

Debra Thompson

From: Will and Christy Ware <info@akcedarbox.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 12:06 PM
To: Assembly
Subject: Fwd: Cares Act Funding

I am forwarding this to the entire Assembly as I'm sure that many of you have similar questions, and I'm wanting all of you to be sure of where I am coming from.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Will and Christy Ware <info@akcedarbox.com>
Date: Wed, Aug 12, 2020 at 11:35 AM
Subject: Re: Cares Act Funding
To: Chelsea Tremblay <ctremblay@petersburgak.gov>

Hi Chelsea,

Thank you for getting back to me. I have a couple questions and comments before I call.

1. Where do local businesses stand in the priority list of the Assembly? I know you can't speak for others, but maybe just for you.
2. We have taken advantage of the PPP. And contrary to popular belief, we have not been assured this is a grant, but only guaranteed it's a loan that may be forgiven. Our local bank cannot offer us the relief application for consideration as it constantly changes. But all in all, the PPP was not enough to sustain our employees for long and we were forced to still lay off our staff and modify hours. The EIDL is also a loan. As we've started our business with minimal loans, I am hesitant to do so now, especially in light of the uncertainty of next year. Because you asked this personal question, I will oblige you probably more than you intended. We opened our store with minimal loans and grew it from only a few items to what we have now. At times early on I had subsidized the Cedar Box out of my own pocket and from support of my other business. At this point, because we have modified our business model to focus on more of an online presence and there is a safety net from our other income, our store is not at risk of closing this year and we are able to take some risks which so far have paid off. However, if this pandemic continues nationwide as it has and travel restrictions continue into next year, we will have to make a decision whether it's wise to continue to do so. Why do I share all this? Because I'm not wanting decision makers thinking I am making my argument for personal gain, although this wouldn't be unethical, it is not why I am writing this.
3. Does and has the hospital received federal aid? And if so, does this still keep the hospital at a level of highest priority at the expense of local businesses? Are we as a community holding money in the "just in case" for the hospital when you have businesses seriously affected in the here and now?
4. I am in great favor of non-profit support in our community. I support many nonprofits both personally and otherwise. However, giving nonprofits \$10,000 out of Cares Act Funding and having no concrete plans of supporting your local for profit businesses is unacceptable. Again, in my professional capacity I am fully aware of what the Cares Act funding is intended for. All of which we are doing as a community, with the exception of supporting and helping to stabilize the local economy.

You may not remember, but it wasn't all that long ago that we had many storefronts empty on mainstreet. So much so, if I remember correctly, there was at least one newspaper article regarding it. Where Anchor Point and where the current Pilot Publishing now sits, were empty for quite some time to just give an example. If you speak to some property owners, you will find that this is why our storefront rental rates are lower than other communities. We don't want an empty main street.

I am not advocating for an us vs. them scenario here. Rather aggressively advocating for local businesses...not just my own. Why? Because we are not seeing the tangible support and concern for the economic stability of our local businesses anywhere on the radar of our local leaders. If it's there....it's not evident and certainly not tangible.

Chelsea, after proof reading this over and over, I sound angry. I assure you I am not. I am passionate about my convictions and as such have been accused of being a bull in a china shop. If you are still open to a conversation, let me know and I'll be happy to call.

Gunalcheesh,
Will

On Wed, Aug 12, 2020 at 10:31 AM Chelsea Tremblay <ctremblay@petersburgak.gov> wrote:

My apologies for the delayed response! Thank you for reaching out to us. I really hope we're able to get some business support figured out soon. There's a big request from the hospital this coming meeting, if they get state funding a large portion of that would come back to the borough and we'll know more about what we have left. The state side of all of this has been a very frustrating process, as well as the overall unpredictability.

Can I ask if you've been able to take advantage of either the federal or state assistance? I know that's something that's been a deep source of frustration, too, trying to understand how folks in town have been able to engage with those sources in case there's a way we can advocate more clearly to our reps on those issues.

I know Liz is trying to develop some kind of plan, I'm sorry so many pieces are having to fall into place first. I'd be curious about what kind of numbers would be helpful, what form of support would be most efficient, etc., if you have any of those thoughts ready to share. My cell phone number is below if that's better for you!

Thanks again,

Chelsea

907-518-0590

'All political power is inherent in the people. All government originates with the people, is founded upon their will only, and is instituted solely for the good of the people as a whole.'

Alaska Constitution, Declaration of Rights, Article II

From: Will and Christy Ware <info@akcedarbox.com>

Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 4:36:07 PM

To: Assembly <assembly@petersburgak.gov>; pcoc@alaskan.com <pcoc@alaskan.com>; Liz Cabrera <lcabrera@petersburgak.gov>

Subject: Cares Act Funding

Good afternoon,

I want to say that I had an incredible call with Liz Cabrera today regarding the status of our local storefronts downtown today. She also took some time to explain where we are with Petersburg's Cares Act Funding in regards to our schools and hospital obligations.

I want to start by saying that I am full support of giving our schools the full funding they need to operate during this time. While we are experiencing low counts of the virus here locally at this time, the full protection of our children's

physical and mental, and of course educational needs should be reflected in our Care's Act Budget. I have the same concern for our medical center.

However, I would also echo these same sentiments for our local small businesses. Small, brick and mortar storefronts are the backbone of every community, including Petersburg. I have spoken with a few of my fellow business owners here on mainstreet and find that, while they may not be vocal regarding their (our) dire situations, many businesses are uncertain if they will still have their doors open after this pandemic is over. While many of us have taken advantage of the PPP and/or the EIDL, it simply is not enough to ensure that we are going to be able to survive the long fall/winter and spring, especially in light of low revenue generation this summer. Bottom line, there is no security in knowing whether or not we have enough to make it. In the next week you will see some food vendor(s) closing as it no longer makes sense to stay open this summer.

In closing, I would be remiss if I didn't say how appreciative we are of the \$1000 grant given by the Borough earlier this Spring. It was immediately used to cover a portion of our rent for that month. I understand that came from the Borough coffers, and not the Care's Act funding. Can our local businesses expect the Assembly to continue to see local businesses as a priority and provide additional support from the Care's Act funding?

Gunalcheesh!

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