to \$124 million at the behest of none other than the Dauphin County commissioners, acting on behalf of bond insurer AGM.

"(T)hat is how the \$124 million offer was determined," Warner told the LCSWMA board. "The Harrisburg Authority is not pleased that the County negotiated a sale price for their asset. The County did this to attempt to enhance the value and to try to develop a plan with the debt guarantor (AGM) in Act 47."

In other words, the same parties Receiver Unkovic asked to be criminally investigated ended up brokering the current incinerator deal involving LCSWMA, and the inflated sale price.

Vacation at the bug-less shore

Over a half century ago, a summer at the shore required constant swatting of mosquitoes and vigilance for the large and noisy flies that acted like leaches. Not only did we lather our bodies to protect against the sun rays, but we sprayed ourselves with repellent.

A common pre and early teen hobby was collecting a large variety of butterflies and in the evenings some filled glass jars with lightning bugs.

Then there was the risk of a bee sting, which

was dangerous for some and painful for all. Allergies were almost unknown.

Sitting on an Ocean City, NJ balcony, I reflect that over the week I have not encountered a single mosquito or fly, not even a nat.

Nor have I seen a butterfly or lightning bug, and nary a bee.

I wonder how the children are doing with their allergies.

INTELLIGENCER JOURNAL NEW ERA

News article “**Library system faces questions**” reports:

“Things haven’t gotten much better. In fact, they may have gotten worse,” John McGrann, a former city library board president and former city school board member, said during a morning meeting with commissioners.

“Some libraries are funded at under \$2 per capita, others are still up around \$9 or \$10,” he said. *“The way that formula works*

... seems to not be working.”

Some library officials have suggested that funds should go directly to member libraries, who could then “buy” services from the system on an as-needed basis.

“That would be something that I would have an interest in investigating,” Lehman said.

WATCHDOG: *Well said by McGrann and well reported by the **Intell**.* Three wags of the tail!

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