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**February 15, 2019**

**Commissioner Andreana Jackson  
City of North Bay Village  
1666 Kennedy Causeway, 3rd Floor  
North Bay Village, FL 33141**

**RE: Former City Manager, Marlen Martell**

**Dear Commissioner Jackson:**

**This firm represents Former City Manager Marlen Martell, who at all times served the tax payers of North Bay Village honorably and with great integrity. Ms. Martell is a former City Clerk and a former City Commissioner and well respected Public Official. Ms. Martell has an excellent reputation and in her entire public life has conducted herself with the utmost honesty. Ms. Martell has never had a single instance of an ethical lapse in her career.**

**This is a formal request that you publicly apologize at the next Commission meeting and more importantly, that you formally retract your slanderous and libelous statements about Ms. Martell at the City's February 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. Your false statements included but were not limited to the following:**

- 1. "Here are documents Ms. Martell said she falsified."**
- 2. "Ms. Martell admitted to fraudulently signing these documents in the Miami Herald."**
- 3. You specifically accused her of committing crimes including perjury and signing false documents among alleged other criminal activity.**

**Falsely accusing an individual of a crime is libel per se according to Florida Law, subjecting you and perhaps the City of North Bay Village to damages for the harm you caused to Ms. Martell's reputation.**

**Let me be absolutely clear. Any suggestion that Ms. Martell acted improperly or dishonestly is a bold-faced lie. Like many other innocent and honest public servants of the City of North Bay Village, Ms. Martell was unfortunately manipulated and used by the some of the nefarious individuals who have operated in that City to serve their own personal agendas. To be clear, Mr. Velken, with the cooperation of others, decided to pay himself as a contractor through a third party company. Mr. Velken visited the City Attorney Norman Powell and the City Attorney approved the arrangement Mr. Velken utilized.**

**The decision to hire Mr. Velken and name him the Interim City Manager was after Ms. Martell was gone from the City. In fact, Mr. Velken was not paid until after Ms. Martell was no longer employed with the City. In any City in the State of Florida, it is absolutely the responsibility of the City Attorney (in this case Norman Powell) to vet and approve any contracts or employment arrangements of any appointed officials. It was the job of the City Attorney to investigate, vet and approve of any employment arrangement made by Mr. Velken and that is exactly what transpired.**

**Respectfully, to suggest that Ms. Martell is responsible for the City hiring Mr. Velken as the Interim Manager after she was not employed by the City is the height of absurdity. To state that Ms. Martell suggested or orchestrated the mechanism for Mr. Velken's payments is simply not true.**

**You have now needlessly, recklessly, maliciously and with full knowledge of the false content of your statements harmed, the reputation of Ms. Martell and caused her irreparable harm to her career.**

We are requesting at the next Commission meeting you publicly apologize to Ms. Martell and retract the statements made at the Commission meeting on February 12, 2019. Please govern yourself accordingly.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Michael A. Pizzi, Jr  
Michael A. Pizzi, Jr., Esq.

CC:

Mayor Brent Latham  
Vice Mayor Marvin Wilmoth  
Commissioner Jose R. Alvarez  
Commissioner Julianna Strout